

**Order and Democracy in Paris from the Oath of the Clergy to
the Tricolour Terror, January-August 1791**

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THESIS ABSTRACT

The first chapters of this thesis explore the picture of eighteenth-century Parisian popular culture emerging from recent research, and suggest how it may be incorporated into a history of Parisian popular disturbances in 1789. Developing themes from this, the thesis explores the interaction in 1791 between popular perceptions of the revolutionary situation and the perceptions of popular activity by the authorities and other opinion-forming groups, notably the press and the popular societies. The picture which emerges from comparison of police records with press and administrative reports is one of near-paranoid suspicion.

Suspicion focused on the conception that popular discontent over socio-economic and political issues was necessarily the product of ignorance coupled with rabble-rousing by agents of aristocratic factions. In a situation of rising political tensions, stimulated by dissent amongst the clergy and royal reluctance to approve the new settlement, records show popular concerns over these events falling into spirals of growing alarm, as the press reflected back to the people the fears that their activities were provoking. Confusion over the identity of alleged seditious elements, coupled with social prejudices continuing from the *ancien régime*, made this process chronically destabilising, and eventually led to the Champ de Mars Massacre.

The thesis concludes that individuals at all social levels appear to have had a meaningful engagement with the issues of freedom and equality raised by the promises of the Revolution, but that attempts to express these independently by members of the lower classes led to conflict and repression. It further suggests a path from this position to a new hypothesis on the formation of the sans-culottes under the Republic.

CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Note on Sources	5
Acknowledgements	6
Introduction	7

Part One - Background and Institutions	
Chapter 1 - Recent Developments in Understandings of	
eighteenth-century Parisian Popular Culture	18
Chapter 2 - Political Upheaval and Social Continuity, 1787-9	35
Chapter 3 - Change and Continuity in Parisian Policing from the	
<i>Ancien Régime</i> to the Revolutionaries of 1791	52
Chapter 4 - Papers, Pamphlets and Popular Societies: Discourses	
of Disorder?	74

Part Two - The Course of Events, January-July 1791	
Chapter 5 - Beginning the Descent: Conditions in Paris in Early 1791	
5.1 - Political Suspicions before Easter	95
5.2 - The Role of the Clergy in Disorder	110
Chapter 6 - From Aristocracy to Sedition: The Shift in Social	
Tensions, April-June 1791	
6.1 - The Easter Crisis	120
6.2 - Social and Economic Concerns	129
6.3 - Popular Political Awareness, May-June	142

Chapter 7 - Tension Becomes Confrontation: From Varennes to the Champ de Mars, 21 June-16 July	
7.1 - Responses to the Flight	155
7.2 - The Constitution in the Balance: Events after the King's Return	164

Part Three - The Massacre: Order <i>versus</i> Democracy?	
Chapter 8 - The Events of 17 July Through the Eyes of Police and People	
8.1 - Before the Horror	181
8.2 - First Reactions	188
8.3 - Turmoil at Nightfall	191
Chapter 9 - The Aftermath: Reactions on 18 July and Beyond	202

Chapter 10 - Conclusion	
10.1 - August 1791: Aftershocks	220
10.2 - Analysis	223
Bibliography	240

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON SOURCES

APP	-	Archives de la Préfecture de Police, Paris
BL	-	British Library, London
BN	-	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
Lacroix	-	Sigismond Lacroix, <i>Actes de la Commune de Paris</i> , second series, 9 volumes, (Paris, 1901-12)

All texts quoted are as in the original, including orthographic and grammatical errors. At points where a word was illegible, this is noted in square brackets. Other words within square brackets are either tentative decipherings, or represent reinterpretations of what appears to be a phonetic spelling.

Manuscripts from the police records are identified by their series followed by two numbers, which indicate for series AA the carton and folio, and for series AB the register and case number; for example, APP AA85:123 or AB323:1234. See Bibliography for further details.

Where a quotation from a contemporary journal has been identified in the text by author or title and date, the reference has not been footnoted, other than to supply supplementary information.

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DRA

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INTRODUCTION

The study of Paris in early 1791 illuminates a number of themes which can be seen as central to the history of the French Revolution - the birth of clerical opposition, and consequent violent anticlericalism; the questioning of the King's role in the Revolution, both from royalist and republican viewpoints; and the birth of the *sociétés populaires*, which marks the emergence of something akin to a 'popular movement'. This last point is of greatest interest to us here, although the notion of such a movement has not been well-treated by recent historiography. With the passing of the *marxisant* orthodoxy of 'social revolution, a positive analysis of the actions of the people has left centre-stage, to be replaced either by high politics and discourse, or by interpretations which amount to little more than shrill denunciations of *la canaille*.¹

Albert Soboul enshrined the notion of the *sans-culotte* popular movement in his magisterial treatment of that subject, but while in recent years some authors have gone on producing works which seek to link the early Revolution teleologically to Soboul's schema, this model itself now faces a head-on challenge.² In 1986 Richard M. Andrews published an article summarising and expanding the assault on Soboul's characterisation of the sans-culottes originally launched in his doctoral thesis, now over twenty years old.³ Andrews' arguments seem to undermine Soboul's entire conception, simply by shifting the angle of perception on the sans-culottes' social origins.

Soboul never tried to conceal the heterogeneous social nature of the movement, embracing various

¹For the former, see the by-now classic F. Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, (Cambridge, 1981), originally published as *Penser la Révolution française*, (Paris, 1978); for the latter, S. Schama, *Citizens, a Chronicle of the French Revolution*, (New York, 1989), or J.F. Bosher, *The French Revolution*, (London, 1989). For a moderate, but still 'non-social' interpretation, see W. Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, (Oxford, 1989), and a brief survey of the historiographical field, which ends with a plea to restore something of the relevance of *question sociale*, see G. Lewis, *The French Revolution: Rethinking the debate*, (London, 1993).

²A. Soboul, *Les Sans-culottes parisiens en l'An II: Mouvement populaire et Gouvernement révolutionnaire*, (Paris, 1958). The main subsidiary works on the early Revolution are M. Genty, *Paris 1789-1795: L'Apprentissage de la Citoyenneté*, (Paris, 1987), and R.B. Rose, *The Making of the Sans-culottes: Democratic ideas and institutions in Paris, 1789-1792*, (Manchester, 1983).

³R.M. Andrews, 'Social structures, political élites and ideology in revolutionary Paris, 1792-4: a critical evaluation of Albert Soboul's *Les Sans-culottes* . . .' *Journal of Social History* 19, (1985-6), pp.71-112; 'Political élites and social conflicts in the Sections of Revolutionary Paris, 1792-An III', (unpub. D.Phil. Oxford, 1971).

educated strata as well as master-manufacturers and craftsmen above the level of simple workers or artisans. Indeed, as his own figures demonstrate, the higher social elements were predominant in leadership roles.⁴ Nonetheless, he did situate the movement in opposition to both the aristocracy and to the wealthy bourgeoisie, and on the side of consumers against producers - that is, essentially with the poor against the rich. Soboul argued that the sans-culotte movement was 'a coalition of disparate social elements . . . undermined by internal contradictions . . . contradictions which explain its incapacity to formulate a coherent policy . . .' This explains, 'in the last analysis, its political defeat.'⁵

In essence, this argument runs, the sans-culottes were not a coherent class with an unambiguous relationship to property and the means of production; therefore, although they represented the 'highest' state of social consciousness achieved in the Revolution, they were not equipped to carry through their policies decisively, as were the ruthless *bourgeoisie possédante*. What Soboul did, however, was to justify the sans-culottes by virtue of their 'passion for equality,' a desire which 'recalls the leveller (*nivelleur*) and anticipates the social democrat (*partageux*).'⁶

Put crudely, then, Soboul used his scholarship to situate the sans-culottes as possessors of revolutionary virtue. Their outlook was the most 'advanced' their time or place could achieve, and their role had to be emphasised as part of a history which would lead to true socialism and communism.⁷ Andrews almost entirely reverses this perception. Based on empirical study of the wealth and resources of leading activists, his work presents the sans-culottes as a group centring around the larger employers of manpower in their local areas, men who had for years dominated neighbourhood economic life, and who continued to do so throughout the Year II.⁸ For Andrews, the radical condemnation of wealth was directed more against its possessors' idleness and political timidity than anything else - the idleness of the poor was equally despised, and riches went relatively unchallenged if they belonged to good patriots. Perhaps most controversially, Andrews sees the entire economic programme of the sans-culottes - maximums on prices, requisitioning, assignat payment, economic terror in general - as devices of an employing class to curtail discontent in their workforce. A cheap regular food-supply and a ready stock

⁴See the English translation of parts of Soboul's work (by G. Lewis), *The Parisian Sans-culottes and the French Revolution, 1793-4*, (Oxford, 1964), pp.45-50.

⁵*ibid.* pp.23, 25, 33 and ch. 1 *passim*.

⁶*ibid.* p.248.

⁷Soboul explicitly makes this point in his conclusions: *ibid.* p.261.

⁸Andrews, 'Social structures', esp. pp.74-7, 83-92.

of peasant and *haut-bourgeois* scapegoats focused discontent away from the arena of wages or working-conditions.⁹ To his mind, the sans-culottes were also to be admired, but in this case for their rugged pragmatism and their stranglehold on Paris in 1792-3, rather than their perceived radicalism.

Andrews' case, certainly as presented in his 1986 article, is without doubt rhetorically overblown and deliberately, one might even say gratuitously, provocative. However, the empirical bases of his research into the wealth of certain sans-culottes appear unchallengeable. If his assertions have not raised an historiographical storm, this is perhaps as clear a sign as any that historians do not find the popular movement an interesting topic any more. The defence recently mounted by Raymonde Monnier, a long-time collaborator of Soboul's, and one of a shrinking band who still cling to the old orthodoxy, was forced to admit the pertinence of Andrews' material commentaries, while quibbling over details and trying in the last instance to restate the virtue of the sans-culottes in terms of their own rhetoric - 'un mouvement qui se voulait universel et fraternel.' Since the collapse of this rhetorical mask appears to be a *fait accompli*, it can hardly be reconstructed by pure assertion.¹⁰

Andrews has observed that the need now is for an exploration of the antecedents of the movement he portrays - a study superseding the works that pin their analyses to Soboul's principles. This is one of the reasons for the focus of this thesis, although it should not be seen as a search for Andrews' heroes - there are many questions still to be answered about his schema, and those working on earlier manifestations of the Parisian artisanate have dismissed it virtually out of hand as an excessively crude and instrumentalist view of socio-political relations.¹¹

The two historians who have done most in recent years to illuminate the artisanal world that has been assumed to underlie the sans-culotte movement are Steven L. Kaplan and Michael Sonenscher. In a succession of works, while not always in total agreement, they have largely reconstructed our understanding of the artisanal world of eighteenth-century France. Previously assumed to be a collection of small, relatively stable workshop units with a virtually patriarchal authority structure, this can now be seen as a site of intense movement and conflict. Workers and employers existed in complex webs of customary and economic relationships, often complicated by administrative and legal claims. Guild and

⁹Andrews, 'Social structures', pp.93-8.

¹⁰R. Monnier, 'La garde citoyenne, element de la démocratie parisienne' in M. Vovelle (ed.), *Paris et la Révolution: Actes du colloque de Paris I, 14-16 avril 1989*, (Paris, 1989), pp.147-159; esp. pp.152-3.

¹¹See M. Sonenscher, 'Artisans, sans-culottes and the French Revolution', in A. Forrest and P. Jones (eds.) *Reshaping France: town, country and region during the French Revolution*, (Manchester, 1991), pp.105-121; p.111.

journeyman identities were only two of numerous pegs upon which self-assertion could be hung, and were themselves not representative of any consistent solidarities.¹²

When moving into the field of the *sans-culottes*, however, these authors have in general confined themselves to cautious speculations. Kaplan ended his article on intra-guild conflicts, for example, by suggesting that the experience of power-struggles, cabals and corrupt electioneering may have educated men for a later role in the Sections. This, however, is as close as either writer has come to a view on the socio-political origins of *sans-culotterie*. Michael Sonenscher has been drawn into the field of speculations on the conceptual origins of the term and rhetoric of the *sans-culotte*. Suggesting at one point that the language of the popular movement was an adaptation to politics of a journeyman discourse used to assess their moral worth against their masters, he now seems to have let this idea lapse in favour of a meditation on the creation of the image of the *sans-culotte* by educated politicians out of a stock of theatrical and republican images of the common people.¹³ While this may be of some importance in its own right, and also seems to direct attention to the conceptual transformations associated with the struggles of the early popular societies against repression in mid-1791, it is unhelpful to the historian in search of clues as to the actual development of popular activity in the Revolution. For the story of such activity there is, of course, an alternative avenue available, that of the history of 'the crowd'.

The classic study in this area is that of George Rudé, dating from 1959.¹⁴ The book is a clear and convincing refutation of the notion that actors in the great revolutionary *journées* were no more than disreputable rabble. Beyond that, however, it has little to say. While the work has yet to be superseded as a piece of basic scholarship, in themselves its conclusions are almost staggeringly banal: the 'revolutionary crowd' represented a fair cross-section of the lower classes, their primary motivation for riot was hunger, but they were leavened with the political ideas of certain of the revolutionary bourgeoisie,

¹²M. Sonenscher, *op. cit.*, and *Work and Wages: Natural Law, politics and the eighteenth-century French trades*, (Cambridge, 1989); 'Journeymen, the Courts and the French trades, 1781-1791', *Past and Present* 114, (1987), pp.77-109; 'The *Sans-culottes* of the Year II: rethinking the language of labour in revolutionary France', *Social History* 9, (1984), pp.301-328. S.L. Kaplan, 'Réflexions sur la police du monde du travail, 1700-1815,' *Revue historique* 529, (1979), pp.17-77; 'Social Classification and Representation in the Corporate World of Eighteenth-Century France: Turgot's "Carnival."' In S. L. Kaplan and C.J. Koepp (eds.), *Work in France: Representations, meaning, organization, and practice*, (Ithaca, NY, 1986); pp.176-228; 'The character and implications of strife amongst masters in the guilds of eighteenth-century Paris', *Journal of Social History* 19, (1985-6), pp.631-647; 'La lutte pour la contrôle du marché du travail à Paris au XVIIIe siècle', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 36, (1989), pp.361-412.

¹³For the former, see Sonenscher, 'Sans-culottes of the Year II'; for the latter, Sonenscher, 'Artisans', and *Work and Wages*, ch.10.

¹⁴G. Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution*, (Oxford, 1959)

and in the end their actions retained 'an element of spontaneity that defies a more precise analysis.'¹⁵

One should not overly disparage a pioneering work that now shows its age, but certain specific weaknesses can also be pointed out in Rudé's text. Much of his judgment concerning the Champ de Mars events of 1791 will be called into question in the course of this thesis, but we may for now note a simple point. Rudé's sample of detainees for this period amounts to some 238 cases, and as he clearly states, they were drawn from the period 14 April to 15 November 1791.¹⁶ This is a different timespan to that chosen for this thesis, and begins in the heart of political and religious agitation at Easter, running on into the late autumn, by which time a new Constitution, a new Mayor and a new National Guard Commander had completely reshaped Parisian politics. These facts are not mentioned in Rudé's analysis, nor is any particular justification given for his timespan. Without such justification, it can only be viewed as arbitrary in the extreme, and liable to distort the picture of events he gives.

Beyond the banality of his conclusions and certain fragilities of methodology, Rudé can also be criticised for his conceptual framework. His use of the words 'revolutionary' and 'popular' as virtually synonymous with a radicalising influence on politics masks questions of the actual modes of popular action, and ignores any activities which do not fit into his pattern. Colin Lucas in a recent article has highlighted these problems, although his retaining of the ordering concept of 'the crowd' poses its own difficulties.¹⁷ Lucas proposes a model of crowd action which would see it before the Revolution, and in the events up to July 1789, as essentially looking to the constituted authorities to right the wrongs it is protesting about. The presence of the crowd is a temporary 'carnivalisation' of the normal modes of authority, even when this goes to the extreme of lynching Foulon and Berthier after appeals for them to be tried met with vacillation.¹⁸

From the October Days onwards, however, Lucas sees the crowd gradually moving closer to a position of real influence on the structure of power - moving the King to Paris, then in 1792 assisting in his dethroning, and by 31 May-2 June 1793, helping to reshape the legislature. This is a problematic analysis - in concrete terms, it could easily be argued that the true place of 'crowds' in Parisian politics under the Republic was in subsistence riots such as those of 25-6 February 1793, an episode that was

¹⁵Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.208-9, 228-31.

¹⁶*ibid.* pp.82n.2, 93.

¹⁷C. Lucas, 'The crowd and politics', in C. Lucas (ed.) *The French Revolution and the creation of modern political culture*, vol. II, *The political culture of the French Revolution*, (Oxford, 1988), pp.259-285; pp.260-1.

¹⁸*ibid.* pp.267-9.

roundly condemned by the revolutionaries in power. Moreover, the *journées* of 1792-3 seem to consist of mobilisations by the radical societies and Sections, and disciplined action by a considerable portion of the Parisian National Guard - scarcely spontaneous popular activity. Conceptually, Lucas relies on seeing 'the crowd' as an entity, indeed almost an organism, in which an evolution of behaviour can be perceived - when considered closely, this is of course an absurdity. Crowds are composed of individuals who happen to be in a certain location on a certain occasion, and, regardless of whether they gather by chance or intent, their behaviour has to be grasped in terms of the understandings of the individuals present, which is to say in terms of their culture. A crowd situation may liberate people from social restraints, and even carry its own dynamic, but if a crowd gathers *for* something, what that is must be in the minds of individuals before they 'merge' into the crowd. To look for evolution in crowd behaviour is a confused and obfuscatory way of probing for changes in culture, which are surely more easily approached directly.

If research on the 'popular movement' and on 'the crowd' seems to have come to a standstill, the same is not true of the study of the popular culture of eighteenth-century Paris. Sonenscher's and Kaplan's work on economic cultures has had a far-reaching impact, and the more socio-culturally inclined work of historians such as David Garrioch and Arlette Farge seems to be equally significant. It has not, however, found its way into mainstream appreciations of the Revolution.¹⁹ For this reason, the first chapter of this thesis will be devoted to a discussion of the implications of this work for an appreciation of popular activity in the Revolution, and much of what will follow has been conditioned by a critical reading of it.

Various reasons have already been stated for the importance of early 1791 to the development of the Revolution as a whole. However, other than two classic studies, very little attention has been paid to its popular history, and these studies focus on the popular societies as organisations, without extensively probing their social or cultural milieu.²⁰ That the period was significant in this respect is clearly indicated by Rudé's decision to examine it, given that he acknowledges that for the activities of the people at this time, the term 'crowd' is only 'in a wider sense . . . apposite.'²¹ It fits, in other words, his scenario of

¹⁹D. Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740-1790*, (Cambridge, 1986); A. Farge, *Vivre dans la Rue à Paris au 18e siècle*, (Paris, 1979), *La Vie Fragile: violence, pouvoirs et solidarités à Paris au XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1986); *Dire et Mal Dire: l'opinion publique au XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1992). Andrews, 'Social structures', n.5 (p.102), mentions some of these works, but his interpretation seems to diverge violently from their clear implications.

²⁰A. Mathiez, *Le Club des Cordeliers pendant la crise de Varennes et le Massacre du Champ de Mars*, (Paris, 1910) and I. Bourdin, *Les Sociétés populaires à Paris pendant la Révolution*, (Paris, 1937). Of other works previously mentioned, Rose's *Making* relies almost exclusively on Mathiez and Bourdin for his information on this period, and Genty's *Apprentissage* concentrates on rather sterile sectional affairs.

²¹Rudé, *Crowd*, p.90.

radicalisation, but not his model of action. Studying the actions and reactions of 'radical' Parisians who do not form a 'crowd', and are clearly not yet any kind of organised 'popular movement', must be of key importance in moving us away from these constricting models.

The basic methodology for this thesis was suggested by the work of David Garrioch, who by a close and extensive reading of neighbourhood police records of the *ancien régime* was able to draw out from their verbatim minutes a detailed picture of social life and understandings. Transferring this method from the pre-revolutionary Châtelet *commissaires* to the *commissaires de police* of the elected Section authorities was a somewhat uncertain strategy, since it was not known in what detail these records survived, or indeed had originally been kept. They had certainly not previously been used for extensive study. Having been stored in the *Préfecture de Police* in the nineteenth century, a large proportion of these records were destroyed at the time of the Paris Commune, and so a comprehensive coverage of the city could not be hoped for. They were therefore first approached tentatively, with the possibility of broadening the study to earlier periods (and surviving Châtelet records) if the sectional material proved inadequate.

The records of twenty-two of the forty-eight Sections of Paris survive from the crisis of July 1791.²² As these were examined, it soon became apparent that they formed a source of street-level information on life in revolutionary Paris that required considerable further investigation. The records generally take the form of statements of arresting National Guards or citizens, witness statements and cross-questioning, and the interrogation of detainees undertaken at the desks of the *commissaires de police*, all recorded contemporaneously by *secrétaires-greffiers*, and signed and acknowledged (sometimes with corrections and additions) by all parties as a true record. Documents that fall outside this pattern include records of *commissaires'* personal investigations, and declarations by victims of crime, or people with suspicious incidents to report, again all signed and witnessed. On these grounds there seems every reason to accept these manuscripts as accurate reflections of the thoughts of the police, of the witnesses, and even of the suspects, allowing for the latter's sense of self-preservation, which is often clearly on display.

The details and assumptions recorded by the police are at least as rich as those observed by Garrioch, and in this time of social and political tension, quite specifically oriented towards suspicions about the assumed attitudes of the general population. Exploring back into earlier months, it soon became apparent that although surviving coverage of the city was less extensive, material existed here to make

²²A general note on the existence and geographical and chronological extent of these records is given in A. Soboul, *Les papiers des sections de Paris, 1790-An IV - répertoire sommaire*, (Paris, 1950). See Bibliography for details of papers consulted from the Archives de la Préfecture de Police.

possible a viable study of early 1791 in its own right.

It is this which has thus been undertaken. Research into the police archives, which include a quite exceptionally detailed record of interactions in the Palais-Royal, haunt of all kinds of political activists and *motionnaires*, has been complemented with a survey of contemporary newspapers and of the administrative records collated and elucidated by Sigismond Lacroix some 90 years ago.²³ Each of these sources at different points sheds light on the others, and with the contribution of the unpublished police records add up, I believe, to a substantial new interpretation of events and attitudes around one of the Revolution's great turning-points.²⁴

This thesis has been organised around a number of themes, which have of necessity been woven into a narrative of sometimes extreme complexity - such was the nature of Parisian politics at this time. Without pre-empting too much of what follows, a short exposition of these themes may be helpful for later clarity. The basis for the model of Parisian politics presented here is drawn from recent work illustrating the extent to which the general population of the city was attentive to news of political developments throughout the eighteenth century, and was capable of commenting on such developments, raising issues of justice, legitimacy and resistance. Having considered this view, relating it to other interpretations of late eighteenth-century developments in economic and social policies, I go on to examine the events of 1787-9, suggesting how these may be interpreted in the light of a model that gives the *menu peuple* more independence and initiative than they have usually been credited with.

From this period also emerge themes which suggest a darker side to popular participation in revolutionary events. The experience of living under an absolute monarchy had inclined the Parisians to an extreme distrust of authority, and the overwhelming suspicion of the lower orders felt by their 'betters' had crept down the social scale until a fear of the *canaille* was almost universal amongst those who could be considered in any way respectable. The events of July 1789 show that large numbers could act violently to resist a perceived attack by authority, while also demonstrating that many people, while sharing this

²³S. Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, second series, vols. 2-8 (Paris, 1902-11). Hereafter cited as Lacroix with volume number. Brief descriptions of the various revolutionary journals used in this thesis are given in the Bibliography.

