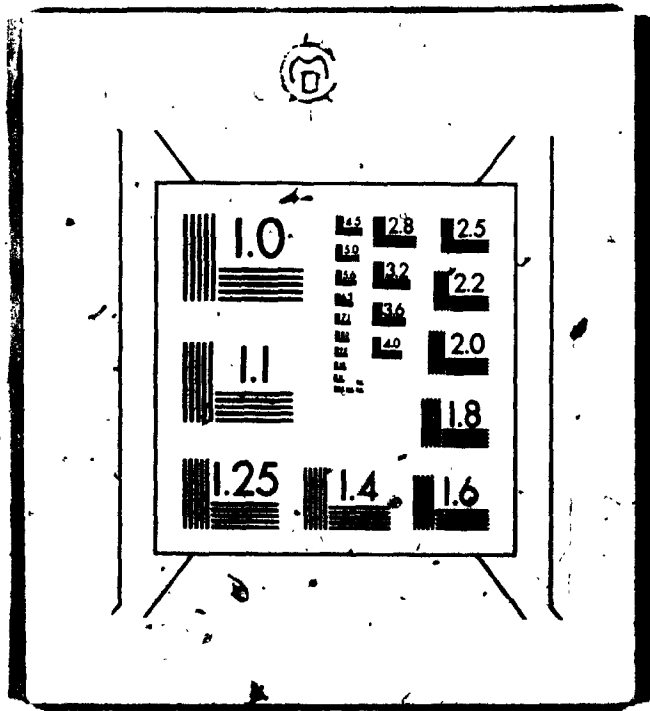


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THE POLITICS OF DISSENT:
AN INQUIRY INTO THE
DEPARTMENTAL RISINGS OF 1793

IN
NORMANDY AND BRITTANY

by

James William Kelsh, B.A.



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of History
Carleton University

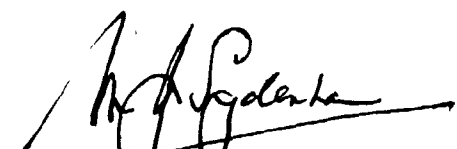
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Abstract

According to many historians the departmental risings of 1793 were primarily the result of mounting conflict between the Convention and the sections of the surrounding capital. Moreover, it is also generally asserted in this regard that the revolts were stimulated to a great degree by a number of the Convention's deputies who are considered to have formed a "Girondin" party or faction, and who are believed to have aroused the départements in order to gain support against their parliamentary opponents, the Montagnards. Similarly, there is also much agreement amongst writers that the chief participants in the local risings were members of the indirectly elected departmental and district administrations, who were ignored or opposed in their efforts by the directly elected communal and municipal officials and the general populace.

There is more marked disagreement, on the other hand, regarding the central issues involved in these revolts. To some historians the insurgents were concerned principally to protect social rights such as the ownership and exploitation of private property after the victory of the Montagnard deputies and militant elements in the Paris sections in the purging of parliament on June 2, 1793. Other writers, in contrast, maintain that the rebels desired primarily to ensure the freedom of parliament from undue pressure and to prevent the

establishment of a national dictatorship in Paris.

In addition, a minority of historians make the important claim that the insurgents were attempting to establish republics independent of the political power of Paris and "federalise" France.

Through the examination chiefly of printed documentary material and periodical literature, this inquiry attempts to suggest the validity or otherwise of these assertions.

Chapter One

Interpretations
of the
Departmental Risings

As a preliminary step in the process of reassessment of the departmental risings of 1793 it may be helpful to examine a representative selection of the major works about the French Revolution and the revolts. This should enable us to arrive at a clearer understanding of the current state of the question and to appreciate some of its salient problems.

We may begin this review with a consideration of works dating from the establishment of the Chair of the History of the French Revolution at the Sorbonne in 1891. Alphonse Aulard, who was the first to hold this position, established the bases of modern scholarship in the study of the Revolution. He undertook painstaking and methodical researches into his subject, and made extensive use of documentation. He also published several collections of archival material relating to the Jacobin Society and the Committee of Public Safety which have become invaluable resources to subsequent historians. His political history of the Revolution was the result of approximately twenty years of research, and appeared between 1901 and 1906.

Aulard, who viewed the "Girondins" as an organized party of deputies in the Convention, saw "federalism" only as a name attached to their policy by their political opponents, the Montagnards. As a result, he denied Montagnard charges that the aim of the "Girondins" was to disunify France. The policy of the "Girondin" deputies, in his view, was to establish a stable regime

in which the départements would exercise the same legal influence as Paris. They hoped to achieve this in 1792 by a peaceful confederation of the départements. (1).

The "Girondins" in the Legislative Assembly found support for their programme among the departmental administrations. These officials favoured in general a "moderantist" regime in which a suffrage based on the ownership of property would have kept public office under the control of the bourgeoisie. To strengthen this system, they also favoured a limited constitutional monarchy. The communes, on the other hand, were being increasingly exposed to anti-monarchical ideas from the local Jacobin Societies. (2).

Events during August and September of 1792 served to widen this gulf as the monarchy was suspended and the property qualification for the suffrage was abandoned. At the national level, concurrently, open conflict developed in 1792 and 1793 between the "Girondins" and their opponents over the central question of the predominance of Paris in national affairs. Upon the expulsion of the "Girondins" from the Convention, these latent tensions broke out into civil war. (3).

(1). Aulard, A., The French Revolution, (trans. Miall, B., London, 1910), V.2, p. 200, V.3, pp. 36, 55-56, 138, 162.

(2). Ibid., V.1, pp. 133, 145, V. 2, p. 37.

(3). Ibid., V.1, p. 116, V.2, pp. 76-77, 100, V.3, pp. 78, 92-93.

According to Aulard the local revolts were caused immediately by anger over the expulsion of the "Girondins". On the other hand, more longstanding factors such as fear of a Parisian dictatorship and accumulated resentment against governmental attempts at centralization since September, 1792, also played important roles in the decision to rebel. Aulard asserted further that the local insurgents accepted royalist support. The former "Girondin" deputies, on the other hand, refused this aid on Republican principles. France's growing sense of national solidarity in the face of foreign invasion, and the general acceptance by the communes of the leadership of Paris during the prevailing crisis, brought about the defeat of the rebels. (4).

The work of Jean Jaurès offered a different perspective. Jaurès was a prominent Socialist statesman of the Third Republic. As well as practising law and journalism, he dedicated himself to the organization of a unified Socialist parliamentary party. His Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution Française, which began to appear in 1901, expressed his belief in the role of profound forces such as democracy and fraternity in the Revolution. He drew inspiration from the work of

(4): Ibid. V.2, pp. 255-256, 309-310, 314.

Jules Michelet, who ^{had} emphasized the power of the human spirit. (5).

Jaures maintained, like Aulard, that the departmental risings developed from the conflict between the "Girondins" and their opponents at the local and national level. However, he laid greater stress on the social and economic aspects of this conflict.

To Jaures the "Girondins" lacked the Revolutionary spirit of democracy and, more importantly, fraternity, which he found in the Mountain and the Commune of August 10, 1792. The "Girondins" represented a politically partisan spirit instead, and guarded the interests of the larger mercantile and manufacturing elements among the bourgeoisie. He agreed that the "Girondin" deputies wished to dominate the central power and not "federalise" France during 1792 and 1793. He emphasized, however, that they were willing to shift the government from Paris to Bourges in 1793 if Paris could not be controlled. They were expelled from the Convention on June 2, 1793, he maintained, both because their partisan spirit was impeding the workings of government during the current military and economic crises, and because it was blocking the progress of the Revolution itself. (6).

(5). Jaures, J., Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution Française, (Paris, 1924), V.7, p. 45.

(6). Ibid., V.7, pp. 117, 193, 269, 347, 455, 515, 519, 512-523.

Jaurès saw the departmental risings as only an indirect response to "Girondin" fulminations against the domineering tendencies of the Mountain and the Commune. In reality, the local "Girondin" leaders revolted against the provocative actions of the Montagnard représentants en mission and hoped to assert the interests of the bourgeoisie. With this in view, according to Jaurès, they readily accepted royalist support. Beyond these common attributes, however, Jaurès stressed the lack of homogeneity in the revolts, and their localised and diversified nature. This resulted in the defeat of the rebels by the stronger forces of Revolutionary solidarity and devotion to the Patrie which the Montagnards symbolised, and which were contrary to the partisan spirit of the "Girondins". (7).

Albert Mathiez, who acknowledged the influence of Jaurès on his work, was the first major historian of the twentieth century to apply a strongly socialist and economic interpretation to the Revolution. He published numerous monographic studies on a variety of its aspects, and founded the scholarly journal the Annales Révolutionnaires in 1908. His general history of the Revolution appeared in 1922.

(7). Ibid., V.7, pp. 223, 324, 331, 334, 522, 529.

Mathiez agreed that the revolts in the départements were the outcome of the struggle between the "Girondin" deputies and the Montagnards. He denied Aulard's assertion, however, that the fundamental cause of the conflict was the question of the predominance of Paris. He maintained instead that their divisions originated in a conflict of class interests.

To Mathiez the "Girondins" represented the larger traders, property-holders and manufacturers of the middle classes. They wished to achieve predominance in a moderate state which would allow freedom of private interest. Their opponents, the Montagnards, were no less "bourgeois" than the "Girondins", but represented the lower class of artisans, labourers and consumers from a greater sense of pragmatism. They also supported a powerful state in which the public welfare would be stressed over private concerns. (8).

According to Mathiez August 10, 1792 was once again the turning point in the evolution of the risings. At the local level discord was growing between the conservative middle class departmental administrations and their more democratic counterparts in the communes who came mainly from the lower classes. At the national level the influence of the "Girondins" was being outstripped

(8). Mathiez, A., The French Revolution, (trans. Phillips, C.A., New York, 1962), pp. 212-213.

by that of their more pragmatic opponents, as legality slowly gave way to revolutionary and direct democracy in August and September. In response to this the "Girondins" proposed the departmental guard to bolster their position, and thereby first openly opposed the départements to Paris. (9).

By the beginning of May, 1793, the position of the "Girondins" in the Convention had greatly deteriorated. Mathiez maintained that they planned the departmental risings at this time to crush the power of Paris, being prepared to retire to Bourges if defeated. Their expulsion from the Convention thus set in motion and extended a premeditated movement.

Mathiez's assessment of the objectives of the "Girondins" and the departmental administrators was similar to that apparent in Jaures. He stressed, however, that many of the "rich property owners" who led the revolts were also Republicans, and that only the more unscrupulous among them sought royalist support. Local particularism was a factor in the revolts, although they were not actually "federalist" in nature. Lack of popular support, and the effective combination of conciliation and repression employed by the Montagnards, led to the collapse of the movement. (10).

(9). Ibid., pp. 163, 196-197.

(10). Ibid., pp. 319, 336 and Girondins et Montagnards, (Paris, 1930), p. 17.

J. M. Thompson, whose history of the Revolution appeared in 1943 and is still one of the standard authorities in English, laid greater stress on the political aspects of the question. For the most part, Thompson reiterated the interpretation apparent in Aulard. He maintained, for example, that latent tensions between the départements and Paris were apparent by August, 1792, and that the "Girondins" exploited these in their proposals for a departmental guard. Traditionally, the départements had nursed resentment against the unjust share of the nation's resources consumed by Paris. After the growth of the Insurrectional Commune, the departmental officials felt that Paris was also seizing an inordinate share of the nation's political power and was attempting to establish a dictatorship over the entire country. (11).

During the departmental risings this resentment was combined with the desire of the propertied, middle class officials for a stable, conservative regime. This determined them to eliminate the anarchy apparent in Paris. Traditional separatist inclinations provided further impetus to the movement, especially in Normandy and Brittany, while in general the atmosphere of instability and crisis was kept up by royalist agitation

(11). Thompson, J. M., The French Revolution, (Oxford, 1943), p. 351.

and unrest over subsistence. Unlike others, however, Thompson saw "federalism", in the sense of decentralizing France, as an integral part of "Girondin" policy and the departmental risings. The revolts were ultimately a miscalculated attempt on behalf of the "Girondins" to impose this system by force, which served to discredit the "federalist" idea in France beyond all hope of realization. The defeat of the rebels gave the Jacobins the opportunity they required to impose a centralized, authoritarian regime. (12).

Albert Goodwin, whose history of the Revolution was first published in 1953, also stressed the role of the "Girondin" deputies in stimulating the provincial revolts. The "Girondins", he maintained, were primarily divided from their opponents in the Convention by "personal rivalries" between the chief spokesmen of the respective groups, and differing views of the question of the political importance of Paris. (13). The "Girondins", however, were able to gain support from the provinces because they were more well-known outside Paris than their opponents, and were generally seen as representative of order and as guardians of private property. They also gained a reputation for protecting the country

(12). Ibid., pp. 144, 399-400, 403, 440.

(13). Goodwin, A., The French Revolution, (New York, revised 1965-66), p. 125.

against the "Parisian" variety of direct democracy. In spite of their provincial orientation, however, Goodwin maintained that the "Girondins" were in no sense "federalists." (14).

According to Goodwin the "Girondins" repeatedly employed politically inexpedient measures such as attacks on Paris and the Commune in 1793 to overcome their opponents. By May, they urged provincial centres such as Marseilles, Bordeaux, Caen and the département of Jura to overt resistance against the political leadership of Paris. The revolts were thus well under way before the end of May, and were only intensified and extended by the purge of the Convention. (15).

In Goodwin's view the rebels may have drawn some inspiration from the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who denied the feasibility of large, unitary republics, and from the evident success of the federal system in America. Beyond this, however, the "federalist" nature of the revolts was negligible. More importantly, many provincial towns acted from resentment of their declining political and social importance in national affairs. In addition, many of the leaders of the revolts were supporters of a constitutional monarchy and feared that political democracy would entail attacks on private property. (16).

(14). Ibid., pp. 123-125.

(15). Ibid., pp. 136, 140.

(16). Ibid., p. 140.

Association with royalists and émigrés discredited the movement, while the "tepid enthusiasm" of the departmental officials was easily surpassed by the commitment and activity of the revolutionary committees of the communes. As foreign invasion once more threatened France, the "Girondins" lost much of their moderate support. Finally, the Committee of Public Safety drew away many wavering supporters by conciliation and concession, and helped bring about the defeat of the rebels by isolating the centres of resistance. (17).

George Lefebvre, to return to the mainstream of French scholarship, was one of the most influential historians of the French Revolution. He acknowledged the influence of the work of Jaurès on his own, and maintained that the Revolution was, in the last analysis, an "episode in the general rise of the bourgeoisie." (18).

In his general history, which appeared in 1951, Lefebvre portrayed the "Girondins" in the Convention as a group of deputies which desired a political democracy for France, but a type of democracy which would nevertheless reward wealth and talent. They gained the support of the local departmental officials who came from the "moderate bourgeoisie". The "Girondins" opposed the

(17). Ibid., pp. 140-141.

(18). Lefebvre, G., The French Revolution, (2 vols., trans. Evanson, E.M., V.1 and Stewart, J.H. and Friguglietti, J., V.2, 1962-1964), V. 2, p. 360.

attempts of their opponents to centralize the government, and tended to encourage local particularism. Lefebvre denied, however, that "federalism" formed a part of "Girondin" policy, even though several "Girondins" may have had a private preference for it. (19).

Lefebvre emphasized the importance of local factors in bringing about the eventual outbreak of rebellion. Tensions, in his view, had arisen between the various administrative levels in the départements after the first invasion of the Tuileries on June 20 and the revolution of August 10, 1792. The politically more democratic municipalities tended to support the actions of the insurgents, while officials at the district and departmental levels showed sympathy for the monarchy. In addition, while a small number of departmental directories were suspended after August 10, many constitutional monarchists remained in office and came into increasing conflict with the local Jacobin Societies. As time progressed these local authorities became increasingly disaffected ~~from~~ the central government, especially as the Montagnard représentants en mission, dispatched by the Convention in March 1793, disrupted affairs in the départements by purging local officials, arresting suspects and

(19). Ibid., V.1, pp. 214, 266.

requisitioning supplies. As a result, the provinces were in a state of ferment before the end of May, and were provoked into open rebellion by the purge of the Convention. (20).

