The French Revolution

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First Published

2014

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The morning of Tuesday, 14 July 1789, was overcast; heavy clouds threatened rain. Throughout the night the atmosphere in Paris had been growing more and more tense as rumours flew from street to street of thousands of troops on the march. In the Hôtel de Ville a Permanent Committee established by the Electors issued urgent orders for the erection of barricades, for the organization of those *Gardes-françaises* who had declared themselves on the citizens' side, for the protection of the banks, and for the arrest of all carts and carriages found entering or leaving Paris. Scores of these vehicles were assembled beneath the windows of the Hôtel de Ville in the Place de Grève which was soon littered with piles of stores and provisions of vegetables, with furniture, baskets, boxes and empty powder-barrels whose contents had been distributed the night before to those who had guns.

As yet, few citizens did have guns, and soon after dawn a crowd of about 60,000 people gathered on the parade-ground in front of the Invalides demanding to be supplied with them. They had already made similar demands at the Hôtel de Ville where one of the leaders of the Permanent Committee, an elderly merchant Jacques de Flesselles, had aroused their distrust by his unhelpful, prevaricating manner. The Governor of the Invalides refused to deliver the arms up without authority. On Monday he had referred an earlier request for arms from a delegation of Electors to the Swiss General Baron de Besenval, Marshal Broglie's second-in-command, who had told him he must do nothing without authority from Versailles and had taken the precaution of ordering the pensioners on duty at the Invalides to render the muskets useless by unscrewing the hammers. The pensioners, unwilling to help their masters, set about this task with such extreme laboriousness that in six hours they had unscrewed scarcely more than twenty hammers of the 32,000 muskets awaiting their attention. The Governor told Besenval 'that a spirit of sedition was rife in the hospital,' so the General recorded, 'and that for the past ten days the soldiers had had their pockets full of money. A legless cripple, whom no one suspected, had introduced into the establishment hundreds of licentious and subversive songs. In a word, the Governor concluded, it was hopeless to count on the

pensioners, who, if they received orders to load their cannon, would turn them on the Governor's apartment.'

While they were still at their leisurely work, a representative of the Electors left the Hôtel de Ville with instruction to persuade the Governor to give way to the peoples' demand. He found the crowd, larger than ever now, pressing round the gate of the Invalides, waving hats adorned with cockades and shouting for muskets. He forced his way up to the gate which was opened just wide enough to let him through. Inside, the Governor told him that no instructions had yet been received from Versailles and that he was, therefore, powerless to help him. The Governor then went out to try to explain this to the mob. But he could not make himself heard above their shouts and, as he withdrew, crowds of men rushed after him, forced the gate wide open and streamed into the building, while others clambered across the moat and up the parapet walls.

The guards of the Invalides stood by their cannon, disinclined to open fire, while 5,000 troops, encamped less than a quarter of a mile away on the Champ de Mars, also remained inactive. Indeed, Baron de Besenval could find no soldiers at all prepared to interfere. One after another their commanding officers told him that their men refused to march, and that, unless they were withdrawn from Paris, they were more likely to join the rioters than act against them.

So the crowd surged down the steps into the cellars of the Invalides undisturbed, seizing armfuls of muskets and dragging out whatever other weapons they could lay their hands on, pressing weapons on anyone who looked in need of them, including two servants of the British Ambassador who had wandered over to see what was going on. But although the rioters got away with over ten cannon as well as 28,000 muskets, they discovered very little powder and very few cartridges. And for these they turned to the Bastille in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

Among them was Jean Baptiste Humbert, a watchmaker born in Langres who had come to Paris in 1787 having learned his craft in Switzerland. He had made first for a shop in the Place de Grève

where he had bought some nails which he hoped might serve instead of shot. On leaving the shop, so he later recorded:

> I was accosted by a citizen who told me they were now issuing shot at the Hôtel de Ville. So I hurried there and was given a few pellets of buckshot. I then immediately set out for the Bastille, loading my gun as I went. I was joined by a group of people who were also on their way to the Bastille. We found four foot-soldiers of the Watch, armed with guns and I urged them to come along with us. They replied they had neither powder nor shot. So we clubbed together to give each of them enough for two shots. Thus armed they were pleased to join us. As we were passing in front of the Hôtel de la Régie we saw that two cases of bullets had just been broken up and their contents were being freely handed out. I filled one of my coat pockets with them to give to anyone who was short . . . [Then], passing through the courtyard of the Arsenal, we arrived at the Bastille.

The Bastille, a huge building of eight round towers linked by walls eighty feet high, had originally been built as a fortress in the fourteenth century. Since then it had been used as a state prison for men who had been arrested in accordance with *lettres de cachet* but who were not guilty of an offence punishable under common law. It was surrounded by an air of mystery. Prisoners, so it was said, their names not divulged to the gaolers with whom they were forbidden to talk, arrived in coaches with drawn blinds, and when they were escorted inside, the soldiers on duty had to turn to face the wall. Its sinister reputation – sustained by legends that owed much to the gruesome and imaginative *Mémoires sur la Bastille* by the lawyer and journalist, Simon Linguet, who published them soon after his release in 1782 – was much increased by stories of 'the man in the iron mask', of the imprisonment of writers like Voltaire and the Abbé Morellet, and of Latude whose thirty years of intermittent incarceration began when he was accused of attempting to poison Mme de Pompadour. Yet the Bastille was, in fact, one of the least unpleasant of Paris's prisons. The food was adequate, prisoners were allowed to bring in their own possessions, and the dreaded dungeons, where it was believed scores of wretches lay in chains, had not been used for years. Indeed, the Bastille was never crowded, there being

rarely more than ten prisoners inside its massive walls. Discussions had recently been held as to the advisability of maintaining so expensive an establishment for the incarceration of so few offenders, and a suggestion had been put forward that the unsightly structure should be demolished and a square laid out on its site. The architects and contractors who supported this plan were encouraged when informed in the late spring of 1789 that the Bastille contained no more than seven prisoners, none of whom was of much importance. Four were forgers who had been transferred there from some other, overcrowded prison; one was a mentally unbalanced Irishman who, believing himself to be alternately Julius Caesar and God, was supposed to be a spy; the sixth, also deranged, was suspected of being involved in an attempt to assassinate the King; the last was the Comte de Solages whose family had arranged for him to be committed by a *lettre de cachet* for incest.

To the people of Paris, however, unaware either of its proposed demolition or of the number of prisoners held there, the Bastille was the symbol of an intolerable régime; and it was not merely to obtain powder for their muskets and to release the men held there that they marched so determinedly upon it this Tuesday morning.

For several days now the Governor of the Bastille, the Marquis de Launay, had been anticipating their arrival with the utmost apprehension. Neither a decisive nor an assertive man, de Launay was quite incapable of instilling his officers with any confidence. One of them, Lieutenant Louis Deflue, who had been sent with a detachment of thirty-two Swiss soldiers to reinforce the garrison of eighty-two superannuated soldiers or *invalides*, described him as being 'without much knowledge of military affairs, without experience and without much courage'.

'I could clearly see from his constant uneasiness and irresolution' [Deflue afterwards wrote in a letter to his brothers],

that if we were attacked we should be very badly led. He was so terrified that at night he mistook the shadows of trees for enemies so that we had to be on the alert throughout the hours of darkness. The staff officers . . . and I myself often tried to assure him that our position was not as weak as he complained and to persuade him to attend to important matters rather

than to expend his energy on trifles. He would listen to us, appearing to agree with our advice. But then he would do just the opposite before changing his mind yet again.