²⁴A number of sources have been used to provide the overall framework of understanding within which this thesis proceeds. Besides the work of Lacroix, and those of Mathiez and Bourdin previously cited, various general histories have been consulted. The most recent of these is Doyle's *Oxford History*, complemented by A. Soboul, *The French Revolution, 1787-1799: From the storming of the Bastille to Napoleon*, (orig. pub. 1962, Eng. trans. A. Forrest and C. Jones 1974, p/b edn. London, 1989). A. Mathiez, *The French Revolution*, (orig. pub. 1922-7, Eng. trans. C.A. Phillips, London, n.d.), makes up in detail what it lacks in modernity. C. Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution*, (London, 1988) is, as Gwynne Lewis has remarked, an invaluable filofax of revolutionary dates and personalities.

fear, were equally afraid of the popular monster the Revolution had unchained - the bayonets of the National Guard, from its origins, faced two ways. At a more rarefied level, the July Revolution seems to have brought about an idealisation of the 'people' as a revolutionary force, provided that their actions remained within certain bounds - put simply, revolutionary justice did not embrace economic grievances. Since the idealised people were supposedly good, righteous, and united, when elements did act outside respectable frameworks, as of course they often did, this could only be understood by a parallel demonisation of such behaviour - as evidence of counter-revolutionary subornation of the *populace*, which tied into a continuation of eighteenth-century views on the prevalence of *brigands* amongst the transient population. Simple fear of aristocratic counter-revolution was accompanied by belief in some quarters that the duc d'Orléans was a major source of radical propaganda and funding for disorder, with a view to his own succession to a discredited throne. Popular actions could thus be interpreted in a number of lights, few of which were flattering.

This situation was exacerbated at the level of everyday policing. By 1791 the police apparatus had been completely overhauled, and notionally staffed with revolutionary 'new men'. However, they naturally relied on the lifetime's understanding built up before the Revolution, and so policing was carried on in the same paranoid fashion it had been under the *ancien régime*. Police spies were extensively used to keep watch on criminal activity, arousing general popular distrust, and the ire of radicals, who associated such things with counter-revolutionary manoeuvrings among the municipal hierarchy. This perception was countered by that of the police, which saw both general popular discontent and politically-motivated disturbances as continuing *brigandage* - thus itself presumed to be counter-revolutionary in intent. The levels of tension provoked by this clash of viewpoints were raised still further by the policing of the city through the agency of the National Guard. Composed of neighbourhood amateurs, this force brought common conceptions of the dangers of counter-revolution to its everyday tasks of maintaining order, thus heightening the already considerable aggression of a force defending its own property in a city faced by accelerating social disorders.

Saturation coverage by an intensely competitive press added to this situation of universal suspicion. By early 1791 hundreds of journals were in production, accompanied by a large volume of occasional news-pamphlets, all or most sold by street-hawkers whose numbers were hugely boosted by growing levels of unemployment, and whose crying of inflammatory headlines added a further element of disquiet to the streets. The press seemed to write within a discourse embracing all the elements we have noted above -

whether ostensibly radical, moderate or conservative, a reading of any of them would give the impression of a city on the verge of apocalypse, and it must be assumed that their overlapping effect was to maintain that impression in the minds of their readers. When at this point radical popular societies began to be formed, the reports of their meetings in the press, and their own publications of denunciatory tracts, would heighten tensions further. I shall suggest, moreover, that their 'popular' nature was problematic, and that their relation to actual popular activities and sensibilities, conditioned perhaps by the surrounding atmosphere of suspicion, cannot be taken for granted.

Having established this complex of 'structural' themes, the thesis moves on to a more narrative framework, although in so doing it reveals a thematic evolution of discord in early 1791. General fear of aristocratic action seems to have been dominant prior to Easter, accompanied by a particular concern over the actions of clergy refusing the oath to the Civil Constitution. At Easter, the King entered fully onto the stage of these controversies, and this also marked the beginning of more direct conflict between radical-influenced gatherings and individuals and the forces of revolutionary order. The months after Easter saw this trend continuing, amplified by growing unemployment and general economic dislocation as well as heightened political tensions. Analysis of all these events will focus on direct popular reactions as recorded by the police, and the frameworks they were placed within by their own and others' understandings.

The final sections of the thesis are formed by an exploration of recorded reactions, firstly to the events around and after the Flight to Varennes, and then more extensively to the episode of the Champ de Mars Massacre. Here the high levels of tension, and its specific manifestations, are revealed in the words of the individuals involved, along with the extent to which the lines of conflict followed the dictates of prevailing understandings, or managed to break out of them under the pressure of extreme circumstances. In conclusion, the evolution of events in 1791 is reviewed in the light of the new interpretation developed, while the implications of this study for the later history of the sans-culottes are outlined.

We have seen that the study of popular participation in the Revolution has been hitherto confined to the historiographical 'cells' of crowd and popular movement, both of which have made heavy assumptions about the nature of understandings and events. Further, it has been shown that both of these approaches have reached a point where their entire validity is in question, and from where it may be argued no more useful research can be done. Meanwhile, research into general questions of pre-revolutionary popular culture has opened up new fields of exploration, with, as we shall shortly see,

conclusions which demand a reconsideration of the events of the Revolution.

Thus the time is ripe for the asking of a new set of questions, which may be briefly stated as follows: Was there a consistent 'popular' viewpoint on politics? If so, did this date from pre-revolutionary understandings or was it a product of Revolution? What can be said about popular participation in the Revolution that does not reduce ordinary people to 'crowds' or the followers of educated leaderships? Beyond simplistic models of class, what processes of social interaction were caught up in the politics of the Revolution? Is it any longer possible to view the participation of 'the people' in the Revolution in a positive light, or conversely is the appalled outlook of a Schama or a Boshier a justified response?

PART ONE - BACKGROUND AND INSTITUTIONS

CHAPTER 1 - RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN UNDERSTANDINGS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PARISIAN POPULAR CULTURE

The popular culture of eighteenth-century Paris was not an area of history which had been explored when historians such as Rudé and Soboul wrote their major works, and thus their descriptions of revolutionary action tended to assume that the people had previously been essentially passive. In 1972 Jeffrey Kaplow produced a pioneering study of this milieu which, however, added to the impression that the Revolution had come as a decisive revelation to the Parisian people. While approaching the labouring poor from a sympathetic viewpoint, as an avowedly *marxisant* scholar, he could only find 'fatalism, helplessness, dependence, and inferiority . . . [a] sense of futility' amongst them, rendering them 'absolutely incapable' of organising for change.¹ Such a profoundly negative conclusion may have much to do with his choice of sources - contemporary observers and the records of poor-relief painted a grim picture, focusing on the lowest of the low. For similar reasons, perhaps, Daniel Roche's 1981 study gleaned from notarial sources on legacies and possessions concentrated in upbeat manner on material elements of culture. He suggested that while both 'success and failure' for individuals occurred in the late eighteenth century, the overall pattern of popular life saw an appropriation of elite values, 'a more refined awareness, and growing cultural demands.'² Whilst noting a widening gap between the very poor and the rest of society, Roche made no comment on sources of tension with the elites or police, concentrating instead on 'how the

¹J. Kaplow, *The Names of Kings: The Parisian labouring poor in the eighteenth century*, (New York, 1972); pp.166-7, 153.

²D. Roche, *Le Peuple de Paris*, (Paris, 1981), Eng. trans. by M. Evans and G. Lewis, *The People of Paris: an essay in popular culture in the eighteenth century*. (Leamington Spa, 1987); p.277.

popular classes came to terms with the material conditions imposed on them.’³

In 1986 two works were published which represented a breakthrough in the use of available evidence. David Garrioch’s analysis of neighbourhood and community and Arlette Farge’s more general account of *la vie fragile* were both based on an in-depth study of police archives, what Farge calls ‘l’archive comme bribe, morceau de phrase, fragments de vies.’⁴ These two works build up, from banal incidents recorded by neighbourhood police *commissaires* and, in Farge’s case, the more detailed dossiers of the central police records, a picture which is far too intricate to be adequately summarised here. Suffice it to say that from now on any consideration of events involving *le peuple* at this time must acknowledge their culture as complex, alert, and aware of the implications of their tense relationship with the elite of French society. Garrioch and Farge demonstrate the intricate interlacing of family and neighbourhood relations, gossip and opinion, work-culture, religion and superstition along with the impact of administration and policing which gave popular life both vitality and perpetual instability. It is from this base that Farge went on in 1992 to elaborate her concept of the evolution of a ‘popular’ opinion in this era, paralleling the formation of public opinion in a ‘bourgeois public sphere’ asserted by Jurgen Habermas, but at a level less elevated, less ‘enlightened’ and less accessible.⁵ Although contained within a text that is often verbose and sometimes obscure, the central themes of her interpretation, and its empirical bases, merit detailed consideration.

Farge begins by noting that in the years of the Orléans Regency, the *peuple* was seen by the elite as little more than a source of anecdotes, particularly tales of crime and death - the classic *faits divers*. The people collectively appeared only as the joyful or afflicted audience to royal ceremonies, as the dark background to criminality, or as a surging mass in an *émotion populaire*. This is not to say that the police took no interest in what was said on the streets of Paris, but their pursuit of *mauvais propos* was conducted more as the search for unconditional obedience expected by absolutism than as a hunt for organised sedition. What they began to find by 1730, however, as the assault on the Jansenist clergy

³Roche, *People*, p.193. It is interesting to note the effect of Kaplow and Roche’s views on their perceptions of the wide trade in second-hand clothing at this time. For the latter it is seen as a chance for the people to experiment with appearance and adornment, while for the former it represents a symbolic and real humiliation for them. See Kaplow, *Names*, p.153, and Roche, *People*, pp.193-4.

⁴A. Farge, *La Vie Fragile: violence, pouvoirs et solidarités à Paris au XVIIIe Siècle*, (Paris, 1986); p.7; D. Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris 1740-1790*, (Cambridge, 1986.)

⁵A. Farge, *Dire et Mal Dire: L’opinion publique au XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1992), Introduction, pp.13-19. For a critical evaluation of Habermas’s formulation, and a survey of recent debates relating to it, see B. Nathans, ‘Habermas’s “Public Sphere” in the Era of the French Revolution’, *French Historical Studies* 16 (1990), pp.620-644.

entered a new phase of rigour, and the *convulsionnaires* of St-Médard responded with apocalyptic prophecies, was a massive popular response:

Les observateurs peinent à faire leur métier tant sont assourdissants les échos de la rue: en tous lieux, à tout propos, chacun s'exprime, parle des prêtres enlevés ou des incroyables miracles du cimetière, du roi et de ses évêques en même temps que des positions prises par les membres du Parlement.

The police were astonished on two fronts, firstly by the sheer determination and firmness with which members of the 'plus simple peuple' took sides, and secondly that they were capable of expressing themselves with such conviction and reflection on the issues involved - a manner entirely different from the 'mots inconvenants, les mauvais dires' they were accustomed to recording.⁶ They took refuge, as they were to continue to do, in talk of agitation, but the opposition of the Parisian people to anti-Jansenist campaigns was likewise to continue through the century.

Discontent in the early part of the century emerged almost exclusively in terms of comment and satire on Court life, influenced towards this by the deliberate publicity of this milieu. The war declared on Jansenism since 1728 was felt by the people as a betrayal by the King, who did not fulfil the role of a monarch as perceived in the memory of the great days of Louis XIV. Every aspect of his personality and actions came under criticism, setting a trend that was to continue throughout his long reign. In the atmosphere of police kidnappings of clergy and the arrest of those who spoke out, Parisian opinion lost all sympathy with the King.⁷

At this early point in the century, criticism often took refuge in metaphorical or metonymic images. On the death of the dissolute Regent Orléans in 1723, for example, it was widely reported that a dog had snatched and eaten his heart as it was removed for separate burial. After 1728, the episode of the *convulsionnaires* combined with a metaphor of woman as purity in a rash of stories against the Court and Church - women of the people scandalously abused by clerics, royal officers committing rape in their carriages, a rapist marquis left unpunished while his victim died, and even a servant of the police lieutenant impregnating all nine charity-girls brought to his *hôtel* to do some embroidering. Farge argues that the stories helped to fill in the conceptual gaps left by the tearing of the social fabric the Controversy represented - the assault by Church and King on the purity of Jansenist religious feeling.⁸

Beyond the use of metaphor, the Parisians were also quite capable of voicing material and political

⁶Farge, *Dire*, pp.44-8.

⁷*ibid.* pp.104-5.

⁸*ibid.* pp.107-112.

concerns, which were frequently glossed over by the police observers who wanted only to show a general picture of satisfaction or unreasoned discontent - popular speech in its proper place of socio-political vacuum. In September 1729 the birth of the Dauphin supposedly 'fait la satisfaction de tous en général,' prompted by thoughts of general tranquillity and a possible tax reduction. So one agent summed up, before going on to record a whole series of articulated concerns - possible shifts in the Court power-balance, economic discontent at the closure of businesses ordered for the celebrations, continued unhappiness with the rule of Chief Minister Fleury, and new dubious royal actions to ponder, such as the brutal rejection of a petition to restore privileges to humbler inhabitants of Versailles. Beneath the bland surface painted by the police, their own reports showed a popular opinion engaged in active discussion of the latest events, shifting with the smallest changes from above, seldom unanimous, but always separated by barriers of suspicion and rejection from what the police apparatus would wish them to think.⁹ If at this time 'opinion' was still a matter of direct responses to particular events, its evolution into something wider was to go on at an ever-accelerating rate.

Underlying Parisian discourse were the perpetual themes of material existence - concern over dearth and high prices was a 'présence obsédante' even in relatively good times.¹⁰ Food shortage could trigger riot, as could the processes of policing and justice - prisons rioted in 1720, 1740 and 1770 when they were packed to overflowing with the destitute victims of hunger, in 1720 a round-up of vagrants caused street-fighting, and in 1750 a similar operation that drew into the police net the children of respectable artisans provoked serious disorder, which will be looked at in more detail in a later chapter. The crowd invited to the spectacle of the death-penalty inflicted at the Place de Grève was not always an approving witness - 'il se passe au pied de l'échafaud une histoire de violence et de passion qui peut se retourner contre l'ordre.'¹¹ The forces of order were always on prominent display at these - frequent - events.

Exploring the people's sources of information, Farge comments on the *nouvelles à la main*, manuscript gossip-sheets copied and circulated surreptitiously to subscribers in Paris and elsewhere, for which there was a rage in the eighteenth century. News came from the servants of *les grands* for a price, and was recirculated to various markets. The full-length versions tended to have a more elevated audience, due to the cost of a regular subscription, but it was common for the copyists producing them to make an

⁹Farge, *Dire*, pp.113-6.

¹⁰*ibid.* p.139.

¹¹Farge, *Vie Fragile*, p.210. A section of this work, pp.206-234, is devoted to the multiple and ambiguous meanings of popular 'participation' in this display of royal power.

extra copy which they could reproduce in abridged (and sometimes embroidered) form on their own time. For as little as two or three *livres* per month, a subscription would buy several such issues each week, and a policeman noted in 1730 that 'On a vu plusieurs marchands et ouvriers de la rue Montmartre qui les reçoivent.' Thus the population was far from the uninformed mass it was still commonly assumed to be, and from around 1745 the police went as far as to create socially useful news to slip into the *nouvelles*, at the same time as their reports continued to milk them for information.¹²

Farge remarks that these products were avidly and universally consumed, even though there was a simultaneous expression of scorn for the possibility of it all being true - not an unfamiliar response to us. In the eighteenth century, part of this avidity, argues Farge, came from the conviction that information was 'un objet manipulé par des multiples stratégies de la Cour, de la police et de la petite foule des malintentionnés.' Thus the aim was always to try to get ahead of the game, before the news could be distorted in retransmission. As is often the case, the attempt to control information which is basically in the public domain ended by increasing the speed and volume of its circulation. Paradoxically, while both official and more enlightened opinion through the century continued to ridicule the notion that the people were worthy of being informed about public life, or even had the right to opinions on events, there remained a tendency for the elite to believe news just because it was the talk of Paris - even to the extent of crediting some of their own fabrications.¹³ All these aspects of the volatility of news, and its contentious quality, would reappear with new emphasis in the Revolution.¹⁴

A further insight into Parisian thinking comes from those *embastillés* for their *propos* across a period from 1661 to 1775. They represent a complete social cross-section, although only one-sixth are women, acknowledged generally as highly vociferous in public. Farge observes that they might receive more immediate physical punishment for speaking out, and were in any case officially regarded as less juridically responsible than men.¹⁵

¹²Farge, *Dire*, pp.53-5.

¹³*ibid.* pp.58-60.

¹⁴Production of *nouvelles à la main* continued up to, and into, the Revolution. Benoite DuPrey, a 28-year-old woman arrested on 11 May 1791 in the Section de la Place-Vendôme, had lived in Paris, disguised as a man, for eight years, working as an *écrivain public*, which for over three years had included copying *nouvelles* for a variety of employers. Eighteen months in the Hôtel-Dieu with a 'fièvre lente' had left her/him destitute, and a church porter had taken him/her in - a charity rewarded by an attempt to swindle him with forged letters from DuPrey's supposedly wealthy mother. (APP AA206:235, DuPrey was imprisoned, but released with the warning to dress as a woman in future - AB323:717, released 25 May.) See also E. Wahl and F. Moureau, 'Les nouvelles à la main en 1788-1789; idéologie et contrastes des gazettes manuscrites', in P. Rétat (ed.), *La Révolution du Journal, 1788-1794*, (Paris, 1989), pp.139-147.

¹⁵Farge, *Dire*, pp.192-3, note on p.306.

In content, the seditious statements essentially represent breaches of the absolutist doctrine of infallible love between sovereign and subject - the King's love being a product of his benevolence, while that of the population is extracted, somewhat paradoxically, under threat of punishment:

Dénier l'amour pour le roi, défier celui qu'il porte à ses sujets (par le biais d'un avis critique ou d'un acte nefaste) constitue une trahison parjure et félonie dont la perfidie n'a d'égale que la déloyauté.

From this compulsory personal adoration is born the logic of regicide - an idea expressed by many of the detainees - an absolute breeding its negation, even if only in idle remarks pounced upon by the police. More pregnantly, a second inflection co-exists with this, whereby subjects rework their relationship to the monarch in a way that shows the development of critical distance, expressed in a phrase recorded in 1753 - 'Tes sujets valeureux méritent un Roi qui les surpasse.'¹⁶

In the opinions which this phrase outlines, Farge sees not so much the theme of 'desacralisation' of the King, but a process on the part of the population itself which centres around the King because he is central to *all* political discourse at this time. Her concern is with 'mouvements d'opinion dans lesquels une population se légitime de devenir actrice sociale, de se vouloir . . . interlocutrice d'un univers politique qu'elle commence à faire sien.'¹⁷

A brief 'honeymoon' of popular approval for Louis during the War of the Austrian Succession was ended by the onerous peace that followed, aided by the continuing scandals of his private life. Actions to comply with the treaty, such as the forcible removal of the Young Pretender from Paris, accelerated the rising scorn for the King - 'Déjà ressenti comme arbitraire, le roi se met à ressembler au traître et au félon, à celui qui en secret prépare des actes déloyaux.'¹⁸

These are the themes that *propos* and *libelles* carried forward from then on, aided from 1748 by the provision of a target in the new royal mistress - *La Pompadour*. The King's adultery was no longer acceptable as it had been in Louis XIV, or Henri IV of distant memory, but represented debauchery and depravity, twin themes which in 1749-50 brought a deluge of writings and a similar growth in arrests for seditious remarks. The assertion that valorous subjects deserve a worthier King arrived after this juncture, indicating a new way of relating to him. Rather than love which begins with the King, and must be returned by the people, now the people are the first term in the equation, and he must live up to them.

¹⁶Farge, *Dire*, pp.193-7. The theme of regicide will be taken up later in connection with Damiens' attempt to 'touch' the King.

¹⁷*ibid.* p.226.

¹⁸*ibid.* pp.232-5.

Farge remarks that the concept contains no subversion or insult, consent to the monarchic role is still complete, but the relationship has shifted to 'un autre cadre où le sujet prend position en pensant et en agissant, donc en méritant.' This is, she would argue, a fundamental alteration.¹⁹

Complex issues around the monarchy and religion were still, however, able to find expression in older, more direct ways, as Damiens demonstrated when he 'touched' the King in January 1757. Dale van Kley has examined this episode in depth, demonstrating that popular opinion in Paris had been highly aroused by the refusal of sacraments issue, creating a link between questions of religion and ethics and the more material difficulties of hunger and new war-taxation in 1756.²⁰

Whatever Damiens' peculiarities - he would probably be diagnosed today as schizophrenic - van Kley shows that his attitudes were only a distillation of more general popular concerns. The people seemed to look on the Parlement of Paris as its safeguard at this point; Damiens was in service to a *parlementaire*, and he and his fellow-lackeys would debate the issues of the Controversy in the halls of the Palais de Justice, holding mock trials of the Archbishop which inflamed them enough to threaten any of his servants who approached the area.²¹ Jansenism was rooted in the population, who viewed religion as a question of ethics rather than doctrine - a Jansenist priest who had been refused the last rites was buried amid popular comment that he had been 'unjustly refused the sacraments because he had lived well,' the crowd going on to offer to hang the priest who had refused them, if the Parlement would judge him. The crowd at the funeral of the Duc d'Orléans was heard to associate both dearth and the sacraments with royal misconduct - 'bread in either case . . . of which the King could not deprive his subjects without evident injustice.'²²

Damiens as an individual merely carried the prevalent popular attitudes further than most, becoming entirely alienated from the clergy and obsessed with the latest news and rumour. He testified that 'all the world' or 'the public generally' talked violently against the Archbishop and clergy, and attacks on clergy had taken place. That this violence should be transformed into physical assault on the King is argued by van Kley to be a decisive rupture in the former respect for the monarchy. He lists some thirty people of the humblest social status detained for *mauvais discours*, usually in the form of comments on Damiens'

¹⁹Farge, *Dire*, pp.237-240.

²⁰D. van Kley, *The Damiens Affair and the Unravelling of the Ancien Régime, 1750-1770*, (Princeton, 1984).

²¹*ibid.* p.46.

²²*ibid.* pp.47-8.

action - 'these seditious discourses often pointed to the high price of bread, excessive taxes, and in general the misery of the people as reasons for why the King ought to be slain.'²³

What Farge is able to show, however, is that this form of discourse runs consistently through the records she has studied - she offers eleven specific assassination-threats between 1687 and 1722 alone, even before attacks on Jansenism penetrated the population as an issue: 'Poignarder ou dagner le roi fait partie de l'imaginaire de chacun et de tous, ne serait-ce que parce que cet acte s'inscrit logiquement dans la rhétorique monarchique et son idéologie.'²⁴ After all, the King never dies, as the publicists of monarchic dogma never ceased to proclaim. He holds the secrets and mysteries of rule within his person, a person that is at the same time publicly displayed, brought close to the people, even touched to them in healing ceremonies. Envisaging killing the King - usually by the direct physical means of a blade - expressed for its advocates the urge for proximity to him combined with recognition of his enormous powers. The King supposedly related personally by love to all his subjects, and hence if they were in suffering or dearth it was quite explicitly his fault, the love was lost, but perhaps the fatal touch of steel could restore the balance.²⁵

From this point on Farge detects an acceleration in the evolution of sentiment. She would not, however, see the explosion of speech around the Damiens Affair as a decisive point of rupture. She points out that it led to an unprecedented police enquiry and the establishment of formidable dossiers of sedition and comment - a bulk of evidence which has distorted later judgments. For her, the event, while dramatic, entered into a sequence of disaffection already begun - 'un "déjà-là" de l'opinion publique,' the weight of the evidence only serving to illustrate how widespread such feelings already were.²⁶

After Damiens there was an unsettled air to society. Criticism came even from within the police - an *exempt* in service at the Bastille was detained for writing anonymous letters assassinating the characters of two-thirds of the Paris police *inspecteurs* - pimps, ex-lackeys and rogues one and all in his view. No doubt he had a personal grudge, but when he was exposed in the pillory for three days before leaving for a sentence in the galleys, the crowd filled his upturned hat with money each day. The same year, 1758, a *huissier* was executed in September for speaking out with a variation on the 'Tes sujets

²³Van Kley, *Damiens*, p.248.

²⁴Farge, *Dire*, p.202.

²⁵*ibid.* p.203.