In Lefebvre's analysis the departmental insurgents were a heterogeneous collection of dissidents. Some were members of the bourgeoisie who feared attacks on their private property, while others were "Feuillants" who opposed universal suffrage. Catholic supporters of the refractory clergy also took part, as did outright counter-revolutionaries. Lefebvre also cited the significant presence of sincere supporters of political democracy who were angered at the "outrage perpetrated against the national representation." Traditional factors such as provincial jealousy of Paris and entrenched local particularism were also important. Unlike other historians, moreover, he added that resistance to recruitment for the military and, in the ports, unemployment resulting from the blockade, caused some popular participation in the risings. The inability of the insurgents to launch effective action, however, and the superior Jacobin tactics of conciliation and the release of the new constitution, led to the collapse of the movement. (21).

(20). Ibid., V.1, pp. 235-236, 240-241, and V.2, pp. 48, 51-52.

(21). Ibid., V.2, pp. 51, 56-57.

Albert Soboul, who assumed the duties of the Chair of the History of the French Revolution at the Sorbonne in 1967, stressed the importance of class conflict above all other factors. As a result he maintained that the chief result of the Revolution was to bring the bourgeoisie to the climax of their rise to power in the world. Like others, he also viewed the divisions in the Convention as arising primarily from divergent class interests. The "Girondins", according to Soboul, represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and supported doctrines such as economic freedom. They feared and alienated themselves from the vague and undefined "people", while their opponents, who were of essentially the same social background as the "Girondins", supported popular policies from a greater sense of realism and an appreciation of the needs of national defence. (22).

In the provinces, according to Soboul, class interests also predominated. He maintained, for example, that the policy of decentralization undertaken by the Constituent Assembly in 1789 and 1790 favoured the bourgeoisie by giving them control of local administration, creating in each département "une petite république aux mains de la haute bourgeoisie." (23).

(22). Soboul, A., La Révolution Française, (2 vols., Paris 1962), V.1, preface, p. vii and pp. 288, 323, 327.

(23). Ibid., V.1, pp. 225, 228.

Soboul's analysis of the departmental risings and the defeat of the rebels reiterates that apparent in the work of Mathiez. He adds, however, that the defeat of the insurgents ultimately led to the acceleration of the movement towards centralization and aided the rise in influence of popular elements over the forces of moderation. (24).

Norman Hampson, whose Social History of the French Revolution appeared in 1963, stressed, like Lefebvre, the importance of tensions in the départements in bringing about the eventual outbreak of rebellion in the summer of 1793. As early as September, 1792, local affairs had been disturbed by the stimulation of sans-culotte activity and, additionally, by threats made to private property by the agents of the Provisional Executive Council and the Commune of August 10. The latter was especially evident in the activities of the commissaire Momoro in Normandy. By 1793 divisions developed between Republicans in centres such as Lyons, Marseilles and Bordeaux, the bases of which remain obscure, according to Hampson, since "in many cases local issues were given a misleading national colouring in terms of 'Girondin' and 'Montagnard'". He maintained, however,

(24). Ibid., V.2, pp. 14-16.

that one highly probable cause was the growing disagreement between those who favoured order and the security of life and property for all and those who favoured the use of violent measures. This disagreement did not fully materialize until after the events of August and September of 1792. (25).

Social antagonisms were also apparent. Several governmental measures, such as the decree adopted on April 27, 1793, to equip recruits and maintain their families by a forced loan on the well-to-do, drove the wealthy into alliance with the counter-revolutionaries because they feared popular attacks on their private property. At the same time, extremists and Montagnard représentants en mission looked for support among the lower classes, especially the sans-culottes. (26).

As a result of these tensions, anti-Montagnard insurrections developed by May in major provincial centres such as Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux and Caen. Hampson, however, like Lefebvre maintained that the leading rebels had a measure of popular support. The purge of the Convention served to ignite the insurrections into open rebellion against the interference by Paris with the national assembly, and the most

(25). Hampson, N., A Social History of the French Revolution, (Toronto, 1963), pp. 158, 171.

(26). Ibid., pp. 172-174.

determined resistance was offered by those centres which had already manifested anti-Montagnard sentiments before the end of May. The lack of willing recruits to take up arms and effective Montagnard counter-measures nevertheless caused the movement to remain a "fire of straw". (27).

At this point in our survey a brief review of some representative special studies on aspects of the period may be helpful. Although some of these were written by relatively unimportant local historians, they further illustrate the differences and similarities apparent in various interpretations of the crisis.

A. Prudhomme, whose Le Fédéralisme dans l'Isère appeared in 1907, maintained that the actions of the insurgents in the Dauphiné were primarily a protest against the infringement of the National Convention's sovereignty by the Parisians. He pointed out that most of the local officials who participated in the rising were legists who, while sympathizing with "Girondin" views, nevertheless rejected illegal measures such as forming a departmental force or arresting représentants en mission. They opted instead for formal protests and the sending of addresses denouncing the purge. (28).

(27). Ibid., p. 184.

(28). Prudhomme, A., Le Fédéralisme dans l'Isère et Français de Nantes, (Grenoble, 1907), pp. 7, 22, 39, 105, 173.

In addition to indignation over the abandonment of democratic principles, traditional provincial loyalty asserted itself against what Prudhomme termed "les prétentions dominatrices des sections parisiennes." The local authorities were also provoked, he maintained, by the disruptive activities of the représentants en mission. (29). They were defeated because they lacked a central rallying-point which isolated all initiatives, and because they refused to take any action which would threaten the unity of the Republic. As a result, he was convinced that the rising in this region was in no sense "federalist". (30).

Madeleine Albert, whose study of the Haute-Garonne was published in 1932, maintained that the revolt in this département was the result of the exploitation by the "Girondins" of departmental indignation over the purge of the Convention. In Haute-Garonne the principal insurgents were the local officials who shared the desire of the "Girondins" for a prudent and moderate type of republicanism and their respect for legality. As such they did not understand the Jacobin and Montagnard demands for exceptional measures for the security of France, and felt that increased centralization would result in the destruction of provincial autonomy and

(29). Ibid., pp. 173-174.

(30). Ibid., pp. 174-177.

tradition. These local authorities were also members of the bourgeoisie, and further rejected Montagnard politics because they viewed them as favouring the growing popular movement during the crises of finance and subsistence. They were also angered by the disruptive activities of Chabot and the représentants en mission in May of 1793 who were enforcing purges of local offices and attempting to rally the local popular societies into a regional congress. (31).

To Albert the ancient separatist tendencies of the Haute-Garonne and the Midi were apparent during the rising, and the movement actually became "federalist" in the sense of an attempt to establish independent republics. Albert asserted that the Haute-Garonne, Gironde, Landes, Hautes and Basses-Pyrénées, Lot-et-Garonne and Gers départements adhered to this plan. (32).

Albert Goodwin, whose earlier general history has already been considered, reached some very different conclusions in his study of Caen which was published in 1959. According to Goodwin Caen did not turn against the Jacobins and Paris until the massacres of September, 1792. At this time there were rumours that the Paris Commune and a Jacobin minority in the Convention were

(31). Albert, M., Le Fédéralisme dans la Haute-Garonne, (Paris, 1932), pp. 46-48, 69.

(32). Ibid., p. 70.

infringing on ^{the authority of} the national representation, rumours which were strengthened by the correspondence of the "Girondin" deputies of Calvados in the Convention. He asserted further that these misgivings were not confined to the middle-class officials, but were shared by the local Jacobin Society and the sections of Caen. After the purge of the Convention these fears were augmented by reports of a proposed dictatorship by Paris and the Commune, and talk of radical social legislation. (33).

The insurgents, however, though they did attempt to dispatch an armed force to Paris, held no "federalist" or counter-revolutionary convictions according to Goodwin. They wished instead to ensure the continuation of stable government and to protect private property. They hoped to do this by restoring the independence of the Convention, reducing the power of extraordinary bodies such as the Commune and the Committee of Public Safety, and recalling the représentants en mission. (34). The majority, he maintained, retracted their protests to avoid a civil war which could damage the local harvest, and to disprove Jacobin allegations of collusion with the rebels of the Vendée. (35).

(33). Goodwin, A., The Federalist Movement in Caen during the French Revolution, (Bull. John Rylands Lib., V.42, 1959-1960), pp. 315-317, 322. The social backgrounds of the members of these popular societies, relative to the local officials, however, are not explored in detail.

(34). Ibid., pp. 338, 340.

(35). Ibid., p. 335.

M. J. Sydenham, whose study of the "Girondins" was published in 1961, pointed out that both the "Girondins" and their opponents were equally responsible for provoking strife in national and local affairs, since both, by December of 1792, had exerted "illicit influence upon the assembly." The Montagnards caused consternation in the départements by their représentants en mission as shown by the number of departmental petitions which reached the Convention by mid-May, 1793, while the "Girondins" drew charges of "federalism" onto themselves by advocating the departmental guard, supporting the referendum on the fate of the King, and encouraging the illegal sending of provincial troops to Paris. However, though Condorcet's proposed constitution granted more power to local authorities, for example, and the "Girondins" seemed to favour the provinces, Sydenham maintained that they were not "federalists" in the sense of disunifying France. Thus national unity was not abandoned even in discussions about a Republic of the Midi in June and July of 1792. (36).

Alison Patrick's study of the Convention, published in 1972, reaffirmed many assertions made by previous historians while seriously challenging others.

(36). Sydenham, M. J., The Girondins, (Greenwood, 1961), pp. 133, 172, 194, 196, 198.

For example, she maintained that one major difference between the "Girondins" and their opponents was their interpretation of the chief danger threatening the Republic. To the "Girondins" the main danger was a dictatorship centered in Paris, while to the Montagnards and the "Left" it lay in "possible disintegration via uncontrolled local initiatives." (37). The growing antagonism between the two sides resulted in a parliamentary stalemate by 1793, which both groups were willing to use illegal means to break. The "Girondins" used threats of departmental resistance to put pressure on Paris, while the Montagnards tried to employ the activities of the Paris sections. In this way the national crisis developed from the parliamentary struggle, as the "Girondins" attempted to turn the départements against Parisian "anarchy" through their correspondence and press. According to Patrick, this campaign increased in intensity after the disturbances in Paris on February 25 and 26 and March 9 and 10, 1793. (38).

Considering the nature of the departmental risings after the purge of the Convention, Patrick maintained that the majority of the départements which protested against the intimidation of the Convention by the Parisians were

(37). Patrick, A., The Men of the First French Republic, (Johns Hopkins, 1972), pp. 126-127.

(38). Ibid., pp. 108-109, 128.

conservative rather than counter-revolutionary, and desired to regulate the course of the Revolution without inviting serious repression as did Marseilles and Toulon. (39). Furthermore, Patrick questioned Mathiez's assertion that the communal officials were more radical than the departmental or district authorities, since the communal officials who were elected to the Convention gave the "Girondins" more open support than the relatively non-committal former district and departmental administrators who were elected to parliament. She also noted that the district and departmental officials were not always of one mind, for only 6 out of 36 départements which elected former district and departmental administrators to the Convention saw the ex-officials of both these levels of local government express similar views after they had taken their seats in the Convention itself. Above all, Patrick concluded that experience of public life and responsibility during the Revolution was a more important factor in determining one's political convictions than social background. (40).

Though many more questions of fact and interpretation could be raised, it would seem from our short survey that historians' interpretations of the departmental risings of 1793 are in fundamental agreement

(39). Ibid., p. 192.

(40). Ibid., pp. 215, 220, 300.

upon certain essential points. To the majority of writers, as we have seen, the revolts were a consequence of the uncertainty and apprehension which was caused at the local level by conflicts in the Convention and between its deputies and the sections of the surrounding capital. Moreover, it is generally asserted that the rebels were further encouraged by a number of the Convention's deputies who, according to many historians, formed a "Girondin" party or faction. The "Girondins", in this view, exploited such tensions as resentment in the provinces of increasing governmental centralization and fears of a Parisian dictatorship in order to gain support from the départements against the Montagnards in the Convention and militant elements in the Paris sections.

Similarly, there is general agreement that the revolts were almost exclusively the work of members of the departmental and district administrators. Their counterparts in the communes and municipalities, in contrast, are considered to have opposed or ignored the actions of their superiors. In addition, it is also maintained by the majority of writers that the rebels received no support from the general populace, though Georges Lefebvre and Norman Hampson are two historians who have questioned this position.

On the other hand, there is a more marked divergence of opinion concerning the central issues involved in the risings. According to writers such as Jean Jaurès, Albert Mathiez, Georges Lefebvre and Albert Soboul, to

whom the social and economic aspects of the Revolution were most pronounced, the insurgents were concerned principally to protect rights such as individual ownership and exploitation of private property. In this interpretation the risings were thus motivated by class interests, for the rebels feared the implementation of radical social legislation after the triumph of the Montagnards and militant elements in Paris on June 2, 1793. In contrast, Alphonse Aulard, J. M. Thompson and Albert Goodwin, to whom political questions were predominant in the Revolution, stressed the anger of the insurgents over the illegal purge of the Convention. Moreover, they also emphasized that the rebels desired to prevent the establishment of a Parisian dictatorship over the nation.

To only a minority of historians, however, such as J. M. Thompson and the less well-known Madeleine Albert, who concentrated upon the revolt in Haute-Garonne, did the rebels intend to make "federalism" a literal reality by establishing republics independent of the leadership of Paris.

Perhaps the re-examination of the immediate origins and principal features of the departmental risings in Normandy and Brittany may help to suggest the validity or otherwise of these assertions. Moreover, it may also shed more light on this crucial period of the Revolution, in which the failure to achieve national unity by consent resulted in an attempt to impose it by force.

Chapter Two

3

The Background

to

Conflict: 1789-1792

From 1789 until 1792 national unity and representative democracy were two closely linked and inter-dependent concepts. In the magnificent Fête de la Fédération of July 14, 1790, the 83 départements symbolically celebrated a voluntary union, renouncing ancient provincial privileges and instituting the reign of political equality and conformity among the hitherto disparate regions of France. The new France was thus a voluntary creation, a confederation of former duchies and counties to form the patrie, which, beyond being the sum of its 83 parts, was a peaceful and cosmopolitan ideal. (1). However, the absence of effective channels between the central government and the départements for the administration of the country did not prepare the local authorities for the unprecedented dispatch of the widely empowered commissaires in August and September, 1792. Weaknesses and tensions within the new system of local government, moreover, caused a general insecurity amongst the new officials, many of whom had been in office for a short time and were now finding their views on the relationship between the people and their elected representatives to be outmoded. Eventually, as representative democracy increasingly began to give way in 1792 in Paris to what may be described as popular or direct democracy,

(1). This concept of the patrie was expressed in the general cahiers of 1789. C.f. Hyslop, B. F., French Nationalism in 1789 According to the General Cahiers, (New York, 1934), pp. 169-174, 194-195.

the spirit of co-operation between local and central authority began to be transformed into confrontation. Essentially, this fundamental divergence between two opposing concepts of the nature and exercise of power was to be an important factor underlying the decision of local officials and their supporters to rise in dissent in 1793, for as the principle of representative democracy was undermined the voluntary element was removed from unity.

France, in 1789, was beset with many barriers to the creation of a unified nation. Some of these obstacles were based in history, as, for example, the way in which the Kingdom of France had been formed. France was a collection of feudal Duchies and Counties, many of which had been united to the Crown by marriage and contractual arrangements in return for legal and fiscal privileges. Normandy and Brittany had been incorporated as early as 1214 and 1491, respectively. Moreover, despite the considerable and increasing influence of the royal bureaucracy, France had no uniform system of local government, but instead a mixture of provinces with their own assemblies or estates. Power and privilege were thus unevenly distributed. Most provinces also possessed a provincial parlement which blocked any attempt to rationalize local institutions and the erection of a system of local administration. In this way they acted as the defenders of provincial and social privilege.

. de Brienne, for example, had attempted to implement

uniform local administration in 1787. For those provinces not already possessing estates he proposed a system whereby all communities lacking a municipal body would elect a council on a proprietary suffrage. Above these municipalities his plan called for secondary assemblies, elected indirectly and corresponding roughly to the fiscal départements. At the highest level of the new provincial structure he proposed a provincial assembly, with half of its members chosen by the King and the other half elected locally. The desire of the court for uniform administration would thus be met, while at the same time a concession would be made to local feeling by allowing the provincial assemblies to make direct representations to the royal government. The parlements, however, resisted this system as the older estates were seen as more independent of royal authority. In addition, the parlements objected to the provision that the new bodies would vote by member instead of rank. (2).