Nervous and indecisive as he evidently was, de Launay had nevertheless done much to prepare the Bastille for an attack. Expecting that he would not have to hold out for long before troops came to disperse a hostile mob, he had not troubled to lay in more than two days' supply of bread; but in the cellars he had a large stock of powder contained in 250 barrels which had been transferred there from the Arsenal. He also had numerous cannon. There were fifteen eight-pounders standing between the battlements on the towers, a further three eight-pounders below them with their muzzles levelled at the approaches to the entrance gate, as well as twelve smaller rampart guns. In order to give these guns a wider field of fire the embrasures had been widened. Other apertures and windows had been blocked up, the drawbridge across the deep dry moat had been strengthened and the defences generally repaired and improved. Loads of paving-stones had been dragged up to the top of the towers from which they could be hurled down through the machicolations on to the heads of any rioters who managed to approach the foot of the towers.

But if these measures gave some confidence to de Launay's officers, his increasingly prevaricating manner certainly did not. Nor did the attitude of their men. Most of the *invalides* of the regular garrison were known to be in sympathy with the people of the surrounding *faubourgs* in whose shops they bought their tobacco and in whose cafés they sat drinking wine. It was hardly to be expected that they would eagerly obey orders to open fire on them, and not at all unlikely that they would flatly refuse to do so. Lieutenant Deflue's Swiss soldiers did not share the same close ties with the people of Paris, but they were by no means hostile to their aspirations. They were rumoured already to have sworn to spike their own guns if they were ordered to fire on the crowd, and the next day seventy-five men of the same regiment, the Salis-Samade, billetted in Issy, Vaugirard and Sèvres, were to desert. Besides, the thirty-two men from the Salis-Samade in the Bastille had been

George Rudé

PART I

Introduction

I

INTRODUCTION

ONE aspect of the French Revolution that has been largely neglected by historians is the nature of the revolutionary crowd. It has, of course, long been recognized that the Revolution was not only a political, but a profound social upheaval, to the course and outcome of which masses of ordinary Frenchmen, both in the towns and countryside, contributed. Not least in Paris; and, in the history of revolutionary Paris, a particular importance has been justly ascribed to the great *journées*, or popular insurrections and demonstrations, which, breaking out intermittently between 1789 and 1795, profoundly affected the relations of political parties and groups and drew many thousands of Parisians into activity.

So much is common knowledge and has long been commonly accepted. But how were the crowds composed that stormed the Bastille in July 1789, marched to Versailles to fetch the king and queen to the capital in October, that overthrew the monarchy in August 1792, or silently witnessed the downfall of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor? Who led them or influenced them? What were the motives that prompted them? What was the particular significance and outcome of their intervention? It is not suggested that the great historians of the Revolution have had no answers to these questions: far from it; but, for lack of more precise inquiry, they have tended to answer them according to their own social ideals, political sympathies, or ideological preoccupations. In this respect we may distinguish between those writers who, like Burke and Taine, adopted a distinctly hostile attitude to the Revolution and everything that it stood for; Republican historians like Michelet and Aulard, for whom

the Revolution marked a great regenerative upsurge of the French people; and, again, a Romantic like Carlyle who, while broadly sympathetic to the 'Nether Sansculottic World', was torn between admiration for its 'heroism' and fascinated horror at the 'World-Bedlam' or 'anarchy' that it appeared to unleash.

To Burke the revolutionary crowd was purely destructive and presumed to be composed of the most undesirable social elements: the crowds that invaded the *château* of Versailles in October 1789 are 'a band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with . . . blood'; and the royal family, on their return journey to Paris, are escorted by 'all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abased shape of the vilest of women'. The National Assembly, having transferred to the capital, is compelled to deliberate 'amidst the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women lost to shame'.[1] Yet Burke's invective is far outmatched by Taine, the former Liberal of 1848, soured by his experiences of 1871, whose vocabulary of expletives has served the conservative historians of the Revolution ever since. The provincial insurgents of the early summer of 1789 are presented as 'contre-bandiers, faux-sauniers, braconniers, vagabonds, mendiants, repris de justice'. The Paris revolutionaries and the captors of the Bastille are the lowest social scum:

> La lie de la société monte à la surface . . . la capitale semble livrée à la dernière plèbe et aux bandits . . . Vagabonds, déguenillés, plusieurs 'presque nus', la plupart armés comme des sauvages, d'une physionomie effrayante, ils sont 'de ceux qu'on ne se souvient pas d'avoir rencontrés au grand jour'.

The market women and others who marched to Versailles in October are thus described:

> Les filles du Palais Royal . . . ajoutez des blanchisseuses, des mendiants, des femmes sans souliers, des poissardes raccolées depuis plusieurs jours à prix d'argent . . . la troupe s'incorpore les femmes qu'elle rencontre, portières, couturières, femmes de ménage, et même des bourgeoises. Joignez à cela des gens sans aveu, des rôdeurs de rue, des bandits, des voleurs, toute cette lie qui s'est entassée à Paris et qui surnage à chaque secousse . . . Voilà la fange qui, en arrière, en avant, roule avec le fleuve populaire.

[1] E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1951), pp. 66–69.

The insurgents of 10 August 1792, who drove Louis XVI from the Tuileries, become:

> Presque tous de la dernière plèbe, ou entretenus par des métiers infâmes, spadassins et suppôts de mauvais lieux, accoutumés au sang . . . des aventuriers intrépides et féroces de toute provenance, Marseillais et étrangers, Savoyards, Italiens, Espagnols, chassés de leur pays.[1]

Following Taine, such terms as 'la canaille', 'la dernière plèbe', 'bandits', and 'brigands' have been commonly applied to the participants in these and similar events up to the present day.[2]

On the other hand, Michelet and the upholders of the Republican tradition have presented the revolutionary crowd in entirely different terms. Whenever it advanced, or appeared to advance, the aims of the revolutionary *bourgeoisie*, it has been presented as the embodiment of all the popular and Republican virtues. To Michelet the Bastille ceased to be a fortress that had to be reduced by force of arms: it became the personification of evil, over which virtue (in the shape of the People) inevitably triumphs: 'La Bastille ne fut pas prise . . . elle se livra. Sa mauvaise conscience la troubla, la rendit folle et lui fit perdre l'esprit.' And who captured it? 'Le peuple, le peuple tout entier.' Similarly, on 5 October, while the revolutionary leaders are groping for a solution to the crisis: 'Le peuple seul trouve un remède: il va chercher le Roi.' The role of the women takes on a more than merely casual significance: 'Ce qu'il y a dans le peuple de plus peuple, je veux dire de plus instinctif, de plus inspiré, ce sont, à coup sûr, les femmes.'[3] Louis Blanc, though lacking Michelet's exaltation, follows him closely;[4] and Aulard, the Radical professor of the Sorbonne, for all his sobriety of language and wealth of documentary learning, is in the same tradition: 'Paris se leva, tout entier, s'arma, s'empara de la Bastille.'[5]

[1] H. Taine, *Les Origines de la France contemporaine. La Révolution* (3 vols., Paris, 1876), i. 18, 53–54, 130, 272.

[2] See, for example, L. Madelin, who freely uses the terms 'bandits' and 'brigands' in relation to the Paris insurgents of July 1789 (*La Révolution* (Paris, 1914), pp. 60, 66, 68); and P. Gaxotte, *La Révolution française* (Paris, 1948), *passim*.