²⁶*ibid.* p.257.

valeureux . . .’ theme. A large crowd attended, and the police reported that it was widely remarked ‘qu’on ne fait pas mourir les gens pour des paroles et des simples écrits.’ The walls of Paris were placarded with similar sentiments over the following days.²⁷

Farge notes that from 1760 the emergence of speech, writings and placards began to take on ‘une vie autonome’ that the police could no longer keep up with; ‘une vitesse de croisière que rien ne peut contrarier . . . le climat politique s’installe en une critique permanente partagée par tous, qu’ils soient petits ou grands.’ Rather than new forms of subversion, what is involved here is ‘un affinement des capacités cognitives et réflexives,’ a move away from criticism focusing physically on the King, to an engagement ‘dans une politique à laquelle chacun s’intéresse.’ War and its accompanying dearth and taxes were a central focus in 1760-63, and when an employee at the Hôtel de Ville was warned by a neighbour he could end up in a dungeon for his comments on royal glory and popular hunger, he replied ‘cela m’est égal car on ne dira pas que je suis un coquin.’ Speaking ill of the King still brought its punishment, but it had lost its infamy - indeed the shame seemed to rest in staying silent.²⁸

The condemnation and expulsion of the Jesuits in 1761-2, a movement led by the Parlement in the face of Court opposition, was received with huge popular joy and a further upwelling of sedition. In the anti-jesuit remarks the themes of the Controversy and Damiens’ *supplice* re-echoed, as King and Rome were equally humbled and ‘Dieu rendu à ses fidèles.’ It was for Farge ‘le triomphe de l’esprit public,’ marking a shift from the repression of words and acts to the vain pursuit of a whole popular attitude, what the police called “‘l’imagination vive et pétulante” de chacun . . . on poursuit l’effervescence et, au coeur de cette perquisition tenace, s’augmente l’enthousiasme.’ The police ‘blâme avant tout’ the new and growing tendency for the common people to reason - *avoir des raisonnements* - on events. Farge observes that ‘la critique se cache de moins en moins, sûre de son bon droit.’²⁹

In the years that followed, encompassing the dearth of 1768, the Du Barry and Maupeou Affairs and the King’s final sickness, Farge supplements her observations with those of the bookseller-diarist Simeon Hardy. In 1771 he recorded with sorrow the general rage against Maupeou’s assault on the

²⁷Farge, *Dire*, pp.260-3. The *exempt* was probably not all that inaccurate in his view of the character of certain police officials, since the evil reputation and associates of *inspecteur* Poussot had contributed to the violence of the 1750 riots - see below. (Paradoxically, Poussot seems also to have been a diligent accumulator of records, and Farge frequently draws on his observations.)

²⁸*ibid.* pp.265-8.

²⁹*ibid.* pp.269-71. The case of one pro-jesuit woman illustrates that people had a grasp of Court power-relations and the opinions held by high figures - she had wished the King dead, that the Dauphin might restore the Order, and her answers showed that she well knew of the interplay between Court, Parlement and priests. (pp.274-5)

Parlements, and called for an angel to open the King's eyes to the height of the precipice he risked falling over 'tandis qu'il croyait augmenter son autorité.' In 1772 he noted the enormous effort of policing gone into making Carnival appear its usual riot of joy - revellers paid, *masques* and *chienlits* paraded and inspected. Farge comments on this 'Inutile mascarade; comme le remarque Hardy, beaucoup d'individus souffrent, de la disette d'abord, des décisions de Maupeou ensuite, qui enlèvent au public des magistrats dont il attendait le soutien.'³⁰

Reasserted absolute power, and an accompanying clerical reaction, stimulated protest and *libelles*, for which once more the punishments intensified. Against this background, Farge paints a further shift in the nature of the sedition pursued between 1768 and 1775:

Il s'agit de personnes qui s'engagent nettement dans un état d'esprit avancé où critiquer le roi est une évidence sur laquelle on ne s'attarde guère pour revendiquer hautement, en revanche, 'le droit de parler et d'écrire en toute matière d'Etat.' Le vocabulaire change, la réflexion politique s'élabore chaque jour davantage.

Even topics of resistance to despotism and popular consent to government made their appearance. For Farge, the most interesting element in all this is the assertion that to hold opinions and discuss public affairs was 'un droit imprescriptible.' The police regarded this as clear evidence that a subject was no longer in the proper relationship of deferential love towards the King, even if detainees explicitly argued that one could love the King and criticise the Court. Perhaps the police were right, since Louis XV's death passed amid indifference, while the subsequent exile of Maupeou was greeted with raptures, only to turn to anger as the dearth returned, and violence as the Flour War erupted.³¹

Farge's comments on public opinion end with the close of Louis XV's reign, but an incident she records in her earlier work on popular life can lead us into an examination of attitudes in the 1770s and 1780s. On 30 May 1770 a firework show was offered to the public on the Place Louis XV to celebrate the wedding of the Dauphin and Marie-Antoinette. It was a time of dearth, and *libelles* had already commented that such ostentation was unseemly, but the fickle crowd appeared distracted by the displays of finery that were to be worn for the ceremonies, and Paris was calm at a time when several provincial centres were seeing food-riots.³²

As the fireworks were ending, a harassed official permitted a phalanx of carriages laden with impatient *notables* to try to force its way through a two-way flow of pedestrians. The result was panic and

³⁰Farge, *Dire*, pp.276-8.

³¹*ibid.* pp.279-82.

³²Farge, *Vie Fragile*, pp.235-6.

carnage, with over 130 confirmed dead and rumours putting the toll at over 1500. A series of official interventions in the following weeks only heightened the ill-feeling created by this event. The Dauphin offered a substantial sum to go to the injured and bereaved, but soon parish priests were complaining that it had been hastily and ineptly disbursed by police officials instead of through the usual charitable channels - themselves. Meanwhile the official inquiry into the causes of the disaster had been caught up in a power-struggle between Court and Parlement over control of the police. The population had already named the guilty men in *propos* and placards, but they would not see justice done - the figures were 'trop haut placés dans la hiérarchie politique pour être abandonnés à la condamnation populaire.' The city administration finally whitewashed the event with an account stressing 'des hasards singuliers.'³³

Such events seem to indicate that the machinery of royal government was no longer functioning as it should, and that its control over the population was slipping - at points fading altogether, at others being reasserted with jarring force. Farge notes that the crowd by the late eighteenth century had established 'une sorte de harcèlement tenace vis-à-vis de toutes les formes d'autorité ou presque.' Des Essarts' *Dictionnaire universel de police* of 1786 commented that riots, gatherings and sedition were only 'trop communs, malgré la vigilance active de la police.'³⁴

It seems that the problem of insubordination in general was a growing one through the century, matched by an increasing police effort at containment. Observers by the 1780s acknowledged this, but tended to be sanguine about the possibility of serious disturbance - Mercier noted that 'Une émeute qui dégénérait en sédition est devenue moralement impossible' due to the heavy repressive forces available.³⁵ This complacency was perhaps based on the same notion as the tactics of the police, that sedition was caused by outsiders and 'bad elements' who if they were watched closely enough could be contained. Farge demonstrates that this was not so, that riot and disorder came from the heart of a population living

à l'affût de ce qui la menace et à la recherche de ce qui peut la fortifier. Elle cherche son équilibre au coeur d'une fragilité qui la définit presque entièrement . . . N'être point dupe devient une de ses passions, ou plutôt une de ses nécessités. Aussi met-elle toute son intelligence à n'être ni abusée ni trompée; de là son goût pour la nouvelle, sa volonté de savoir, de nommer, de comprendre, la rapidité de circulation de son information.'³⁶

As we have seen, from early in the century it was commonplace to expect deceit from the

³³Farge, *Vie Fragile*, pp.248-57.

³⁴*ibid.* p.293.

³⁵L.S. Mercier, *Le Tableau de Paris*, textes choisis par J. Kaplow, (Paris, 1979), p.318. (Original publication Amsterdam, 1782-6, although this collection contains comments on events of 1787-8 which indicate a later edition has been used.)

³⁶Farge, *Vie Fragile*, pp.323-4.

authorities, to resist that deceit through the deployment of alternative understandings and rumours, and to hold in reserve the possibility of overt physical resistance should the situation become intolerable. Moreover, the decades from 1720 to 1770 saw a distinct evolution in sentiment. The causes behind this change are not discussed by Farge - exploring them would involve venturing into areas far removed from the judicial archives, and any link that could be made with 'enlightened' culture would of necessity be almost entirely speculative.³⁷ It seems clear, however, from Farge's work, that by the commencement of Louis XVI's reign the unquestioned legitimacy of absolute monarchy had been undermined, even at street-corner level, by arguments which point, however hesitantly, towards the development of a self-conscious polity. We may not be able to say that a very great number of people were thinking in a new way, or that their thoughts were in any way 'republican' or 'revolutionary,' but they were definitely no longer entirely subservient to absolutist ideology. Farge may be overstating her case to see some autonomous 'popular public sphere' forming - after all, much of her own work has focused on the ambiguities of social positioning, and her examples are not by any means all from the *bas fonds* - but it is certainly valid to recognise that the *possibility* of a non-deferential mode of expression was a significant innovation, and an ominous one for the security of the absolutist régime.

Some of the complexity of eighteenth-century political *mentalités* can be seen in the 'Famine Plot Persuasion' documented by Steven Kaplan. While no less destabilising in its effects than the scorn poured on the King, this complex of beliefs nonetheless relied heavily on the centrality of the royal role.³⁸ In every decade from the 1720s on, the same elements of alleged conspiracy reappeared. Underpinning the whole framework was the universal assumption that France was a land of boundless fertility, where any dearth that arose must be due to deliberate agency. This tendency was augmented by the reluctance of the police apparatus to admit that difficulties might be caused by factors outside their control, such as the weather, rather than by miscreants that could notionally be brought to book. When shortages emerged, the first assumption of people from all social classes was that there was some organised body profiting from the resultant price-rise - often such accusations embraced unpopular Court factions, royal or ministerial mistresses, bankers or tax-farmers. Failure of government to intervene was seen as a sign of complicity,

³⁷Such speculation may not of course be entirely unjustifiable, but it does not essentially concern us here. For examples of what can be said in this direction, see R. Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, (Durham, N.C., 1991), and K.M. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays in French political culture in the eighteenth century*, (Cambridge, 1990).

³⁸S.L. Kaplan, *The Famine Plot Persuasion in Eighteenth-century France*, (Philadelphia, 1982, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 72, part 3); p.2.

while if the ministry attempted to ease the shortage by imports and movements of grain, this opened up a panoply of new charges: the grain was spoilt and dangerous, it was French grain exported and now re-imported at a premium, more was stockpiled than the government would admit, any rotted grain thrown into the rivers was actually good stock disposed of to keep the price high, and so on.³⁹

One can show that the accusations almost always had some *vraisemblance* - in the world of factional politics, economic ignorance and heavy-handed policing, the actual dealings of those involved in grain-trading and the relief of dearth could look very much like a famine pact. Indeed, some men made a very great deal of money from government contracting in these episodes, but on closer examination, these turn out to be the profits of a vast operation undertaken in good faith.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the famine-plot idea continued to grow, and from the liberalisation of the grain-trade in 1763-4 to the Flour War of 1775, it was 'a quasi-permanent mental set' among everyone from common artisans and labourers to provincial *intendants* and *parlementaire* magistrates. The liberalisation itself was an obvious gift to speculation, and as the grain price began to rise in the late 1760s, the government's attempt to isolate Paris from the impact of this led to belief in a plot to obtain a 'royal grain monopoly.' The re-imposition of control under Terray in 1770-1 and the vesting of purchasing powers in a public corporation did nothing to allay these suspicions (or rather convictions) - Hardy noted in 1773 that Terray was 'suspected perhaps rightly of favouring the Monopoly and the Export of grain . . .'⁴¹

Louis XV died in disgrace, and the famine plot persuasion had no little to do with this. It continued, moreover, to ravage the governments of his successor. Turgot freed the trade again, prices rose, and the Flour War erupted across the Parisian region. The minister gave a new twist to the plot mentality, blaming the popular violence on agitation from the deprived monopolists and disgruntled police, but even after his fall, rumours of further conspiracies in the grain trade continued into the 1780s.⁴² Part of the crisis of 1789 was a re-eruption of this theme, as 'aristocratic' speculation and exportation of grain were added to the political crimes of the Second Estate. The events of October of that year were to further illustrate one of Kaplan's main conclusions - the centrality of the King to the complex of beliefs encompassing *subsistances*:

³⁹Kaplan, *Famine Plot*, *passim*, esp. Conclusion and pp.63-4.

⁴⁰*ibid.* pp.21-3 on the dealer Bernard in the 1720s, and pp.40-42 on Thellusson, who had a similar role in 1738-41.

⁴¹*ibid.* pp.53-7, 59.

⁴²*ibid.* pp.60-61 and n.316.

According to the unwritten compact between king and people, in return for their submission, the king promised to assure their subsistence . . . If the king failed to act or (it amounted to the same thing) if the subsistence threat persisted or worsened, that was proof enough of some kind of plot.⁴³

This is a point to be borne in mind throughout the exploration to come. The later decades of the century were also marked by government measures in other fields of life which inflicted alarm and bred suspicion amongst the *peuple*. We have already noted the misery that was said to follow from Maupeou's removal of the Parlement in 1771, and in 1776 under the new King even more penetrating reforms were attempted. The abolition of the guilds engineered by Turgot in February of that year was greeted and foreshadowed by a storm of protest from guild masters, using every kind of abuse to condemn the character of the journeymen and workers who would be 'freed' from their control, and predicting the breakdown of both law and order and the economic system.⁴⁴

In this we can see a continuation of the condemnation of the lower orders as unthinking *canaille*, who have to be held to their places and tasks by the threat of force. It is curious that this kind of opinion should emerge from bodies whose members had, by definition, occupied the status of journeymen themselves in previous years. Moreover, the guilds were the site of intense factional conflicts, severely undermining the notion of solidarity and control they based their claims on, and in fact often aligning masters and their journeymen together against regulatory controls they saw as usurped by opposing cabals.⁴⁵ Whatever reservations we have about the masters' world-view, it has to be acknowledged that the workers themselves fell into an 'insolent rapture,' and 'independence' began to be manifest even before the promulgation of the edict.⁴⁶

By mid-March it was felt necessary for the police to begin to crack down on workers 'deserting' their masters without completing agreed work, and the *Lieutenant de Police* ordered that all 'disobedient journeymen' should be jailed. Hardy noted the repression with relief, along with a rumour that the King had ordered journeymen to remain with their masters for a year. Police patrols by both day and night were stepped up, and the *Gardes françaises* had to intervene in several incidents. Meanwhile the police were overwhelmed with people wishing to register in business, and had to resort to pretexts to send them away -

⁴³Kaplan, *Famine Plot*, Introduction and Conclusion, esp. pp.1-2 and 66-7.

⁴⁴See S.L. Kaplan, 'Social Classification and Representation in the Corporate World of Eighteenth-Century France: Turgot's "Carnival."' In S. L. Kaplan and C.J. Koepp (eds.) *Work in France: Representations, meaning, organization, and practice*, (Ithaca, NY, 1986); pp.176-228.

⁴⁵see S.L. Kaplan, 'The Character and Implications of Strife amongst Masters in the Guilds of Eighteenth-century Paris,' *Journal of Social History* 19, (1986); pp.631-47. Abuse of the system meant that not all masters had actually been journeymen, but their ideology rested on perpetuating that myth.

⁴⁶Kaplan, 'Social Classification.' pp.199-201.

asking for proofs of capital or probity nowhere mentioned in the edict, for example.⁴⁷

The whole process of chaotic levelling had clearly undermined the guilds' attachment to a government which could resort to such measures, while on the other side of the dispute the workers experience was of

perplexity, frustration and [a] sense of betrayal . . . they found themselves treated as quasi-delinquents and would-be insurgents . . . Instead of being welcomed into the milieu of commerce, they encountered delays . . . that seemed like tricks devised to fool them and deny them satisfaction.⁴⁸

Which, it must be said, is very much what they were.

Turgot was dismissed in May 1776, the edict was in *de facto* suspension by the next month, and in August a new edict re-established the guilds, and in particular 'the domestic authority of the masters over their workers.'⁴⁹ Michael Sonenscher has observed that this reassertion of masters' control was part of a process whereby workers were stripped of much of their independence and power in the eyes of the law over the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ In earlier decades, it had been common for collective master-journeyman disputes over rates of pay, working hours and conditions to be arbitrated through the courts, but in later years a growing concern for social discipline allied to a stricter view of the employment relationship to strip away the legal safeguards the journeymen argued for under 'natural law.' The post-1776 Paris guilds were reduced in number by over half to forty-four, and their statutes were based around 'a series of police sentences ratifying a number of highly-standardized corporate deliberations,' thus removing workers' use of particular rights and customs as arguments in disputes.

Control had been reinforced in 1781 by royal Letters Patent ordering all journeymen to register with a guild, and instructing them to carry a *livret*, or work-record book - two issues that had been bitterly fought out, to a standstill, in individual guilds since the previous century.⁵¹ We cannot be certain of the impact of such changes on the popular mentality, as the central police archives Farge exploited for her studies do not exist for the post-1775 period. One thing seems clear, despite the loss of these records - the police attention to Parisian life was as intense in the 1780s as it had ever been, if not more so. For

⁴⁷Kaplan, 'Social Classification', pp.201-2.

⁴⁸*ibid.* p.203.

⁴⁹*ibid.* p.210.

⁵⁰M. Sonenscher, 'Journeymen, the Courts and the French Trades, 1781-1791.' *Past and Present* 114, (1987); pp.77-109.

⁵¹*ibid.* pp.100-106. See also S.L. Kaplan, 'La lutte pour la contrôle du marché du travail à Paris au XVIIIe siècle,' *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 36, (1989); pp.361-412. The bitterness of master-journeyman relations would be reflected in conflicts that erupted in 1791, and which were viewed as suspiciously by the revolutionary authorities as they had been by the *ancien régime*.

example, Lenoir, *Lieutenant de Police* for much of the pre-revolutionary period, had in his possession when he came to write his memoirs after the Revolution the reports of spies concerning 'undesirables' at large in 1781-5. Among these pornographers, hacks and part-time informers were men such as Gorsas, Audouin and Fréron - journalists we shall meet in 1791 - as well as, for example, Marat, Chenier and Mercier himself.⁵² There can be no doubt that this intense scrutiny extended to many other milieux.

While Mercier, as we have seen, argued in his work that the police were ultimately able to contain popular Paris, he nonetheless observed in the late 1780s that insubordination 'est visible dans le petit peuple depuis quelques années et surtout dans les métiers.' He saw an 'oubli de toute discipline' which would shortly bring 'les plus mauvais effets.'⁵³ Certainly, while acknowledging that violent incidents were frequent throughout the century, David Garrioch has brought to light one in January 1788 which suggests an escalation in social tensions. A prank by some waggoners, hitting a horse led by a servant with their whips to make it skittish, led to the horse's owner striking one of them with his whip. Despite bearing the noble *particule* and being in a carriage when he left from a nearby house an hour later, this man was set upon by a mob of thirty to forty people and beaten with sticks, receiving serious injuries.⁵⁴

Among the conclusions to Garrioch's work is that

the very process of centralization and of breaking down barriers both within the capital and between Paris and its provinces, combined with the demographic explosion and the growing gap between prices and real wages, made the maintenance of order an ever-present preoccupation. The measures taken to assure the supply of bread, the police concern with rumour, and the action against beggars and the ubiquitous *gens sans aveu* all testify to the near-paranoid state of the official mind.

Garrioch's emphasis here on ever-growing policing against an ever-growing perceived threat of disorder can also be seen in Alan Williams' work on the organisation of the eighteenth-century police in Paris.⁵⁵ The level to which this concern was paranoia is debatable, given the events of 1789 and after, although it was certainly oriented more towards conspiracy-theories than to any appreciation of the forces and perceptions animating the population.

Arlette Farge's work, reinforced by that of David Garrioch, and less directly by that of Steven Kaplan and Michael Sonenscher, suggests that the events of the Revolution in Paris have to be read in the light of the evident ability of the Parisian population to generate criticism of their rulers, criticism which

⁵²See R. Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment and the Low-life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France,' in D. Johnson (ed.) *French Society and the Revolution*, (Cambridge, 1976); pp. 53-87, esp. pp.75-6. (Original publication in *Past and Present* 51, May 1971.)

⁵³Mercier, *Tableau*, pp.316, 318.

⁵⁴Garrioch, *Neighbourhood*, p.50.

⁵⁵*ibid.* p.211. See A. Williams, *The Police of Paris, 1718-1789*, (Baton Rouge, 1979).

displayed an evolution towards more sophisticated political sensibilities through the eighteenth century. The sorts of statement we have seen articulated, however, are not redolent of the language of liberty and rights that would appear in the crisis of the Pre-Revolution. The silence of the archives does not allow us to see whether such sentiments did surface at some point in the 1780s, but we know they were present by 1789. There can be almost no doubt that the Parisian people received this language from the educated strata of society - the kind of admixture that formed part of Rudé's explanation for crowd action. We cannot escape the obvious truth of this, but what the new awareness of popular thought in the pre-revolutionary decades shows is that once such ideas were loosed upon the people, they were willing and able to respond to them individually, not just as a collective entity agitated by slogans. This conception is fundamental to the remainder of this thesis, although as we shall see, popular understandings, and understandings of the people, were far from unproblematic. The next chapter demonstrates how this new conception can be read into the events of 1787-9, along with some of the problems that face any analysis of the social relations of this time.

CHAPTER 2 - POLITICAL UPHEAVAL AND SOCIAL CONTINUITY, 1787-1789

Paris seemed to enjoy a period of relative social calm after the Flour War, but it is arguable that this was more due to a lack of serious triggers of discontent than to any real popular satisfaction. Since Necker had managed to finance the American War through loans, iniquitous new taxes were avoided, which as we have seen could provoke trouble in their imposition, and in expectation of their removal. Nonetheless, the words of Mercier and of the *Dictionnaire de Police* have shown that there was a perceived rise in social tensions by the mid-1780s, and it was not long before the period of 'pre-revolution' saw a violent popular response to political events.

In late September 1787 the Parlement of Paris returned from a brief exile, triumphant over a royal attempt at forced registration of new taxes. The area around the Pont Neuf was occupied by a 'jeunesse effrénée,' confronting a heavy military presence.¹ The troops were pelted with stones, fireworks were let off, and on 28 September the *Gardes françaises* were driven to open fire. There were no casualties, but a further week of riot ensued. To an extent this was a political protest - anti-royalist tracts were distributed, and Court figures burnt in effigy - but as it spread it incorporated more general disorder, including looting, and 'semi-political' acts such as assaults on passers-by who would not join in with the right slogans. By this stage it had also spread geographically to the Right Bank, including the area around the Palais-Royal. On 3 October the Parlement managed to calm much of the trouble with an order forbidding gatherings in its vicinity, although as late as 12 November Hardy reported that 600 troops had been mustered against another outbreak.

¹G. Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution*, (Oxford, 1959), pp. 29-30, the phrase is Hardy's. Also Williams, *Police*, pp. 194-5. Information in this chapter on the events of 1787-9 comes principally from Rudé, and from J. Godechot, *The Taking of the Bastille*, (London, 1970).

When in April 1788 the duc d'Orléans returned from the exile he had earned at the *Lit de Justice* in November 1787, he received a riotous welcome, and genuine riot was the response a month later to the royal *coup d'état* against the Parlements - troops had to defend the royal law-courts from a mob bent on arson. Over the following months, reports of disorder in the provinces added to Parisian tensions, as did the incendiary placards which began to appear in the summer. Hardy for one believed by July that the *populace* was about to rise against the forces of order, and in August troop-reinforcements began to occupy outlying villages around Paris.²

Eleven months after their previous return, the judges of the Parlement were recalled at the end of August 1788. On the 26th the *basoche* again began general celebratory disorder in the Place Dauphine and surrounding areas. On 17 August the price of bread had begun to rise from its normal level of 9 *sous*, to reach 11 *sous* by 7 September. This was a commonplace annual phenomenon, but Hardy remarked that the first signs of increase had aroused some agitation in the Faubourg St-Antoine, and by 28 August the working population in general was beginning to participate in disturbances. On the 29th guard-posts were attacked and destroyed in several parts of the city, including one in Les Halles supposedly sacked by women led by a prostitute.³ That night, six hundred demonstrators, gathered on the Place de Grève, were fired on by the *Garde de Paris*, this time leaving seven or eight dead, and restoring calm for a fortnight.⁴

On 14 September, crowds were allowed to celebrate Lamoignon's dismissal noisily, but the population was bitter at the deaths of August, and an attempt was made to storm the house of the *Garde* commander. Rumour told of fifty killed in the repulsing of this attack, but the police only recorded fourteen wounded. A week later the new session of the Parlement was greeted by a march of 200 youths in the Quartier Latin, cursing the police, which was set upon by the *Gardes françaises*, causing several casualties. The situation was calmed, however, by the commander's resignation at the end of the month.⁵

It is significant that disorder should die away in Paris at this point, since the famous hailstorm of 13 July had worsened an already poor harvest, and bread-prices continued to rise - to 12 *sous* on 8 November, and 14½ by 1 February 1789. The general 'hunger thesis' used to explain disorder seems to fall down here. If, however, we credit the Parisian people with some form of political consciousness,

²Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.30-1.