Further obstacles to national unity were expressed by demands in the general cahiers of 1789 for increases in the powers of local bodies. The majority of cahiers demanded provincial estates and a corresponding reduction in the number of royal intendants. The strongest demand

(2). Aulard, The French Revolution, V. 1, pp. 107-109 and Cobban, A., Local Government During the French Revolution in Aspects of the French Revolution, (Paladin, 1971), p. 114.

for a provincial voice in legislation came from Normandy where the nobles of Rouen demanded the power to consent to all legislation of the Estates-General before it could become valid in that province. Further, the nobles of Evreux asserted "that in addition to the rights common to all Frenchmen, the Normans possess those in particular attached to the constitution of the duchy of Normandy." (3).

On the other hand, there was a strong desire in 1789 for unity and a uniform re-division of France so that all provinces would be equal in rights and representation. Even the cahier of the nobles of Caen spoke in 1789 of "submitting all passions to the salvation of the patrie", while in general national feeling was expressed in the lengthy consideration given by many cahiers to a revised definition of treason. In addition to the traditional lèse-majesté many proposed terms such as crime d'état, lèse-nation, lèse-patrie, lèse-liberté and the cosmopolitan term of lèse-humanité. (4).

As a result of this desire for national unity and in recognition of the obstacles barring its achievement, the National Assembly, in December, 1789, passed one of the most crucial pieces of legislation of the Revolutionary period. The Decree Establishing Electoral and Administrative

(3). Hyslop, French Nationalism in 1789..., pp. 54, 184, 186.

(4). Ibid., pp. 158-159.

Assemblies of December 22 dealt a death-blow to the parlements and all other existing provincial assemblies and substituted a uniform system of local political administration for the whole of France. (5). Section 2 of this decree provided each new territorial division with a departmental administration of 36 members, 8 of whom formed a directory which sat year-round while the remaining 24 formed an annual council. Subordinate to the départements were the districts, composed of a 4 member directory and an annual council of 12 members. At the communal level, finally, an earlier decree of December 14 had created municipal councils of mayors and officers in recognition of the albeit unofficial installation of revolutionary committees in many provincial towns during the summer. (6).

Section 3 of the December 22 decree, however, created the situation which was to help lead to crisis in confrontations between the new authorities and the central government, for the new assemblies were extremely limited in their powers and came to resent any further infringements on what little authority they had. The departmental administrations could not initiate new legislation or vote new taxes without the approval of the central government,

(5). Section 3, Article 8, reproduced in Stewart, J. H., A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution, (New York, 1951), p. 137.

(6). Ibid., pp. 133-134 and Decree Establishing Municipalities, pp. 120-121. In Caen, Brest and Rennes these revolutionary committees had taken over complete control of municipal politics in 1789. C.f. Hunt, L., Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France, (Stanford, 1978), p. 136.

nor even employ the National Guard unless "regulated by special decrees." Instead they were given a list of duties. They were responsible for the assessment of nationally imposed direct taxes, providing for poor relief, maintaining hospitals, prisons, roads and forests, and making adequate provision for public health. They also supervised local educational institutions and authorized the construction of roads and canals. Moreover, though they were given charge of security and public order, the National Assembly stipulated that "the departmental and district administrations shall always be required to comply with the rules established by the constitution, and with the decrees of the legislature sanctioned by the King." (7). France seemed to be relatively decentralized, as no representative of the central government sat on the departmental council, and there was no intermediary body between the département and the central government to ensure an administrative hierarchy linking the central power to the rest of the nation. (8). In reality, because the powers of the new bodies were so circumscribed, France was neither centralized nor decentralized, but fell ambiguously somewhere between the two.

(7). Section 3: Of the Functions of Administrative Assemblies, Stewart, Documentary Survey, pp. 135-136.
 (8). Ibid., p. 137 and Cobban, Aspects of the French Revolution, p. 120.

The new system of local assemblies was beset with other weaknesses, some of which began to emerge immediately. The municipalities and districts were officially subordinate ^{in some ill-defined respects} to the departmental directories, but in practice they did not always act as if this were the case. (9). In Brest, for example, the municipal authorities openly criticized the Finistère departmental directory for lessening their rigorous measures against the local refractory clergy in April of 1792 (10), while in August many municipalities bypassed the districts and départements by communicating directly with the central government.

A further problem, which did not become critical in Normandy until the summer of 1792, was the anomaly between the electoral processes for the various levels of administrators. The municipal officials were elected directly by primary assemblies whose members had to pay a direct tax equal to the wage of a local journeyman for the labour of three days, while the district and departmental officials were elected by electoral assemblies whose members paid a tax equivalent to ten days of labour. (11).

(9) C.f. Decree Establishing Municipalities, December 14, 1789, Article 55: "The municipal bodies shall be entirely subordinate to the departmental and district administrations in all matters pertaining to the duties which they are to perform by delegation from the general administration." and the Decree Establishing Electoral and Administrative Assemblies, December 22, 1789, Section 2, Article 28: "The district administrations shall be entirely subordinate to the departmental administrations and directories." Reproduced in Stewart, Documentary Survey, pp. 126, 135.

(10). Levot, P., Histoire de la Ville du Port de Brest pendant la Terreur, (Eure, 1972), pp. 29-32.

(11). Decree Establishing Electoral and Administrative Assemblies, Section 1, Stewart, Documentary Survey, pp. 129-131.

Often this meant that the municipal officials could claim that they were more representative of popular opinion in times of dispute. Later, however, much was made of this difference by critics of both the electoral system and the departmental and district authorities. Anthoine, for example, stated this prevalent view at the Jacobin Society in Paris on August 12, 1792:

...une des plus grandes causes de nos maux est le mode d'élection employé pour la législature. Tant que vous aurez des corps électoraux vous aurez de mauvais choix. Vous en avez un exemple bien frappant dans la différence sensible que l'on aperçoit entre les municipalités choisies directement par le peuple, et les départements, les tribunaux choisis par les corps électoraux. (12).

Another disparity between the departmental and district officials on the one hand, and their municipal counterparts on the other, was based on differences in their social and economic standing. In general the officials of the first two categories and the members of the electoral assemblies tended to have a basis in legal training and to be rural landowners. The municipal officials, meanwhile, were generally recruited from among the merchants and tradesmen of

(12). Aulard, A., La Société des Jacobins: Recueil des Documents, (Paris, 1892), V.4, p. 198.

the towns. (13). However, since Mathiez, Soboul and others have asserted that there was a wide social gulf between the departmental and district officials on the one hand, and the municipal officials on the other, it should be remembered that administrators at all these levels were subject to the same economic qualifications before they could hold office. (14).

In spite of differences in the mode of election, and in economic and social standing, moreover, municipalities did not always reject the overtures of their département to resist the central power, and districts did not always align themselves with their departmental superiors. Indeed, throughout periods of crisis exception tended to be the rule. 5 of the 6 districts of Eure, for example, refused to co-operate in June, 1793, when the departmental directory attempted to raise forces for a march on Paris. In Caen, during the same period, the departmental directory had the more or less open support of the municipality until the defeat of the departmental contingents at Brécourt. (15). This lack of a consistent pattern was common in Normandy and Brittany.

Discord in the new départements, however, was caused

(13). C.f. Hunt, Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France, pp. 121-123.

(14). Decree Establishing Municipalities, Article 12, reproduced in Stewart, Documentary Survey, p. 121.

(15). Patrick, A., The Men of the First French Republic, p. 220 and Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, pp. 317-318, 333.

by the often bitter rivalry between towns desiring to be chosen by the National Assembly's constitutional committee as chefs-lieu for the départements. Being selected as chef-lieu meant a tremendous increase in political power and prestige for the town, as the chef-lieu would house three levels of administration: its own municipality, most probably a district assembly and the departmental assembly. Troyes, in the département of Aube and Reims, in the département of Marne, both actively lobbied in Paris to be selected for this honour (16), while in Eure Evreux and Bernay engaged in bitter recrimination in their competition to be chosen. François Buzot, a native of Evreux and a member of the constitutional committee, chose his home town of Evreux on December 19, 1789, and the result, as elsewhere, was widespread suspicion of favouritism. Buzot, writing to the municipal corps of Evreux on February 2, 1790, alluded to this unhappy division in the new département:

Il ne m'a pas été possible de satisfaire toutes les villes de votre département, plusieurs d'entre elles sont mécontentes de moi, et m'accusent d'avoir sacrifié leur intérêt et leur bonheur aux vôtres. (17).

(16). Hunt, Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France, p. 111.

(17). Herissay, J., François Buzot: Un Girondin, (Paris, 1907), pp. 66-70. Buzot's letter reproduced p. 401.

Apparently many deputies in the National Assembly engaged in intrigues to have their home towns chosen, and the ill-feeling generated by this eventually became a crucial factor in the crisis of 1793 when chefs-lieux such as Evreux were canvassing for support in their resistance to the central government. Bernay, for example, rejected all the overtures of Evreux and was temporarily named chef-lieu in June by the Committee of Public Safety, a position it held until the crisis passed. (18).

Fundamentally, however, unity was emphasized in the new national structure, as the 83 départements, which had been officially created by the decree of February 26, 1790, were organized around apolitical features such as rivers and mountains. The greater part of the rationale behind this step was to eliminate the traditional regional spirit associated with names such as Normandy and Brittany. (19). Further, Article 8 of the Decree Establishing Electoral and Administrative Assemblies ^{sought to} ensure that a regional spirit would not dominate the national assembly:

(18). Ibid., p. 66 and Montier, A., Robert Lindet, (Paris, 1899), p. 100.

(19). Decree Dividing France into Departments, Stewart, Documentary Survey pp. 137-139 and Thompson, French Revolution, p. 143.

The representatives elected to the National Assembly by the departments may not be regarded as representatives of a particular department, but as the representatives of the totality of the departments, that is to say, of the entire nation. (20).

The weaknesses in the new structure of local politics and the inherent tensions among the various levels of administration in the departments, as well as those developing between the local bodies and the central government, were intensified by the sequence of events between June 20, 1792, and the opening of the National Convention on September 21. In essence these events both aggravated and reflected the developing conflict between representative and popular or direct democracy, and the erosion of the voluntary element in national unity.

After the invasion of the Tuileries on June 20 and the overthrow of the monarchy in what was a second revolution on August 10, a number of local administrators came under bitter attack for either supporting the monarchy or, more importantly, protesting the precedent implicit in direct popular action superseding constitutional authority. In some cases this attack came from within their own département. On June 27, for example, the Eure departmental directory sent addresses to the King, the Legislative Assembly and the Paris département protesting the invasion of the palace and calling the authors of the demonstration

(20). Stewart, Documentary Survey, p. 128.

"intrigants" and "factieux". They made the mistake of sending copies of these addresses to the municipal council of Evreux, believing, presumably, that these officials supported their action and would be willing to publish the addresses for the sake of the entire département. The immediate reaction of the municipality was to send a letter of congratulation, drafted by François Buzot and Le Tellier, to Paris two days later. (21). More significantly, the electoral assembly of Eure strongly censured the conduct of the Eure departmental directory and the district directory of Evreux. In addition, in an address to the Legislative Assembly on September 5, the electors took the illegal and radical step of calling for the replacement of the departmental and district officials, the members of the criminal and judicial tribunals and several justices of the peace. Moreover, it recommended a purge of the municipalities to separate the innocent from the guilty, and sent a similar address to the Provisional Executive Council of Ministers on the same day. (22).

Similar episodes occurred throughout France, with the result that many local officials began to feel increasingly insecure in their posts. The mandate of the electors was to elect representatives to the National Convention alone,

((21). Herissay; Buzot, pp. 180-183.

(22). Ibid., documents reproduced pp. 417-421.

but only 23 out of the 83 electoral assemblies adhered to this rule. Of the others, which also replaced departmental officials, 12 assemblies renewed their entire departmental council, and a further 19 elected at least one new departmental official. In addition, 12 more electoral assemblies threatened to change their entire departmental directory in the near future. (23). The Provisional Executive Council of Ministers also took a hand by suspending the departmental administrations of Rhône-et-Loire, Moselle and Somme. (24).

A further danger which may have had a critical effect in 1793 was the apparent lack of an efficient and impartial channel of information to ascertain exactly what was happening in the national capital. More often than not, whether it was in letters from deputies to their home départements or in official correspondence from the Legislative Assembly or the Executive Council, the people in the départements received accounts of events weighted in favour of the writer's views. The Legislative Assembly, to take one example, sent 7 documents to each département between August 10 and September 2, 1792. Some dealt with practical instructions on procedure for the upcoming elections to the

(23). C.f. Patrick, The Men of the First French Republic, pp. 172-173.

(24). Mathiez, The French Revolution, p. 168.

National Convention, but most were official versions of the actions of the Legislative Assembly on and after the revolution of August 10. The Exposition des Motifs of August 13 was the most crucial, for it mentioned neither the Commune of August 10 nor the citizens of Paris, but portrayed the revolution as the work of the Assembly alone. (25). As a result the vast majority of the départements had a false conception of what had occurred on August 10. This became evident when only 7 of the 83 départements mentioned Paris directly in their letters of congratulation for the day's success. (26). The Eure département, as it happened, did not need to receive this circular to be misinformed, as the Adresse du Conseil Général de la Ville d'Evreux à l'Assemblée Législative of August 11 and the Arrêté du Tribunal Criminel à l'Occasion du 10 Août, 1792 both contained congratulations to the Legislative Assembly for its actions on August 10 without naming Paris or the Commune. (27). This lack of adequate information caused much confusion in 1793 as opposing sides in the Convention's disputes appealed to the département and painted their opponents in the blackest terms, and especially in the case of Caen where a rumour

(25). Patrick, The Men of the First French Republic, pp. 142, 145, 152.

(26). Ibid., p. 168. The départements were Côte-d'Or, Haute-Garonne, Nord, Rhone-et-Loire, Seine-et-Marne, Seine-et-Oise and Manche.

(27). Herissay, Buzot, documents reproduced pp. 415-417.

heard on June 6 helped the local insurgents decide to take drastic measures in light of the alarming events apparently taking place in Paris. (28).

It was also during this period that a fundamental shift in attitude toward the meaning of constituted authority became increasingly apparent. This was to reach alarming proportions in 1793. In fact, the changing attitude to the mandate exercised by legally elected representatives was the most apparent indication of the growing conflict between representative and direct democracy, which was to be intensified in 1793. (29). The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of August 27, 1789 was promulgated partly "in order that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power (could) constantly be compared with the aim of every political institution and... accordingly be more respected" and "in order that the demands of the citizens, founded... upon simple and incontestable principles, (could) always be directed towards the maintenance

(28). On June 6, 1793, an anonymous agent of the Ministry of the Interior told the commissioners who were returning to Caen from their information-gathering in Paris that a dictatorship was being planned in the capital, that all private incomes would be equalized, and that the Paris Commune would henceforth rule France. Apparently, he had mistaken his audience for ardent Jacobins. Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, *cf.* p. 322.

(29). An earlier manifestation of direct democracy had been the women's march to Versailles of October 5 and 6, 1789. Stimulated, like other instances, by food shortages, this remarkable event had resulted not only in the transfer of the King but also the Constituent Assembly to Paris. For a description of this episode see Sydenham, M. J., The French Revolution, (University Paperback, 1969), pp. 59-61.

of the Constitution and the welfare of all." (30). This meant, in theory, that the French political system was founded on the conviction that the elected authorities truly represented the "will" of the sovereign people, and that their task was to express that "will" in the government. However, the question as to how that "will" was to be ascertained was never answered, and no formal provision was ever made to obtain a national consensus as a guide for the deputies. Beyond elections, where a voter could express his choice through his suffrage, the only formal attempt ^{before July 1793} to achieve a nation-wide consensus on a question of crucial importance was voted down in parliament itself, when the appel au peuple on the fate of Louis XVI was defeated in January, 1793. As a result the majority of constituted bodies, including the national parliament, were subjected to pressure from groups who felt they were expressing the general will, such as the Paris sectional assemblies, the Commune, the departmental administrations and others. This mode of action took the form of petitions, demands and appearances by various deputations, and it increased radically during times of crisis.