[3] J. Michelet, *La Révolution française* (9 vols., Paris, 1868–1900), i. 248, 377–9. The original edition dates from 1847 to 1853.

[4] L. Blanc, *Histoire de la Révolution française* (12 vols., Paris, 1868–70), ii. 352–3; iii. 184. The first edition is dated 1847–62.

[5] A. Aulard, *Histoire politique de la Révolution française* [*1789–1804*] (Paris, 1905), p. 37.

Great as has been the influence of these two rival schools on the historiography and teaching of the Revolution in France, in this country perhaps an even greater influence has been exerted on generations of students, teachers, and textbook writers by the striking imagery of Carlyle. The social forces unleashed by the Revolution and composing the active elements in each one of its decisive phases are variously described as an 'enraged National Tiger'; 'the World Chimera, bearing fire'; 'Victorious Anarchy'; and 'the funeral flame, enveloping all things . . . the Death-Bird of a World'. With all this, it is perhaps not surprising that he should gravely warn his readers against attempting a more precise analysis: 'But to gauge and measure this immeasurable Thing, and what is called account for it, and reduce it to a dead logic-formula, attempt not.'[1]

Yet, widely different as these interpretations are and the influences they have exerted, there is one common thread running through them all: whether the revolutionary crowd is represented as 'la canaille' or 'vile multitude' by Taine and Burke; as 'Victorious Anarchy' by Carlyle; or as 'le peuple' or 'tout Paris' by Michelet and Aulard—it has been treated by one and all as a disembodied abstraction and the personification of good or evil, according to the particular fancy or prejudice of the writer. This should perhaps not surprise us as, in the nineteenth century, to which most of these writers belonged, the debate on the French Revolution was conducted almost exclusively in political or ideological terms. This applied equally to constitutional monarchists like Mignet and Thiers in the 1820's; to those, like Michelet and Louis Blanc, who drew their inspiration from the events of February 1848; to a disgruntled Liberal like Taine in the 1870's; and even, though less obviously, to a Radical of the Third Republic like Aulard. Though differing profoundly in their attitude to the revolutionary tradition and in their hostility or reverence for the leaders or victims of the great Revolution, they have all been inclined to view these events and their participants 'from above'[2]

[1] T. Carlyle, *The French Revolution* (3 vols., London, 1869), i. 226, 258, 264–6, 303. It is of some interest to note that Carlyle's first edition of 1837 bore the subtitle 'A History of Sansculottism'.

[2] The phrase has been frequently used in this connexion by Georges Lefebvre, most recently in his preface to W. Markov and A. Soboul, *Die Sansculotten von Paris* (Berlin, 1957), p. viii.

—that is, from the elevation of the committee room of the Committee of Public Safety, of the rostrum of the National Assembly or Jacobin Club, or of the columns of the revolutionary press. This being the case, the revolutionary crowd, whose voice was seldom reflected in the speeches of the politicians or the writings of the pamphleteers and journalists, tended to be lost sight of as a thing of flesh and blood and to assume whatever complexion accorded with the interests, opinions, or ideals of the revolutionary leaders, their critics, or adherents.

During the past half-century, however, the work of a number of eminent historians has made it possible to approach the subject in a more detached, or scientific, spirit. It is not so much that they have unearthed new archival materials that were unknown or inaccessible to their predecessors. This has sometimes been so, though, in the case of Paris, at least, rather the opposite is true: important materials that were available to Michelet and Mortimer-Ternaux, the historian of the Terror, have subsequently been destroyed. It is rather that the new social patterns and problems of the twentieth century have prompted historians to seek answers to new questions and, as the result of these considerations, to view the history of the Revolution from a new angle. An important consequence of their inquiries has been that the popular elements composing the *sans-culottes*—the peasants, craftsmen, journeymen, and labourers—have begun to appear as social groups with their own distinctive identity, interests, and aspirations, whose actions and attitudes can no longer be treated as mere echoes or reflections of the ideas, speeches, and decrees of the journalists, lawyers, orators, and politicians established in the capital. This new conception of the Revolution—seen as it were from below—was first given expression by Jaurès in his *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française* which, in spite of its tendentious title, won the unstinting praise of Aulard, then holding the chair of French Revolution studies at the Sorbonne.[1] During the next fifty years this field of inquiry has been enormously widened by Albert Mathiez's work on the Parisian social movements of 1792–94,[2] Professor Labrousse's researches on prices and wages

[1] J. Jaurès, *L'Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française* (4 vols., Paris, 1901–4. Revised edition, 8 vols., 1922–4).

[2] A. Mathiez, *La Vie chère et le mouvement social sous la Terreur* (Paris, 1927).

during the eighteenth century,[1] and, above all, by Professor Georges Lefebvre's studies on the peasantry, the psychology of revolutionary crowds, and on the revolutionary panics of 1789.[2]

Without the new direction and stimulus that such work has given to French Revolution studies, the present volume might never have been attempted. Another determining factor has been, of course, the availability of suitable documentation. It is evident that the mass of participants in the great popular movements of the Revolution have, unlike the journalists and politicians, left few permanent records of their activities and aspirations in the form of letters, pamphlets, speeches, or committee minutes. In the case of Paris, too, a valuable source have been removed by the destruction by fire in 1871 of the great bulk of municipal and fiscal records, whose survival might have yielded valuable information on the incomes, tax-assessments, and working capital of the craftsmen and shopkeepers, from whom the most militant elements among the Parisian *sans-culottes* were to be drawn. Yet an important source, perhaps even more valuable for the present purpose, remains to us—the police records of the Archives Nationales and the Paris Préfecture de Police; these have served as the main documentary basis for this volume. The French police system of the eighteenth century was far more developed than that of this country and has consequently left far more substantial archives. In addition the method of cross-examination conducted by the police, with its recording in the traditional *procès-verbal*, provides the historian with detailed information regarding a prisoner's occupation, address, province of origin, age, and his degree of literacy and previous criminal record. Already fifty years ago Alexandre Tuetey and Marcel Rouff, in a number of studies, illustrated the great value of such records as a source for social history.[3] Yet, unaccountably, they were neg-

[1] C.-E. Labrousse, *Esquisse du mouvement des prix et des revenus en France au XVIIIe siècle* (2 vols., Paris, 1933); *La Crise de l'économie française à la fin de l'ancien régime et au début de la Révolution* (Paris, 1944).

[2] G. Lefebvre, *Les Paysans du Nord pendant la Révolution française* (Paris-Lille, 1924); 'Foules révolutionnaires', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, xi (1934), 1–26; *La Grande peur de 1789* (Paris, 1932).

[3] See, for example, A. Tuetey's Introduction to volume I of his *Répertoire général des sources manuscrites de l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution française* (11 vols., Paris,

lected by Mathiez and his pupils,[1] and it is only in recent years that historians have begun to turn to them again. In the present instance, I have drawn largely on the *procès-verbaux* drawn up by the *commissaires de police* of the Paris Châtelet for 1787–90[2] and of the Paris Sections for 1790–5,[3] and—to a lesser extent—on the equivalent reports of the Committee of General Security of 1793–5.[4] These documents help to throw a new light on several of the popular movements arising on the eve of, and during, the Revolution in Paris, often inadequately treated by previous historians; and, above all, they make it possible to present a fuller and more accurate picture of the varying social elements that took part in them. While, of course, they relate only to a small minority of the participants—those arrested, killed, or wounded, or against whom information is laid with the police—the samples thus provided are often sufficiently large to allow one to draw general conclusions from them. For the participants in the major revolutionary movements of the period, however—those of July 1789, August 1792, May–June 1793, and the revolts of Prairial of the Year III and Vendémiaire of the Year IV (1795)—it has been found necessary to turn to other, additional, sources: to the lists of the *vainqueurs de la Bastille*,[5] to those of the claimants for pensions in August 1792[6] and for compensation for time lost under arms in June 1793,[7] and to the records of the military tribunals set up to judge the insurgents of Prairial and Vendémiaire.[8]

While the composition of revolutionary crowds may emerge, more or less clearly, from such records, it is, perhaps not surprisingly, more difficult to determine the motives that drew

1890–1914); also M. Rouff, 'Le Personnel des premières émeutes de '89 à Paris', *La Révolution Française*, lvii (1909), 213–31.