³Williams, *Police*, p.194.

⁴Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.31-2.

⁵*ibid.* p.32.

continuing on in amended form from the Jansenist Controversy in which the Court-Parlement opposition played a leading part, this may help to account for the apparent lack of response after September to more 'material' difficulties. 25 September 1788 had seen the Parlement put forward its notorious ruling on the 'Forms of 1614' for the meeting of the Estates-General, which had just been brought forward to May 1789. This inept move, which the judges would later try to explain away as a reference to electoral districts, set the Third Estate at the throats of the privileged Orders, and particularly the nobility. The anti-ministerial coalition broke up, and pamphlet-war raged through the winter, with not a few genuine skirmishes in the provinces. The entire political landscape had been turned effectively on its side, and it would not be surprising to find that the people were no longer sure where to channel their discontents. Adding in the difficulty of staying alive in the winter of an economic crisis-year, and the vigour the police had displayed in September, the relative calm becomes eminently understandable.

That this calm was imposed rather than genuine became evident with the passing of the arctic weather. On 23 April in the Faubourg St-Antoine, the manufacturer Reveillon made an ill-judged remark in his District electoral assembly about the times when workers could get by on 15 *sous* a day. That evening the *Lieutenant de Police* reported 'un peu de rumeur' in the Faubourg, but the real disorder broke out four days later. Groups of workers in varying states of insurrection could be found in the Faubourg itself, on the Place de Grève, around Notre-Dame, in the Quartier Latin and down to the Faubourg St-Marcel. The police cleared the streets, but in the evening a crowd gathered to assault Reveillon's house. Finding it under military guard, they diverted to sack that of Henriot, another employer who had made a similar remark. The troops only drove them off after they had looted it. The authorities at this point thought calm was restored, but on the next day disturbance spread still further - groups went out recruiting their fellows from the Temple area, the docks and other factories, gathering by late afternoon on the boulevards, the Pont Neuf and other open areas. Reveillon's house was again the target, and in the evening it was stormed. The *Gardes françaises* were ordered to fire in the fray, and a crowd of thousands stood firm against them, shouting newly-coined slogans such as 'Liberté . . . Nous ne céderons pas!' and 'Vive le Tiers État!' - fruit of the new political alignment. In bitter fighting, the *Gardes* eventually cleared the house of rioters, including those found senseless in the wine-cellar (who were nonetheless beaten for their pains). The police recorded an absolute confirmed minimum of twenty-five killed and twenty-two wounded, and various estimates put the casualties well into the hundreds - 300 may not be an

exaggeration.⁶

Rudé is keen to see in these events a 'unique . . . insurrectionary movement of wage-earners.' Acknowledging, however, that none of Reveillon's own workers seem to have been involved, and that 'a few random remarks on wages . . . could hardly in themselves have provoked a conflagration,' he ends strangely by reducing the riot to a 'partly unconscious' protest against the price and scarcity of bread. It is hard to see why this protest should need to be 'unconscious' - Rudé himself goes on to point out that Reveillon's and Henriot's remarks could easily have associated them with food-hoarders and speculators, that the only other properties attacked were food-shops, and that Hardy had reported the rioters' threat to force a reduction in the price of bread.⁷

What is obscured in this attempt at a reductionist explanation (with a hint of class war) is the sense of interplay of forces that we have continually observed in manifestations of popular wrath. It is clearly no exaggeration to say that the political atmosphere was at fever-pitch by this time. A simple recounting of the violent clashes of the previous two years shows an escalation of conflict involving the people that echoes the aggravating political situation. When Rudé invokes 'hunger' as a motivation for riot, we should read it as the Parisians of the time would have done - as a matter of survival, not merely against the vagaries of nature, but against organised *agiotage et accaparement*, and possibly also a deliberate famine-pact. For the Parisians, there was no separation between the considerations of *subsistances* and those of politics.

From the other side of the fence, the element of agency in provoking disorder was also apparent to observers. If Hardy was content in 1788 to attribute the aggravation of the late-August disturbances to an influx of *populace* from the Faubourgs (especially St-Marcel) linking up with the 'polissons du quartier', by April 1789 he was convinced that these more serious outbreaks were due to the workers being 'soulevés par des brigands.'⁸ Financial subornation was once again everyone's favoured explanation for the violence of the outburst - whether by the clergy (suspected of fomenting the Flour War in 1775), the duc d'Orléans, or other persons unknown. The police pursued these themes vainly in their interrogations, while journalists alleged that the dead were carrying 12 *livres* apiece - a demonstrable falsehood, as the police records show 'not a brass farthing' was found. Nonetheless, the presumption

⁶Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.34-8.

⁷*ibid.* pp.39-43.

⁸*ibid.* pp.31n.6, 40-1.

remained, and was to be restated with greater force after the events of July.⁹

Some modern historians have echoed this thesis, branding Philippe, duc d'Orléans 'Grand Master of the Revolution' and accusing him of manipulating politics in favour of goals that were 'totalitaires, anti-chrétiennes et violentes.' According to this model, which consists ultimately of an uncritical rehashing of the copious calumnies poured on Orléans' head in the revolutionary era, the whole course of the Revolution was 'un complot soudoyé et manipulé.'¹⁰

André Castelot seems to have produced the most balanced recent work on Orléans. He views the Duke himself as a man in whom wit and vanity served in place of intelligence, and a love of novelty concealed profound ignorance. If he undertook 'political' acts such as the challenge to Louis at the *Lit de Justice* of 19 November 1787, it was in pursuance of a personal vendetta against the royal couple, (especially the Queen), fuelled by deep loathing on both sides.¹¹

Notwithstanding that this feud was only 'political' in the eyes of the Court, it did lead Philippe into putting a certain weight behind the cause of progress, if only to further irritate Marie-Antoinette. By late 1788 Choderlos de Laclos, his secretary, had begun to put considerable energy into creating an Orléanist *parti*, agitating, pamphleteering and scheming to make the composition of the Estates-General as 'liberal' as possible. Nevertheless, Philippe personally was still prepared to bet 2000 *livres*, on the eve of their opening, that the Estates would not even dare abolish *lettres de cachet*.¹²

In the meantime, there was no doubt that the Duke was becoming the darling of the people. His Palais-Royal, its gardens and booths open to the public, provided a haven traditionally free of police interference for popular but illicit activities, from prostitution and gambling to political speechifying. Orléans had given huge sums in charity in the winter of 1788-9, which Versailles viewed as 'une charité de factieux,' but which he had also provided in the winter of 1783. Laclos' propagandising on his behalf only intensified the regard for him created by such gestures. The charge that the Duke's money was being used to actively foment violent disorder remains unproven, but Castelot admits that in many of the pre-Bastille events can be seen 'sinon des agents mandatés par le Palais-Royal, du moins des *orléanistes*.'¹³

⁹Rudé, *Crowd*, p.41.

¹⁰H. La Marle, *Philippe Égalité, 'Grand Maître' de la Révolution*, preface by J. Dumont, (Paris, 1989), pp. 64, viii. Note that these writers lambast Orléans and Lenin in the same breath, and explicitly urge their work on 'jeunes universitaires catholiques', intellectual hostages of a 'laïco-jacobin' education system (pp. iv, viii.)

¹¹A. Castelot, *Philippe Égalité le Régicide*, (Paris, 1991) pp.143-4, 152.

¹²*ibid.* pp.153-6.

¹³*ibid.* pp.163-6, 170.

Certainly, by the opening of the Estates-General in May, the crowd was in love with him, crying 'Vive Orléans' at the opening procession, and in the Palais-Royal, where the atmosphere of excitement 'tient de la folie,' he was proposed by *motionnaires* for Generalissimo, or even for King.¹⁴

Although there is much that will always remain slightly shady about Orléans' involvement in the Revolution, it is not, however, necessary to believe that he had simply bought his popular support. The bookseller Nicolas Ruault, who lived in the Petit St-Antoine area and had a shop on rue de La Harpe, wrote to his brother in Normandy on 24 March 1789:

Mr le duc d'Orléans, qui est fort au-dessus de la haute noblesse par ses opinions politiques, suit le penchant qu'a toujours eu sa maison pour le peuple, dans les grandes crises de l'État . . . On ne doute pas que le duc d'Orléans ne soit élu par le Tiers État député aux États. Il sera plaisant de voir un prince représenter le peuple.¹⁵

On 25 June, Ruault reported that the previous day he had gone to the Palais-Royal - 'en quelque endroit qu'on se portât, on était dans un groupe vociférant contre la cour.' The entire area was packed with 'hommes de tous états.' At 11 p.m. the crowd had gone up into the Duke's *appartements*, but finding only the Duchess at home they had nonetheless paid her 'de longs compliments très tumultueux sur la conduite populaire de son mari.' They went on to make a bonfire outside the *Contrôle général* in the rue des Petits-Champs, passing the night in cries of 'Vive Mr Necker! Au diable l'Archevêque!'¹⁶

Ruault, who called himself a *philosophe* and who was to go on to edit the highly-reputable *Moniteur*, makes no mention of subornation or agitation in all this. He was not, however, given to any kind of naïve approval of popular action. In the 25 June letter he remarked ominously on the *Gardes françaises*' refusal to obey crowd-control orders:

Je vous laisse à penser ce que tout cela va devenir si les troupes refusent de contenir un peuple aussi à craindre dans sa gaieté que dans sa colère. On craint que l'archevêché ne saute aujourd'hui ou demain. Qui pourrait empêcher ce désordre? La police est sans force et sans credit.¹⁷

Ruault seems to have viewed Orléans as part of the constellation of political forces - on 11 July he remarked that the Court's inept manoeuvrings would end by putting the crown on the Duke's head - but never hinted that the popular violence was anything less than spontaneous. He was present in the Tuileries gardens on 12 July when news of Necker's downfall arrived, and describes in detail the flight of the respectable (*du mieux choisi*) crowd, the clash of cavalry with a chair-hurling mob, and the rampage

¹⁴Castelot, *Régicide*, pp.168-9.

¹⁵N. Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien sous la Révolution: lettres à son frère, 1783-1796*, ed. A. Vassal and C. Rimbaud, (Paris, 1976), p.127.

¹⁶*ibid.* p.141.

¹⁷*ibid.* p.142.

that resulted when 'le peuple des artisans et manoeuvriers,' returning from suburban *guinguettes*, picked up the news. 'Hommes ivres de vin et de fureur' destroyed the customs-barriers overnight, and on the 13th emptied the prisons and tried to force the bourgeoisie to join the insurrection, threatening to burn their homes if they refused. Ruault himself was a member of one of the first militia patrols that set out to keep order that night: too few in number, he felt, to have real effect - 'nous ne pouvions contenir la fureur du peuple; . . . ce n'est pas le moment de lui parler raison.'¹⁸

It is clear from all this that Camille Desmoulins on a chair in the Palais-Royal was not necessarily the decisive spark of Revolution; Paris seemed ready to explode with or without one more incendiary speech. Even Rudé, however, is prepared to see Orléanism of some kind behind the assaults on the *barrières* - 'It is no doubt significant that the two posts said to belong to the Duke of Orleans were deliberately spared by the incendiaries.' The larger aim, it is alleged, was to put control of access to and from the city into the hands of the 'extreme revolutionary party' (the phrase is Hardy's).¹⁹

Reviewing these events in the light of our re-evaluation of the popular mentality, we can suggest that historians have drawn a false dichotomy between spontaneous and organised incidents. Georges Lefebvre's classic account recognised the 'almost mythical character' that the Estates-General and the *cahiers de doléances* had assumed in the popular mind by the spring of 1789, raising 'a hope both radiant and nebulous, a hope for a national regeneration, a new era in which men would be more happy.' Already by this stage, however, the evidence of noble opposition was breeding fears that the aristocracy 'would stop at nothing to crush the Third Estate.'²⁰ In February 1789, as the price of bread rose yet again, Hardy heard people saying 'que les princes avaient accaparé les grains pour mieux réussir à culbuter le sieur Necker.'²¹

We have seen that in September 1788 the Parisian people had lost its traditional bearings, and champion, when the Parlement appeared to go over to the aristocracy. The duc d'Orléans' feud with the royal couple, and his determination to extract as much personal satisfaction as possible from the nation's troubles, put him in the perfect position to become the focus for rebellious popular sentiments. Some of the bourgeoisie clearly already felt that the Court could be defied without the need for such an elevated

¹⁸Ruault, *Gazette*, pp.152-4.

¹⁹Rudé, *Crowd*, p.49.

²⁰G. Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*, trans. R.R. Palmer, (Princeton, 1947); p.88.

²¹Rudé, *Crowd*, p.46.

figurehead, as their actions from 13 July on would demonstrate, but they could not come to this pass until Orléans-oriented popular disorder had broken down the old system.

In the growing conflict, the open-handed Duke was ranged alongside the people against the Court, the *fermiers-généraux*, and all species of oppression and manipulation. Perhaps it was then a sense of respect that spared his toll-houses on the night of 12 July, and a sense of justice combined with garbled oral transmission that led to talk of 'orders' not to steal from what was burnt. We cannot know exactly how the mass of the people saw Philippe's involvement with the momentous political crisis then unfolding, other than to set it into a framework of this kind. The manichaeian and simplistic tendencies at all levels of thought about practical politics had put Orléans on the popular side of a gulf which separated them from the Court. If the people took him on as an ally and a figurehead, as they had adopted the Parlement through the Jansenist years, it did not necessarily mean that they deferred to him or to his party in action. The Parlement had never sponsored riot, and it is doubtful whether the Orléanists did either, however much both parties may have desired at different times a climate of unrest. In what, up to mid-July 1789, could be seen as a political crisis, albeit of near-unprecedented magnitude, eighteenth-century understandings continued to be the mainstay of action, and could not be wholly erased even by the tempest to come.

Returning to the theme of perceptions of those who actually took part in unrest, we have noted already that Hardy thought it significant that the *populace* of the Faubourg St-Marcel should join the riots of September 1788. According to Mercier, writing a few years earlier, this quarter was where 'les séditions et les mutineries ont leur origine cachée,' and its *populace* was 'capable de se porter aux plus grands excès.'²² The same low elements were reported to have started the Reveillon disturbances - even one of the suspects questioned reported that 'Ce sont des gens du faubourg Marcel qui ont occasionné ce tumulte-là, qu'il l'a entendu dire à son frère et autres.'²³ Such hearsay may reflect a reality, or simply a common assumption. As well as these geographically-suspect groups, the general class of *vagabonds et gens sans aveu* was picked out for responsibility on numerous occasions - over fifty, for example, were recorded as having been rounded up and charged with involvement in the looting of the St-Lazare monastery on the night of 12-13 July. The old police were aided in this by units of the new citizens' militia, demonstrating

²²Mercier, *Tableau*, pp.75, 77.

²³Rudé, *Crowd*, p.38.

shared prejudices from the first day of its existence.²⁴

Despite this tendency towards criminalising certain elements of civil unrest, the administration's own approach in the aftermath of disturbances in 1787-9 showed that they no longer felt confident in the legitimacy of repression. Jacques Godechot notes that in 'practically every' riot of the period, their policy in the aftermath was 'to disavow the police [and] proclaim that . . . shooting had been unauthorized.'²⁵ Although in the Reveillon riots no clear position was ever reached by an investigation, the *Gardes françaises* were not offered wholehearted support. Their own officers disowned the order to fire, possibly as an anti-authority gesture, but one that backfired on their troops' morale - the men 'began to criticize the Government and to side with the Parisian working class.' This attitude was to intensify in late June - on the 24th and 28th units of the *Gardes* refused to stand-to for crowd control, and on the latter occasion they ran to the Palais-Royal to fraternise with the people. The detention of the ringleaders of this episode led to another 'insurrection' and to further fraternisation when a crowd freed them from the Abbaye two days later. By the second week of July, if some reports are to be believed, a kind of 'soldiers' council' was functioning within their ranks, pledged to take no action that might hinder the work of the National Assembly. On 12 July, the *Gardes françaises* unhesitatingly went into action against Swiss and German units deploying to repress what was evidently becoming a serious uprising.²⁶ One could, with some straining of the imagination, put all this down to a massive plot, but it seems more to reflect the troops' finally taking sides with the city that was their home against what appeared to be an increasingly isolated and despotic Court.

From here we come on to deal with the violence of 12-14 July itself, and the first active confrontation of the three social components of the Parisian revolution - aristocrats, bourgeoisie and people. As crowds roamed the streets in the aftermath of the burning of the *barrières*, the tocsin sounded to summon District electors to an emergency session at 5 a.m. on 13 July. By the end of the morning a committee had been formed at the Hôtel de Ville, and a citizens' militia of 12,000 decreed (to be raised to 48,000 in the afternoon). Ironically, it was this militia, as much as the dangerous crowd, that was searching for weapons when the *prévôt des marchands*, de Flesselles, was tainted with the vacillation that

²⁴Rudé, *Crowd*, p.50.

²⁵Godechot, *Bastille*, p.147.

²⁶*ibid.* pp.150, 175-6, 183-4, 189-90.

would cost him his life.²⁷ If, as we have seen, Nicolas Ruault felt the first patrols of this militia to be practically powerless, Godechot notes that others were not so reticent, and that some went as far as to summarily execute thieves caught in the act. Units of the *Gardes françaises* accompanied some patrols and lent their weight to the repression, the force of which derived principally from the kind of perception Restif de la Bretonne was to put in print - a city swarming with brigands, those from outside joining forces with the 'natives' of the Faubourg St-Marcel and other evil haunts.²⁸

It is clear, however, that more was going on than mere licence and disorder - the city was arming itself against the Court in spectacular fashion. In the weeks after the rising, the Districts were instructed to buy back arms from workers who had obtained them, and Rudé notes that one alone - St-Roch - purchased over two hundred and fifty muskets in three weeks. Ninety-six thousand pounds of gunpowder were given out from municipal stores from the 13th to the 15th, the vast majority of it with no note of its destination.²⁹ Even as the militia strove to disarm the dangerous elements of the population, new rumours convulsed the city in the small hours of the 14th that a counter-attack was under way, and drove the search for arms to new heights. Eighty thousand may have been involved, or at least present, when the Invalides was besieged, surrendered and pillaged for muskets in the morning, its garrison forcing their commander to yield to the people.³⁰

The confusion of crowd and militia is evident in the taking of the Bastille itself. Thousands upon thousands of people were swarming in the general area between the Faubourg St-Antoine and the Hôtel de Ville, and many of these participated in a general way in the 'siege'. On the other hand, after around a hundred had been killed in a fusillade provoked by a supposed attempt to break in, it fell to relatively-organised bodies of militia, assisted by sympathetic troops, to engage the fortress and force its surrender. Six out of every seven officially-recognised *Vainqueurs de la Bastille* had been present as members of what was to become the Parisian National Guard - the fact that militiamen did not exclusively hold this honour suggests the accuracy of the proportions.³¹

The distinction between the two groups was, however, evident to contemporary observers.

²⁷Godechot, *Bastille*, pp.197-8.

²⁸*ibid.* p.199.

²⁹Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.52-3.

³⁰*ibid.* p.54. Rudé suggests the attackers may have numbered 8-9,000; Godechot, *Bastille*, p.214. gives the higher number.

³¹Rudé, *Crowd*, p.59; and Godechot, *Bastille*, p.218.

Loustalot's account of these events in his *Révolutions de Paris* opens with an exposition on the aimless destruction carried out by 'le peuple' in contrast to the determined and disciplined action of 'les citoyens.'³² An Assembly *député* went further in distinguishing 'le séditieux armé par la licence' from 'le citoyen armé pour la liberté.' Colin Lucas has demonstrated that this type of discourse was used to 'free' the revolutionary import of collective violence from its more brutal aspects. By palming these off onto *brigands et gens sans aveu*, 'the revolutionary contribution of the crowd could remain uncontaminated by frightening violence.' The message was reinforced by turning the deaths of prominent individuals into acts of justice - Loustalot claimed that Berthier was killed by a man whose father he had murdered, and various accounts made de Launay give verbal provocation or justification to the crowd. Meanwhile, this did not stop the commentators slipping into an assimilation of all the poor with the untrustworthy *canaille*, or even those that Lucas describes as 'potentially more radical' laying the blame for crowd violence on the 'ignorance and gullibility of the poor,' who were led by 'others' into their acts.³³

Even if, as Lucas concludes, the revolutionaries finally began to grope towards some overall justification of popular violence, it would never be a consensus, and opinion would continue to be traumatised by the excesses of which the people showed themselves capable. Nevertheless, in 1789 Loustalot felt bound to acknowledge that 'c'est pourtant cette populace, méprisée des oisifs et des nuls, qui nous a sauvés de l'esclavage.'³⁴ This is an interesting comment, since we have noted the concern of the militia to repress these elements, and the place of that same militia in the concluding drama of the rising. If there were inconsistencies in the recruitment of different units, overall this force was, as Barnave described it on 15 July, 'bonne bourgeoise . . . aussi sûre pour l'ordre public que formidable pour la tyrannie.'³⁵

Had the uprising of July gone down to defeat, we might be able to say more about its composition through the records of its repression. As it was, the triumph of the insurgents left everyone free to put their own gloss on events. One consequence of this, it might be suggested, was an exaggeration of the divide between 'good' and 'bad' elements. At various points in the drama - the seizure of the Invalides,

³²See C. Lucas, 'Talking about urban popular violence in 1789', in A. Forrest and P. Jones (eds.), *Reshaping France: Town, country and region during the French Revolution*, (Manchester, 1991), pp.122-136; p.124.

³³*ibid.* pp.129-131.

³⁴*ibid.* p.125.

³⁵Rudé, *Crowd*, p.52.

the turmoil around the Hôtel de Ville - observers and participants had found these distinctions hard to make. It is evident in certain cases that different portions of the bourgeoisie had different ideas about who was to be trusted to carry arms. The President of the District de St-Gervais, for example, requisitioned various pieces from a gunsmith for a number of individuals, who were disarmed elsewhere, as 'on avait des soupçons' about them.³⁶ Examination of partial lists, such as those of the *Vainqueurs*, or of detainees for various crimes, cannot offer much guidance concerning the overall tone and composition of the revolt.

What does seem indisputable, however, is the general sentiment that Paris was defending itself from a direct threat, an aristocratic conspiracy involving elements of a famine-plot and of military assault, ending with a huge massacre of Parisians and the re-imposition of the feudal yoke. Babeuf, newly-arrived in the city in late July, wrote to his wife of the universal acceptance of this understanding - 'The people's sole thought was to wreak a signal revenge for such a betrayal, unprecedented throughout history.' He had his own explanation for the cruelty meted out to the vanquished - it was the fruit of 'the rack, the wheel, the stake, the gibbet' to which the people had been exposed for so long.³⁷

This apparently evident connection between the cruelty of the *ancien régime* judicial system and the excesses of the crowd palliated the latter in the eyes of those who felt themselves to be more 'enlightened.' Such a link has, of course, been scorned by those entirely out of sympathy with the aims of the Revolution, and certain aspects of recent historiography have sought to link popular violence, Revolution and Terror into an inevitable descending spiral.³⁸ In passing, we may note that it is almost certainly true that the Court was ready (with the exception of Louis himself) to see the preservation of its prerogatives achieved over the dead bodies of a great many Parisians, and was to remain firmly and publicly of that opinion. It might also be said that the 'victims' of 14 and 23 July had done more to merit their deaths than the 'criminals' strung up after the Reveillon riots, or those shot in the repression of that and earlier incidents. In the end, however, such discussions are pointless. It is as futile to make the violence of the crowd into a profound turning-point as it is to pass it off as exemplary justice or damn it as murderous brigandage.

The novelty of the events of this time was not their violence. The eighteenth century was a violent time, and Paris in particular a violent place. Notwithstanding deliberate conflict, let us recall as example

³⁶Lacroix, vol. 6, p.15. It was 3 August 1791 before the gunsmith received his property back.

³⁷Godechot, *Bastille*, p.245.

³⁸See Schama, *Citizens*, particularly pp.406 and 447 on the events of 1789. Much of this excessive generalisation is demolished by B.M. Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice in Paris 1789-90*, (Cambridge, 1993), esp. Conclusion.

the nobles who drove their coaches through the crowd at the Dauphin's fireworks in 1770, and note that minor incidents of the same ilk occurred every day. Research into popular life may have demonstrated how brutal some aspects of it were, but the middling classes were only just beginning to separate themselves from this milieu - the refinement and sentimentality that contemporary literature encouraged were still new to them (and as writers like Loustalot were to demonstrate, the language of strong feelings served equally well to write about bloody, violent sights and experiences).³⁹

It was only after the event that interpretations of the shocking phenomenon of popular violence emerged. In the cycle of disorder right up to July 1789, we have seen that the old reductionist explanations were still in favour. Though the criticism of violence focused on the sanguinary fate of the high-born, one might argue that what really terrified such commentators was the fact that rebellion had succeeded - that there had indeed been a Revolution, a term given a whole new meaning by these events. This outcome was not reached because blood was shed, but because the bourgeoisie, the people and portions of the armed forces had united to raise a city in arms against its rightful King. If the city was opened to Louis on 17 July, few can have doubted who was really surrendering.