Thus in the summer of 1792, the Legislative Assembly was besieged with petitions and deputations demanding

(30). Preamble to the Declaration of Rights, Stewart, Documentary Survey, p. 113.

decisive action against the recalcitrant Louis XVI, and later against the multitudes of prisoners in Paris and the départements, who, it was feared, were only waiting for the departure of the able-bodied men for the frontiers to escape and wreak havoc on the defenceless citizenry. However, in the majority of cases the legally-elected representatives of the nation were considered worthy of respect and obedience. In fact, the prevalent philosophy behind the majority of petitions and demonstrations implied that the deputies were worthy of the trust of the nation. It was merely felt that they sometimes had to be enlightened as to the best course to follow. Such was the tone, for example, expressed in the Pétition des quarante-huit sections à l'Assemblée Nationale of August 13, 1792, which was based on the discourse given by Anthoine at the Jacobin Society of Paris on August 12. (31). Among other things, such as calling for the direct election of all public functionaries (32), it reminded the deputies of the Assembly that their best guide to action was the voice of the people and the spirit of liberty:

...(the people's voice)...c'est celle
de la raison, c'est celle de la force;
prêtez-y une oreille attentive et que,

(31). See p. 33 supra.

(32). Aulard, La Société des Jacobins, V.4, p. 203, session of August 13.

jusqu'à l'instant où vous aurez fait
 place à la Convention nationale, tous
 les décrets de circonstance qui doivent
 émaner de vous soient dictés par la
 génie de la liberté...C'est la tâche
 que vous avez à remplir. (33).

More serious, moreover, was the fact that the deputies, whose persons were theoretically inviolable until they attempted to impeach one of their own number on April 13, 1793, could be threatened with harm. The most important occurrence of this phenomenon took place in Paris in the purge of May 31-June 2, 1793. The precedent, however, was set on August 8, 1792, after the acquittal of charges against General Lafayette. If the national parliament, each of whose members were to be regarded as representative of the entire nation, could be coerced by violence, then alarming doubts about the security of the present system of government and the persons of all officials would be raised. Indeed, this was one of the main factors which decided the departmental insurgents to rise in resistance in 1793, and was an expression of the developing confrontation between representative democracy and popular or direct democracy. In the Legislative Assembly's session of August 9, 1792, the deputies Mézières, Regnault-Beaucaron, Froudières, Lacratelle, Soret, Calvet, Quatremère, Chapron, Deuzi, Desbois and Vaublanc each sent a letter which was read by

(33). Reproduced in Braesch, La Commune du Dix Août, 1792, (Paris, 1911), pp. 397-398.

the secretary and complained of being insulted and threatened by small crowds after the session of August 8. One deputy, Chapron, reported being injured by assailants, while Regnault-Beaucaron's letter employed phrases which became typical of the departmental risings of 1793: "...la violation de la représentation nationale, la preuve de la non-liberté du Corps-législatif..." (34). In response, Kersaint proposed a law in the same session against those who disturbed the sessions of the assembly and unduly excited the tribunes, while Vaublanc spoke of shifting the assembly from Paris. After the tumult this caused, however, he qualified his statement by declaring that no formal proposal to that end was being made. (35).

The idea of moving the national parliament from Paris to escape the Prussian and Austrian forces as the fortresses of Longwy and Verdun fell on August 20 and September 2, 1792, was not directly a crucial factor in the evolution of the departmental risings in Normandy and Brittany. However, it was crucial in bringing charges of both "federalism" and defeatism against Roland and his associates, especially after Danton revealed discussions of this idea in the Convention on September 29, 1792. (36). Apparently, several

(34). Mavidal and Laurent, Archives Parlementaires, (Paris, 1896), V.47, p. 598. The letters are presented on pp. 598-605 of the Arch. Parl. and in Buchez, P. and Roux, P., Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française, (Paris, 1834-1838), V.16, pp. 376-384.

(35). Arch. Parl., V. 47, pp. 603-604, 606.

(36). Sydenham, The Girondins, p. 194.

discussions were held between Roland, Barbaroux, Lebrun and Clavière in July and August to move the King and Assembly to the south of France and form a Republic of the Midi if the northern half of the country were conquered. (37). However, as revealed in Madame Roland's letter to Servan of December 25, 1792, the idea was not to separate from France and abandon the north to its fate, but to regroup forces in the south and rescue the fallen territory:

I know not whither all this is leading;
but if Paris be lost, the south must save
the rest.

Similarly, Madame Roland, who had been in close contact with those involved in these discussions, maintained in her memoirs that the Republic of the Midi would be a refuge for "la liberté menacée". (38).

Closely linked to this notion was the idea of a special force or guard which would be at the disposal of the national assembly. After the theft of the Crown Jewels from the Garde Meuble, Roland proposed a guard for the Legislative Assembly and the upcoming Convention. He cited, among other things, a supposed conspiracy to assassinate the deputies

(37). Mathiez, The French Revolution, p. 173.

(38). Mme. Roland to Servan, Dec. 25, 1792, reproduced in Jacquemarie, M., The Life of Madame Roland, (London, 1930), p. 243 and Roland, Mme., Mémoires, De Roux, P. ed., (Mercure de France, 1966), p. 73

who had voted in favour of Lafayette, propositions by unknown persons for an "agrarian law", and clandestine agitation for another popular uprising. He added that without this measure Paris would be lost and France would be divided. (39). Roland repeated his demand on September 18, the next day, (40), and on the 19 the Legislative Assembly passed a decree for the formation of a guard in the décret rendu sur les mesures de surêté et de tranquillité publiques pour la ville de Paris. Significantly, the Legislative Assembly declared its members inviolable in the same session and sent an address to this effect, drafted by DeLaunay, to the départements. (41). These measures became crucial after the Convention replaced the Legislative Assembly, for by September 24 the civic guard, which was never implemented, became the proposed departmental guard, which helped add apparent substance to subsequent Montagnard charges against their opponents of favouring "federalism" and stimulating civil war. The crucial fact, however, was that attempts by the Legislative Assembly to maintain its position peacefully had failed. Its move to break the power of the Commune on August 30 after that body illegally tried to arrest the journalist Girey-Dupré was repudiated several days later, while in general efforts

(39). Arch. Parl., V.50, p. 69 and Buchez and Roux, Hist. Parl., V.17, pp. 462-463.

(40). Arch. Parl., loc. cit., pp. 121-122.

(41). Ibid., pp. 134-138.

to ensure respect for the deputies were now being replaced by a proposed display of force. (42). Dialogue was increasingly giving way to confrontation.

A similar trend was becoming evident in the départements as local officials came into open conflict with agents of the national government. On August 29, 1792, the Provisional Executive Council of Ministers sent 30 commissaires with widely ranging powers to the départements, officially to aid in the levy of 30,000 men. On September 3, a further 24 were sent, chosen mostly by the Paris Commune. The extent of their authority, however, as well as the exact requirements of their mission, were left undefined, and this led some of these agents to abuse their powers and antagonize local officials. (43). Momoro and Dufour, for example, who were dispatched by the Provisional Executive Council on August 29, alarmed the local authorities and many property holders in Eure by displaying a supposed declaration of rights on September 7 which had actually been drawn up by Momoro himself. (44). Article 27 of this declaration caused the most unrest,

(42). Buchez and Roux, Hist. Parl., V. 17, pp. 160-161.

(43). The papers which were given by the Provisional Executive Council to the commissaires of August 29 and September 3 simply stated that the agents had been dispatched "... à l'effet de faire auprès des Municipalités, Districts et Départements, telles réquisitions qu'ils jugeront nécessaires pour le salut de la Patrie...". The Commune's instruction of September 3 to the commissaires also was vague, for it merely said that these agents were to engage "...les citoyens des départements à se réunir à l'armée parisienne et à employer tous les moyens qui sont en leur pouvoir pour repousser l'ennemi..." Documents reproduced in Caron, P., La Première Terreur, (Paris, 1950), V.1, pp. 28-29.

(44). Ibid., c.f. pp. 16-17, 66.

for in no uncertain terms it threatened that which all constituted authorities were supposed to protect: personal landed property:

La nation ne reconnaît que les propriétés industrielles; elle en assure la garantie et l'inviolabilité...
 ...La nation assure également aux citoyens la garantie et l'inviolabilité de ce qu'on appelle faussement propriétés territoriales, jusqu'au moment où elle aura établie des lois sur cet objet. (45).

On September 8, in an episode which was to be the forerunner of similar ones during the departmental risings of 1793, Momoro and Dufour were arrested at Bernay and conducted before Buzot, the head of the criminal tribunal at Evreux. Momoro and Dufour were severely reprimanded and reminded to adhere to their mandate of recruitment and supply before they were released. (46). Several weeks later two other commissaires, Goubeau and Cellier, were arrested by the municipality of Lisieux in the département of Calvados for exceeding their powers and disturbing the local populace. (47). In Orne two commissaires with radical backgrounds also came into conflict with the local authorities.

(45). Reproduced in Braesch, La Commune du Dix Août, p. 587.

(46). Herissay, Buzot, p. 201.

(47). Mathiez, The French Revolution, p. 205, Braesch, La Commune du Dix Août, p. 382 and Caron, La Première Terreur, V.1, p. 66, where Goubeau's colleague is named Millier.

André-Pacifique Peyre, president of the Cordeliers Club during the affair of the Champ de Mars, and François-Nicolas Vincent, a member of the Commune and a personal friend of Hébert, author of the Père Duschene, harangued crowds in the Notre-Dame church of Alençon on September 23. These commissaires threatened to jeopardize the relationship between local officials and their constituents by bypassing the authorities and appealing directly to the citizenry. In this instance they blamed the authorities for the high price of foodstuffs:

...si les subsistances deviennent plus chères, c'est que les administrations les accaparent ou qu'elles ne sont pas assez surveillantes... (48).

The accusation of hoarding was a very serious matter throughout the Revolution, as witnessed by the murders of Foulon and Berthier in Paris in July, 1789. Nevertheless, and this is typical of the actions of most officials during the risings of 1793, the administrators did not express anger at the slandering of their personal reputations as much as fears for the consequences of this type of attack on con-

(48). The administrator Veilh's report to Roland, Sept. 23, 1792, reproduced in Nicolle, P., Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne en 1793, (Ann. Hist. de la Rév. Française, V.13, 1936), pp. 490-492.

stituted authority and public security:

... (Peyre and Vincent) annonçant par cette conduite le désir d'appeler la désorganisation absolue de toutes les autorités constituées et avec elle l'anarchie et ses funestes suites... (49).

In Brittany, too, a commissaire by the name of Guerber was arrested on September 22, the day he arrived in Quimper, chef-lieu of Finistère. He was not released until the National Convention promulgated a special decree to this effect on March 4, 1793. (50). No clearer indications could have been given of the desire on behalf of the local authorities to protect the internal peace of their départements against disruption from any source, even if it apparently emanated from the Executive Council itself.

Thus, by the fall of 1792 when the Legislative Assembly was to be replaced by a National Convention, various tensions had arisen between the capital and the départements. In the départements, the foundations for serious anxiety regarding the safety of parliament in Paris had been laid by the increasing conflict between representative and direct democracy, which had become more obvious during the final months of the Legislative Assembly.

(49) Pronouncement of Orne departmental administration, reproduced *ibid.*, p. 492.

(50) Levot, Histoire de la Ville et du Port de Brest..., pp. 54-55 and Mathiez, The French Revolution, p. 205.

Moreover, any disquietude caused by this development had been aggravated by the activities of certain of the commissaires of the Provisional Executive Council and the Insurrectionary Commune. These agents, whose powers, as we have seen, were relatively undefined, had raised alarm by threatening property rights and the relationship between local authorities and their constituents. It remained to be seen whether the potential for conflict between Paris and the départements would be resolved or intensified after the convocation of the eagerly anticipated Convention.

Chapter Three

The Development
of
Confrontation

As many historians suggest, the departmental risings of 1793 were primarily the result of a mounting crisis in the national capital. For as conflicts increased between the newly elected Convention and militants in Paris, anxiety in the provinces for its safety and hostility toward those considered responsible for infringing upon its position grew to dangerous proportions as well.

As we have seen, tensions had arisen between Paris and the départements by the time the Legislative Assembly was replaced by the Convention in late September of 1792. A national crisis, which could seriously effect the security of France and the future course of the Revolution, had begun to grow increasingly obvious in the capital. During June, July and August of 1792 the deputies of the Legislative Assembly had been besieged with petitions and deputations from militant elements in the Paris sections and provincial fédérés present in the capital demanding the deposition of Louis XVI. After the monarchy had fallen in the Revolution of August 10, moreover, an Insurrectionary Commune had added its voice, calling for such measures as a special tribunal to judge those persons considered guilty of treachery against the people while defending the Tuileries from attack. At the root of this situation, however, had been a developing conflict between representative and direct democracy. To the members of the Assembly, and to many Revolutionaries, the national or general "will", which was the basis of the Revolutionary system of government, was legitimately expressed only by the elected deputies in parliament, whose guides to

action were their consciences. To militant elements such as those in the Commune and sections of Paris, on the other hand, the general "will" was also expressed by the people themselves in assembly, whose duty it was to ensure that this "will" was followed by the deputies in government. Hence, pressure could be applied to the members of the national legislature for actions deemed by these vocal and radical minorities to be genuinely popular and policies could be adopted which were beneficial to these groups but which were prejudicial to the interests of France as a whole. This type of pressure had become so serious that 11 of the Legislative Assembly's members had reported witnessing or falling victim to attacks from crowds on August 8, after they had voted for the acquittal of charges against General Lafayette. Moreover, the Assembly had made it a point in its final session of September 19 to decree the inviolability of the representatives of the nation and the forming of a civic guard for the upcoming Convention. In the départements, where a similar confrontation between local authorities and the general populace does not appear to have been as evident, as we shall see, the basis for serious disquietude regarding the safety and freedom of the new national parliament had thus been laid.

This anxiety had also been aggravated by the activities of the commissaires of the Provisional Executive Council of Ministers and the Insurrectionary Commune, who had been dispatched in late August and early September to make requisitions and stimulate recruitment for the military. The agents

Momoro and Dufour, for example, had alarmed many officials and citizens in Eure by revealing a supposedly official declaration of rights at Bernay on September 7, which threatened the maintenance of the individual's right to own private property. In Orne, as well, the commissaires Peyre and Vincent had raised the frightening spectacle of open discord between the local authorities and their constituents by publicly accusing the officials of Alençon, on September 23, of the serious activity of hoarding foodstuffs. Brittany, moreover, had not been left untouched by these conflicts, for on September 22 the departmental administrators of Finistère had arrested the agent Guermer, whom they would hold until March of the following year.

As a result of the developments, it was against a background of fear in these provinces for its safety and anxiety regarding radical political and social trends in Paris that the National Convention assembled in the capital on September 20, 1792. It was to be increasing conflict between this new assembly and the capital, and its eventual purge by the sections, which would transform this disquiet into revolt in the summer of 1793. At first, the Convention was held in universal esteem, in Paris as well as in the départements. As the economic situation began to decline in the capital by November, however (1), it began to come under growing pressure from the sections for efficacious measures. At the

(1). Braesch, La Commune du Dix Août, c.f. p. 849.

root of this situation was the conflict between direct and representative democracy, which had become increasingly evident during the final months of the Legislative Assembly. This was shown by the fact that, from the very opening of the Convention itself, militants in the sections presumed to have the right to oversee its operations and to pass judgement on its legislation. An illustrative instance is that on September 21 the deputies of the assembly voted the abolition of the monarchy, placed persons and properties under the safeguard of the nation and declared that the constitution which they had been called upon to draft would be submitted to popular ratification. (2). The next day, moreover, they announced the Republic in an indirect manner by decreeing that all public acts would henceforth be dated "1^{er} an premier de la République française." (3). Several sections, however, demonstrated the practice of direct democracy by giving their formal sanction to these acts: Place-des-Fédérés gave its formal approval on September 23 and was followed by Sans-Culottes and Cité on September 25 and 29, respectively. (4). The address of Gravilliers to the Convention on October 7 was typical of this attitude:

(2). Berlia, G., Duguit, L., Monnier, H., Bonnard, R., Les Constitutions et les Principales Lois Politiques de la France depuis 1789, (Paris, 1952 edition). Décret du 21 septembre 1792, sur l'acceptation de la Constitution et sur la sauvegarde des personnes et des propriétés, reproduced p. 33.