[1] Thus, even a great work of social history like *La Vie chère et le mouvement social sous la Terreur* is based almost entirely on reports of speeches in the National Convention, the Paris Commune, and the Jacobin Club.

[2] Archives Nationales, series Y: archives du Châtelet de Paris; series Z: juridictions spéciales et ordinaires.

[3] Archives de la Préfecture de Police, series Aa: sections de Paris. Procès-verbaux des commissaires de police.

[4] Archives Nationales, series F^7 (police générale).

[5] The most useful of these is the list of 662 *vainqueurs de la Bastille* among the Osselin papers of the Archives Nationales, series T 514(1).

[6] Arch. Nat., F^15 3267–74; F^7 4426.

[7] Arch. Nat., BB^3 80.

[8] Arch. Nat., W 546–8, 556–8.

them together and led thousands of Parisians to participate in these movements. For this purpose, too, the police records have been a far more fruitful source than the usually tendentious accounts of memorialists, journalists, deputies, and government reporters. In addition to the police archives just cited, a valuable source is provided by the collections of *rapports*, or public-opinion surveys, of police agents of the Paris Commune, the Central Bureau of Police and the Ministry of the Interior, variously compiled by Schmidt, Caron, and Aulard for the period 1792 to 1795.[1] These reports are a mine of information on the reactions of small property-owners and wage-earners, in particular, to the events of these years. For the earlier years, there is no exact equivalent, though Hardy's manuscript *Journal* is more than an adequate substitute for the eve and outbreak of the Revolution.[2]

The police surveys are, besides, a useful source for the movements of prices and wages, which play a considerable part in the present volume. The main source for these, however, are the various statistical lists and occasional data found in series F^{12} and F^{13} of the Archives Nationales.[3]

It may perhaps seem surprising that fuller use has not been made of the *cahiers de doléances* of 1789 and of the papers of the Paris Sections of 1790–5, which have been listed and (for the 'Year II') used to such good advantage by Albert Soboul.[4] But it must be remembered that the *sans-culottes*, from whom the great bulk of rioters and insurgents were drawn, had little to say in the drafting of the *cahiers*—least of all in Paris. Again, they played little or no part in the general assemblies or committees of the Sections until after August 1792 and a predominant part only during the brief period June 1793 to July 1794; and this, being a period of strong government, was, with the single exception of September 1793, a phase of the

[1] A. Schmidt, *Tableaux de la Révolution française* (4 vols., Leipzig, 1867–71); P. Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur. Rapports des agents secrets du Ministre de l'Intérieur* (4 vols., Paris, 1910–49); A. Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne et sous le Directoire* (5 vols., Paris, 1898–1902).

[2] S. Hardy, *Mes loisirs, ou journal d'événements tels qu'ils parviennent à ma connoissance* (MS. in 8 vols., Paris, 1764–89. Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français, nos. 6680–7).

[3] For a fuller record of sources see Bibliography.

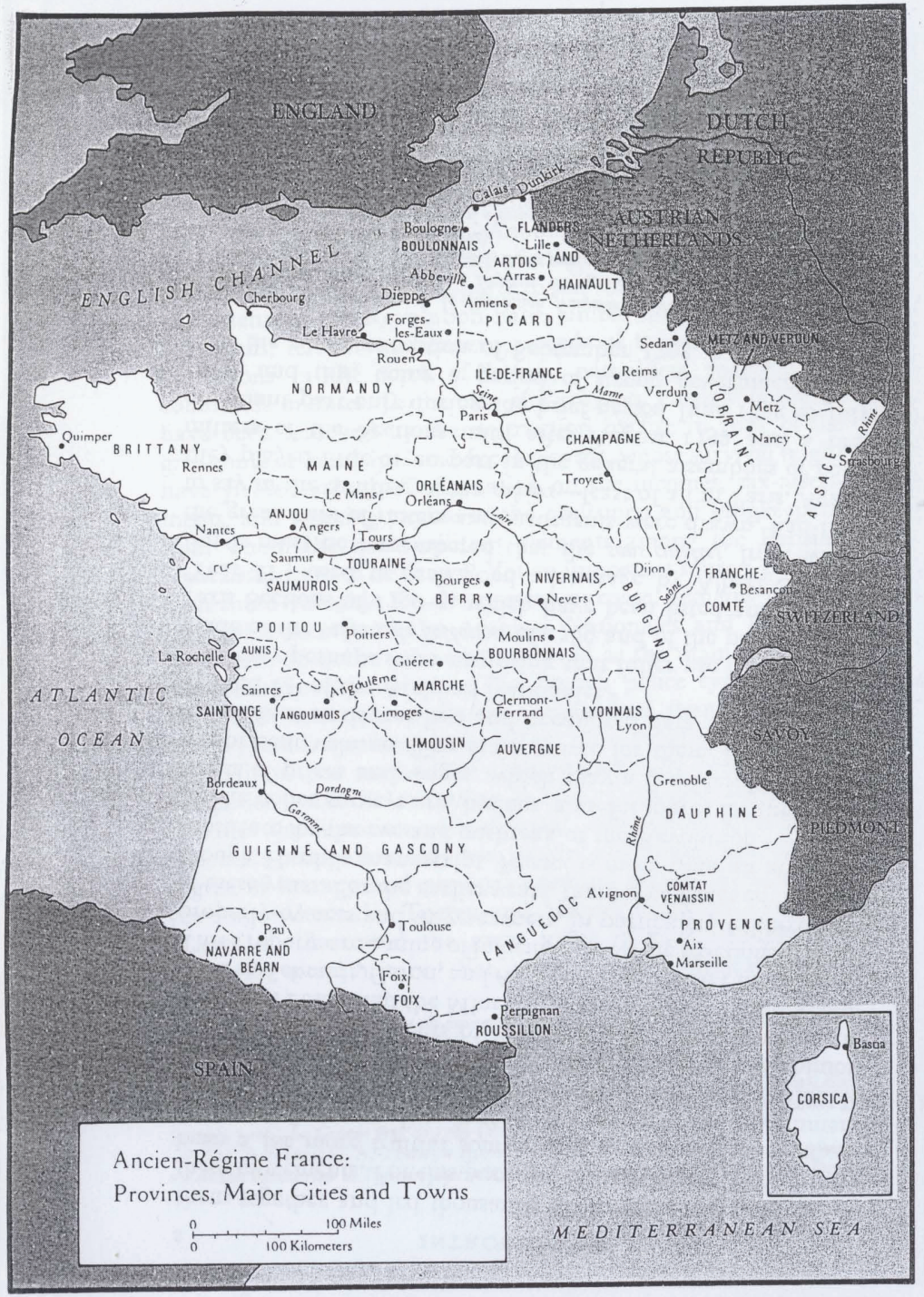
[4] A. Soboul, *Les Papiers des sections de Paris (1790–an IV)* (Paris, 1950); *Les Sans-Culottes parisiens en l'an II. Histoire politique et sociale des sections de Paris 2 juin 1793–9 thermidor an II* (to be published in autumn 1958); (with W. Markov), *Die Sansculotten von Paris: Dokumente zur Geschichte der Volksbewegung 1793–1794* (Berlin, 1957).