The last shreds of legitimacy which held the absolutist power-structure in place were worn through by the friction of the 'pre-revolution.' July 1789 saw a confrontation of naked power between Court and newly self-defined Nation, which was won by the latter with the aid of the people of Paris.⁴⁰ In the course of victory, a mythic identity was established between Nation and People, whereas previously they had been seen as separate. In fact, as our examination of the July events has shown, separation was fully established on a practical level, obfuscated by the tendency for 'people' to become 'brigands' when they overstepped certain bounds.

What all this was to mean for future socio-political relations is clear. Elements of *le peuple* in its widest interpretation would continue to view this identity as operative, while the guardians of the 'political Nation' would attempt to exclude the lower orders from any constitutional role. The conflict thus generated was seen through the prism of a continued aristocratic threat, to which revolutionary manichaeism inevitably linked all symptoms of discord. The mysterious machinations of the Orléanists continued supposedly to weave through all of this, from the October Days of 1789 to the *déchéance*

³⁹See Garrioch, *Neighbourhood*, ch. 6, 'The evolution of the local community', pp.205-256. On literature, see for example C. Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue*, (Ithaca, 1986).

⁴⁰See Chartier, *Cultural Origins*, and Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, for discussions of the pre-revolutionary growth of understandings of the 'nation', 'public opinion', etc.

agitation of July 1791. Insofar as this added anything to the constellation of perceived forces, it was as a means for moderates to discredit the intentions of radicals, and aristocrats to blame the whole Revolution on personal ambition and malice. For example, when the Duke himself was told of the March on Versailles, he exclaimed that it was all a plot by Lafayette, but that he would get the blame anyway. So it transpired, more or less.⁴¹

Outside of the realm of plot-fantasies, the post-July period in general displays interesting continuities with what had gone before, and with what was to come. Rudé notes explicitly that various trades petitioning the Municipality for improvements in pay and conditions were rebuffed as brusquely as they had been by the old order, 'sometimes with the help of the National Guard.' One *domestique* received two years' imprisonment in August for having said in the Palais-Royal, after municipal refusal to grant citizens' rights to his *état*:

que toute la garde bourgeoise et toutes les personnes qui portaient l'uniforme étaient tous des j. f. et que 10,000 domestiques étaient capables de f. le bal à tous les j. f. qui portaient des habits bleus . . . et qu'il y avait 60,000 domestiques à Paris qui pourraient se réunir aux ouvriers des différents états et que l'on verrait tous ces j. f. se cacher chez eux avec leurs f. habits.⁴²

This genre of statement, and its reflexive repression, would appear with great frequency in 1791. Anticlerical protest, which would enflame Paris in the early months of that year, was also abroad in 1789. At the end of September a dispute over burial-fees led first to a riot which forced a curé to carry out the funeral service, then to another which threatened the life of a neighbouring parish's curé who had dismissed his choir-leader for taking part in the funeral - reinstatement under the auspices of the National Guard, along with a ringleader's arrest, calmed the crowd.⁴³

Meanwhile, the processions of working people from all over the city to thanksgiving services in the new church of Ste-Geneviève were intimidating many. As Hardy noted, there was 'quelque chose d'effrayant' in their magnitude, and 'la Piété ne formait pas malheureusement tout le motif' for them. An accelerating cycle of subsistence disturbances had also run through August and September, which included arrests for accusing Lafayette of complicity in shortage. Guards had to be stationed in bakeries from the beginning of September, and by the 18th the Hôtel de Ville was experiencing its third minor siege by angry crowds. On 23 September three men were hanged at Versailles for attempting to lynch a baker two

⁴¹Castelot, *Régicide*, p.185. He notes that some 'evidence' for Orléans' involvement was hearsay at as much as fourth-hand. See also Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.61-2, and Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice*, ch. 7, pp.84-98.

⁴²Rudé, *Crowd*, p.65. His original sentence had been branding and nine years in the galleys, but this was commuted.

⁴³*ibid.* p.66.

weeks before - the King himself had had to intervene in this disturbance 'pour calmer les esprits'.⁴⁴

The October Days themselves demonstrated the continued complexity of social relations and the determination that the people retained in the face of their perceived enemies. As well as the various issues mentioned above, popular discontent had also turned on political events in Versailles. Such demonstrations as had taken place, including an unarmed march by 1500 people from the Palais-Royal towards Versailles on 30 August, had been broken up by the National Guard. By September, radical patriots were contrasting their position with the 'patrouillotisme' of Lafayette's militia.⁴⁵ As was only to be expected in the circumstances, the accusations of famine-plotting that had damned the previous administration now rebounded onto this one. As Barry Shapiro points out, the *journée* of 5 October actually began with a crowd assault on the Hôtel de Ville itself, which was narrowly prevented from escalating into lynching and wholesale arson. Women in the crowd proclaimed that 'the entire Commune was composed of bad citizens who all deserved to be hanged, beginning with M. Bailly and M. de Lafayette.'⁴⁶ This crowd was turned aside towards marching on Versailles, and mutinous Guard units forced Lafayette to lead them after it virtually at gunpoint.

Shapiro demonstrates that by turning the focus of hostility from municipal to national authority, Lafayette eventually managed to achieve a considerable victory over a potentially dangerous insurrection, while at the same time securing further the constitutionalists' power-base against the aristocrats. The events at Versailles itself seemed to confirm both the crowd's infiltration by brigands and its basic fickleness - the night storming of the palace and beheading of two guards, followed by Lafayette's turning of an angry mob, with one courtly gesture, into one that cried 'Vive la reine.'⁴⁷ This sudden acceptance of the Queen is indeed remarkable, and frankly inexplicable, other than as a side-effect of perceived victory over her. We may note that at this point the King was still widely seen in a favourable light, particularly as he now passed all the measures he had been delaying. Gouverneur Morris reported a remark by a street-orator that demonstrates, however, that suspicions remained about the 'famine plot' that had already become part of the mythology of 1789:

Messieurs, nous manquons du Pain, et voici la Raison. Il n'y a que trois jours que le Roi a eu ce Vêto

⁴⁴Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.67-9.

⁴⁵Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice*, p.89.

⁴⁶Testimony of Stanislas Maillard, *ibid.* p.90.

⁴⁷See Schama, *Citizens*, pp.466-8, for an account which shares this low opinion of the people.

suspensif et déjà les Aristocrates ont acheté des Suspensions et envoyé les grains hors du Royaume.⁴⁸

Louis' semi-mythic connection to the food supply was of course central to this *journée* in the first place, and once he was secured in Paris, action by the Assembly did ensure that bread reached the capital in adequate quantities, at a lower price than in the summer.⁴⁹

However, in line with the notion that the October Days were a victory for the moderates in the city, a crackdown on radicals followed. This began with the press - a warrant drove Marat into hiding, and on 8 October a decree restricted what *colporteurs* could cry in the streets. This was zealously enforced by Guard patrols.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the third week of October saw the culmination of remaining food protests. On the 21st, a baker who had hoarded bread (allegedly for the Assembly, widening the import of the crime) was subjected to the classic fate of the people's enemies. Dragged first to the Hôtel de Ville, where officials promised he would be tried, he died on the *lanterne* of the Place de Grève as the crowd's patience rapidly expired. His head toured the city.⁵¹ Lafayette's response was a full mobilisation of the Guard, breaking up the parade of the trophy and various associated disturbances, and clearing the Place de Grève itself with the threat of cannon. Later the same day, the Assembly was moved to pass the Martial Law provision that would see service on 17 July 1791, and within 24 hours two protestors had been executed to drive home the point. One of these was probably guilty of complicity in the baker's death, but the other had done no more than attempt to rouse a crowd in the Faubourg St-Antoine. Shapiro suggests that this latter execution, at the Porte St-Antoine, can be viewed less as justice than as a warning to the inhabitants of this area.⁵²

In keeping with his general theme of the leniency of revolutionary justice in 1789-90, Shapiro points out that rioters arrested prior to this incident received light custodial sentences or brief periods in the pillory. On the other hand, it could be argued that the judicial response to the 21 October riot was not much less severe than that to the Reveillon riots, for which three men were hanged and five branded. Certainly, it was part of a general administrative offensive which also targeted excessive autonomy in the Districts and by individual activists.⁵³

⁴⁸Quoted by Kaplan, *Famine Plot*, p.1.

⁴⁹Rudé, *Crowd*, p.78.

⁵⁰Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice*, pp.100-101

⁵¹For other examples of lynchings which follow this pattern, see the chapter on policing.

⁵²Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice*, pp.103-5.

⁵³*ibid.* pp.106-7, 108-114.

The people of Paris, after their exertions of July, evidently retained a powerful reservoir of assertion, which the bread-crisis of the autumn brought into play. The climate of tension thus stimulated provoked the emergence of attitudes and patterns of behaviour, from both the authorities and the population, echoing *ancien régime* responses, but also answering to the new balance of forces. We shall see in later chapters the extent to which such understandings continued to operate into 1791, under circumstances which belie Rudé's insistence on the primacy of hunger as a motivation for political action. Before doing so, however, we will need to explore in more depth the complex of institutions and attitudes that had grown up in revolutionary Paris in the eighteen months since the fall of the Bastille.

CHAPTER 3 - CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN PARISIAN POLICING FROM THE ANCIEN RÉGIME TO THE REVOLUTIONARIES OF 1791

Throughout the eighteenth century the police had spread a continually tightening net of surveillance and control across Paris. The Revolution which eventually destroyed the social system they existed to preserve was doubtless beyond their wildest nightmares, but nonetheless their perceived enemies were almost ubiquitous. These ranged from the ever-present *gens sans aveu*, through the servant-class and the disorderly troops of women and children, on up into the realm of those who had an 'interest' in encouraging subversion. That there were such figures was axiomatic in the conduct of policing. For years in the 1730s the police had a standing order to locate and detain one Gaspard de Visé, believed to be the principal force behind the *convulsionnaires* of St-Médard, although he was never found. *Lieutenant de Police* Lenoir, whose service ended in 1785, still believed that Jansenist agitation was part of a plot in alliance with Protestantism 'to destroy the clergy of France and to overturn royal authority.' The pursuit of this was one of the contexts in which Dutch and German ambassadors and tourists were watched, although good reasons could always be found to scrutinise any foreigners.¹

Jansenism was only one of the many fields in which the Parisian police actively strove to head off a perceived threat to public order. It is an historical commonplace now to invoke their concern with the administration of the food-supply, the regulation of the flood of foundlings into the city and the reverse flow of infants put out to wet-nurse, or the maintenance of the cleanliness and lighting of the streets, alongside those tasks which seem more appropriate to modern notions of policing.²

What is less widely observed, indeed scarcely acknowledged, is that the revolutionary administration took on the task of the *ancien régime* police almost in its entirety. The final elimination of the Châtelet police jurisdiction came, along with that of the other courts and Parlements, at the end of 1790. On 26 December the new municipal *Département de Police* published a decree setting out the division of tasks between its four administrators.

The first of these, named Thorillon, (soon to be replaced by one Vigny,) had charge of all matters

¹Williams, *Police*, Ch. 5, pp.189-237, esp. pp.198-200.

²See for example Godechot, *Bastille*, pp.64-86, where these and other tasks are covered in summary detail.

concerning the military, such as recruiting and soldiers on leave, along with the fire-service, the organisation of the National Guard for routine policing, and also the following:

balayage, enlèvement des boues et neiges, l'arrosement, l'illumination, . . . les wauxhalls, panthéon, bals publics, clubs, cirques, promenades publiques, places, rues, carrefours, édifices, églises, cimetières, pour le bon ordre, la décence, les mœurs et la sûreté, l'inspection des pharmacies et drogueries, exécution des règlements faits et à faire.

The second, Jolly, despite the freedom of the press supposedly granted by the Revolution, controlled:

spectacles, librairie, imprimerie, gravures, colporteurs, [along with] marché et poste aux chevaux, les voitures publiques et de places, les postes et messageries, halles et marchés, les ouvriers et domestiques, nourrices et recommanderesses, le dénombrement des habitans de Paris.

The third area of responsibility went to Perron, a serving member of the municipal *comité des recherches*, thus fitted particularly to watch over:

hôtels garnis, auberges, logeurs, cafés, vagabonds, escrocs, mendiants, dénonciations de vols, étrangers, juifs, maisons de jeux, assemblées nocturnes, femmes publiques, empiriques, passeports, [along with correspondence with other authorities.]

Lastly, one Maugis had the surveillance of:

corps et communautés, poids et mesures, les fripiers, les revendeurs, halles aux toiles et aux draps, les boucheries et tueries, les boulangeries, la bourse, les loteries, les barrières, et tout ce qui est relatif à la perception des droits.³

Their names are almost all we know of these men. All were *hommes de loi*, Perron had been an *avocat aux conseils du roi*, Jolly an *avocat au parlement* and Maugis and Thorillon *procureurs au Châtelet*. Shapiro's recent work, which extensively covers the political role of the municipal *comité des recherches* in 1789-90, can only give two paragraphs of vague information on Perron, and no personal details. It is known that he continued to serve as a police administrator until 10 August 1792, but was subsequently arrested and *septembrisé*, having been called in a pamphlet that April the 'grand-maître des mouchards' - with some reason, as we shall see. On the other administrators, information is even more hazy.⁴

If the administrators must remain relatively faceless, it is nonetheless clear that they presided over an institution which was intended to maintain a comprehensive grip on Parisian life. Although legislation in early 1791 would remove elements such as the guilds and customs-barriers from this panoply, it still stretched far and wide over almost all public activities, and no doubt some private. The fact that the chief

³This particular list comes from the *Révolutions de Paris* of 8-15 January 1791, but appears in the same form in other journals.

⁴See *Moniteur*, 24 October 1790; also Lacroix, vol. 8, p.282, and P. Robiquet, *Le personnel municipal de Paris pendant la Révolution*, (Paris, 1890); Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice*, p.24.

agents of this police apparatus have remained obscure figures, even next to the pre-revolutionary *Lieutenants Sartine* and *Lenoir*, shows how far revolutionary politics had moved Paris away from the point at which such a system could have been successfully imposed.

That is not to say that the police system was a complete failure on the ground. By early 1791 day-to-day policing was operating probably as thoroughly as it had before 1789, with various elements working in a more co-ordinated version of their predecessors' roles. Neighbourhood *corps de garde* and patrols were mounted by the National Guard of the local Sections, in place of the old *garde* and *guet*, while the paid companies of the *garde nationale soldée* provided the permanent back-up once afforded by the *Gardes françaises* - frequently with the same personnel. Civil policing was provided by an elected *commissaire de police* in each Section, (assisted by up to sixteen part-time *commissaires de section*), performing the same role as the old *Châtelet commissaires* - receiving complaints and declarations, conducting initial interrogations of suspects and those caught *en flagrant délit*, deciding on a referral to the central authorities or a summary night in a guardhouse cell, and generally monitoring the security of the Section. The operations of this system have yet to be explored in detail, although Dale Clifford has recently published some material on the evolution of the Guard in 1789-90.⁵

As it had come into being, the Guard was an ad-hoc neighbourhood formation, and although as time progressed Lafayette and the Municipality were to impose a centralised structure on the Guard, every step down this path was hard-fought by the jealous advocates of District autonomy.⁶ Provisional regulations were adopted in early August 1789, granting a 500-man Battalion to each District, including 100 *gardes soldées* recruited principally from the *Gardes françaises* and other defunct military units. The paid guardsmen, living in barracks under full-time discipline, were intended to give the *état-major* a reliable core of military strength. They were supplemented by six extra paid companies, one attached to each of the Divisions of ten Districts, and by late October by a corps of paid cavalry, six companies of *chasseurs des barrières*, and permanent guards for the Halles and the ports. Lafayette also put some energy into establishing the principle that all Guard movements outside their Districts were to be

⁵The *commissaire de police* system was established by the law of 21 May 1790, which defined the whole structure of municipal government for Paris - see Jones, *Longman Companion*, pp.210-11. See Garrioch, *Neighbourhood*, Introduction, pp.1-15, for the role of the *Châtelet commissaires*. R. M. Andrews' thesis, 'Political élites', offers a socio-political breakdown of the *commissaires de police* of 1792-4, who were a different breed from those of 1791. On the National Guard, see D.L. Clifford, 'The National Guard and the Parisian Community,' *French Historical Studies*, vol. 16 no. 4, Fall 1990, pp.849-878; and 'Command over Equals: the Officer Corps of the Parisian National Guard,' *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, vol. 18, 1991, pp.152-165.

⁶Clifford, 'National Guard,' pp.851, 853-5.

controlled by the *état-major*, not District authorities - this was stated definitively by the Municipality after the October Days.⁷

Arguments concerning the rights of Districts over 'their' forces continued into 1790, principally in the form of attempts to recall officers for dubious conduct. Although one prominent case involved an accusation of the excessive use of force in favour of grain-merchants, others included charges of favouritism and nepotism, and simple dereliction of duty, and still more were quibbles over the form of, or necessity for, written commissions. In a similar way, Districts and Battalions continued to resent the overly military manner of the officers of the General Staff. Lafayette had hand-picked these men for their reliability and experience, qualifications which resulted in an exclusively noble, albeit 'patriotic,' body. Their attempts to treat the Guard like a regular military force subject to discipline (which on duty it theoretically was) resulted in yelps of outrage at arbitrary and aristocratic ways.⁸ It will become apparent as this study goes on to examine the events of 1791 that this friction did not impede active large-scale deployments of the Guard. Nor did it prevent, as we have already observed, the Guard filling the role of the *ancien régime* police forces.

The national authorities' view of the Guard, moreover, remained one conditioned by absolutes. Its public order powers were continually strengthened - for example, ten days after the Champ de Mars Massacre, a new law was voted that reduced the number of warnings the Guard had to give before firing on crowds. Article ten of this legislation codified the fields in which the Guard could be used against the people:

Les attroupements séditieux . . . [against the collection of feudal dues], contre celles des contributions publiques, contre la liberté absolue de la circulation des subsistances, des espèces d'or et d'argent . . . contre celle du travail et de l'industrie, ainsi que des conventions relatives au prix des salaires, seront dissipés . . .⁹

Within this measure were incorporated the commitments to the freedom of the grain-trade and the collection of dues sworn at the Fête de la Fédération of 14 July 1790, as well as the anti-worker Loi Le Chapelier of June 1791, whose article eight had authorised the Guard to dissipate workers' meetings, 'tenus pour attroupements séditieux.'¹⁰ What the authorities wanted from the Guard had been spelled out

⁷Clifford, 'National Guard', pp.853-4.

⁸Clifford, 'Command', pp.156-60.

⁹F. Devenne, 'La garde nationale, création et évolution, 1789 - Août 1792', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 283 (1991), pp.49-66; p.61. This article, while recent, contributes little to the history of the Guard beyond a survey of the debates over its regulation.

¹⁰*ibid.* pp.55, 60.

by Rabaut de St-Etienne on 21 November 1790, reporting to the Assembly on a project for the organisation of the Guard:

Délibérer, hésiter, refuser, sont des crimes. Obéir, voilà, dans un seul mot, tout leurs devoirs.
Instrument aveugle et purement passif, la force publique n'a ni âme, ni pensée, ni volonté.

Even those such as Dubois de Crancé, who wanted more acknowledgement of the role of the Guard as a bulwark against despotism and internal enemies, agreed that it should not have the right of deliberation or disobedience.¹¹ We shall see that these desires were far from being fulfilled in practice.

In the District organisation of the Guard, however, while enthusiasm for autonomy continued, its identity as a 'bourgeois' force aided its mission of social order. Even if non-active citizens were only formally excluded in 1791, 'all workers, artisans and non-domiciled citizens' were exempted by the 1789 regulations - which in practice was generally taken to mean excluded, especially as a *six-livre* compensatory bounty was offered to those who left, and we have seen that specific measures and incentives were in place to disarm workers. It is true that some of the less well-off who had rendered service in the July Crisis were allowed to remain, and that some Districts set up uniform funds to help the 'moins aisés', but in general the Guard remained a militia of property-holders. This was reflected in the regulations, which indicated that the obligation of Guard service fell on all propertied persons, not merely the 400 volunteers, and in District practice, which frequently involved extracting contributions from the non-serving bourgeois to finance the Battalion. As early as August 1789 one District made the role of the Guard particularly explicit, ruling that all property-holders were liable to contribute 'for the common defence of the property included within a district.' This included women and clergy, clearly exempt from actual service.¹²

Clifford has noted from Châtelet sources information on the status of 344 Guard patrol-leaders taking prisoners before *commissaires* in July-December 1789. Lawyers, preponderant in elective office at this time, number only twenty-three in this sample, compared to fifty *bourgeois de Paris*, ninety-three artisans and ninety-eight *marchands*. The sample also includes ten clerks or *employés*, six workers, and one *domestique sans place*, normally a status associated with the underclass. Clifford compares these figures with Battalion and Company officers' records, to reveal an unsurprising shift up the social scale

¹¹Devenne, 'garde nationale', p.56. Dubois de Crancé later criticised the Parisian Guards for slavishly pledging loyalty to Lafayette after the 18 April 1791 débâcle.

¹²Clifford, 'National Guard', pp.654, 865-7. Many of the issues raised by Clifford are also discussed by M. Genty, 'Controverses autour de la garde nationale parisienne', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 291 (1993), pp.61-88, which quotes many documents from early debates on the Guard, although it does not seem to add anything not already said by Clifford.

(and towards those with military experience). Relating the Guard figures to those of militiamen in Petit St-Antoine in the July Crisis, and to citizen activists in St-Germain l'Auxerrois in 1790, she concludes that 'The active National Guard was more similar to the broadly representative group of citizens who turned out to defend the Revolution in Petit St-Antoine than it was to the district leadership . . .' Most notably here the tendency for lawyers and professionals to be over-represented in political activism emerges clearly.¹³ Nonetheless, despite a few survivors of the popular mobilisation of July 1789, the Guard was clearly predominantly the domain of those who by 1791 would be defined as active citizens.

Clifford goes into more detail concerning the political attitudes of the Guard in her article on the officer corps. She records that from 1789 towards 1791, hostility to 'military aristocracy' in the Guard grew, and the contests over officer elections emphasised the autonomy of the Districts and citizens' rights. She also notes that in this changing and radicalising political climate, there was a 'surprising' lack of change in the officer corps - 'instead of alteration by "new men," the officer corps slowly became more radical because its members did.'¹⁴ Although men of military background declined from around 36% of Battalion Commanders to 20%, to be replaced by men of business, this was a relatively small shift, and the vast majority of officer elections confirmed existing positions, or merely juggled the hierarchy. The National Guard was becoming more 'political' - almost half its Battalion Commanders in late 1790 held another local office. Clifford argues that this reflected politicisation of the population as a whole, not a shift in social composition, but it could equally be suggested that control of the Guard and the Districts was falling into the hands of a smaller group with the time to devote to a long-term administrative commitment (and that is only the most innocent interpretation that might be put on such a trend).¹⁵

The organisation in May-July 1790 of the forty-eight Sections as a replacement for the sixty Districts, which afforded the new administrative units much less of a role in politics, and also cut the direct link to the sixty Battalions, was intended as a measure to combat the politicisation of the Guard, and to undercut the general rebelliousness of some Districts. It seems to have succeeded in quelling the ardour of a few radical assemblies, but the reorganisation left many of the old boundaries unchanged, so the intended fragmentation was largely ineffective.¹⁶

¹³Clifford, 'National Guard', pp.876-8.

¹⁴Clifford, 'Command', p.153.

¹⁵*ibid.* pp.160-1.

¹⁶See R.B. Rose, *The Making of the Sans-Culottes: Democratic ideas and institutions in Paris, 1789-1792*. (Manchester, 1983); pp.77-82, 87-93, on the abolition of the Districts.