(3). Arch. Parl., V.52, p. 80.

(4) Braesch, La Commune du Dix Août, c.f. p. 597.

- Mandataires du peuple, la section des
 • Gravilliers nous députe vers vous pour
 vous présenter la sanction qu'elle donne
 au décret qui abolit la royauté et établit
 en France la République (5).

In the départements of Normandy and Brittany, on the other hand, similar conflict between local authorities and their constituents does not seem to have been as evident. This may have resulted in part from the fact that, as we have seen, local officials were more the administrators of central governmental policies than representatives in their own right. As a result, laws and decrees of the national government which were unpopular in a region could not be altered or suspended by these authorities, and popular pressure upon these officials could thus have little result. (6). Whatever may have been the true reasons, though, the fact remains that the administrators in the départements seemed to have enjoyed at least some popular support. Evidence of this was shown in the elections for local government, which were decreed by the Convention on September 22 and held in November and December. (7). In Orne, for example, the procureur-général-syndic, Lepelletier de Coudray was re-elected

(5). Ibid., reproduced p. 598.

(6). This was also to become a crucial question during the revolt itself. In Orne, officials would be confronted both with popular demands for the abrogation of the Convention's Law of May 4 on foodstuffs, and their legal inability to do so. See Chapter 4.

(7). On September 22, the Convention ordered the renewal of all administrative bodies in the départements, as well as municipal and judicial officers and justices of the peace. It was stipulated, however, that these officials who retained public confidence could be re-elected. Arch. Parl., V.52, c.f. p. 84.

as was Provost de la Pérelle, the president of the criminal tribunal of Alençon, and Lemeunier de la Gerardière, one of the eight members of the departmental directory. In addition, 4 other officials were elected to the directory, of the département from subordinate posts. Legendre-Sainville and Thoumin rose from being the procureurs-syndics of the districts of Mortagne and Bellême, respectively, while Belin de Parquets was promoted from the tribunal of commerce and Charles-Thomas Hommey moved upward from the post of procureur of the commune of Sées. (8). In the town of Rennes in the Breton département of Ille-et-Vilaine, the pattern was similar, for 10 of the 17 municipal officers retained their posts as did 7 of the 28 members of the commune. (9). This support was also to be shown in the following months when protests increased in Normandy and Brittany regarding trends in Paris and during the actual revolts as well. (10). Immediately, however, this polarization between the capital and the départements meant that events in Paris would receive almost wholly united resistance from many elements in Normandy and Brittany.

This became evident as pressure upon the Convention grew more acute, and prominent deputies of the assembly's more moderate majority came to be held increasingly responsible

(8). Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, c.f. p. 500.

(9). Dupuy, R., Aux origines du fédéralisme breton: Le cas de Rennes, (Annales de Bretagne, V.82, 1975), c.f. p. 339.

(10). See Chapter 4.

for the nation's ills by their parliamentary opponents, the Montagnards, and the Paris sections. The departmental authorities of Finistère, for example, apparently had cooperation from their constituents whom they decreed, on December 15, the sending of an armed force to protect the Convention, a force which would be drawn from. "...les citoyens du département dont le civisme et les moeurs seront à toute épreuve..." (11). They were followed by the district of Caen in Calvados which opened its register for volunteers for a similar mission on January 2, 1793. (12). Moreover, the departmental administrators of Finistère, in conjunction with the district of Brest, sent another detachment to Paris on approximately January 21, (13), and Nantes, in Loire-Inférieure, sent 100 armed men to the capital at the end of the month. (14).

Increasing unrest in Normandy and Brittany was also shown by the responses of officials and their constituents to further alarming developments in Paris in the spring of 1793. On April 15, for example, the Convention received a petition which had been approved by 33 of the Paris sections, the Commune and the central Jacobin Society, and which called

(11). Duchatellier, Al, Histoire de la Révolution dans les Départements de l'ancienne Bretagne, (Paris, 1836), V.2, decree reproduced pp. 361-362.

(12). Montier, Robert Lindet, c.f. p. 42.

(13). Levot, Histoire de la ville et du port de Brest..., p. 62 and Dupuy, Aux origines du fédéralisme breton, pp. 354-355.

(14). Ibid., loc. cit.

for the expulsion of 22 deputies. (15). The result was a striking address from the departmental administrators of Calvados, the district officials of Caen, officers of the town's criminal tribunal and members of the local société populaire des Amis de la constitution. Read in the Convention on April 23, it was but further evidence of growing indignation in the départements, for while it urged the deputies to continue holding their sessions in the capital as long as possible, it also contained an overt warning if they should come harm:

...Elu du peuple, tu le sais, la France n'est pas dans Paris, elle est formée par 84 départements; si dans l'un on t'outrage, dans l'autre tu seras respecté, obéi; là, tu trouveras un asile contre la fureur et les complots des brigands; là tu jouiras de tes droits et de la liberté...Mais, avant de quitter le premier berceau de la liberté, fais un dernier effort, brave les orages; méprise les rumeurs de quelques ambitieux; punis les conspirateurs, travaille à donner des lois sages à un grand peuple; sauve ton pays; procure le bonheur à tes citoyens; surtout fais-toi respecter, et si quelques scélérats élèvent encore leurs voix impies, pense à nous, parle et tu seras vengé. (16).

The Convention's subsequent passing of the Law of May 24, 1793, stimulated even more drastic action, this time in Finistère in Brittany. Proposed by the deputy Viger in the

(15): For a list of the deputies named see Sydenham, The Girondins, p. 166.

(16). Montier, Lindet, reproduced p: 71.

name of the special Commission of Twelve which had been created on May 20 by the Convention to investigate conspiracies against the parliament in the capital, this legislation called for, in part, a civic guard for the assembly. (17). When news of this decree reached the departmental authorities of Finistère, these officials declared, on May 31, the sending to Paris of another force, in this instance of 400 men. This grew to 900 men by June 2. In addition, they also took the radical step of calling on their neighbouring Breton départements to assemble their substitute national deputies at Bourges in the département of Cher, a suggestion which had been made ~~already~~ by the authorities of Jura on May 24. (18). The desire of these administrators to maintain a single national representation, however, was shown by their stipulating that the suppléant deputies were to take no action if the Convention maintained itself in Paris. (19). This stipulation, as we shall see, would be made during the revolts as well.

(17). Article 1 of this decree stated: "La Convention nationale met sous la sauvegarde spéciale des bons citoyens la fortune publique, la représentation nationale et la ville de Paris." Reproduced in Arch. Parl., V.65, p. 280.

(18). Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne...; V.2, pp. 370-372 and Mathiez, The French Revolution, p. 334.

(19). "Avant de quitter leur chef-lieu, les suppléants s'engageraient solennellement à ne faire ducun acte, si la représentation nationale se maintenait..." Excerpt from the address of Finistère to Brittany, May 31, 1793, reproduced in Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne..., V.2, pp. 371-372.

A later event in Paris also revealed the explosive situation which existed in the provinces by the spring of 1793. Moreover, it also demonstrated that disquietude and indignation at the local level was not confined to the various levels of officials, but was shared to a certain degree by the populace as well. On May 29 news arrived in Caen of the suppression of the Convention's Commission of Twelve, which had occurred two days before. (20). In response, the local Jacobin Society, the illegal société des Carabots (21) and, albeit reluctantly, the commune, called upon the departmental authorities the next day to assemble all the authorities of Caen as well as the town's sections. (22). At this meeting, which was held at 2:00 a.m. on the morning of May 31, it was decided to raise and send an armed force which would protect the Convention and to invite the rest of France to do the same. (23). In addition, 10 commissaires, 1 from each of the 5 sections of Caen and the rest from the Jacobin Club, the Carabots and the communal, district and departmental bodies, were chosen to go to Paris

(20). The Commission had been suppressed the night of May 27 by its parliamentary opponents, The Montagnards, after it had arrested a number of prominent militants in Paris. C.f. Sydenham, The Girondins, pp. 174-175.

(21). The members of the société des Carabots were former National Guardsmen who had lost their status when the Guard had been regularized in 1791. Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 318.

(22). Ibid., c.f. p. 320 and Montier, A., Le Département de l'Eure et ses Districts en Juin 1793, (La Révolution Française, V.30, 1896), p. 134.

(23). Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, pp. 320-321.

and inform the Convention of these actions (24). The address they carried showed to what extent many officials and their constituents in the départements were alienated by trends in the capital, for it was quite simply a declaration of war:

...Nous déclarons une guerre à mort aux anarchistes, aux proscripteurs, et aux factieux, et nous ne mettrons bas les armes qu'après les avoir fait rentrer dans le néant. (25).

What was clearly at work here, then, was a cumulative and interactive process between trends in Paris and how they were being perceived and responded to in Normandy and Brittany. Continuing news of the Convention's conflicts with the capital was causing local officials and their constituents to take a course of increasingly active and militant resistance.

This crisis was further aggravated by the activities of certain of the Convention's représentants en mission and several agents of the Executive Council of Ministers. Duroy, one of the special représentants en mission who had been dispatched by the Convention since March 9, 1793 with wide-ranging powers to enforce recruitment and requisition

(24). In reality, however, only 9 of these emissaries actually left Caen. Ibid., p. 320 and Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, pp. 134-135, 144.

(25). Ibid., reproduced pp. 134-135.

military supplies (26), alienated the authorities and populace of Evreux in Eure by arresting 4 citizens on April 29 for causing disturbances over enrolment. (27). More serious still was the conflict which erupted between the représentant Bernard and the communal council of Rennes. On May 10 the council denounced this agent for his involvement in a shipment of faulty footwear which had been destined for the troops. (28). The extent of feeling amongst the authorities of Ille-et-Vilaine against the capital was revealed when the officials of the département went so far as to defy openly the central government by arresting him the same day for suspicious conduct:

...[Bernard] paraît avoir joué un rôle de regratier, que d'ailleurs sa conduite et son peu d'instruction dans la partie de l'habillement le le rendent fort suspect. (29).

These administrators also apparently had some popular support in their hostility to Bernard, for on June 2 he was expelled from the local political club for his "anarchical

(26). See the Décret de la Convention envoyant 82 commissaires en mission dans les départements, 9 mars, 1793, reproduced in Mautouchet, P., Le Gouvernement Révolutionnaire, (Paris, 1912), pp. 148-149 and the Decree Establishing Deputies on Mission, 9 April, 1793, reproduced in Stewart, Documentary Survey, p. 426.

(27). C.f. Herissay, Buzot, pp. 301-313.

(28). Apparently, of a shipment of 1,437 shoes only 500 were of sufficient quality. C.f. Dupuy, Aux origines du "fédéralisme" breton, p. 357.

(29). From the decree of the département of Ille-et-Vilaine for Bernard's arrest. Cited *ibid.*, loc. cit. He was released the following day.

principles":

... [the society] a cru devoir exprimer par là toute son indignation contre les principes anarchiques et lui rendre aussi le regret qu'elle conservera longtemps d'avoir eu dans son sein un homme qui emporte avec lui toute son indignation et son mépris. (30).

In the port of Brest in Finistère, similarly, the local authorities were alarmed by what they perceived as the intention of several agents of the Minister of War, Bouchotte, to sow dissension in the region. On May 7, these authorities wrote to the Minister of the commissaires Lepeyre and Garnerin:

... Nous devons aussi vous avouer avec la franchise de vrais républicains, que les membres chargés de votre confiance n'étaient pas propres à en inspirer dans un pays où l'on n'est d'aucun autre parti que de celui des lois, et où l'on était prévenu d'avance qu'un certain parti d'anarchistes devait envoyer des apôtres pour gagner des prosélytes à leur nouvelle religion, apôtres que nous avons reconnus dans vos délégués... (31).

On June 3, moreover, 2 more of the Minister's agents, Gaumont and Quincy, were summarily arrested by these officials. It

(30). Pronouncement of the local popular society of Rennes upon the burning of Bernard's membership card. Cited *ibid.*, p. 378.

(31). From the letter of the civil and military authorities of Brest to the Minister of War, May 7, 1793, cited in Levot, Histoire de la ville et du port de Brest..., pp. 84-85.

is interesting to note and is a commentary upon local attitudes to conditions in Paris that the principal reason these officials gave to Bouchotte for the arrest was the fear that these commissaires would cause similar divisions in Brest as existed in the capital:

...Croiriez-vous que vos délégués, sous le prétexte apparent de cette mission, cachaient l'intention perfide de troubler la paix intérieure qui règne dans notre ville en tachant d'y inoculer des ferments de division et les germes de partis qui désolent la malheureuse ville de Paris?...
(32).

Moreover, this apprehension was apparently so strong that requests made on June 5 by the Convention's représentants Sevestre and Cavaignac for the release of these agents were flatly refused, and the central government was once again defied as it had been in the arrest of Bernard in Rennes.
(33).

Antagonism was also aroused by agents of the central government outside Normandy and Brittany. In Toulouse, chef-lieu of Haute-Garonne, for example, the représentant en mission Chabot encountered the fierce resistance of the departmental administrators and the officials of the town when he attempted to assemble a regional congress of local

(32). The letter of these same officials to Bouchotte, June 3, 1793, reproduced *ibid.*, p. 86.

(33). *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

popular societies in mid-May for discussion of national defence. (34). The officials not only opposed this measure because they regarded it as a threat to local security and public order, but also because they wished to prevent something which they viewed with the utmost apprehension: an attempt to usurp the authority of the Convention and thereby disrupt national unity:

...Qui pourrait calculer les résultats d'un rassemblement de 800 citoyens se croyant revêtus d'un caractère de représentation et formant une sorte de Convention rivale de la Convention même?...

...tout rassemblement d'hommes privés voulant se donner un caractère public de représentation offre non seulement une infraction à l'ordre, mais un acte marqué de fédéralisme et l'attentat le plus audacieux à l'unité et à l'indivisibilité de la République... (35).

As this evidence would suggest, by the end of May and the beginning of June, 1793 a state of strong disquietude and hostility had developed amongst officials and their constituents in Normandy and Brittany in direct response to trends in the capital. Aggravated by the activities of représentants en mission and commissaires of the Executive Council, this apprehension had grown as conflict between the Convention and militants in Paris had deepened. As

(34). Albert, Le Fédéralisme dans la Haute-Garonne, c.f. pp. 53, 60, 308.

(35). Address of the administrative council of Haute-Garonne and the authorities of Toulouse to the citizens of the département, reproduced *ibid.*, pp. 307, 311.

many historians maintain, it was to be the arrival in Normandy and Brittany of news of the purge of the Convention by Paris which would transform this unrest into open revolt.

On June 2, 29 deputies of the Convention and 2 ministers were forcefully expelled from their duties by the armed intervention of the sections of Paris, in what was a climax in the developing confrontation between representative and direct democracy. By the spring of 1793, as to economic hardships had been added the ravages of foreign defeat and, in the Vendée, counter-revolution and civil war, deputies of the Convention's majority had come to be held increasingly responsible. As a result, when the two opposing forms of democracy finally clashed in June, these deputies became the victims: scapegoats for the nation's ills. When one of the expelled deputies; Buzot, arrived in his home town of Evreux in Eure two days later, he was immediately placed under the protection of the département. (36). After the account which he delivered in a church in Evreux of the insurrection in Paris, the departmental assembly decided to convoke a general meeting for the next day of 2 members from each district of Eure and Evreux's general council of the commune to discuss "les moyens de sauver la Patrie." (37).

(36), Dubreuil, L., Evreux au temps du Fédéralisme, (La Rév. Fr., V.78, 1925), p. 245.

(37). Ibid., p. 246 and Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, pp. 135-137.

It was at a gathering of 2 days later which was called at this meeting that the departmental authorities committed themselves to revolt by decreeing an armed force to counter the insurrection in Paris. (38). At the end of a long process of accumulating disquietude and hostility regarding trends in the capital, the departmental risings in Normandy and Brittany had begun. It remained to be seen what issues would dominate them.

(38). Ibid., pp. 144-146.