Revolution in Paris singularly unmarked by mass political disturbance.[1]

In the present volume, while dealing in the main with the revolutionary movements of 1789–95, I have attempted to bring into the picture the popular movements of the years 1787 and 1788 which, though preceding the outbreak of 1789, were a significant expression of the social and political ferment out of which the Revolution arose. Earlier historians, while appreciating the role of the *révolte nobiliaire* of those years as a curtain-raiser (if not an integral part) of the Revolution itself, have tended to neglect these movements—as they have tended, at the other end of the story, to neglect that of Vendémiaire of the Year IV (October 1795) which, though essentially a rising of middle-class property-owners, yet provoked a significant response from the Parisian *sans-culottes*. The present study may therefore perhaps claim to be original in so far as it attempts to present the Parisian revolutionary crowd (in its broadest sense) throughout the period 1787–95—showing how it behaved, how it was composed, how it was drawn into activity, what it set out to achieve, and how far its aims were realized. To do this it is proposed, in the first place, to relate those episodes of the Revolution in Paris, and of the years immediately preceding, in which a decisive factor was the mass intervention, in streets and markets, of mainly ordinary men and women: these outbursts were, with the exception of the year 1790 (a period of remarkable social calm), an almost continuous feature of the life of the capital during the first six years of the Revolution and for nearly two years before its outbreak. Following this, some general conclusions will be drawn from the composition, behaviour, springs of action, and aims of the crowds engaged in these various movements.

But first the reader must be introduced, if only briefly, to the social and historical background against which the events of the Revolution in Paris took place.

[1] Some revision of Part II, chapter 9 (dealing with the period September 1793–July 1794) may, however, be called for with the publication of M. Soboul's work on *Les Sans-Culottes parisiens*.



Ancien-Régime France:
Provinces, Major Cities and Towns

Simon Schama –
'Citizens'

Preface

ASKED WHAT he thought was the significance of the French Revolution, the Chinese Premier Zhou En-lai is reported to have answered, "It's too soon to tell." Two hundred years may still be too soon (or, possibly, too late) to tell.

Historians have been overconfident about the wisdom to be gained by distance, believing it somehow confers objectivity, one of those unattainable values in which they have placed so much faith. Perhaps there is something to be said for proximity. Lord Acton, who delivered the first, famous lectures on the French Revolution at Cambridge in the 1870s, was still able to hear firsthand, from a member of the Orléans dynasty, the man's recollection of "Dumouriez gibbering on the streets of London when hearing the news of Waterloo."

Suspicion that blind partisanship fatally damaged the great Romantic narratives of the first half of the nineteenth century dominated scholarly reaction during the second half. As historians institutionalized themselves into an academic profession, they came to believe conscientious research in the archives could confer dispassion: the prerequisite for winkling out the mysterious truths of cause and effect. The desired effect was to be scientific rather than poetic, impersonal rather than impassioned. And while, for some time, historical narratives remained preoccupied by the life cycle of the European nation-states—wars, treaties and dethronements—the magnetic pull of social science was such that "structures," both social and political, seemed to become the principal objects of inquiry.

In the case of the French Revolution this meant transferring attention away from the events and personalities that had dominated the epic chronicles of the 1830s and 1840s. De Tocqueville's luminous account, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, the product of his own archival research, provided cool reason where before there had been the burning quarrels of partisanship. The Olympian quality of his insights reinforced (albeit from a liberal point of view) the Marxist-scientific claim that the signi[illegible] the Revolution was to be sought in some great chang[illegible]

social power. In both these views, the utterances of orators were little more than vaporous claptrap, unsuccessfully disguising their helplessness at the hands of impersonal historical forces. Likewise, the ebb and flow of events could only be made intelligible by being displayed to reveal the *essential*, primarily social, truths of the Revolution. At the core of those truths was an axiom, shared by liberals, socialists and for that matter nostalgic Christian royalists alike, that the Revolution had indeed been the crucible of modernity: the vessel in which all the characteristics of the modern social world, for good or ill, had been distilled.

By the same token, if the whole event was of this epochal significance, then the causes that generated it had necessarily to be of an equivalent magnitude. A phenomenon of such uncontrollable power that it apparently swept away an entire universe of traditional customs, mentalities and institutions could only have been produced by contradictions that lay embedded deep within the fabric of the "old regime." Accordingly, weighty volumes appeared, between the centennial of 1889 and the Second World War, documenting every aspect of those structural faults. Biographies of Danton and Mirabeau disappeared, at least from respectable scholarly presses, and were replaced by studies of price fluctuations in the grain market. At a later stage still, discrete social groups placed in articulated opposition to each other—the "bourgeoisie," "sans-culottes,"—were defined and anatomized and their dialectical dance routines were made the exclusive choreography of revolutionary politics.

In the fifty years since the sesquicentennial, there has been a serious loss of confidence in this approach. The drastic social changes imputed to the Revolution seem less clear-cut or actually not apparent at all. The "bourgeoisie" said in the classic Marxist accounts to have been the authors and beneficiaries of the event have become social zombies, the product of historiographical obsessions rather than historical realities. Other alterations in the modernization of French society and institutions seem to have been anticipated by the reform of the "old regime." Continuities seem as marked as discontinuities.

Nor does the Revolution seem any longer to conform to a grand historical design, preordained by inexorable forces of social change. Instead it seems a thing of contingencies and unforeseen consequences (not least the summoning of the Estates-General itself). An abundance of fine provincial studies has shown that instead of a single Revolution imposed by Paris on the rest of a homogeneous France, it was as often determined by local passions and interests. Along with the revival of place as a conditioner have come people. For as the imperatives of "structure" have weakened, those of individual agency, and especially of revolutionary utterance, have become correspondingly more important.

Citizens is an attempt to synthesize much of this reappraisal and to push the argument a stage further. I have pressed one of the essential elements in de Tocqueville's argument—his understanding of the destabilizing effects of modernization *before* the Revolution—further than his account allows it to go. Relieved of the revolutionary coinage "old regime," with its heavy semantic freight of obsolescence, it may be possible to see French culture and society in the reign of Louis XVI as troubled more by its addiction to change than by resistance to it. Conversely, it seems to me that much of the anger firing revolutionary violence arose from hostility towards that modernization, rather than from impatience with the speed of its progress.

The account given in the pages that follow, then, emphasizes, possibly excessively, the dynamic aspects of prerevolutionary France without turning a blind eye to the genuinely obstructive and archaic. Important to its argument is the claim that a patriotic culture of citizenship was created in the decades after the Seven Years' War, and that it was thus a cause rather than a product of the French Revolution.