By 1791, when Lafayette resigned command of the Parisian National Guard, the officer corps he left behind was very similar to the one with which he began. But it no longer consisted of men on whom he could rely absolutely. They had chosen their civilian political interests over the military values represented by the commander in chief. . .¹⁷

It is not hard to find flaws in this model of the ‘politicisation’ of the guard-mounting classes. If it is true, as Clifford indicates, that the rhetorical intensity of disputes grew over time, nonetheless she has also demonstrated that from its origins the Guard contained tensions over command practices. Further, we may observe that if the militia ‘turned out to defend the Revolution’ in July 1789, we have seen that they were also deeply concerned for their property. Finally, the October Days and their aftermath had demonstrated that although in a crisis the Guard could put political goals above blind obedience, they were ready and willing to crack down on popular unrest once the ‘bigger’ issue of the King had been settled. Thus, if we are to allow the idea of radicalisation or politicisation of the Guard, it will clearly be very far from a simple bipolar movement across a spectrum. The triangular nature of socio-political relations always intrudes to complicate such schemes, and later chapters will dwell on both political tensions within the Guard, and its large-scale commitment to a ‘social order’ viewpoint. Its daily police duties strengthened this commitment, epitomised in the atmosphere of panic and repression that surrounded the Tricolour Terror of July-August 1791.

The accounts we have examined of the crisis of July 1789 have shown that while some patrols had quaked with their own ineffectiveness, others were merrily lynching looters. The bourgeoisie of Paris, put in uniform and set to patrol some very mean streets, lacked both the confidence and the restraint of a true police force. There is no sign that by 1791 they had acquired these traits. For example, on 4 January 1791 a Guard patrol led by a *commissaire de police* was in the Palais-Royal confiscating obscene material from *colporteurs*. A scuffle resulted in a bystander being arrested for insulting the Guard. This 22-year-old *confiseur* said

qu’il ne l’a point insulté, qu’il a vu un des gardes nationales qui nous [i.e. the *commissaire*] assistoit repousser un Monsieur par le bras, et qu’il lui a dit, lui répondant, un instant ne poussez pas le monde si durement, a quoi le garde national lui a dit qu’il f . . . son sabre par le ventre, que lui répondant lui a observé que ce n’étoit pas dans ses fonctions qu’il en pouvoit user ainsi.

The *commissaire* got him to admit that he had used the word ‘polisson’ in talking to the Guard, but he did not question the substance of the exchange.¹⁸ We shall document many arrests for insults to the Guard in the months after this, many perhaps prompted by such unwarranted aggression in the pursuit of

¹⁷Clifford, ‘Command’, p.161.

¹⁸APP AA82:29, Section du Palais-Royal. The man was released when he was vouched for by his employer.

public order.

What also contributes to a sense of unease at the ability of the Guard to cope with the duties it had been given are incidents such as the shot fired at a sentry on 26 January. The investigators found a Guard *volontaire* in a third-floor apartment who admitted that he had taken up his gun, which he habitually kept loaded, 'mais par inadvertence il l'a déchargé par sa fenêtre peut-être excité par un peu de boisson.' On 2 March a shot went through a boutique on the quai de la Megisserie, just missing the two people inside. It was tracked to another bourgeois *volontaire*, who admitted 'qu'il étoit bien vrai qu'il avoit tiré ce coup de fusil mais qu'il ne savoit pas qu'un fusil portoit si loin.' On 28 June two artisans, a *garçon limonadier*, two labourers and a water-carrier declared that they had seen a shot come from the apartment of a *jouaillier* on the rue St-Louis, and felt obliged to say something 'comme il arrive journellement des malheurs par des coups de fusils tirés imprudemment et sans précaution; que le vendredi dernier . . . Etienne Meunier porteur d'eau a été dangereusement blessé,' by another accidental shot.¹⁹ Mirabeau's funeral service in April was marred when a *fusillade* was fired in his honour, and a gun left loaded shot a piece of masonry from the ceiling of St-Eustache onto the head of a Guard.²⁰

Men capable of these everyday incompetencies, buoyed up by a sense of aggressive righteousness, were sent out on twenty-four-hour shifts to police a city that had for centuries been regarded as a sink of iniquity, a reputation now accentuated by the threat of counter-revolutionary co-optation of the underclass. How far these factors added to the escalation of social tensions in 1791 is a question we shall address later, as we examine the events of that year, but there can be no doubt that the insecurity and enthusiasms of the Guard need to be appreciated in understanding what occurred in those months.

The basic volatility of the Guard as a police force added to a situation in which justice and public order were already in a precarious state. The normal processes of justice had been effectively suspended since 1789, and by early 1791 it had become necessary to set up alongside the new regular courts six *Tribunaux criminels provisoires* to get the backlog under control.²¹ The prisons were clogged with defendants awaiting trial, while the economic crisis continued to cast more unfortunates athwart the law.

¹⁹APP AA215:372-4, Section d'Henri-Quatre, AA182:103, Section du Louvre, AA215:453, Section d'Henri-Quatre. In no case was any observable action taken, except to relieve the inebriated man temporarily of his weapon, and report up the police hierarchy.

²⁰See Lacroix, vol. 3, p.538. On 11 April, as a result of this, the Municipality banned such indoor firing.

²¹The records of these institutions can be found in series Z3 of the Archives Nationales, but they contain very little beyond recitations of legal formulae and sentences passed, often with no more than the name of the defendant to identify the matter in hand.

The overall result was a constant procession of petty criminals passing into and out of the prisons. A glance at the register of the prison of La Force shows that the vast majority of detainees were remanded for a few days and then released, while those that reached the petty jurisdiction of the Police Tribunal could expect no more than a small fine or a few weeks' jail.²²

The result of all this is evident in the note *commissaire de police* Deneux of the Section des Arcis appended when he sent a violent drunk into custody at midnight on 11 May 1791:

Observons seulement que depuis quelques tems nous voyons les gardes nationales insultés, nous mêmes injuriés dans nos fonctions, que plusieurs fois nous avons porté des plaintes fondées de différentes patrouilles, qu'à leur plainte nous avons joint les nôtres, et nous avons demandé des punitions affichées qui imprimassent un caractère fait pour inspirer le respect et la soumission . . . que ces perturbateurs n'ont autre chose à dire qu'ils en seront quittes pour quelques jours de prison.

The very next piece in the records confirms this - a *colporteur* who 'faute de pouvoir vivre autrement' had been running an illegal street-lottery, arrested on 11 May, was sent to La Force, rearrested in the same place ten days later, and three days after that was back with the *commissaire* again, with a note requesting the return of his property, since he had paid the required twelve-*livre* fine.²³

Within a month Deneux had become so sick of this game that he had begun to confiscate for the Section's poor-fund all money found on gamblers - 'puisque la prison de la force ne les corrige pas.' He managed to continue this policy for a week before the arrestees began returning from prison, accompanied by notes from the administrators reminding him that he was exceeding his powers, and ordering the return of the money.²⁴

It should not be thought, however, that the judicial system was in the hands of starry-eyed humanitarians. When the machinery finally creaked into action, it could still be rigorous. On 22 April a man was arrested lurking in a house 'comme très suspect ayant été fouetté et marqué il y a quelques jours sur la place de Grève,' and rapidly received a three-month sentence for the crime of staying in Paris after this punishment.²⁵ A *garçon imprimeur* who repeatedly stole type from his employer was arrested on 17 March, and the sentence handed down, after six months' incarceration, was a public whipping, plus two

²²See APP AB322-324, *passim*, sentences noted on prisoners' records. La Force was the standard destination of prisoners remanded by the police - sentenced petty criminals went to Bicêtre, while the Conciergerie and Châtelet were used for prisoners on trial and those detained on various kinds of warrants. The Abbaye was for 'political' cases.

²³APP AA56:164, 165-7.

²⁴APP AA56:232, arrest of a dice-player, 8 June, and 241-2, 245, arrests 9 and 10 June, all returned 15 June. On 3 July Deneux encountered a prisoner who, having been found lurking in an alley, 'a répondu par des injures' to all questions, and 'nous a envoyé faire foutre.' He sent him to La Force, without comment, but doubtless with black thoughts. (APP AA56:314)

²⁵APP AB323:420.

days in the pillory for his female accomplice.²⁶ On 29 July five men who had robbed a house on the night of 28 December 1789 were hanged on the Place de Grève, and a sixth branded and sent to the galleys for life. This crime, as Lacroix notes, had been ‘sans violences personnelles, sans assassinat.’ but this had not restrained the elected judges, nor was it to temper approving press coverage of the execution.²⁷ It should be noted that the new penal code the Assembly had been working on made both acting in concert and during the hours of darkness aggravating factors in crime, but it still did not permit the death-sentence for theft of any kind. It also abolished all forms of corporal punishment.²⁸ Such programmatic leniency was clearly not part of the assumptions of any part of the police and judicial system as it actually operated in 1791, and the apparent laxity we see must be put down to the literally overwhelming volume of petty crime. Certainly the police were constantly alert for signs of suspicious activity, and were prepared to read much into small incidents, as a further case from the Section des Arcis shows.

The document is a declaration by one L’hermitte, a *huissier au Châtelet* and *commissaire de section*. In that latter function he received at 5 p.m. on 11 January 1791 a young man seeking a certificate to enable him to get a job in the public workshops or a passport to leave Paris. He presented a certificate of domicile signed by a Pierre Bourre, a *logeur* supposedly living in the same street as L’hermitte. Seeing this, the latter was ‘étonné,’ since he took care to know the Section, and particularly his own neighbourhood, but the name was ‘absolument inconnu’ to him.

As L’hermitte carried out further investigations, the young man fled, and Deneux was left to record the declaration, and to add his own deductions, which show the heights to which suspicion could rise:

. . . persuadé que nous sommes que le Département de police croira comme nous qu’un homme est toujours coupable quand il en impose, qu’il lui faut même de grands raisons pour mentir sur son domicile, et que ledit Daponnier peut être de ces jeunes gens que les fripons mettent en avant pour étudier les moyens de s’introduire dans les maisons, voir comment elles sont fermées, quelles sont les personnes qui les habitent, enfin si elles sont surveillantes; que sous tous les rapports Daponnier est un jeune homme très suspect qu’il est intéressant d’arrêter.²⁹

On the other hand he was perhaps a young man without a home who wanted a job thereby denied to him, but we have already seen that the police faced pressures sufficient to justify a certain lack of

²⁶APP AB322:1534.

²⁷Lacroix, vol. 6, p.145. The *Révolutions de Paris* of 30 July-6 August was an honourable exception - ‘craint-on de faire ressentir trop-tôt les bienfaits de la révolution, et veut-on prolonger les horreurs de l’ancien régime?’

²⁸See *Moniteur*, 1 July 1791.

²⁹APP AA56:35. This report was passed to the Police Department and to the passport and public works administrations - Deneux was taking no chances.

charity on their part. Furthermore, the pursuit of felons might involve risks greater than merely being insulted. Two *observateurs* employed by the *commissaire* of the Roi-de-Sicile section, charged with tracking down four known criminals, came to the Arcis *commissaire* on 13 May to report what had happened when they spotted them on the Place de Grève. One of the policemen followed them into a bar, where three of them and a fourth man in their company recognised and attacked him, one carrying two pistols and another an open knife. Another man stepped in to help the *observateur*, and was hit over the head by the ‘fourth man,’ who was seized by the Guard while the three wanted men made good their escape.

This man, Jean François Delahaye, called himself a *marchand bonnetier*, and offered receipts to prove he had done 102 *livres* worth of trade in the last month - a touch perhaps of protesting too much. He only added to the suspicions of the police when he went on to describe Bidot, the unemployed *compagnon orfèvre* who had stepped in, as ‘un vaurien et un joueur et un escroc de profession’ whom he knew to have tricked an ‘homme de campagne’ out of 1400 *livres* a few days before, and to allege that Bidot had insulted him and leapt at him to start the affray. (The *marchand de vin* himself was present to confirm Bidot’s and the policeman’s denials on this point.) Delahaye also denied all knowledge of any of the other participants in the fight. He got little advantage for himself out of these stories, but managed to place enough suspicion on Bidot to have them both sent to La Force ‘comme perturbateurs et gens de mauvaise conduite.’ The *commissaire* noted ‘observons à M. l’administrateur que ces deux particuliers s’accusant reciproquement de vol et de brigandage [this is unjust to Bidot, who accused no-one of anything, except hitting him] peut-être est il intéressant qu’ils soient remis en ses mains pour produire des renseignements utiles.’³⁰

It is hard to fathom how a man who steps in to help a police employee (and there can have been little doubt over his identity, the men were calling him a spy as they struck,) could be thought to be a criminal on the word of the man he helped to arrest. We can see here possible grounds for agreeing with Richard Cobb’s cynical view of the workings of the revolutionary police, placing the basis for many of their assumptions and decisions less on investigation than on the standard forms and lists of ‘usual suspects’ provided by *traités de police* and similar manuals.³¹ If this may help us account for some apparently odd attitudes and unjust decisions, it remains true that, as we have seen, men like *commissaire*

³⁰APP AA56:170.

³¹R.C. Cobb, *The Police and the People: French popular protest 1789-1820*, (Oxford, 1970); pp.14-37.

Deneux had minds of their own. Moreover, there were further complications to be grasped in the relationship between policing and crime. Deneux himself had a forceful reminder of this a few months later on 27 August.

The tale began when a Mme. Vidu, *logeuse*, came to report that one of her tenants, M. Cudot, 'employé par le département de police,' and his mistress had attacked her the previous day, passing from vicious insults to spitting in her face, and preparing to take a stick to her when her daughter intervened, 'laquelle fut à son tour maltraitée.' 'Observe la déclarante que le nommé Cudot ne cesse de lui dire qu'il se f. . . d'elle attendu qu'il est employé à la police, et a, à ce qu'il dit, l'oreille de M. Perron, l'un des administrateurs.'

As she completed her statement, Cudot himself burst into the office, and after the *commissaire* informed him of what was going on,

au lieu d'y répondre, il s'est comporté devant nous d'une manière infiniment malhonnête, nous menaçant de M. Perron dont il nous a dit être l'homme, s'est permis même de nous dire qu'un commissaire comme nous n'étoit pas un homme à craindre au département de police où il est bien sûr d'être écouté de préférence.

He fled, however, when Deneux called the Guard. Mme. Vidu was advised to call them herself next time she saw him, and the *commissaire* sent copies of this encounter to the *Département de Police* and the *Procureur de la Commune*.

This was not the end of it, however. When Mme. Vidu and her daughter were walking home, Cudot accosted them, repeated his various threats and insults, and banged the daughter's head on a wall, after which his mistress punched her, threw her on the ground and kicked her about the head before they made off. For some reason the Guard, when summoned, refused to hunt for the two, so the women went back to the *commissaire*. He personally led a patrol which cornered the mistress, detaining her after she had been restrained from leaping at him - Marie Jeanne LeBrun, 20, 'se disant blanchisseuse' (and probably a part-time prostitute, he implies by this.) She had nothing to say but 'invectives,' and the clearly wearying Deneux noted 'avons cessé de l'interroger, et préféré de laisser ce soin à M. l'administrateur.'

Meanwhile two *garçons tailleurs* came to testify that they lived in the same hostel, and had kept out of Cudot's way because he 'les a menacé de la Mairie où il se dit être employé d'une manière très confiante, en les faisant passer pour des voleurs et obtenant un ordre pour les faire arrêter et envoyer à la force.' Now it was LeBrun who went there. About Cudot, all that could be done was tell Mme. Vidu to have him arrested if he showed up again, and to add a very strong note to the minutes sent to the *Département de Police*, calling Cudot 'infiniment coupable' and noting 'notre étonnement de ce qu'un

homme sans aveu et qui n'est point domicilié ait obtenu sur nombre de citoyens un préférence pour obtenir une place de confiance.' Deneux is sure to make clear that he scorns the threats against himself, but does display a rather naïve attitude to the current practices of criminal detection, as we shall see.³²

In the records of the *Bureau municipal*, the confidential inner government of the city, there is further evidence of police espionage. We find, for example, that on 30 April 1791 'sur le rapport fait au Bureau des services rendus par le nommé Doublet pour la découverte d'un grand nombre de voleurs et des mauvaises traitements qu'il a essuyés de la part de ceux qui redoutaient ses indications,' a grant of 200 *livres* was made on top of 150 he had already received. On 5 May six different agents received grants of between 45 and 600 *livres* 'pour services à la chose publique.' Lacroix, who published these records at the turn of the century, cannot identify Doublet, but says of the six others, 'tous agents secrets de la police municipale.' All the claims were submitted on their behalf by Perron, the Administrator that Cudot had claimed to work for. On 12 May one Deschamps, again unidentified, was given 514 *livres* 'pour remboursement des dépenses. . . de la police' since December. On 17 June a claim is made for a Lenoir - 240 *livres* in back-pay for the last two years - and for a Morel - 600 *livres* for services rendered. On 8 July 300 *livres* were reimbursed to the *commissaire de police* of the Section de Ste-Geneviève, which he had paid out 'en salaires à différentes personnes par lui chargées de faire des vérifications et de prendre des renseignements sur des objets intéressant la sûreté publique.' To show that the Municipality was not indiscriminating, they also turned down a request for payment by two men who had served as 'inspecteurs de police du district de St-Jacques-l'Hôpital,' though without giving a reason.³³

It should not be thought that the espionage activities of the police were confined to tracking down thieves. Perhaps the most striking single piece of evidence we have of 'political' policing is a note of a decision taken just before the midnight conclusion of the emergency session of the *Corps municipal* on 17 July. Twenty thousand *livres* of expenditure was authorized to the *Département de Police*, 'destinés à acquitter les soins qu'exige la sûreté publique. . . et de laquelle M. le Maire et MM. les quatre administrateurs de la police ne seront tenus de rendre aucun compte détaillé.'³⁴

We can only speculate as to possible uses for this money, but it may have been used to pursue the

³²APP AA57:95.

³³Lacroix, vol. 4, pp.71, 107-9, 234, 590-91, and vol. 5, p.296. By August the Municipality was getting round to fulfilling less urgent requests for payment, such as to the *inspecteur du marché aux chevaux* (vol. 6, p.79) and the 400 street-sweepers controlled by the Police Department (vol. 6, p.203.)

³⁴Lacroix, vol. 5, p.410.

leaders of the 'plot' the authorities assumed was behind the agitation of July.³⁵ Certainly when it came to activities more overtly linked to the *émigré* counter-revolution, the secret police were actively working for the *comités des recherches* of the Municipality and the National Assembly. On 5 June an *inspecteur* with a warrant from the latter committee arrested a nineteen-year-old *garçon marchand de vin* 'accusé d'avoir des vues ou des intentions pour s'engager avec d'autres particuliers dans l'armée du Prince de Condé.' Scraps of paper found in his room linked him to one Medard, 'cy-devant portier de la communauté de St-Roch, et dont on ignore la demeure actuelle.'³⁶

When, after the promulgation of the Constitution, Bailly tired of the Mayorship and resigned, he spoke of espionage in his resignation address of 12 November - 'On a detesté, avec raison, l'espionnage qui portait une inquisition sur les paroles et même sur les pensées,' he said, but spies were a 'sauvegarde des fortunes et des moeurs' when used to hunt down 'brigands . . . leurs repaires et leurs allures ténébreuses.'³⁷ A hurricane of opprobrium fell on him in the press, but if anything he was minimising the administration's use of spying, and there is no sign that such methods were abandoned under later regimes.

Until this statement, however, the Municipality had denied the employment of spies, or *mouchards* as they were known. On 26 January the *substitut-procureur*, Cahier de Gerville, had stood up in court and made just such a denial. At this time Marat was conducting a campaign to expose the *mouchards* he saw as agents of a plot to put France in the hands of Lafayette. On 3 February he was able to publish a certificate from 'l'inspecteur chargé du département de sûreté', which one man offered as proof that he was not a spy. For Marat, however, this showed that Cahier de Gerville 'mentoît comme un valet de bourreau . . . puisque l'espionnage forme un département.' He correctly identified Perron as the administrator in charge of espionage, alleging on 4 February that he drew 200 *livres* per month for the man who had offered this certificate.³⁸ Nor were such indirect proofs his only weapons; on 10 April he published a letter denouncing the *commissaire de police* of the Section du Louvre for supporting spies, which named the *mouchards* as 'le nommé Doublet et sa femme' - the same man we have already seen

³⁵Mathiez, *Club des Cordeliers*, part II, reproduces and comments on the police and judicial records of this pursuit.

³⁶APP AB323:1012, the prisoner was transferred to the Abbaye, where the records for 1791 have been lost. The St-Roch parish was a centre of clerical non-juring in 1791 - see below.

³⁷Lacroix, vol. 8, p.39.

³⁸*L'Ami du Peuple*, nos. 360, 361.

named in secret municipal records. Their task was to identify thieves, and they had been given a certificate to identify them to other police officials: 'pourvu néanmoins qu'ils ne se trouvent pas pris en flagrant délit,' it read, 'ce attendu leur conversion.' They were 'turned' criminals themselves, in other words - the classic tools of the eighteenth-century police.³⁹

When Bailly made his resignation statement, he may have been trying to say that spies of this type were necessary to combat crime, but in his choice of words he illustrated how movements of opposition from the working population could fall under the same heading. The word *brigand* was an almost ubiquitous designation in the Revolution for lurkers in shadows, takers of foreign gold, and all those low elements susceptible to subornation. Certainly it could mean criminals, but even by 1791 it had acquired a far more precise meaning - the rumoured 30,000 men in Paris in the pay of Aristocracy to bring down the Revolution. This, incidentally, was a figure Lafayette had mentioned for the total of 'étrangers et gens sans aveu' in Paris as early as the week after the fall of the Bastille. In late December 1789, after the arrest of the Marquis de Favras, a flyer appeared around the city denouncing him 'pour un plan qu'il a fait de soulever trente mille hommes pour assassiner Mr de la Fayette et le Maire . . . et ensuite pour couper les vivres.' In February 1791, amid renewed rumours of aristocratic plots, the President of the Jacobins read a denunciation to the Club 'que plus de trente mille personnes de tout état étaient entrées ces jours-ci dans Paris pour y faire un coup de main . . .' Its relative constancy, as well as its use in varying contexts in 1791, would suggest that the total alone had acquired mythic potency.⁴⁰

On 23 July 1791, Rabaut de St-Etienne protested in the National Assembly that measures were not being taken fast enough to complete a census of Paris. His fears sprang from 'les brigands, les assassins, les scélérats dont Paris regorge' - variously 'étrangers' and 'repris de justice,' all 'infiniment suspects.' A few days before the term had been hurled at the Champ de Mars protestors. The decree published on 16 July was entitled 'Arrêté sur les factieux, les étrangers soudoyés, les aristocrates et autres ennemis du bien public,' and in the official account of the 'Massacre' the phrases flew - 'factieux,' 'séditieux,'

³⁹*L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 425. It appears that Doublet went on to make trouble for himself. On 19 May one Alexis Doublet was arrested 'pour avoir par recidive fait tapage sur le quarré de la porte St-Martin ou il a cherché dispute à differents particuliers en leur declarant qu'il étoit observateur de la sûreté. Cet aveu lui a attiré autour de lui un attroupement considerable et quelques particuliers ont voulu le pendre.' (APP AB 323:793, Section des Gravilliers. Released 20 May.) On the character of such spies in the eighteenth century, see Mercier, *Tableau*, pp.84-5, 203; and below.

⁴⁰See Rudé, *Crowd*, p.19n.8, and Ruault, *Gazette*, pp.174, 221. Note the echo of famine-plot in the Favras denunciation.

'brigands,' exercising 'les violences les plus criminelles' and forcing the authorities to resort to force.⁴¹

It would appear that this perception of brigandage was an extension of a perception of the lower orders as a whole. To be *non-domicilié*, that is without a permanent address (often defined as being 'dans ses meubles') placed a person in a lower juridical category than otherwise. Quite simply, a *commissaire de police* could order the imprisonment of a *non-domicilié* on his own authority, whereas for a *domicilié* the signatures of two *notables adjoints* (fellow Section officials) were required.⁴² Moreover, to be *sans aveu* - that is, to be unable to produce a respectable citizen to vouch for you - was to invite almost automatic imprisonment upon falling foul of the police. The mobile and disreputable elements of the Parisian population were effectively guilty until proven innocent, and easy prey for social prejudice coloured by political fears.