Chapter Four

The Departmental Risings
of
1793 in
Normandy and Brittany

As we have already noted, the departmental risings of 1793 were the result of mounting apprehension regarding the declining position of the National Convention in the capital. Evident from the beginning of the Convention's tenure, this disquietude had grown as conflicts between the new parliament and militants in Paris had worsened. The climactic confrontation between direct and representative democracy, which had resulted in the purge of the Convention by the city's sections on June 2, had finally transformed this growing unrest into open revolt.

What were the principal characteristics of these risings, relative to what historians suggest? Was fear of radical social legislation from Paris and the desire to protect individual ownership of private property the central issue involved? As some writers have asserted, moreover, and as it was maintained by the opponents of the rebels in 1793, were the insurgents in the départements attempting to create republics independent of Paris and truly "federalise" France? Further, to what extent had the revolts been incited by or were they in support of those deputies expelled from the Convention on June 2, 1793? Or, on the other hand, were the rebels motivated by a significant degree of political and moral idealism, especially a desire to maintain a truly representative national government in the capital?

In regard to the actual insurgents, were the chief participants members of the indirectly elected departmental and district administrations or did officials at the communal and municipal levels, where election was direct, also

take part? Of crucial importance, moreover, was there any support for the revolts amongst the general populace? Perhaps the examination at this point, of the salient features of the departmental risings of 1793 in Normandy and Brittany may suggest something of the answers to these questions.

According to historians such as Jaurès, Mathiez, Lefebvre and Soboul, the primary aim of the insurgents was to protect social rights such as, for example, individual ownership and exploitation of private property. Indeed, as we have seen, this right was very important to many officials and their constituents in the départements, as had been shown in the swift arrest of the commissaires Momoro and Dufour in Bernay on September 8, 1792 after the former had threatened private property in his supposedly official declaration of rights. Moreover, the protection of persons and properties was one of the declared aims of the rebels during the actual departmental risings as well. The important point is, however, that this was but one of their goals, and by no means the most important. This was reflected in the various oaths and declarations which were made by the insurgents after the risings had begun. In Eure, to take but one example, at a public meeting which was held at Evreux on June 6 and was attended by delegates from the six districts of the département and 2 members of the town's local popular society, the central committee of the département passed a decree which added the protection of persons and properties to the aim of freeing the Convention and Paris from the "factions"

...Il sera organisé, concurrement avec les citoyens des autres départements, une force armée pour marcher soit en tout ou en partie, contre les factions qui, dans Paris, ont ravi la liberté de la représentation nationale et enchainé le patriotisme des bons citoyens; et en même temps pour protéger les personnes et les propriétés. (1).

In a similar fashion, a levy of troops from Calvados and a number of administrators who were destined for Paris in order to reverse the insurrection of June 2, declared in mid-July to the citizens of Eure their desire to maintain the law as "...l'expression de la volonté nationale et non de la volonté partielle et arbitraire des dictateurs et des triumvirs", the Republic "une et indivisible" and "la liberté tout entière" as well as "la sûreté des personnes et des propriétés...". (2). In Brittany, also, the departmental council of Morbihan, the district and communal officials and the civil and criminal tribunals of Vannes decreed on June 16 the levying of an armed force which would ensure "la liberté des délibérations de la Convention" and which would also protect "la sûreté des personnes, des propriétés et de la fortune publique." (3). On June 25, moreover, an indication of the universality of these goals was given as delegates from the départements of Ille-et-Vilaine,

(1). Article 2 of the decree of the departmental committee of Eure, June 6, 1793, reproduced in Montier, Le Département de l'Eure..., pp. 145-146.

(2). From a notice: [The] Avant-garde du Calvados réunie à ses frères d'Evreux aux citoyens du département de l'Eure, mid-July, 1793, cited in Dubreuil, Evreux au temps du Fédéralisme, p. 329.

(3). Decree reproduced in Bliard, P., Le Conventionnel Prieur de la Marne en mission dans l'ouest, (Paris, 1906), p. 95.

Morbihan, Finistère, Loire-Inférieure, Côtes-du-Nord, Calvados and Mayenne, who had formed a central insurrectionary assembly at Rennes on June 19, swore an oath to uphold "...la liberté, l'égalité, la république, une et indivisible, la sûreté des personnes et des propriétés, en même temps que la souveraineté nationale..." (4). It would thus appear that if we are to find the central motivation behind the risings, we must look elsewhere.

It is also maintained by some historians, and was widely asserted by the opponents of the rebels in 1793, that one of the principal desires of the insurgents was to establish republics independent of Paris and make "federalism" a literal reality. Since this charge was leveled at a time when France was already faced with foreign military defeat and, in the Vendée, civil war, and thus when national unity was of the utmost importance, it had a devastating effect upon opinion concerning the revolts and those who participated in them, and upon the expelled Convention deputies with whom the risings were believed to be linked. Moreover, since December 16 of 1792 to suggest a federative system had been a capital crime. (5). The evidence indicates, however, that the unity of the 10 month-old Republic was a primary concern of the rebels, and that they feared the

(4). Reproduced in Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne..., V.2, pp. 394-395. For the list of départements involved see Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, (Ann. Hist. de la Rév. Fr., V.43, 1971), p. 371.

(5). Sydenham, The Girondins, p. 137.

consequences of any attempt to "federalise" France as much as their opponents. The departmental administrators of Finistère, to take but one example, showed their desire for a strong national government by stipulating that the assembly of suppléant deputies at Bourges which they advocated as had the authorities of Jura on May 24, was not to begin unless the dissolution of the Convention was confirmed. They had already stated this condition on May 31, as we have seen, (6), and repeated this demand on June 12 in a letter to the other départements of Brittany. (7). Moreover, this wish for a national government was also shown in a decree of the same day from these officials to their neighbouring départements which instructed the suppléants either to form, immediately upon news of the Convention's dissolution, a provisional national assembly or to convòke the électorales assemblies so that a permanent parliament could be chosen. (8). These officials also demonstrated further attachment to national unity by opposing an assembly of communes at Rennes on the grounds

(6). See Ch. 3, supra, p. 61 .)

(7). "...Il faut encore que la réunion proposée à Bourges n'ait lieu qu'en cas de dissolution de la Convention...". From a letter of the Finistère département to the rest of Brittany, June 12, 1793, reproduced in Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne..., V.2, pp. 382-387.

(8). "Si la dissolution de la Convention devient inévitable, le comité concertera les moyens de réunir promptement à Bourges les députés suppléants pour y former une représentation nationale provisoire, ou de convoquer, sans ce préalable, les assemblées électorales pour nommer une représentation complète et définitive." Article 7 of this decree, reproduced in part, ibid., p. 381.

that it could form a rival representation and thereby harm Republican unity:

...Cette assemblée s'étant faite une fois représentative, nous aurions deux chambres de représentants; l'unité de la République serait donc rompue par le fait... (9).

In addition, the insurgents constantly reiterated the unity and indivisibility of the Republic as one of their principal aims in various manifestoes and declarations. On June 16, to take but one of many instances, the departmental authorities of Eure called a general meeting of officials, National Guards and soldiers at the place de la Fédération in Saint-Léger, where a solemn oath was sworn to uphold "...égalité, liberté, unité et indivisibilité de la République..." (10). A similar vow was taken by deputies to the Assemblée centrale de résistance à l'oppression which had been formed in Caen on approximately June 30, 1793 and consisted of members from the départements of Morbihan, Finistère, Côtes-du-Nord, Mayenne, Ille-et-Vilaine, Loire-Inférieure and Calvados. (11). Their oath, which was drawn up shortly after this assembly was formed, began with

(9). From the letter, already cited, of the departmental officials of Finistère to the other Breton départements, June 12, 1793, reproduced *ibid.*, pp. 382-387.

(10). Cited in Dubreuil, Evreux au temps du Fédéralisme, p. 261.

(11). Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 329. Oath reproduced on p. 330. For a list of the départements involved see Grall, J., Une étrange institution Révolutionnaire: Le Conseil d'Administration de l'Armée des Côtes de Cherbourg, (*Ann. de Normandie*, V.8, 1958), p. 360.

the words:

...Je jure de maintenir de tout mon pouvoir la Liberté, l'Egalité, de soutenir l'unité, l'indivisibilité de la République...

In the same way the general council of the commune of Vannes in Morbihan declared on July 18, in a decision to support their insurgent departmental officials:

A l'exemple du département nous voulons marcher d'un pas ferme dans les sentiers du patriotisme et de l'amour des lois; maintenir avec elles la liberté, l'égalité, la sûreté, la propriété, la République une et indivisible, et le respect dû à la Convention nationale. (12).

They were followed, moreover, by the town's popular society which proclaimed on the same day: "...Nous voulons comme vous la liberté, l'égalité, l'unité et l'indivisibilité de la République." (13).

Striking signs of attachment to the idea of Republican unity were also given by the practice of some of the troops levied to march to Paris of proudly displaying, at their head, their original banners of the Fête de la Fédération of July 14, 1790. The Avant-garde du Calvados, which was located in Evreux after July 4, 1793, for example, carried

(12). Reproduced in Bliard, Prieur de la Marne, p. 96.

(13). Reproduced *ibid.*, loc. cit.

their banner as a "signe de l'unité, de l'indivisibilité de la République". (14). Similarly, the fédérés of Finistère were instructed by the departmental authorities on June 21 that when they reached Paris they were to display their banner of the first Fête de la Fédération. If they were not received peacefully, however, then they were to display an alternate flag with the words Division du Finistère, République Une et Indivisible on one side and Résistance A l'Oppression on the other. (15). Concern for and attachment to the unity of the Republic could not have been much more clearly demonstrated.

Another assertion which is made by historians and was maintained by the opponents of the rebels in 1793 is that the revolts were stimulated by and in support of the deputies who had been expelled from the Convention by the sections of Paris on June 2, 1793. It is true that some of the Convention's deputies had written to their home départements before June 2 warning their constituents of trends in Paris. Lebreton, for example, who would sign the protest of 6 and 19 June against the purge, along with 74 other deputies, (16), had addressed Rennes on March 4, 1793, to put the authorities on their guard against

(14). Dubreuil, Evreux au temps du Fédéralisme, pp. 327, 329.

(15). Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne..., p. 400.

(16). The other deputies who signed this protest are listed in Sydenham, The Girondins, Appendix A, List VIII, p. 219.

the upcoming dispatch of the Convention's représentants
en mission:

...Une circonstance plus inquiétante
selon moi, si elle est vraie, est l'envoi
de commissaires de Paris dans les départe-
ments, pour y exciter les troubles: si
l'on me rend un compte exact, vous devez
en avoir deux à Rennes... (17).

Vergniaud, as well, had written to Bordeaux on May 5 of
imminent threats to the safety of parliament:

...Hommes de la Gironde, levez-vous!
La Convention n'a été faible que parce
qu'elle a été abandonnée. Soutenez - la
contre tous les furieux qui la menacent...
(18).

In addition, several départements had condemned outright
the opponents of the expelled deputies, who were members
of the Convention's more radical minority, which was
known as the Mountain. On December 29, 1792, for example,
the departmental administrators of Finistère had gone as
far as to demand the exclusion of the more prominent of
these deputies:

(17). Letter of Lebreton to Rennes, March 4, 1793, cited
in Dupuy, Aux origines du "fédéralisme" breton, pp. 351-
352.

(18). Letter of Vergniaud to the authorities of Bordeaux
in the département of Gironde, May 5, 1793, cited in
Forrest, A., Society and Politics in Revolutionary
Bordeaux, (London, 1975), p. 99.

...Nos plus grands ennemis sont dans
votre sein, les Marat, les Robespierre
les Danton, les Chabot, les Bazire, les
Marlin et leurs complices...
...chassez-les donc, éloignez-les au
plus tôt, repoussez-les du sanctuaire
de vos délibérations... (19).

The fact remained however, that in spite of these letters from Paris and denunciations like that of Finistère, a great many officials and their constituents in the départements consistently condemned the dispute in the Convention as a whole. Typical of this attitude was the pronouncement which had been made at a meeting of the departmental authorities of Ille-et-Vilaine and the communal and municipal authorities of Rennes on May 25:

...[neither] Robespierre. ni Guadet,
ni Danton ni Gensonne, ni la Montagne.
ni la Vallée, ni toutes ces lignes de
démarcation qui dégradent la dignité
des Représentants du peuple... (20).

Even more striking had been the address of the conseil général du district d'Auray of Morbihan to the Convention in late May or early June, 1793:

(19). An address of the departmental authorities of Finistère to the Convention, December 29, 1792, reproduced in Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne... V.2, pp. 363-364.

(20). Cited in Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 369.

...Au lieu de s'occuper à l'ouvrage de la constitution qu'il [the people] leur demandait, ils [the deputies of parliament] ne se sont occupées que d'administration, ils remplissent toutes les fonctions, tous les rôles, excepté celui qui leur était affecté, depuis huit mois, il attend en vain l'ouvrage dont ils étaient chargés. Que fait au peuple français l'existence de Marat ou de Robespierre, de Brissot ou de tel autre personnage? Ce sont des représentants qui'il lui faut, et des représentants amis de la chose publique qui en veillent à l'avancement et l'opèrent. (21).

7 This still remained the case during the revolt itself as well. An assembly of electors in the district of Pont-Audemer in Eure and the Assemblée centrale de résistance à l'oppression at Caen, for example, demanded on June 4 and approximately June 30, respectively, the release of the arrested deputies. (22). In addition, the Finistère departmental authorities and the central assembly at Rennes demanded, on June 12 and June 19, the reinstatement of these deputies. (23).

A good many other insurgents, however, demonstrated their desire for justice above all by requesting the legal

(21). From the address of the Auray district in Morbihan to the Convention, probably dispatched in late May or early June, 1793 because of the reference to waiting eight months for the constitution. Reproduced in Bliard, Prieur de la Marne, p. 95.

(22). Petition of the Pont-Audemer assembly of electors to the Eure departmental council, June 4, 1793, reproduced in Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, pp. 139-141 and Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 340.

(23). Decree of the Finistère administrators to the other départements of Brittany, June 12, 1793, Article 5, reproduced in part in Duchatellier, Histoire de... Bretagne..., V.2, pp. 380-382 and Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 371.

and impartial trial of these deputies. The commune of Sées in Orne, for example, declared on June 17 that it recognized "...ni côté droit ni côté gauche..." and demanded "...que les chefs d'accusation promis par la municipalité de Paris contre les membres mis en état d'arrestation soient incessamment produits...". If a trial proved necessary, moreover, they asked that "...les dits membres soient jugés par un tribunal composé d'un député de chaque département et dans toute autre ville que Paris..."

(24). The conseil générale of the commune of Laigle, moreover, also in Orne, proclaimed this same day that it would support a petition to the Convention which had as one of its objects "...de faire prononcer légalement sur l'arrestation des membres inculpés et leur remplacement par les suppléants tant qu'ils ne pourront voter à la Convention..."

(25). Similarly, the conseil générale of the district of Domfront in Orne also asked for a trial if necessary. (26).

Sentiments of a like nature were also expressed outside Normandy and Brittany. The authorities of Bordeaux, for example,

(24). Proceeding of the commune of Sées in Orne, June 17, 1793, cited in Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, (Ann. Hist. de la Rév. Fr., V.15, 1938), pp. 29-30.

(25). From a decree of the conseil générale of the commune of Laigle, June 17, 1793, sending a delegate to a general meeting of the département of June 20. Cited *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

(26). "Sera-t-il fait un prompt rapport des délits prétendus contre les députés mis en arrestation? Oui S'il y a lieu à accusation, par qui seront-ils jugés? Par un tribunal composé de tous les présidents des tribunaux criminels de la République...". Excerpt from the pronouncement of the conseil générale of the district of Domfront, June 17, 1793, reproduced *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

demanded the release and legal trial of the expelled deputies in an address of June 13 to the citizens of Gironde, as did the delegates of the sections of Toulouse in Haute-Garonne in an address to the Convention which was drawn up sometime after June 24, 1793. (27).