Three themes are developed in the course of this argument. The first concerns the problematic relationship between patriotism and liberty, which, in the Revolution, turns into a brutal competition between the power of the state and the effervescence of politics. The second theme turns on the eighteenth-century belief that citizenship was, in part, the public expression of an idealized family. The stereotyping of moral relations between the sexes, parents and children, and brothers, turns out, perhaps unexpectedly, to be a significant clue to revolutionary behavior. Finally, the book attempts to confront directly the painful problem of revolutionary violence. Anxious lest they give way to sensationalism or be confused with counter-revolutionary prosecutors, historians have erred on the side of squeamishness in dealing with this issue. I have returned it to the center of the story since it seems to me that it was not merely an unfortunate by-product of politics, or the disagreeable instrument by which other more virtuous ends were accomplished or vicious ones were thwarted. In some depressingly unavoidable sense, violence *was* the Revolution itself.

I have chosen to present these arguments in the form of a narrative. If, in fact, the Revolution was a much more haphazard and chaotic event and much more the product of human agency than structural conditioning, chronology seems indispensable in making its complicated twists and turns intelligible. So *Citizens* returns, then, to the form of the nineteenth-century chronicles, allowing different issues and interests to shape the flow of the story as they arise, year after year, month after month. I have also, perhaps perversely, deliberately eschewed the conventional "survey" format by which various aspects of the society of the old regime are canvassed before attempting political description. Placing those imposing chapters on "the

economy," "the peasantry," "the nobility" and the like at the front of books automatically, it seems to me, privileges their explanatory force. I have not, I hope, ignored any of these social groups, but have tried to introduce them at the points in the narrative where they affect the course of events. This, in turn, has dictated an unfashionable "top down" rather than "bottom up" approach.

Narratives have been described, by Hayden White among others, as a kind of fictional device used by the historian to impose a reassuring order on randomly arriving bits of information about the dead. There is a certain truth to this alarming insight, but my own point of departure was provided by a richly suggestive article by David Carr in *History and Theory* (1986), in which he argued a quite different and ingenious case for the validity of the narrative. As artificial as written narratives might be, they often correspond to ways in which historical actors construct events. That is to say, many, if not most, public men see their conduct as in part situated between role models from an heroic past and expectations of the judgment of posterity. If ever this was true, it was surely so for the revolutionary generation in France. Cato, Cicero and Junius Brutus stood at the shoulders of Mirabeau, Vergniaud and Robespierre, but very often they beckoned their devotees towards conduct that would be judged by the generations of the future.

Finally, the narrative, as will be obvious, weaves between the private and public lives of the citizens who appear on its pages. This is done not only in an attempt to understand their motivation more deeply than pure public utterance allows, but also because so many of them, often to their ruin, saw their own lives as a seamless whole, their calendar of birth, love, ambition and death imprinted on the almanac of great events. This necessary interconnection between personal and public histories was self-evident in many of the nineteenth-century narratives and, to the extent that I have followed their precedent, what I have to offer, too, runs the risk of being seen as a mischievously old-fashioned piece of storytelling. It differs from the pre-Tocquevillian narratives in being offered more as witness than judgment. But like those earlier accounts it tries to listen attentively to the voice of the citizens whose lives it describes, even when those voices are at their most cacophonous. In this sense too it opts for chaotic authenticity over the commanding neatness of historical convention.

IT WAS Richard Cobb who first preached the "Biographical Approach" to the history of the Revolution twenty years ago, though he mostly had in mind the unsung victims of revolutionary turmoil rather than those who had been responsible for it. I hope, then, he won't take amiss my own declaration of allegiance to that approach. From his unforgettable seminar in Balliol College in the late 1960s, I learned to try to see the Revolution not as a march of abstractions and ideologies but as a human event of complicated and often tragic outcomes. Other members of that seminar—Colin Lucas; Olwen Hufton, now my colleague at Harvard University; and Marianne Elliott—have over the years been an enormous source of enlightenment and scholarly friendship, for which this book is a rather blundering gesture of gratitude.

One of my greatest debts is to another of my colleagues, Patrice Higonnet, who has been kind enough to read the manuscript and save me from many (though I fear not all) errors and muddles. Much of what I have to say, especially concerning the group I call the "citizen-nobility," owes its point of departure to his important and original work *Class, Ideology and the Rights of Nobles During the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1981). Other friends—John Brewer, John Clive and David Harris Sacks—also read parts of the work and were, as always, generous with their comments and helpful with their criticisms.

My preoccupation with reexamining the oratory of the Revolution, and with the self-consciousness of the political elite, originates with a paper given to the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1979. I am most grateful to Owen Connelly for inviting me to participate in a memorable panel that also included Elisabeth Eisenstein and George V. Taylor. It was at Charleston that long conversations with Lynn Hunt helped stimulate my interest in the force of revolutionary language and I am grateful to her and to Tom Laqueur for their interest and encouragement since. Robert Darnton, whose first book on Mesmerism and the late Enlightenment set me thinking many years ago about the sources of revolutionary truculence, on far more occasions than he deserves has had to hear me out. He has always offered helpful advice and gentle correction and has been a constant source of inspiration.

The book could not have been written without the posthumous help of one of Harvard's most extraordinary scholars: Archibald Cary Coolidge, University Librarian in the 1920s. By buying the entire library of Alphonse Aulard, the first professor of the history of the Revolution at the Sorbonne, Coolidge created a priceless resource for scholars working in this field: a collection as rich in newspapers and pamphlets as it is in extremely rare and obscure works of local history. I am most grateful, as always, to the splendid staff of the Houghton Library, without whose patience and efficiency hard-pressed professors would find it impossible to do research in a busy teaching year. Susan Reinstein Rogers and her colleagues at the [illegible] Library of the Harvard Business School have been helpful [illegible]

Norman Hampson

Preface

FROM one point of view major social revolutions are like geological faults. The rolling evolution of the historical landscape is suddenly broken and the continuity of its strata interrupted. What follows is conditioned by what went before, but is not a direct continuation of it. Unlike geological faults, however, social revolutions are the product—however unexpected and unwelcome—of human action. Structural changes which have been proceeding at a slow pace, without deliberate central planning and often without any clear awareness of their cumulative significance, suddenly become an object of political attention. The social history of a revolution is therefore essentially different from that of a society in peaceful evolution, since political action becomes more closely involved in the process of accelerated social change. The nature, extent and significance of the revolutionary modifications in the structure of a society are conditioned by the political context in which they are brought about. To quote only one example, the question of whether change is achieved by consent or imposed by force may be a matter of politics, but the solution adopted will influence both the structure and the social cohesion of the community involved.

This fusion of social and political factors is particularly marked in the case of the French Revolution. To an extent that has probably no parallel in modern European history, the Revolution was a maelstrom of social aspirations ranging from the restoration of an aristocratic society to the creation of a welfare state controlled by a monolithic and totalitarian government. In 1789 aristocrats were demanding the appointment of official genealogists to verify noble ancestry. Within five years revolutionary extremists were struggling with the problems of a national health service and wages policy in national industries. Social aspirations, whether 'reactionary' or 'progressive',

ranged far beyond the practical limits imposed by the material conditions of late eighteenth-century society. What was achieved was a mere fraction of what was attempted. In consequence, a simple comparison of the social structure of France before and after the Revolution would be both inadequate and misleading, since the final result was conditioned by the false starts and lost illusions that had preceded it.

A social history of the French Revolution must therefore take account of politics, because a substantial part of politics was concerned with changing social structure. I have consequently tried to integrate social analysis with a description of how social interests and aspirations shaped political movements and how political action modified both the structure of society and what people thought about society and their own place within it. This has involved the adoption of a broadly chronological treatment of the subject and the inclusion of a fair amount of detail on some aspects of revolutionary politics, since it is in the detail that social attitudes are often most clearly revealed and it is only by understanding the complexity of the revolutionary situation as a whole that one can appreciate the specific aims of those who wished to effect social changes and the means which they decided to employ.