If brigand was the favourite word of the authorities for describing its opponents, *mouchard* had always been an insult amongst the people, and by 1791 the influence of radical campaigns was turning it more directly into a political accusation. Journalists such as Marat were making accusations of counter-revolutionary subornation in the Guard, supposedly orchestrated by Lafayette to defeat the 'popular' cause.⁴³ At this time, such things were said with little concern for defamation proceedings - rightly, as it turned out. Three master-artisans and an 'ancien canonier' from the Faubourg St-Antoine tried to bring such an action against Fréron and his paper, *L'Orateur du Peuple*, in January 1791, after he had denounced them as sold to Lafayette. The case came to the *Tribunal de Police* on 19 January, when the Guard had to be used to keep order, and was adjourned for a week. On the 26th, the case resumed, and the *substitut-procureur* made his denial of the use of spies, before the court declared itself incompetent in the matter, dismissing the case. Fréron found fuel even in this, writing:

l'objet unique est d'amener les choses au point de pouvoir tirer sur le peuple: ce doit être pour les conspirateurs le signal de frapper, d'assassiner dans leurs foyers tous les patriotes et, pour la famille royale, celui de gagner la frontière, à travers l'incendie, le massacre et le pillage.⁴⁴

Perhaps it is unsurprising then that the next day, 27 January, one of the four plaintiffs, one Kabert

⁴¹Lacroix, vol. 5, pp.476, 371, 399-400.

⁴²Dozens of *procès-verbaux* make this clear, and as the *Courrier de Paris* reported on 18 May, the *commissaire* of the Section du Faubourg-Montmartre was fined 54 *livres* for committing two young *domiciliés* to La Force without this procedure.

⁴³For example, on 10 February, a labourer begging on the Place Royale was detained after shouting 'au mouchard' at a Guard captain who had refused him alms. (APP AB322:1169, released with *passport* 14 February.) A cobbler on the quai de Grève was detained in August for 'journallement' crying 'mouchard' after National Guards. (AB324:2026, sentenced to eight days detention 'vu l'état de sa santé.')

⁴⁴Lacroix, vol. 2, pp.285-89.

or Kabers, 'dit Louvain,' *marchand ébéniste et Vainqueur de la Bastille*, was attacked by a mob. Accounts vary as to how the riot started - he had insulted the *Vainqueurs* while drunk, fought a duel and wounded a National Guard, or insulted the Guard in the street, having been expelled from it previously. In any case, at around 11 a.m. a crowd fell on him with a rain of blows in the Grande Rue du Faubourg St-Antoine, knocking him twice to the floor as he fled to the shelter of a section *comité* house, 'noyé dans son sang et respirant à peine.' The alarm had been given to the Mairie, and several municipal officers, including the writer of the eye-witness account quoted here, rushed to the scene with the Guard Reserve. The main body had trouble getting through the Porte St-Antoine due to a barricade (or convenient traffic-jam) of several wagons. Thus the officers found themselves obliged to negotiate at first with the crowd:

Entrés dans la salle du comité, les officiers municipaux montent sur le bureau et haranguent le peuple: ils lui représentent que l'obéissance à la loi est la sauvegarde de la liberté et que des particuliers n'ont pas le droit de punir de mort même un criminel . . . ils demandent que Kabers soit mis sous la sauvegarde des lois; ils offrent et promettent de le conduire eux-mêmes en prison. Quelques voix prononcent ces mots terribles: *Non, non! Pendu! Pendu!* Ce cri est subitement répété par le peuple qui remplissait les anti-chambres, le vestibule et la cour; une foule de furieux se précipite dans la salle . . .

Kabers was dragged out for another beating before the Guard broke through and retreated with him all the way to the Châtelet. The same witness meanwhile noted that the majority of the crowd was 'plus ou moins pressé, mais sans armes et paraissant loin de la fureur.' This contradicts the conclusion of a report in the *Journal de Paris*, which called the riot a crime 'auquel la populace proprement dite de ce faubourg a seule eu part - car tout le peuple a secondé, avec respect, les efforts des officiers.'⁴⁵

Since the eye-witness report makes no mention of particular divergence of opinion in the crowd, it seems likely that the journalist's attempt to distinguish *peuple* from *populace*, and to blame the latter, lower, element, is merely a repetition of the kind of prejudicial judgment common to the eighteenth century. The *Révolutions de Paris*, however, sought to turn these perceptions on their head. The writer acknowledged that the *populace* existed, but described it as the breeding-ground not of riots, but of mouchards. Education would redeem it for the Revolution: 'Menageons-lui des moments pour s'instruire, pour se retirer peu à peu de la fange et des ténèbres de l'ignorance . . . bientôt nous serons tous frères, de moeurs comme de naissance . . .'⁴⁶ We shall see later, however, that patriotic journalists could mix good and bad perceptions of the *menu peuple* to suit any point they cared to make.

Respectable journals might condemn popular violence towards a *mouchard*, or seek to replace it

⁴⁵Lacroix, vol. 2, pp.292-4. The crowd had its revenge nearly two years later, on 31 December 1792, when Kabers was lynched in virtually the same spot, having been dragged from the Place Royale after speaking up for the King.

⁴⁶*Révolutions de Paris*, 22-29 January 1791.

with enlightened care, but those who had to suffer their attentions might feel justified by the general conduct of the breed. Some of them seem to have exhibited all the characteristics that were held against brigands. On 22 May a 'cy-devant observateur' was detained as a common pickpocket, and on 15 August it was noted about one Jean Deveaux, arrested trying to strangle a woman whom he said had taken an assignat from him, 'a été observateur dans la sûreté: c'est un mauvais sujet qui a été nombre de fois emprisonné.'⁴⁷ Despite this latter note, in both cases the men were released within a few days, following the pattern we have already noted for this time.

The example of Cudot we have examined shows that some of these men were ready to abuse their position, even in the face of the elected authorities, but sometimes it would seem these authorities abetted this. On 29 December 1790, one Hutte, 'employé dans la sûreté de Paris' was detained, accused of picking the pocket of a *frotteur*. The laconic prison record is not clear on what happened next, but while Hutte remained free, his accuser was driven into a fury which cost him a spell in La Force. As for the consequences of being denounced, the register of La Force notes for 21 April 1791 the names of five women held since 23 January 'comme suspectes d'après le Dénonciation d'un particulier connu sous le nom de la Jambe de Bois, et que d'après cette interrogation elles ont été relaxées.' - They had been held for three months apparently without even being questioned.⁴⁸

The truth was, as all Paris knew, that *mouchards* had been the scourge of the city for decades. Mercier commented at length in his *Tableau de Paris* on their work in the capital, concluding that 'cette inquisition, qui peut avoir ses abus, produit la sûreté publique,' which was an 'avantage inestimable' due solely to these spies, whose number was in any case inflated by public opinion - an 'erreur utile à la police.' He observed, however, that police *inspecteurs*, 'crus ordinairement sur parole,' were not a disciplined body - 'Quelques-uns obéissent à leur humeur, à leurs caprices; mais qui sait si la cupidité n'entre pas aussi dans leurs démarches . . .?'⁴⁹ That these remarks were no mere empty speculation can be seen in events of a generation earlier, which the Parisian glazier Jacques-Louis Ménétra recorded in the 1790s as one of the clearest memories of his childhood - the 'Child-Kidnapping Affair' of May 1750,

⁴⁷APP AB323:835, released with *passport* 25 May; AB324:2286, released 23 August.

⁴⁸APP AB322:711, (the *frotteur* was released two days later, but fined 24 *livres*.) AB323:411.

⁴⁹Mercier, *Tableau*, pp.203, 335.

explored through detailed use of police records by Arlette Farge and Jacques Revel.⁵⁰ Like Kabert the victims of riot here were *mouchards*, the reason not political plotting but the abduction of children, occurring as the clandestine police machinery twisted a policy designed to reduce begging and street-crime into little more than a licensed extortion racket.

On 23 May in the *quartier* St-Roch, an *exempt de police* named Labbé was hounded and done to death in a riot with remarkable parallels to the Kabert incident. Labbé too was an inhabitant of the district which turned on him (after he had tried to seize a child on the Pont Marie.) He proved a more vigorous fugitive than Kabert, running through a market and an apartment-house as well as several streets, captured more than once and re-escaping after beatings. The crowd pursued him at last to the house of a *commissaire du Châtelet*, the equivalent then to Kabert's place of shelter. Here the offer to see justice done was made by this official, and at first there seemed more chance of it being accepted, but the *guet* broke the truce by trying to clear the crowd from the house - shots were fired, and the forces of order found themselves under siege. The *commissaire* escaped, and Labbé was surrendered to the crowd for punishment; he was beaten to death in the street and his body paraded in front of the house of the *Lieutenant de Police*, whom the people blamed, rightly as research shows, for the kidnapping policy and its abuse.⁵¹

It transpired in the official enquiry, although it was never made public, that the new *Lieutenant de Police*, Berryer, a favourite of Mme. Pompadour, had ordered his men to be particularly rigorous in their normal pursuit of vagrants and vagabonds. He felt no need to keep any particular discipline over his men, other than that of paying by results - that is, arrests. Since the police agents also had to fund transport and the pay of their subordinates out of this 'head-money,' they began to look for new ways of increasing their income under the cover of this policy of rigour. Berryer's lax control allowed them to begin taking children and ransoming them back to their parents, and he took no notice of individual complaints, so long as he could boast at Court of his men's zeal and energy.⁵²

This episode marked without doubt a low-point in the prestige and discipline of the Parisian police, and under men such as Sartine and Lenoir a tighter rein was kept on such abuses. Nonetheless, the

⁵⁰A. Farge and J. Revel, *Logiques de la Foule; l'affaire des enlèvements des enfants, Paris 1750*, (Paris, 1988). See J.-L. Ménétra, *Journal of My Life*, ed. and commentary D. Roche, trans. A. Goldhammer, (New York, 1986); pp.21-2.

⁵¹Farge and Revel, *Logiques*, pp.69-84.

⁵²*ibid.* pp.41, 52-3.

essential organisation remained the same. Not only that, but even in 1750 the forces of order rallied behind a pro-police version of events. In setting out to seek culprits, the police spoke of ‘une compagnie formée de brigands pour faire soulever le peuple’, demonstrating that this concept was far from being a revolutionary coinage.⁵³ When punishment was finally handed down by the Parlement, three young marginals went to the gallows, while for the kidnappings, four policemen received largely symbolic punishments. None of the hanged had been involved on the 23rd, but in other less dramatic incidents. The investigation was guided, suggest Farge and Revel, by a ‘sociologie intuitive’ which produced a list of likely suspects, all ‘mauvais garçons’ surviving in marginal employment - no women and no artisans, that all witnesses agreed had been present on the 23rd right up to the kill. Farge and Revel note that the bourgeois and artisans not only had their status to protect them, and knew better how to manufacture an alibi, but ‘une fois le drame dénoué, la tension retombée, ils sont prêts à tout oublier et à partager la version que les autorités donnent de l’affaire’ - not least because the violence reminds them of a kind of ‘autre culture’ that they wish to ignore in themselves.⁵⁴ Here we can see another source of the fascinated horror of popular violence evident in 1789.

Whatever kind of self-defence mechanisms the artisanate operated, their basic hostility to the police spies remains evident. As we have already seen, the personal character of some of these men in 1791 could only have added to this antipathy, and the like can be found in 1750. Labbé’s immediate superior was the *inspecteur de police* Poussot, who lived with his mistress Geneviève Dion, ‘dit la Maréchale,’ an ex-thief who had found more profitable employment spying on pamphleteers and prostitutes. She habitually resorted to violence, false denunciation and blackmail to obtain money and the sexual services of *filles publiques* that took her fancy. The couple and their ‘mouches’ were known as the ‘bande de la Maréchale,’ a gang as feared as any robbers, with no redeeming glamour. It is little wonder that in the popular mind the police were held guilty of ‘toutes les compromissions’ imaginable.⁵⁵

The police meanwhile, at the highest levels, viewed all disturbances through blinkers - ‘la pègre est donc bien à l’origine de l’émotion populaire’ sums up their attitude, and they were capable of moulding all social tensions into a model of banditry and subversion. Two workers who chose 23 May 1750 to pick a fight with their master over their wages found themselves arrested in the round-up after

⁵³Farge and Revel, *Logiques*, p.22.

⁵⁴*ibid.* pp.59-62.

⁵⁵*ibid.*, pp.51-2, 56.

the Labbé riot, while at the same time the police were hunting for evidence of the continued influence of the great criminal gangs of the early decades of the century - Cartouche, Rafiat and others. Through the next months, many women were questioned in the hunt for the 'support network' such a gang was sure to have.⁵⁶

Viewed solely in terms of such assumptions, the Parisian police appears as an unbending instrument of repression, one moreover perpetuated into the Revolution to serve ends only slightly altered. Before accepting this view, we must recognise that the presence of the police was also an integrated part of local life for Parisians in the eighteenth century. David Garrioch shows that the Châtelet *commissaires* in particular were linked into the modes of neighbourhood communal self-regulation. Although outside and 'above' the community, the device of appeal to them also functioned as a tactic within community disputes.⁵⁷ As a local elected official, despite the repressive aspect of his task, the Section *commissaire de police* functioned even further within his community, and their records are filled with declarations concerning minor incidents which illustrate that they remained the instinctive first resort in a wide variety of circumstances.

Even some of the more dramatic devices of police, such as the *lettres de cachet* dreaded and denounced by the *philosophes* and their lesser fellow-writers, could find a role in everyday social relations. Arlette Farge and Michel Foucault have compiled an entire volume of documents showing the desire of ordinary families to have their offspring or relatives disciplined by a spell in a royal prison.⁵⁸ Ménétra's autobiography illustrates the complexity of such matters. In the early years of his marriage his persistent adultery led to a 'plot' by his wife's family to have him confined 'for a quarter at St-Lazare.' Warned by another relative, Ménétra first threatened his father, whose signature was necessary to complete the warrant, and then after talking to a contact in the police, he borrowed a gun and hid in his room, ready to shoot the first man through the door. The arrest was never carried out. Despite this scare, Ménétra in later life thought it only proper to have his own son-in-law arrested and put away for six weeks, for very similar reasons. The man in question was a thoroughly bad lot, and the families involved considered a more permanent seclusion, though finally deciding that this was unnecessarily 'extreme.'⁵⁹

⁵⁶Farge and Revel, *Logiques*, pp.46, 48-50.

⁵⁷Garrioch, *Neighbourhood*, pp.53-5.

⁵⁸A. Farge and M. Foucault, *Le Désordre des Familles: lettres de cachet des Archives de la Bastille*. (Paris, 1982).

⁵⁹Ménétra, *Journal*, pp.185, 210.

We can see an interesting contrast between the 'ordinary' attitudes of Ménétra and those of Mercier, who along with all the other writers of the Enlightenment, had denounced the arbitrary powers of the police. He wrote of witnessing an *enlèvement de police* - 'quatre estafiers sautent sur lui, le tiennent à la gorge, l'entraînent, le pressent contre la muraille . . .' A passer-by warned him not to bother interfering, and the scene was set for a condemnation of such practices.⁶⁰ The more robust Ménétra, who claimed to have personally experienced such treatment one night by the porte St-Denis, seized from behind and carried off to the Bonne-Nouvelle *corps de garde* in a darkened coach, was moved to remark, when the mistake was realised, only 'that many a crook looks a lot like an honest man.'⁶¹

Nonetheless, for many Parisians, the secret police, as opposed to the network of *commissaires*, was a repressive force always on the brink of violating the law itself - and when it did so, it was with impunity, as 1750 proved. Such sentiments persisted, and one of the first acts of the July 1789 uprising in Paris was an assault on a mouchard on 9 July, after he had tried to make an arrest in the Palais-Royal.⁶² Seen from a certain perspective, nothing had changed by 1791. Some of the old police had faded away, but others were presumably still employed, since an espionage network cannot be created from nothing, and they would have been ready and willing to stay in service, no doubt. Meanwhile, a whole new breed of mouchard had emerged, whose role was to support the administration against radicals, and, if one went along with Marat and Fréron, to plot the day when all the old abuses would be restored. On the other side of the fence, if one substitutes *aristocratie* for *pègre*, the same view of disorder was still being held. Since both sides viewed the other as being in league with the same third party, the situation could not have been more absurd, but a glance back into the eighteenth century makes it all too comprehensible. The Old Regime's repressive relationship to its people was too twisted to be straightened out in one great heave, and many of its worst features - the mutual suspicion of police and population, the use of criminals as agents, a general air of secrecy, arbitrariness and deceit - lingered on, in the streets and in the minds of men on both sides. These warped perceptions were to continue to influence politics, to the detriment of all concerned. As we shall see in the next chapter, one agency by which these concerns were spread was the press, although this institution also bred disquiet for many other reasons.

⁶⁰Mercier, *Tableau*, pp.201-3.

⁶¹Ménétra, *Journal*, p.208.

⁶²Godechot, *Bastille*, p.183. This spy may or may not have been the 'sieur Zezzi' who unsuccessfully petitioned the Municipality in January 1791 for 'secours et indemnité,' claiming to have been 'soupçonne d'être espion' and assaulted on 8 July 1789. (Lacroix, vol. 2, p.452.)

CHAPTER 4 - PAPERS, PAMPHLETS AND POPULAR SOCIETIES:

DISCOURSES OF DISORDER?

Once freed from the restrictions of the *ancien régime*, the Parisian publishing industry had boomed, and its production both maintained the popular awareness of events evident in 1789, and created its own agitations. For example, in May 1790, when the Assembly was debating the rights of King and Nation in the matter of making war and peace, patriotic anger at royalist pamphleteers and journalists led to several attacks on print-shops, and the public burning of publications by crowds - a particularly violent and widespread outbreak followed the final vote for a compromise solution on 22 May. Such incidents were, of course, widely and luridly reported, adding to the atmosphere of confrontation.¹

Two days after this last disturbance, three men, caught stealing silver plates in a hostelry, were being marched into detention at the Châtelet when one of them is said to have cried out 'que pour un écu il sortirait le lendemain.' The response to this intimation of police corruption was dramatic:

Le peuple nombreux qui les environnait a jeté un cri de fureur, a arraché les trois fripons des mains de la garde, qui n'a pu opposer aucune sorte de résistance à la foule immense qui s'en est emparée. Les voleurs ont été conduits au marché St-Antoine. On en a pendu deux, et l'autre a été assommé à coups de pierres.²

On the 25th, 'une foule immense, armée de bâtons' attacked a thief in Guard custody on the quai de la Feraille - his fate is unclear from the *Moniteur* report, but he was probably killed. Lafayette himself was passing the area, and plunged heroically into the mob to seize one of the 'assassins.' He berated the crowd, brought it to its senses 'et l'a averti des tentatives factieuses qu'on faisait pour le soulever.' The paper editorialised that

Le bon peuple de Paris n'est point coupable de ces excès; ils sont la preuve la moins douteuse que la capitale est aujourd'hui livrée à des étrangers sans aveu, sans domicile, stipendiés pour exciter le désordre.

The next edition reported the municipal decision to double the Guard patrols, and preparations for swift intervention in future incidents (which did not occur). It was alleged that 'l'on a eu la connaissance positive et déterminée de sommes distribuées à des brigands, la plupart étrangers, pour désoler la capitale.'

¹See W.J. Murray, *The Right-wing Press in the French Revolution, 1789-1792*, (London, 1986), pp.96-102, esp. pp.96-7, and *Moniteur*, 24 and 26 May 1790. For a general history of the press, focusing less on its attitudes than on issues such as censorship, see H. Gough, *The Newspaper Press in the French Revolution*, (London, 1988); see also the brief essays on many aspects of the revolutionary press collected in P. Rétat (ed.) *La Révolution du Journal 1788-1794*, (Paris, 1989).

²*Moniteur*, 26 May 1790.

If one riot was a misfortune, two was 'un complot formé contre la tranquillité publique, des desseins factieux, le projet d'attaquer les lois et la Constitution par la main d'une multitude féroce et égarée.'³

From the reactions of the *Moniteur*, it is clear that the respectable press played its own role in maintaining the paranoid discourse on social unrest fostered by longstanding policing assumptions. Moreover, incidents such as these have been written into a wholly more sinister view of the role of the press in disorder. According to Ouzi Elyada, much of the history of this institution in the early Revolution can be oriented around an Orléanist-Fayetteist power-struggle.⁴ This battle also included, supposedly, tactics such as 'la distribution de pain bon marché et de l'argent, et la diffusion de rumeurs et contre-rumeurs par des voies orales et écrites,' all in the attempt to excite or calm *le peuple*, particularly those of the feared Faubourgs St-Marcel and St-Antoine. If it seems tiresome at this point to return to the question of Orléanist subversion in the Revolution, it must be pointed out that this thesis was absolutely central to many contemporaries' conceptions of revolutionary events, especially those involving the *menu peuple*. It has also, as we have seen, infiltrated interpretations of the events of 1789 by leading historians, and as here, explanations of other revolutionary phenomena.

There is a body of evidence to indicate that Lafayette did fund and organise the propaganda for social peace that emerged over this period, and it is certainly true that Orléanism was one of the founts of *sédition* blamed for all disorder, but it is a large step from here to accepting the proposition that every pamphlet calling on the people to protest against economic or political conditions, and every disturbance that arose, was a product of the ducal party. As contemporaries blamed outbreaks such as those of 24 and 25 May 1790 on *factieux* and *brigands*, Elyada takes it as read that 'en effet, depuis fin avril, des agents du duc d'Orléans apparaissent de nouveau dans les faubourgs populaires.' The sole evidence offered for this, however, is that Marat had resumed publishing the *Ami du Peuple*, and between late May and early July made several calls on the people to rise up - as if that were not his standard fare, and there is no particular evidence beyond supposition to link him in any way to Orléans.⁵

The continuity of conflict portrayed here relies on a chain of specious reasoning - that radical agitation fell off in the winter and spring of 1789-90 because Orléans had been sent abroad (regardless of the improved political atmosphere and easing of food-supply problems); that the acceleration of

³*Moniteur*, 27 and 28 May 1790.

⁴O. Elyada, 'L'appel aux faubourgs, pamphlets populaires et propagande à Paris, 1789-1790', in Vovelle, *Paris*, pp.185-200.

⁵*ibid.* pp.185-9.

Fayetteist pro-order propaganda in June-July 1790 was a response to a real, rather than a perceived, Orléanist threat on the Duke's return; and that the lack of disorder at this time is testimony to the effectiveness of the propaganda, not to the absence of a real threat (despite a lack of evidence for its reality).⁶

The case for the existence of Orléanist propaganda relies on some very feeble foundations. Unlike Lafayette, Orléans is supposed to have used 'journaux déjà existant' to put across his message, a system deduced from the comments of his enemies and the occasional sympathy shown for the Duke in certain papers - Elyada herself recognises that it is difficult to see men such as Marat and Fréron as Orléanist agents, 'mais il est fort possible que ces derniers étaient payés de temps à autre.' Moreover, although 'nous ignorons les détails exacts sur les rapports financiers' linking the Duke to various *Père Duchesne* papers, they are supposed to have been associated with him, having made sympathetic gestures around the New Year of 1791. The fact that the same papers continued to support the Cordelier-Jacobin 'Left' is read as evidence of 'une certaine co-opération' between these two political forces.⁷

There is no doubt that the war between the agents of Lafayette and the radical press grew more bitter in the early months of 1791, until in late March several of them were reduced to physically destroying the presses of Anne-Félicité Colombe, publisher of an anti-clerical *Père Duchesne*, as well as of Marat and Fréron. The police records show that on the 11th of that month, Mlle. Colombe had already been threatened by a party of *grenadiers* from the Filles St-Thomas Battalion, who had been calumnified in the *Orateur du Peuple* - when they complained to the Section authorities about this, she counterclaimed that they had threatened 'de la suivre jusqu'au pied de la potence.'⁸ Several months prior to this, on 14 December 1790, Estienne, the chief agent later responsible for destroying her press, had tried to have its products seized pursuant to an action for defamation against Fréron. At the time, Colombe had lodged a protest against the illegality of the search being made:

elle se reserve de se pourvoir contre les personnes qui se sont permises cette visite, devant les tribunaux competents et à la face de la nation, intéressée à conserver la liberté de tous ses membres.

This may be merely bluster, but it does not sound like the talk of a corrupt political agent.⁹

⁶Elyada, 'L'appel', pp.188-191.

⁷*ibid.* p.193.

⁸APP AA215:409-411, Section d'Henri-Quatre.

⁹APP AA215:345-7. The Colombe printworks would be raided again in the aftermath of the Champ de Mars, and its entire staff of three taken into custody as they were preparing an edition of *L'Ami du Peuple*. (See APP AA206:388 and AB324:1851, Section de la Place-Vendôme; they were transferred to the Abbaye on 27 July.)