If, then, the preservation of private property and the unity of the Republic were but two of the concerns of the insurgents, and if the revolts had not been launched strictly to support those deputies expelled from the Convention on June 2, what was the central issue involved in these risings? What was important enough to make these officials and their constituents greatly exceed their legal powers and pursue a course of militant dissent in a time of foreign war and counter-revolution? The evidence suggests that the principal aim of the rebels was to ensure, by opposing the insurrection of June 2, that France would have a secure national assembly, independent of undue pressure from militants in the Paris sections and Commune and therefore better able to represent truly the interests of the entire nation. With this end in view, various demands were made by the insurgents in order to guarantee the freedom of parliament. The conseil générale of the district of Domfront in Orne, for example, demanded stern measures to control the interference of the public galleries in debates,

(27). Forrest, Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux, c.f. pp. 131-132 and Albert, Le Fédéralisme dans la Haute-Garonne, c.f. pp. 118-121.

by requesting that noisy offenders be detained in custody for 15 days and be barred from the parliament's sessions for 6 months. (28). The conseil générale of the commune of Laigle was even more determined upon this end, for, not content with control, they demanded the suppression of the public galleries altogether. (29). The Assemblée centrale de résistance à l'oppression at Caen, for its part, made as one of its demands on approximately June 30 the forming of a guard which would be drawn from Paris as well as the départements to protect the Convention, a proposition which had been put forward by the deputy Buzot in parliament as long ago as September 24, 1792. (30).

(28). "Qu'il soit décrété par la Convention, comme mesure de police, que toute personne dans les tribunes qui osera se permettre de huer ou d'applaudir les différentes opinions des membres de l'Assemblée soit immédiatement capturée, conduite devant un tribunal ad hoc établi dans le sein de Paris, lequel prendra le nom...de la personne arrêtée qui sera condamnée à au moins quinze jours de détention, à une amende, avec défense sous plus grand peine de s'introduire pendant six mois dans l'asile sacré des députés de la Nation; et, pour l'exécution du décret, que la garde nationale soit requise de se tenir en force suffisante dans le lieu des séances de la Convention." From the deliberations of the conseil générale of Domfront district in Orne, June 17, 1793, reproduced in Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, pp. 32-33.

(29). In its decree of June 17, to which we have already referred the conseil générale of Laigle commune also announced that they would support a petition to the Convention which had as another of its objects "...de supprimer les tribunes de l'assemblée, d'assurer aux députés la plus grande liberté dans l'expression de leurs opinions et dans leur personne...". Cited *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

(30). Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, c.f. p. 340 and Herissay, Buzot, pp. 211-212.

Other measures were also called for to keep the national assembly free of excessive influence from the city of Paris. On June 19, the central insurrectionary assembly at Rennes demanded that the Commune of Paris be purged, a demand which was repeated by the Assemblée centrale de résistance à l'oppression at Caen sometime on or after June 30. (31). Moreover, the Rennes assembly and, on June 13, the authorities of Bordeaux called for the complete renewal of all the city authorities of Paris. (32). Additional measures advocated by the Norman and Breton assemblies on these occasions were ending the permanence of the sectional meetings and, in the case of the Breton assembly, reinstating the Convention's special Commission of Twelve. (33).

An interesting concomitant to this preference for a truly representative parliamentary democracy and illustrative of the nature of the departmental risings as a form of dissent against trends in the national government was the demand voiced by the insurgents for the curbing or abandonment of those extraordinary powers which the government had begun to exercise since the spring of 1793. Thus the Norman and Breton assemblies declared as one of their objectives in their respective deliberations of June 30

(31). Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, pp. 371-372 and Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 340.

(32). Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, pp. 371-372 and Forrest, Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux, pp. 131-132.

(33). Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 340 and Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, pp. 371-372.

and June 19 the reduction or clear definition of the powers of the Committee of Public Safety, which had been created by the Convention on April 6 officially to supervise and accelerate the work of the Executive Council. (34). The Caen and Rennes assemblies also called for, on these occasions, the end of the institution of the représentants en mission, while the delegates of the latter insurrectionary body went on to request a special commission with one member from each département to inquire into the activities of these agents. (35). Moreover, the Assemblée centrale at Caen and, once again on June 13, the authorities at Bordeaux, demanded the suppression of the Paris Revolutionary Tribunal, which had been created by the Convention on March 10, 1793, to combat counter-revolution. (36).

Further indications of the desire on the part of the insurgents for a regulated government with defined powers were given in the widespread demands for the completion of the long-awaited Republican constitution, for which the Convention had been primarily elected 10 months before. (37). The importance attached in the départements to the drafting of this document had been shown as early as a month after the opening of the Convention, when the authorities of Finistère, in an address of October 19,

(34). Goodwin, *ibid.*, loc. cit., Stone, *ibid.*, loc. cit. and Stewart, Documentary Survey, Decree on the Formation of a Committee of Public Safety, 6 April, 1793, reproduced p. 424.

(35). Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 340 and Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 372.

(36). Goodwin, *ibid.*, loc. cit. and Forrest, Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux, pp. 131-132.

(37). The Constitution of 1791 was based upon a monarchy, and had thus been rendered partially obsolete by the revolution of August 10, 1792.

1792 to the central Jacobin Club and the 48 sections of Paris had demanded that the deputies of the Convention be allowed by the capital to deliberate upon the constitution in peace. (38). Calls for the swift completion of the Constitution had also been made before the actual outbreak of revolt by other officials and citizens as well. The town of Coutances in Manche, to cite one instance, had demanded its promulgation on March 30, (39), and the sections of Quimper in Finistère had gone a step further to demand, in an address of May 25 to the Convention and their neighbouring communes, that the deputies ratify the constitution by July 1, 1793 or make way for the election of a new parliament. (40). As we have seen, moreover, impatience for the constitution had also been the central motivation for the striking address to the Convention by the district council of Auray in Morbihan in late May or early June. (41).

This demand recurred during the departmental risings as well. To the officials of Finistère, typically, the constitution was a principal concern, as was shown in their letter of June 12 to the other départements of Brittany:

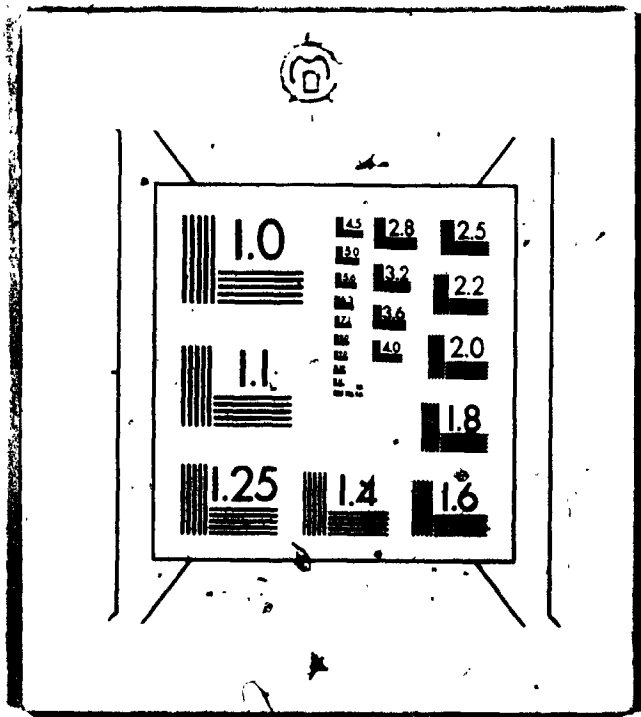
(38). "...Que la Convention Nationale puisse travailler dans le calme à la constitution qu'elle nous prépare. Si elle ne le trouve point au milieu de vous, il est d'autres villes qui sauront le lui procurer...". Excerpt from this address, reproduced in Duchatellier, Histoire de... Bretagne ..., V.2, pp. 354-357.

(39). Wallon, H., La révolution du 31 mai et le fédéralisme en 1793, (Paris, 1886), V.2, Appendices, p. 527.

(40). Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 369.

(41). See pp. 79-80, supra.

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...il nous faut une constitution, il nous la faut républicaine, fondée sur les principes immuables de la raison... (42).

A similar statement was made by the commune of Sées in Orne on June 17, when these officials declared of their commune ".,.,qu'elle demande une Constitution fondée sur la liberté et l'égalité." (43). In addition, the central insurrectionary assemblies at Rennes and Caen also made the new constitution one of their main demands. (44).

Despite their attachment to representative government, constitutionality and, as we have seen in the demands for the trial of the deputies expelled on June 2, justice, however, the rebels also made use of force and intimidation in order to oppose trends in the capital. The departmental officials of Eure, for example, decreed on June 6 that the municipalities were to arrest suspects, and gave a wide and dangerously ill-defined definition of who could fit into this category. (45). In addition, the municipal council of Evreux violated an individual freedom by beginning to open mail on June 6, while the authorities of Rennes in Ille-et-Vilaine began to censor mail from Paris

(42). Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne..., V.2, letter reproduced pp. 382-387.

(43). From the proceedings of Sées commune in Orne, June 17, 1793, cited in Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, pp. 29-30.

(44). Deliberations of Rennes and Caen assemblies, June 19 and approximately June 30, respectively, Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, pp. 371-372 and Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 340.

(45). Decree of the département of Eure, June 6, 1793, Article 8: "Les municipalités sont expressément chargées de faire mettre en état d'arrestation les individus qui prêcheraient la doctrine de l'anarchie, du meurtre, du

on June 19. (46). The departmental officials of Calvados, moreover, went so far as to challenge directly the authority of the purged Convention by having 2 représentants en mission, Romme and Prieur de la Côte-d'Or, arrested at Bayeux on June 9. (47). It should also not be forgotten that an attempt was made to confront by force of arms those persons considered responsible in Paris for the expulsion of the deputies from parliament on June 2. On July 13, at the Chateau of Brécourt between the towns of Pacy and Vernon in Eure, troops from Paris easily scattered a force of approximately 1,900 armed men from Normandy and Brittany which had been marching on the capital in order to oppose the purge of June 2. (48). As it happened, no blood was shed on either side. (49).

(45). (cont'd). pillage et tous les principes désorganisateur de la faction qui a attenté à la représentation nationale. Decree reproduced in Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, pp. 145-146.

(46). Dubreuil, Evreux au temps du Fédéralisme, p. 251 and Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 371.

(47). Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen, p. 323 and Bouchard, G., Prieur de la Côte-d'Or, (Paris, 1946), p. 167.

(48). According to Montier in Robert Lindet the représentant en mission Du Roy had a force from Paris of approximately 500 men. Ibid., pp. 124-125. Concerning the departmental forces, M.F. Vaultier, who actually participated in this attempted march on Paris, gave the following estimate of the numbers of the men involved: 400 cavalry, (the Dragons de la Manche and the Chasseurs de la Bretagne); 900 Bretons in 3 batallions from Ille-et-Vilaine, Morbihan and Finistère and 4 Norman contingents from Evreux, Vire, Bayeux and Caen, for a total of 1,900. See Vaultier, M.F., Souvenirs de l'Insurrection Normande: dite du Fédéralisme, en 1793, (Caen, 1858), p. 61. These memoirs were written some years after the rising in Normandy.

(49). Ibid., pp. 23-25.

Drastic measures had also been taken outside Normandy and Brittany as well. The departmental authorities of Gironde and the district and municipal officials of Bordeaux had closed a local popular society, the Club du Café National, as early as March, 1793, due to conflicting views of trends in the capital. (50). In the département of Gard, moreover, authorities in Nîmes, the chef-lieu, had created a body sometime in June or July called le pouvoir exécutif, the purpose of which was to intimidate those who did not support the local insurgents. (51).

On the other hand, the rebels also demonstrated that they could live up to their declared principles. In Eure, for example, Eude, the president of the civil tribunal of the district of Pont-Audemer and Crochon, the procureur-syndic, showed their attachment to the idea of the responsibility of governmental officials to their constituents by withdrawing from the revolt in the département on June 26, on the grounds that the local populace no longer supported the insurrectionary actions of their

(50). The members of this society had caused much consternation by supporting the September Massacres in Paris in late 1792 and by sympathizing with the Montagnard deputies of the Convention as well. C.f. Forrest, Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux, pp. 75, 107.

(51). Lewis, G., The Second Vendée: The Continuity of Counter-revolution in the Department of the Gard, 1789-1815, (London, 1978), c.f. p. 65.

officials (52). The insurgents of Orne, moreover, demonstrated their respect for law by refusing to suspend one of the Convention's decrees, even though it was having disastrous effects in the département. On May 4, 1793, the Convention had passed legislation which instructed each of the departmental administrations to establish a maximum local price for grain. (53). In part because each département had a different price, however, grain had tended to move to those provinces with a higher maximum which left other areas seriously depleted. (54). On June 21, even though many delegates to a general meeting of the officials of Orne which was also attended by members of the populace (55) complained of "...la pénurie on se trouve sa commune, son canton ou son district et les

(52). Eude and Crochon had been representing their district at the departmental emergency meetings since June 5. On their decision to resign this commission, see the proceeding of the district of Pont-Audemer of June 26, 1793, the salient passage of which is reproduced in Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, (La Rév. Fr., V.31), pp. 215-216. Their letter of resignation of the same date to the departmental authorities read in part "...vous savez, citoyens, qu'à l'exécution des mesures de salut public proposées, était attachée une condition essentielle, l'adhésion du peuple. Nous ne vous réitérons pas notre surprise sur l'indifférence qu'on a gardée à cet égard...". Reproduced *ibid.*, pp. 216-217.

(53). The First Law of the Maximum, 4 May, 1793, Article 25, reproduced in Stewart, Documentary Survey, pp. 442-444.

(54). This law and its effects in Normandy is treated in Mathiez, Le Vie Chère et le Mouvement Social sous la Terreur, (Paris, 1927), pp. 189-190.

(55). This meeting was attended by 23 members of the departmental administration, the procureur-général-syndic and one delegate from each of Orne's six districts, as well as by members of the département's various tribunals, of 9 of its popular societies and by delegates from its 45 municipalities. Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, pp. 38-41.

tristes effets qui en résultent...", a proposal to suspend this law was rejected on the grounds that "...l'administration ne peut, sans aucun prétexte, suspendre l'effect d'une loi..." (56). In Calvados, moreover, Levesque, the president of the département, Bougon, the procureur-général-syndic, and the administrators Mesnil and Lenormand informed the departmental assembly on July 20 that they would not sacrifice their principles even to bring about a peaceful resolution of the crisis:

...nous ne consentirons jamais à acheter une paix-honteuse, si les conditions du traité sont la violation de la souveraineté du peuple, la désorganisation de la représentation nationale, l'impunité des crimes et le règne des brigands. (57).

Duplessis, the mayor of Rennes, refused similarly to abandon his scruples, even after his arrest by Paris on August 7. He later wrote to the town of Rennes:

Je dis donc que je n'ai point changé; je sens dans mon coeur le même préférence pour un gouvernement républicain bien ordonné. (58).

(56). From the procès-verbal of this meeting. Cited ibid., p. 44. On the limited powers of local authorities see Chapter 2, supra.

(57). From a letter of these officials to the departmental assembly of Calvados, written after discussions with 2 agents of the Committee of Public Safety, Chastel and Maudé, at Lisieux. Montier, Lindet, pp. 151-152.

(58). Reproduced in Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 377.

In addition, the municipality of Rennes and the département of Ille-et-Vilaine demonstrated their patriotism by continuing to vote munitions, supplies and men for the Republican army during the entire revolt and by constantly opposing the rebels in the Vendée as well. (59).

It is also noteworthy in this regard that the insurgents did not condemn Paris as a whole for the purging of the Convention on June 2, 1793. Instead, in their desire for justice, they constantly distinguished the innocent citizens from those considered responsible for the infringement of parliamentary democracy. As early as October 19, 1792, to take but one instance, the departmental authorities of Finistère had declared to the other départements of Brittany, concerning the menace of a possible Parisian dictatorship, that the city was merely blinded to the danger:

...Paris veut le bien, nous le croyons;
 mais Paris se laisse aveugler, il importe
 au bonheur de la République de lui dessiller
 les yeux... (60).

(59). Ibid., pp. 384-386.

(60). Address of Finistère to the rest of Brittany, October 19, 1792, reproduced in Duchatellier, Histoire de...Bretagne..., V.2, p. 357.