Anyone who tries to investigate the social history of the Revolution is immediately aware, despite the overwhelming literature on the subject, of important aspects about which very little is yet known. On any number of subjects, such as the way of life of the provincial gentry at the end of the ancien régime, the use made of the capital paid in compensation for offices whose venality was abolished, the extent to which feudal dues continued to be paid between 1789 and 1792, even the consequences of the sale of the property of the Church and of the *émigré* nobility, information is fragmentary if not totally inadequate. This is all the more serious a handicap to the historian since it is becoming increasingly apparent that conditions in France, both before and during the Revolution, varied very widely indeed from one area to another. A detailed survey of one Department—which itself may be a collection of contrasts—offers no safe basis for generalization about others. Anything in the nature of statistical precision is therefore, for the present at least, out of the question, and it is not possible to do more

than make a tentative assessment of the extent to which a known situation in one area corresponded to conditions elsewhere.

Within the dimensions of a book of this size it is often impossible to do more than hint at the range of local variations, even when these are known. To some extent, interpretations that would be better qualified have to be given a categorical form and generalizations advanced without the exceptions that would tie them more closely to the evidence. If the result is at times nearer to a caricature than a portrait, I can only hope that the inevitable oversimplification, without unduly distorting the proportions of the whole, has emphasized some of the main issues that might otherwise disappear in a mass of detail.

This study is intended primarily for the general reader. Although I have not hesitated to omit political aspects of the Revolution which had no direct social repercussions, I have tried to include enough of the basic framework of events to make the whole intelligible to those without any previous knowledge of the period. At the same time, I hope to have provided some new evidence in support of familiar arguments and some controversial interpretations that may interest, and perhaps provoke, readers already acquainted with the subject. If I can help to stimulate those who are unable to accept my own views into evolving new syntheses of their own, I shall be gratified to have contributed this link to the endless chain of French revolutionary studies.

I am happy to have this opportunity of acknowledging my debt to those who have assisted me in the preparation of this book, notably to Harold Perkin, the most helpful and tolerant of editors, to Professor A. Goodwin, and to Malcolm Anderson for their great kindness in reading the manuscript and correcting many inaccuracies, and to Richard Cobb for allowing me to read in proof the second volume of a thesis that is one of the major contemporary works on the Revolution. I am indebted also to the staff of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and particularly to the librarian and staff of the John Rylands Library, for their unfailing courtesy and helpfulness. Finally, I would like to thank my students at Manchester University for teaching me while I taught them.

Manchester
January 1963

To the memory of the late

J. M. THOMPSON

In England, after the revolutions of the seventeenth century, gentlemen and bourgeois joined to share power with the king; in the United States they dispensed with the monarch by common agreement; on the continent hereditary kings, yielding to historical change during the nineteenth century, retained control and arranged compromises. In France, on the contrary, the nobility intended both to impose itself on the king and to hold the bourgeoisie down. To oppose the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie became the apostle of the equality of rights, and when popular force stepped in the Old Regime abruptly gave way. The aristocracy lost not only its privileges but also a portion of its wealth and, consequently, of its social authority. Artisans and peasants, however, supporting the 'notables' in their struggle, turned the same principle of equal rights upon the bourgeois, who had used it to arm themselves, and the Revolution for a time led first to political democracy and then to an embryonic social democracy.

Accelerating its development with these sharp changes, the Revolution stirred fervent hopes beyond its frontiers. It also, however, aroused violent reaction from threatened kings and aristocrats. Thus, from 1789 to 1815, the history of countries of European culture was to a large extent determined by this great event.

Its influence has not yet ceased to play a role in men's lives. Nevertheless, if we today are for that reason inclined to view the French Revolution as one chapter in world history, the reader must not expect that feature to characterize the Revolution at the time it took place. Then, much of the world lay outside European dominion; the great civilizations which had developed under Islam and those in India, China, and Japan had not yet opened to the European spirit. The greater part of contemporary humanity was unaware of the flame that had been kindled in a small area of the world, or else did not feel its heat. The unity of the world is beginning to be realized in our time; only when it is achieved will a truly universal history begin.

I

THE WORLD ON THE EVE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Lefebvre

Introduction

THE ORIGINS of the Revolution of 1789 lie deep in French history; the basic outcome of the Revolution hastened the nation's development without altering its historical direction. Begun by the 'patricians', as Chateaubriand remarked, the Revolution seemed to be the final episode in the aristocracy's struggle against the Capetian monarchy, and thereby it ended the long history of the kingdom. Completed by the 'plebeians', it made certain the advent of the bourgeoisie. Thus it inaugurated the history of modern France, but nonetheless capped the era preceding it, for the germination of that class within the feudal world it undermined was one major aspect of a long-term development.

Neither of these features sets France apart from Europe. All European states were formed similarly, at the expense of the lords, and all were sooner or later dominated by the rising bourgeoisie. The French Revolution was not the first which benefited a middle-class—before it, two revolutions in England and one in America were landmarks in that evolution.

Viewed in the broad development of civilization, the Revolution has greater significance. After the barbarian invasions ended, a passion for conquest drove Europeans towards domination of the globe, towards discovery and control of natural forces. At the same time a bold determination to govern the economy, society, and manners grew stronger—for the welfare of the individual and the improvement of mankind. The bourgeoisie of 1789 guaranteed freedom of research to the scholar, freedom of enterprise to the producer, and at the same time undertook to rationalize the ordering of politics and society. The French Revolution denotes one step in the destiny of the Western world.

Nevertheless, as its power grew the bourgeoisie could have stepped into government without breaking with the aristocracy.

tumult of dazzling jagged fire, in a world all electric: thou wilt not undertake to show how that comported itself,—what the secrets of its dark womb were; from what sources, with what specialties, the lightning it held did, in confused brightness of terror, strike forth, destructive and self-destructive, till it ended? Like a blackness naturally of Erebus, which by will of Providence had for once mounted itself into dominion and the Azure: is not this properly the nature of Sansculottism consummating itself? Of which Erebus Blackness be it enough to discern that this and the other dazzling fire-bolt, dazzling fire-torrent, does by small Volition and great Necessity, verily issue,—in such and such succession; destructive so and so, self-destructive so and so: till it end.

Royalism is extinct, 'sunk,' as they say, 'in the mud of the Loire;' Republicanism dominates without and within: what, therefore, on the 15th day of March, 1794, is this? Arrestment, sudden really as a bolt out of the Blue, has hit strange victims: Hébert *Père Duchesne*, Bibliopolist Momoro, Clerk Vincent, General Ronsin; high Cordelier Patriots, redcapped Magistrates of Paris, Worshippers of Reason, Commanders of Revolutionary Army! Eight short days ago, their Cordelier Club was loud, and louder than ever, with Patriot denunciations. Hébert *Père Duchesne* had "held his tongue and his heart these two months, at sight of Moderates, Crypto-Aristocrats, Camilles, *Scélérats* in the Convention itself: but could not do it any longer: would, if other remedy were not, invoke the sacred right of Insurrection." So spake Hébert in Cordelier Session; with vivats, till the roofs rang again. Eight short days ago; and now already! They rub their eyes: it is no dream: they find themselves in the Luxembourg. Goose Gobel too; and they that burnt Churches! Chaumette himself, potent Procureur, *Agent National* as they now call it, who could 'recognise the Suspect by the very face of them,' he lingers but three days; on the third day he too is hurled in. Most chopfallen, blue, enters the National Agent this Limbo whither he has sent so many. Prisoners crowd round, jibing and jeering; "Sublime National Agent," says one, "in virtue of thy immortal Proclamation, lo there! I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is suspect, we are suspect, ye are suspect, they are suspect!"