On January 2, similarly, the administrators of Calvados and the procureur-syndic of the Caen district described Paris as, "le berceau de la liberté" and declared that one of their aims if they should march upon the capital would be to render the city "digne de sa gloire". They said this, moreover, even after they had asserted that Paris was "rempli d'agitateurs orgueilleux et sanguinaires" (61),

This attitude was maintained throughout the revolts as well. Thus at their meeting of 8 and 9 June, 1793, which formally committed them to insurrection, the administrative bodies of Calvados, the municipal and judicial officials of Caen and delegates from the sections and popular societies of the town announced that an armed force would be dispatched to Paris "...aux fins de protéger la liberté de la Convention et la sûreté des bons citoyens de Paris courbés sous le joug de l'anarchie..."

(62). In a similar fashion the departmental administrators of Finistère wrote to their delegates at the insurrectionary committee in Rennes on June 19:

(61). Address of these officials to the Convention, January 2, 1793, reproduced in Montier, Lindet, p. 42.

(62). From the procès-verbal of this meeting. Reproduced in part in Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, p. 14.

...ce n'est pas contre Paris que l'on marche, mais seulement contre les scélérats qui tourmentent la masse de ses habitants, et qui oppriment en même temps la représentation nationale... (63).

The municipality of Eure, as well, gave further evidence of this attitude by refusing, on June 17, to support the proposal of Calvados to halt shipments of foodstuffs to Paris. Its statement on this occasion clearly revealed this unwillingness indiscriminately to punish the capital, and the desire of the majority of insurgents for justice.

...qu'il serait impolitique de faire éprouver les horreurs de la famine aux bons citoyens de Paris qui ne cherchent qu'à se soustraire à l'anarchie et au despotisme tyrannique qui les subjuge. (64).

We may now ask who shared these principles. Who was willing to support a revolt based primarily upon representative government and a regulated, constitutional regime? According to many historians the rebels were chiefly members of the departmental and district administrations, who are thought to have been more moderate in their political and social attitudes because they

(63). Address of Finistère to the Rennes committee, June 19, 1793, reproduced in Duchatellier, Histoire de... Bretagne..., V.2, pp. 397-400.

(64). Cited in Dubreuil, Evreux au temps du Fédéralisme, pp. 261-262.

were indirectly elected to office. The communal and municipal officials, on the other hand, are thought to have opposed or ignored the risings because, being directly elected, they were "closer" to radical popular elements and were therefore more likely to support the Montagnard deputies and the purge of June 2, 1793. It would appear, however, that exception tended to be the rule in this matter. Support for the rising amongst the officials of Calvados was not unanimous, for example, for out of the 6 districts of the département only the administrators of Bayeux, Lisieux and Caen followed the actions of their superiors. (65). In Eure, moreover, the situation was even more striking, for only 1 out of the 6 districts of Eure, Evreux, consistently supported the departmental authorities. (66). Many communes and municipalitiés participated as well. The commune of Vannes in Morbihan, as we have seen, supported the June 16 decision of their département to raise an armed force and re-affirmed this stand on July 18. (67). In addition, the communal general council of Evreux joined with the officials of the chef-lieu and members of its populace to swear an oath for the Republic and the Convention on

(65). Vire, Falaise and Pont l'Eveque refused adherence to the revolt on June 9, 19 and 20 respectively. Montier, Robert Lindet, c.f. p. 119.

(66). Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, c.f. p. 207 and passim.

(67). Bliard, Prieur de la Marne, pp. 95-96.

June 14. (68). In Ille-et-Vilaine, moreover, the departmental authorities and the district and municipality of Rennes were all active during the revolt until they withdrew from the rising on July 26, (69), while the communes of Laigle and Sees in Orne supported the basic principles of the rising as we have seen in their proceedings of June 17. (70).

It is also maintained by many writers that the revolts received little or no support from the general populace. The evidence would suggest, however, that the risings received at least some popular support in various regions. In the district of Pont-Audemer in Eure, for example, between 600 and 800 people signed a petition at an assembly of electors on June 4 which urged the département to take action to regain the liberty of the Convention in Paris. (71).

(68). Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, (La Rev. Fr., V. 30, 1896), pp. 153-154.

(69). Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, c.f., pp. 375-376, 387.

(70). Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, pp. 29-31.

(71). C.f. Dubreuil, Evreux au temps du Fédéralisme, p. 247. This petition to the departmental general council of Eure read in part: "...nous réclamons contre l'arrestation injuste, illégale et vexatoire de nos représentants, et nous déclarons que nous sommes prêts de nous armer pour les rendre à la liberté, ou pour périr en les défendant."

C'est à vous qu'il appartient de donner le mouvement à vos concitoyens, qui vous ont remis leurs plus chers intérêts, le soin de protéger leur Liberté... Elle est violée aujourd'hui; ils sont menacés des fers qu'ils ont si courageusement rompus en 1789! Ordonnez, ou plutôt, dites-leur de se lever, et nous pouvons vous assurer qu'ils sont debout." Reproduced in Montier, Le Département de l'Eure, pp. 139-141.

In Calvados, similarly, it had been the 2 popular societies of Caen, the Carabots and the Jacobins which, with the commune, had convinced the authorities of the département to call the crucial meeting of May 30 and 31, 1793, which had seen the dispatch of the 9 special emissaries to Paris. (72).

There was popular participation during the revolts as well. The popular society of Brest, to take but one instance, apparently demanded the arrest of the représentants en mission Sevestre and Cavaignac on approximately June 13.

(73). The club of Vannes, for its part, declared on July 18 its adherence to measures taken two days previously by the Morbihan departmental council and the district, communal and civil and criminal officials of the chef-lieu.

(74). The popular society of Rennes, moreover, supported the town's municipality and district, and the departmental authorities of Ille-et-Vilaine throughout the entire revolt as well. (75).

There was also support from the populace for the risings outside of Normandy and Brittany. An illustrative instance is that in Toulouse, chef-lieu of Haute-Garonne, commissaires from the sections vehemently defended 9 of their local authorities after the Convention called for their

(72). Ibid., pp. 134-135.

(73). Levot, Histoire de la ville et du port de Brest, pp. 94-95.

(74). Bliard, Prieur de la Marne..., p. 96.

(75). C.f. Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 387.

arrest on June 24. (76). Moreover, even though these authorities were arrested on June 29, the primary assemblies of the town did not abandon their revolt until July 1, and they did so even then with a request for the new Republican constitution and the punishment of the authors of the purge of the Convention. (77). In the département of Gironde, similarly, not only did 120,000 out of 400,000 citizens support the rising in one way or another, but 400 men also enrolled in the special force départementale which was to have marched on Paris. (78). This would indicate that the position that the revolts were the work of a minority of officials must at least be questioned.

Our examination of this evidence has, hopefully, helped us to form some understanding, albeit incomplete, of the salient features of the departmental risings of 1793 in Normandy and Brittany. We have, on the one hand, a concern to maintain private property from attack, although this was by no means dominant. We also have, in spite of the accusations of the Montagnard deputies in parliament and the supporters of the purge of the Convention on June 2, 1793, a desire on the part of the insurgents to safeguard the unity of the infant Republic against the pressures

(76). These officials had been denounced by the représentant en mission, Baudot, for refusing to dissolve their meetings of the constituted bodies of Haute-Garonne. Albert, Le Fédéralisme dans la Haute-Garonne, c.f. pp. 103, 116-119. The lengthy protest of the section commissaires of Toulouse is reproduced *ibid.*, Appendices, pp. 311-319.

(77). *Ibid.*, c.f. pp. 122-123.

(78). Forrest, Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux, pp. 118, 157.

placed upon the national government in the capital. We also have, beyond anger over the expulsion on June 2 of 29 parliamentary deputies and 2 ministers from their duties, a strong wish to see justice done, and the truth of the charges levied against these men determined by a legal and impartial trial. Essentially, moreover, it would appear from the evidence, that we have, variously, departmental and district administrators, communal and municipal officials and portions of the general populace attempting to ensure the maintenance of a genuinely representative democracy and a regulated, constitutional regime by engaging in a movement of dissent against contrary trends in the capital.

Various factors combined to defeat this movement. A general shortage of foodstuffs in France, which had begun at the end of May, 1793, (79); and which owed much to the Convention's Law of May 4, distracted many insurgents from the revolts by becoming a more pressing problem than the political and moral crisis in Paris. In Orne, for example, the positive benefits for the rising which may have resulted from the general meeting of June 20 of the authorities of the département and members of the populace were lost when it was decided to make subsistence the main topic of discussion. On the second day of this meeting a certain Charpentier turned attention away from proposals from 2 Calvados delegates for co-operation between these départements and the strength which may have resulted from

such a coalition was lost:

...Je me levai, et faisant allusion aux phrases pompeuses des Calvadociens qui ne parlaient que de liberté, d'égalité, pour mieux cacher leur royalisme, je dis: nous n'avons besoin ni de liberté ni d'égalité si nous périssons tous par la faim. Je demande donc qu'on s'occupe du pain avant tout. (80).

Moreover, many officials and their constituents were also alienated from the insurgents by the famine. Manche and Seine-Inférieure for example, apparently turned away from the rebels of Calvados after the latter began to enforce their embargo upon Paris on June 18. (81).

A lack of adequate information regarding the state of affairs in the capital probably also caused much confusion amongst the insurgents. A certain Chrétien, who was a member of the Jacobin Society of Caen, probably revealed the doubts and hesitations of many of the rebels in his letter of June 14, 1793 to someone named Décaux in Paris. Speaking of the presence in Caen of a number of the deputies who had been expelled from the Convention on June 2, he pleaded for the truth in this crucial situation:

(80). From the procès-verbal of this meeting. Reproduced in part in Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, pp. 46, 50.

(81). Goodwin, The Federalist Movement in Caen p. 327 and Mathiez, La Vie Chère, p. 190.

...Ils arrivent ici, déjà on en compte dix on douze: Gorsas, Buzot, Lesage, Salle etc...Ils vont à la société des Jacobins engager les habitants à se porter sur Paris, pour, disent-ils, rendre à la liberté cent cinquante membres qui sont restés purs...Ils tonnent contre la Montagne, le département et la municipalité de Paris; ils disent que ces autorités s'arrogent tous les pouvoirs, qu'elles font la loi à la Convention; ils terminent par demander mainforte pour en imposer au reste qu'ils nomment brigands, et maintenir par cette mesure la République une et indivisible, la liberté et l'égalité. Ce sont bien là mes dieux; je suis armé pour les défendre, mon ami; mais est-il vrai qu'à Paris ils ne sont pas révéérés, et que la Montagne n'en veut point?

Je brule d'avoir ta reponse pour me servir de guide dans la position critique où je me trouve en cette ville. (82).

The revolts were also hampered, at least to some degree, by feelings of rivalry and resentment amongst towns. The officials of Redon in Ille-et-Vilaine hurt the chances of Rennes being peacefully reconciled to Paris by denouncing, toward the end of August, the participation of this chef-lieu in the revolt. (83). In Eure, moreover, it is quite possible that ill-feeling over not being chosen as chef-lieu when the département had been established caused the important town of Bernay not to support the officials of Evreux, thereby prejudicing the success of the revolt in that province. (84)

(82). From the letter of Chrétien to Décaux, June 14, 1793, reproduced in Hérissey, Buzot, pp. 319-320.

(83). Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, cf. p. 377.

(84). C.f. Chapter 2, supra.

Another cause of the eventual collapse of the departmental risings in Normandy and Brittany was the fear generated by the civil war which had been raging in the Vendée since mid-March, 1793. (85). Apparently, the concern caused by the rebellion lost the effective and active participation in the risings of at least 3 départements: Loire-Inférieure and Côtes-du-Nord in Brittany and Orne in Normandy (86), though many officials and their constituents in these provinces continued to share the principles of the more active insurgents in their neighbouring départements (87).

In addition, the efforts of the insurgents were undermined to no small degree by their own adherence to principles and their unwillingness to act outside the law. Thus the support of the Pont-Audemer district in Eure for the other insurgents was lost when Eude and Crochon felt they no longer had a popular mandate for revolt. In a similar fashion, an opportunity for the officials of Orne to halt debilitating unrest over food supplies in the département and to return attention to the crisis in Paris was lost when they refused to suspend the Convention's Law of May 4, 1793.

(85). Sydenham, The French Revolution, p. 145.

(86). C.f. Duchatellier, Histoire de... Bretagne..., V.2, pp. 373-374.

(87). For example, both Loire-Inférieure and Côtes-du-Nord did manage to send delegates to the insurrectionary assemblies at Caen and Rennes. Grall, Une étrange institution Révolutionnaire, p. 360 and Stone, La Révolte Fédéraliste à Rennes, p. 371. For Orne's part in the risings see Nicolle, Le Mouvement Fédéraliste dans l'Orne, passim.

Other reasons for the failure of the revolts could be cited as well, such as the promulgation by the Convention of the long-awaited Republican constitution on June 24, its submission to the primary assemblies for approval (88), and certain economic concessions which were made to the peasantry in June in order to gain their support. (89). The important point is, however, that no one single factor can be singled out as responsible for the collapse of the risings. For various problems, such as fear of the Vendée rebellion and the ravages of famine had greater effect in some areas than in others. Instead, it was to be the accumulation of these exigencies which would cause the rebels to abandon, by the fall of 1793, the last major movement of dissent against the curbing of parliamentary freedom before the Terror engulfed Revolutionary France.

(88). See Stewart, Documentary Survey, where the constitution is reproduced on pp. 456-465.

(89). On June 3 the Convention decreed that the estates of émigrés would be sold in small lots and announced one week later that villages could divide their common fields. On June 17, moreover, all feudal rights were completely abolished without compensation. Goodwin, The French Revolution, pp. 138-139.

Conclusion

On July 28, 1793, during the repudiation of the revolt in Eure, 2 members of the district of Evreux, Robillard and Trude, ceremonially burned the département's banner of the great Fête de la Fédération of July 14, 1790. This was just 3 years after that event had taken place. What had been the nature of this crisis which had brought about this state of affairs, and had caused many départements to oppose openly the capital in a time of foreign war and internal counter-revolution?

As many historians suggest, the departmental risings appear to have been primarily the result of a mounting crisis in the national capital. After the National Convention assembled on September 20, 1792, the growing confrontation between the representative democracy of parliament and the direct democracy of the sections had worsened until threats were being made to expel those deputies considered responsible for the nation's ills. In Normandy and Brittany, where this conflict between the authorities and their constituents does not appear to have been as evident, anxiety for the safety of the Convention had grown proportionally as attacks on the freedom of the assembly had increased in Paris. Further aggravated by the activities of certain représentants en mission and agents of the Executive Council of Ministers, this disquietude had been finally transformed into open revolt by the arrival of news of the purge of the Convention by Paris on June 2, 1793.

Once the revolts were underway, the insurgents had manifested some concern that the triumph of militant elements in the sections on June 2 and the removal of the principal

opposition of the Montagnard deputies from parliament would result in the curbing of rights such as ownership of property. However, this seems to have been but one of the aims of the rebels, and not the most important. Instead, they appear to have been more concerned with insuring the freedom of parliament and its ability to represent the interests of the entire nation. Thus, we have all the demands for measures to achieve this end from the two central insurrectionary assemblies at Caen and Rennes and requests from other insurgents as well. Along with this preference for a truly representative democracy, we also have the desire of the rebels for a regulated government, its powers and limitations set down in a Republican constitution, and the wish for justice, as witnessed by the calls for the legal and impartial trial of those deputies expelled by Paris on June 2, 1793. We also have the determination that this democratic state will be a unified one, as opposed to the claims of the opponents of the insurgents that the latter's aim was to impose a "federalist" system upon France.

It would also seem, moreover, that the position put forth by many historians that the chief participants in the risings were the indirectly elected departmental and district administrators, who were opposed or ignored by their subordinates and the general populace, is in need of some reassessment. Indeed, it appears from the evidence considered here that these principles were shared by many Revolutionaries, regardless of their station. This, in turn, may mean that opposition to the triumph of the Montagnards and militants in

the Paris sections on June 2 need not necessarily be linked to social conservatism or anti-Republican sentiment. In this respect further study of the social and economic background of the insurgents would be most useful.

In the end, what seems to have been at the heart of this episode was a fundamental disagreement amongst committed Revolutionaries over the means to assure the security and unity of the threatened nation, goals which were shared equally by all sides in the dispute. In this sense it was one type of Republican, who believed that unity and survival were best achieved by force instead of consent, who was the victor on June 2, 1793 and after the collapse of what was a great upsurge of dissent in the départements against this trend.

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