The meaning of these things? Meaning! It is a Plot Plot of the most extensive ramifications; which, however,

Carlyle

Barrère holds the threads of. Such Church-burning and scandalous masquerades of Atheism, fit to make the Revolution odious: where indeed could they originate but in the gold of Pitt? Pitt indubitably, as Preternatural Insight will teach one, did hire this Faction of *Enragés*, to play their fantastic tricks; to roar in their Cordeliers Club about Moderatism; to print their *Père Duchesne;* worship skyblue Reason in red nightcap; rob all Altars,—and bring the spoil to *us!*

Still more indubitable, visible to the mere bodily sight, is this: that the Cordeliers Club sits pale, with anger and terror; and has 'veiled the Rights of Man,'—without effect. Likewise that the Jacobins are in considerable confusion: busy 'purging themselves, *s'épurant*,' as in times of Plot and public Calamity they have repeatedly had to do. Not even Camille Desmoulins but has given offence: nay there have risen murmurs against Danton himself; though he bellowed them down, and Robespierre finished the matter by 'embracing him in the Tribune.'

Whom shall the Republic and a jealous Mother-Society trust? In these times of temptation, of Preternatural Insight! For there are, Factions of the Stranger, '*de l'étranger*,' Factions of Moderates, of Enraged; all manner of Factions: we walk in a world of Plots; strings universally spread, of deadly gins and falltraps, baited by the gold of Pitt! Clootz, Speaker of Mankind so-called, with his *Evidences of Mahometan Religion*, and babble of Universal Republic, him an incorruptible Robespierre has purged away. Baron Clootz, and Paine rebellious Needleman lie, these two months, in the Luxembourg; limbs of the Faction *de l'étranger*. Representative Phélippeaux is purged out: he came back from La Vendée with an ill report in his mouth against rogue Rossignol, and our method of warfare there. Recant it, O Phélippeaux, we entreat thee! Phélippeaux will not recant; and is purged out. Representative Fabre d'Églantine, famed Nomenclator of Romme's Calendar, is purged out; nay, is cast into the Luxembourg: accused of Legislative Swindling 'in regard to moneys of the India Company.' There with his Chabots, Bazires, guilty of the like, let Fabre wait his destiny. And Westermann, friend of Danton, he who led the Marseillese on the Tenth of August, and fought well in La Vendée, but spoke not well of rogue Rossignol, is purged out. Lucky, if he too go not to the Luxembourg. And your Prolys, Guzmans, of the Faction of the Stranger, they have gone; Pereyra, though he fled, is gone,

'taken in the disguise of a Tavern Cook.' I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is suspect!—

The great heart of Danton is weary of it. Danton is gone to native Arcis, for a little breathing-time of peace: Away, black Arachne-webs, thou world of Fury, Terror and Suspicion; welcome, thou everlasting Mother, with thy spring greenness, thy kind household loves and memories; true art thou, were all else untrue! The great Titan walks silent, by the banks of the murmuring Aube, in young native haunts that knew him when a boy; wonders what the end of these things may be.

But strangest of all, Camille Desmoulins is purged out. Couthon gave as a test in regard to Jacobin purgation the question, 'What hast thou done to be hanged if Counter-Revolution should arrive?' Yet Camille, who could so well answer this question, is purged out! The truth is, Camille, early in December last, began publishing a new Journal, or Series of Pamphlets, entitled the *Vieux Cordelier*, Old Cordelier. Camille, not afraid at one time to 'embrace Liberty on a heap of dead bodies,' begins to ask now, Whether among so many arresting and punishing Committees, there ought not to be a 'Committee of Mercy?' Saint-Just, he observes, is an extremely solemn young Republican, who 'carries his head as if it were a *Saint-Sacrement*,' adorable Hostie, or divine Real-Presence! Sharply enough, this *old* Cordelier,—Danton and he were of the earliest primary Cordeliers,—shoots his glittering war-shafts into your *new* Cordeliers, your Héberts, Momoros, with their brawling brutalities and despicabilities; say, as the Sun god (for poor Camille is a Poet) shot into that Python Serpent, sprung of mud.

Whereat, as was natural, the Hébertist Python did hiss and writhe amazingly; and threaten 'sacred right of Insurrection;' —and, as we saw, get cast into Prison. Nay, with all the old wit, dexterity and light graceful poignancy, Camille, translating 'out of *Tacitus*, from the Reign of Tiberius,' pricks into the *Law of the Suspect* itself; making it odious! Twice, in the Decade, his wild Leaves issue; full of wit, nay of humour, of harmonious ingenuity and insight,—one of the strangest phenomena of that dark time; and smite, in their wild-sparkling way, at various monstrosities, Saint-Sacrament heads, and Juggernaut idols, in a rather reckless manner. To the great joy of Josephine Beauharnais, and the other Five-thousand and odd Suspect, who fill the Twelve Houses of Arrest; on whom a ray of hope dawns! Robespierre, at first

approbatory, knew not at last what to think; then thought, with his Jacobins, that Camille must be expelled. A man of true Revolutionary spirit, this Camille; but with the unwisest sallies; whom Aristocrats and Moderates have the art to corrupt; Jacobinism is in uttermost crisis and struggle; enmeshed wholly in plots, corruptibilities, neck-gins and baited falltraps of Pitt *Ennemi du Genre Humain*. Camille's First Number begins with '*O Pitt!*'—his last is dated 15 Pluviose Year 2, 3d February 1794, and ends with these words of Montezuma's, '*Les dieux ont soif*, The gods are athirst.'

Be this as it may, the Hébertists lie in Prison only some nine days. On the 24th of March, therefore, the Revolution Tumbrils carry through that Life-tumult a new cargo: Hébert, Vincent, Momoro, Ronsin, Nineteen of them in all; with whom, curious enough, sits Clootz Speaker of Mankind. They have been massed swiftly into a lump, this miscellany of Nondescripts; and travel now their last road. No help. They too must 'look through the little window;' they too must 'sneeze into the sack,' *éternuer dans le sac;* as they have done to others, so is it done to them. *Sainte-Guillotine*, meseems, is worse than the old Saints of Superstition, a man-devouring Saint? Clootz, still with an air of polished sarcasm, endeavours to jest, to offer cheering 'arguments of Materialism;' he requested to be executed last, 'in order to establish certain principles,'—which hitherto, I think, Philosophy has got no good of. General Ronsin too, he still looks forth with some air of defiance, eye of command: the rest are sunk in a stony paleness of despair. Momoro, poor Bibliopolist, no Agrarian Law yet realised,—they might as well have hanged thee at Evreux, twenty months ago, when Girondin Buzot hindered them. Hébert *Père Duchesne* shall never in this world rise in sacred right of insurrection; he sits there low enough, head sunk on breast; Red Nightcaps shouting round him, in frightful parody of his Newspaper Articles, "Grand choler of the Père Duchesne!" Thus perish they; the sack receives all their heads. Through some section of History, Nineteen spectre-chimeras shall flit, squeaking and gibbering; till Oblivion swallow them.

In the course of a week, the Revolutionary Army itself is disbanded; the General having become spectral. This Faction of Rabids, therefore, is also purged from the Republican soil; here also the baited falltraps of that Pitt have