Elyada sees the final assault on Mlle. Colombe as an admission of defeat by the Fayetteists in the face of a powerful coalition of Orléanists and radicals - the 'argumentations autoritaires' that made up Fayetteist discourse had failed 'envers un peuple qui s'engage de plus en plus dans la pratique démocratique dans les Sections et les sociétés populaires.' We might see this conclusion as an admission of defeat in trying to find real evidence for Orléanist propaganda. Elyada admits

que tout en servant les intérêts Orléanistes [which mainly means criticising Lafayette], les journaux Duchêne continuent à fonctionner comme une affaire commerciale. Les titres alarmants . . . véhiculaient des messages manipulateurs . . . mais ils servaient également de moyen pour inviter la foule à acheter les numéros.¹⁰

Given what we already know about the eighteenth-century Parisians' avidity for news, and particularly criticism, of their rulers, this argument for the dual purpose of such publications would not seem to hold up for long against Occam's Razor.

If it seems reasonable to suggest that the radicals were writing in good faith (or at least what passed for it in a commercial venture), we also have to acknowledge that the Fayetteists probably believed what they were saying - as Elyada summarises:

le peuple, selon ce discours, est incapable de participer de façon démocratique à la vie politique, car il lui manque l'éducation, les outils intellectuels, et l'expérience: il doit donc reconnaître ses limites et laisser au 'brave général' et à 'not'bon roi' le soin de gérer et de protéger l'intérêt populaire.

This is not very far from absolutist notions, and in its conception of *le peuple*, was quite probably ingrained in its holders at a level beyond the merely intellectual - they are likely to have genuinely believed in popular political incapacity, from which the idea of factional agitation followed in 1791 as logically as it did in 1757 at the trial of Damiens. The opposing discourse, which 'dissimule la hiérarchie sociale et présente le peuple en général, et celui des faubourgs en particulier, comme porteur de la souveraineté,' was the wave of the future, as its victory at this point would seem to show.¹¹ The authoritarian discourse, however, lost none of its strength through this, so long as a figure such as Orléans, or even more shadowy aristocratic links, could serve as an excuse to deny the consciousness of the people.

Jack Censer's study of the Parisian radical press offers further clarification on the evolution of expressed attitudes. He defines the underlying assumption of the radicals as a belief that

a moral, egalitarian *peuple* had developed, who were opposed by a selfish and self-indulgent *aristocratie* [committed to keeping power, including by violence] . . . To oppose the 'aristocratic' menace to the social ideal of the *peuple*, the radicals suggested a literal adherence to popular sovereignty.

¹⁰Elyada, 'L'appel', p.194.

¹¹*ibid.* p.197.

The 'infallible' people would keep government from getting out of hand, by 'vigorous action' if need be.¹² In general, Censer calls these attitudes 'Cordelier politics,' defining them in relation to the position on popular sovereignty taken up by the District des Cordeliers, and after May 1790 by the Club which replaced it as the focus for extreme Parisian radicalism.

This study also suggests that the hostile radical attitudes to Bailly and Lafayette which would dominate 1791 emerged in the course of 1790. Between May and August of that year, all six of the journals Censer studied had swung in opinion from admiration of the revolutionary authorities to deep distrust, amounting to a conviction of their counter-revolutionary intentions. In early April 1790, Desmoulins could still praise Lafayette for co-ordinating espionage against plots, but by the time news of the suppression of the Nancy mutiny had reached the Parisian patriots, Lafayette's approving response to this was enough to confirm a new picture of him as an egotistical aspiring military dictator. It was also from this point on, spurred by attempts to increase the powers of the National Guard, that suspicion of its officers, and particularly the *état-major*, began to take firm root.¹³

As was later to be the case with a decisive switch to hostility towards Louis XVI in April-June 1791, following on from doubts perceptible in late 1790, Censer sees political evolution rather than reaction to specific events behind these changes - although we might suggest that he undervalues the role of the elimination of the Districts in breeding hostility to the Municipality. A progressive disillusionment with all power-holding persons and institutions took place, for reasons Censer cannot wholly elucidate.¹⁴ It is suggested, however, that such a process was implicit in the doctrine of popular sovereignty itself. If this is by its nature hostile to strong government, it will perceive attempts to 'govern' in a negative light, especially when behind the figures initially admired are others - Queen, Court and clergy - consistently reviled as a threat to the *peuple*. The longer government under this system went on, the more hostile opinion would grow. In this sense, Censer confirms our observation on political attitudes at this time, that there was no hope of compromise from the initial premises - what we could call the 'brigands and mouchards' mentality.

Part of the attack launched by radicals involved accusations of corruption and conspiracy, bringing us back again to the question of faction and subornation. We are faced with grave difficulties in trying

¹²J.R. Censer, *Prelude to Power; the Parisian radical press, 1789-1791*, (London, 1976), pp.xii-xiii.

¹³*ibid.* pp.100-110.

¹⁴*ibid.* pp.111-123.

to draw up reasonable conclusions about this issue. Not only did such allegations serve as political explanations and justification for both authoritarian and radical positions, but they were also part of the mental framework of almost all writers. As Norman Hampson observed in his biography of Danton, 'The former Grub Street hacks had not lost their old habits when they became the journalists of the Revolution and the air was thick with insinuations against almost everybody worth buying.'¹⁵ Of course, in the case of Mirabeau, for one, it has been convincingly demonstrated that he was paid by the Court, but it is equally evident in this case that he continued to consistently follow his own opinions in action.¹⁶

Although it is quite possible that the Parisian air was thick not only with insinuation, but with Orléanist, Fayetteist, British, Prussian and Austrian gold and its results, there remains no solid evidence to tie any of this either with outbreaks of popular violence, or with those who wrote for and encouraged popular radicalism. If some, like Fréron, were rakes, others were respectable intellectuals, like those at the heart of the *Cercle Social*, pillars of the artisanate like Santerre or the butcher Legendre, or indeed apparently genuine idealists, as Louise and François Robert, journalists and exemplary popular society activists, seem to have been.¹⁷ Of course, to those opposed to their opinions, this social diversity was in itself evidence of corruption, since in their world-view nothing else could have brought such elements together.

Robert Darnton famously put forward a counterpoint to this, suggesting that the future revolutionaries had formed a 'low-life of literature' in pre-revolutionary Paris, a kind of frustrated literary *canaille*, forced to peddle smut and co-operate with the police to survive, and who therefore brought to revolutionary discourse a visceral hatred of the *ancien régime* which coloured its whole development. Elizabeth Eisenstein has recently demonstrated the inaccuracy of this perception of pre-revolutionary conditions, at least for certain figures, and thus of the inevitable progress to the outburst of pent-up hostilities.¹⁸ Nonetheless, she cannot argue that the hothouse discourse of the revolutionary press did not exist. Jacques Guilhaumou has suggested strongly that the revolutionary focus on language had, as early

¹⁵N. Hampson, *Danton*, (London, 1978), p.40. See pp.26-66 for an overview of Danton's early revolutionary career against a constant background of such accusations.

¹⁶See B. Luttrell, *Mirabeau*, (Hemel Hempstead, 1990), pp.208-10 for his arrangement with the Court, and pp.213-278 for his performance as its defender.

¹⁷For the first and last of these, see Censer, *Prelude*, pp.31-3 and 14-5. For the intellectuals, see G. Kates, *The Cercle Social, the Girondins and the French Revolution*, (Princeton, 1985).

¹⁸See Darnton, 'High Enlightenment', and E.L. Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad: Aspects of the French cosmopolitan press from the age of Louis XIV to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1992), ch. 5, esp. pp.145-152. Eisenstein cannot wholly negate Darnton's point - we have already cited the evidence of police surveillance of writers in the pre-revolutionary years. Doubtless this debate will continue.

as Sieyès' *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers État?*, placed the revolutionaries in an ascending spiral of rhetorical excess. The material of his study tends to a higher level of political discourse than that we are most concerned with, but seems to reflect a similar pattern - Guilhaumou headlines a section on 1791 'The rhetoric expands to the point of folly', and he quotes a moderate pamphlet semi-satirically denouncing orators and 'leurs phrases emphatiques . . . locutions nouvelles . . . exclamations . . . exagérations outrés . . . mouvemens extatiques . . .'¹⁹

Bearing in mind both this apparently self-generating aggravation, and the socio-political assumptions underlying conflict concerning the press, it is nonetheless also evident that the market-conditions of its production and distribution drove it towards output that was inherently inflammatory. The most blatant examples of this kind are of course the 'Père Duchesne' genre, aimed at the very bottom of the market, which grew dramatically in volume from late 1790 onwards.²⁰ The assumption must be that there was a popular readership for such texts, although they were clearly also a vehicle for a wide range of political viewpoints attempting to capture the popular mind, including right-wing writers using a 'Mère Duchesne' to debunk the radical pretensions of her male counterpart. Hébert's publication, later to become an epitome of Parisian radicalism, was at this time a relatively moderate work, compared to others such as the one written by the abbé Jumel, and produced in partnership with Mlle. Colombe.²¹

It is clear that there was no particular relation between political opinions and mode of address. A newspaper commonly reported in the wares of incendiary hawkers in 1791 was Audouin's *Journal Universel*. Censer comments on this publication - its prose was 'dull,' its opinions of a 'subdued tone,' and its critique of Lafayette and Bailly 'respectful, even apologetic.'²² Nonetheless, it was, apparently, a very successful publication, turning out a daily eight pages for a good number of years, but a reading of it over January-August 1791 confirms this impression of tedium. What Audouin did give was reporting of daily political events, especially Assembly debates and news from the frontiers, in a handy format, laced with the simple expression of radical opinions. If this did manage to appeal to the very people that

¹⁹J. Guilhaumou, 'Discourse and Revolution: the foundation of political language (1789-1792)', in G. Levitine (ed.), *Culture and Revolution: cultural ramifications of the French Revolution* (College Park, MD, 1989), pp.118-133; pp.123-4. Guilhaumou covers the same ground at greater length in his *La langue politique et la Révolution française*, (Paris, 1989).

²⁰See O. Elyada, 'La Mère Duchesne: masques populaires et guerre pamphlétaire, 1789-1791', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 271 (1988), pp.1-16. This study is also oriented to some extent around assumptions of 'faction', but they are less prominent in the analysis, which takes in a political spectrum beyond the Orléans-Lafayette axis.

²¹*ibid.* pp.5-7, and see Hébert, *Le père Duchesne*, reprinted in 10 vols. (Paris, 1969), vols. I-III.

²²Censer, *Prelude*, p.18.

the moderates were most afraid of, then perhaps it says something about the political sophistication of some of *le peuple* that all the purveyors of caricature sans-culottes were failing to grasp.

However, even Audouin's publication could not do without a little incendiary 'spice.' Each issue had on its front page between three and six headlines, set above the start of the text, and ostensibly indicating the content of the issue. These were the *titres* cried by the *colporteurs* as they hawked their wares in the streets, cafés and open spaces of Paris. In the case of the *Journal Universel*, they are so different in tone from the text that one cannot help suspecting that they were added by the publisher to put some life into the work (and the sales).

For example, over 6-13 January 1791 *titres* included:

Détails sur le projet de contre-révolution qui devait avoir lieu à Marseille le jour de Noël . . . Découverte importante de tous les mauvais prêtres déshonorant la Religion et reconnus pour ennemis de la Nation et du Roi . . . Lettres infâmes adressés aux curés pour les engager à ne pas prêter le serment civique . . . Infâmes manoeuvres des Prêtres Aristocrates pour exciter du tumulte . . . Grand Tumulte arrivé à Saint-Sulpice, au sujet du serment civique refusé par le curé . . . Affreuses manoeuvres employées par les prêtres dans les séminaires de Paris . . . Grande fureur des Prêtres Aristocrates contre l'Assemblée nationale . . . Avis donné à tous les bons citoyens de se réunir pour arrêter les cabales des Prêtres qui refusent de prêter serment.²³

Between 23 and 30 March 1791, the clergy were no longer quite so central, and the loudest headlines were:

Dénonciation de plusieurs attentats contre la liberté des citoyens [an article on imprisonment for debt, it transpires] . . . Détails importants sur l'argent dépensé par la Cour et ses créatures . . . Avis aux citoyens concernant le faux Bref du Pape, répandu par les ennemis de la chose publique . . . Avis aux citoyens sur la Révolution générale qui se prépare avec une grande activité . . . Complot des Evêques, et des Prélats rebelles, pour exciter une Guerre de Religion en France . . . Avis sur la conduite infâme des Contre-Révolutionnaires et sur leurs projets criminels . . . Annonce aux bons citoyens, concernans les préparatifs de nos Ennemis, et la négligence des Ministres Français à mettre le Royaume en état de défense.²⁴

By early June the tone remained the same, but priests continued to decline in prominence relative to more secular counter-revolution:

Avis aux bons citoyens, au sujet des troubles excités exprès par les ennemis de la liberté, pour en accuser ensuite le Peuple [another variation on the subornation and brigandage theme] . . . Motion tendante à lancer un décret contre les émigrans qui désertent lâchement leur Patrie et emportent notre or . . . Réflexions sur la conduite et les projets des Ennemis de notre liberté . . . Grands détails à l'Assemblée nationale, au sujet de la réunion des Mécontens sur les frontières, et d'une foule de vagabonds qui s'accumule dans Paris . . . Avis importants aux Citoyens sur les efforts employés par les Ennemis de la Constitution, pour égarer le peuple et le séduire [further variations on the same theme].²⁵

The practice of *colportage* in Paris, like all other public activities, had been closely controlled by the *ancien régime* police, but after the Revolution and the tacit, later explicit, abandonment of controls

²³*Journal Universel, ou Révolutions des Royaumes, par P.-J. Audouin*, 1791, vol. 9.

²⁴*ibid.* vol. 10.

²⁵*ibid.* vol. 12. 4-14 June 1791.

over the press, it exploded to keep pace with the booming press industry. Even given the Parisian avidity for news, this boom could only result in a market at saturation-point. Censer notes that between May 1789 and October 1791 five hundred and fifteen newspaper titles came out in the city, 53% of which lasted no more than a month, including 107 represented by only a single issue. The first half of 1791 was second only to the post-Bastille period in the number of new titles emerging. Censer suggests this reflected 'both a rising popular interest in daily news and national politics and a growing number of people who wanted to publicize their own opinions' - opinions which were, we should add, becoming ever more violently divergent.²⁶ We have already recognised that sensation sold newspapers then as now, and the violence of Audouin's headlines clearly reflects the attempt to compete in this field.

The burgeoning of press production, especially in 1791, coincided with a growing army of unemployed, for whom *colportage* could be a last resort before crime and destitution. The police records of the Sections du Louvre and des Arcis, covering the right-bank *quais* and the Place de Grève, show something of the extent of this practice. From April to mid-July 1791, ninety-eight people were detained in these two Sections for what might be called crimes of desperation - petty theft, pickpocketing and penny-ante open-air gambling. Of this number, no less than thirteen had been, or were, *colporteurs* or *vendeurs de papiers*. They took their place alongside an array of artisans *sans place* and other impoverished workers, including those who had experienced a gradual descent to the point of crime - a servant who had gone on to sell vegetables, a locksmith who became a message-runner, a *garçon charcutier* who worked as a mason's labourer - and those who had never been more than *commissionnaires* or *gagne-deniers* (the only single category, at 14, to outnumber the *colporteurs*).²⁷

Under such circumstances, Paris must have rung to the cries of these men, who were obliged to buy their stock, and thus had even more incentive to recoup a meagre profit. The arrest of one man in the Section de la Place-Vendôme on 27 June 1791 illustrates the hand-to-mouth existence many must have led. Having sold two men in a café a copy of Audouin's *Journal*, he went on to offer them an *Orateur du Peuple*, which they read, and finding it incendiary, arrested him. He was a 27-year-old *commissionnaire*, and admitted buying six copies of the *Orateur* in the Faubourg St-Germain, and four of *Louis XVI et Antoinette traités comme ils le méritent* at 'rue de la parcheminière no. 13 dans la maison

²⁶Censer, *Prelude*, p.9.

²⁷APP AA56 and AA182. As we shall later see, even some of those arrested while selling papers preferred to record their former *état*, rather than this new occupation, so the number of detainees who had tried their hand at *colportage* may have been even higher than indicated.

du limonadier au deuxième sur le devant', from a man whose name he did not know. He also admitted knowing 'que c'étoit les deux feuilles . . . qui ne devoient pas être vendus.' The tiny quantities of stock indicate clearly the meagre resources of this seller, and his willingness to court arrest suggests desperation - there is certainly no bravado or evidence of political commitment in his answers.²⁸

Under such circumstances *colporteurs* were tempted to elaborate on what may already have been fairly 'hot' material in pursuit of purchasers. On 1 March in the Section des Tuileries, one was imprisoned 'pour avoir colporté des imprimés incendiaires et les avoir annoncé sous un faux titre, tel que Grande Colère du Père Duchesne au sujet d'un homme qui est monté chez la reine pour la tuer.' We shall later see how the events of 28 February may have inspired this fabrication out of the confusion of the *journée* of the *chevaliers du poignard*. The man may have felt these events made his news stale, and sought to create a new sensation. His reward was a week in La Force.²⁹

On 24 April, a near-illegible record from the Section des Enfants-Rouges notes the arrest of a *colporteur* of unidentifiable previous trade, attempting to sell the *Journal du Soir* with the cry 'M. Delafayette a repris le commandement, à bas les aides de camp avec les [Blames?] et chasser l'état-major qui donne de faux ordres.' A Guard noted that this paper contained none of the incendiary phrases, but the man repeatedly defied warnings to stop - 'ce particulier lui a dit a plusieurs fois que personne ne pouvoit l'empêcher de vendre ses papiers.' The Guard proved him wrong, and the *commissaire*, noting that he had 'ni plaque ni medaille' that would mark him as an official *colporteur*, was about to imprison him when a local citizen vouched for him.³⁰

This action after the Easter confrontation of King and people confirms the intensification of police vigilance against *colporteurs* in times of tension, as after the October Days. This is also apparent in the Champ de Mars episode - at 10 a.m. on 17 July a *colporteur* was brought to the Enfants-Rouges *commissaire* by two sergeant-majors and a *soldat volontaire* of that Battalion. They had heard him crying 'l'ordre de la marche pour aller au champ de mars citoyens assembles [z?],' and had arrested him 'jugeant que c'étoit un écrit incendiaire et très dangereux dans la circonstance présente.'³¹

The vendor, Jacques Chenon, 38, *maçon sans ouvrage*, had been selling papers 'depuis environ huit

²⁸APP AA206:328, he was sent to La Force.

²⁹APP AB322:1402.

³⁰APP AA157:103.

³¹APP AA157:143.

mois.' Asked why he sold 'papiers incendiaires,' he answered 'qu'il n'est pas le seul qui vend de ces imprimés qu'il croit être en règle, le nom de l'imprimeur étant en bas.' Despite this attention to one rule, he was unsurprisingly devoid of 'la permission et la médaille,' thus offering further excuse to detain him. He was sent to La Force.³²

The pamphlet he was hawking when arrested was entitled, in the clerk's rendition, 'Grand détail de la réunion de plus de deux cents mille citoyens de la capitale et des environs, sur le terrain de la Bastille, pour se rendre au champ de mars aujourd'hui dimanche dix-sept juillet: le ordre de marche des citoyens.' It came from 'l'imprimerie de Tremblay, Rue Basse St-Denis no. 11.' It began 'Tremblez citoyens,' and ended 'elle ne saura pas lutter de [franc?] contre l'opinion de tout la nation également manifeste.'

This particular pamphlet does not survive in the Bibliothèque Nationale collection, but its title, tone and publisher place it in a well-established series. The Tremblay shop, home also of Hébert's *Père Duchesne*, had been producing its 'Grand Détail' pamphlets for some months. These are one example of a genre apart from the periodical press and the burlesques of Hébert and his ilk, reporting news of sensational events anonymously (hence perhaps avoiding the impression of being mere opinion), and appearing in clouds around any significant incident. The first identifiable one in this series in 1791 is *Grand Détail de la révolution arrivée hier au faubourg St-Antoine, dans laquelle un mouchard a été massacré par le peuple*, which is a brief polemic on the Kabers riot of 27 January. This lauded the action of 'ce peuple contre lequel tant de scélérats trament tant de projets iniques.' It seemed unaware of the fact that Kabers survived his ordeal, and attempted to cover its evident approval of the 'massacre' with petty equivocation:

Nous sommes bien éloignés d'approuver ces mouvemens du fureur auxquels le peuple se laisse quelquefois entraîner; mais ce qui le rend en quelque sort excusable, c'est l'impunité des brigands, qui journellement échappent à la vindicte des loix.³³

From around the same period comes an account of a counter-revolutionary sermon which nearly ended in a lynching - *Grand Détail d'une sédition occasionnée par un Vicaire de Paris . . .* This recounts an unidentifiable incident in which a *prédicateur* at the Hôpital de la Pitié - 'ce furieux écumant de rage' - was finally prevented from continuing with a series of sermons blaming the ills of society on the

³²Among his wares again appeared Audouin's *Journal*.

³³BN 8-Lb41-2553.

Assembly, and preaching a return to the *ancien régime*.³⁴

Although even at this date, presumably around January-February, when priests were still big news, the tone of these works was fairly wild, it was not until after Easter that they began to grow truly rabid. Oddly, no Tremblay pamphlet on the Easter events survives, but others, including one of a very similar series by 'l'imprimerie de Labarre,' show that the general pamphlet coverage of those days was extremely inflammatory. Concerning the King's communion with a non-juring priest, the Labarre pamphlet had this to say:

Sur une pareille démence, que doit-on penser d'un monarque sur qui les réfractaires ont un ascendant inconcevable, que tout les citoyens n'ignorent point, puisque tous les papiers publics le déclarent l'ennemi juré de la révolution, et que sa conduite inconsidérée en donne des preuves authentiques.³⁵

By mid-May, covering a minor anti-*agioteur* riot, this was the Tremblay pamphlet's opening paragraph:

Pauvre peuple, qu'on tourmente toujours de mille manières; toi, l'appui, le soutien de l'état, jusqu'à quand laisseras-tu subsister tant de monstres déchainés pour te faire une guerre éternelle; ne crois pas que tes plus grands ennemis soient ceux qui menacent les frontières; les plus redoutables sont auprès de toi. Ecrase donc au plutôt tous ces serpens qui t'environnent, sans quoi tu seras bientôt victime de ton indulgence.³⁶

However, while 'vils monopoleurs' were the target of this attack, the writer also denounced

les scélérats qui troublent ton repos en te plongeant dans des inquiétudes continuelles, qui voudroient t'exciter à la révolte à force d'oppression, pour avoir une occasion de t'égorger et de s'abreuver de ton sang, qui traitent de factieux tes véritables appuis, et qui voudroient rendre la révolution odieuse en abusant de l'autorité que tu leur as confiée pour te vexer . . .

One may readily ask what is the message of all this - to revolt or not to revolt? Perhaps it was some fine legal scruple that constantly inserted into these writers' discourse the cautionary idea that a general rising was just what the people's enemies wanted; more likely it was just involuted revolutionary paranoia. But it must be asked if such a constant production of material that managed to be incendiary without offering any radical solutions did not indicate a profound conflict in radical minds. Even the most radical of activists (always excepting Marat) clung to the forms of constitutionality, albeit in their Rights-of-Man oriented understanding of it, suggesting that this approach signified more than mere timidity or lack of commitment. The confusion at the heart of the radical approach to politics, where activists lacked any genuine alternatives to the constitutional structures whose manipulation was repressing them, must thus be constantly borne in mind. The press, particularly in its ephemeral pamphlet variety, was the

³⁴BN 8-Lb39-8172.

³⁵BN 8-Lb39-9869, *Détail de la grande révolution arrivée aux Thuilleries pour le départ du roi*. See also BN 8-Lb39-4826, 4827, 4867, 4868. The Labarre pamphlet, and others, printed as fact the supposed death of a *garçon perruquier* at the hands of the Guard, a completely false rumour. See Lacroix, vol. 3, pp.631-2.

³⁶BN 8-Lb39-4925.

shallowest manifestation of this general mindset, offering inflammatory instant reporting without political reflection, and leaving the people enraged, but stymied. The whole experience of the Champ de Mars Massacre only offers tragic confirmation of this.

Another case from the July events, while having about it an air of farce at times, leads us further into the production and distribution of ephemeral literature. At 11 a.m. on 20 July two men were brought in to the *commissaire de police* of the Section de l'Oratoire by a lieutenant of cavalry, who had arrested them in the street, for standing amidst a group of people and calling out 'La loy est atroce faisons une pétition Bien Raisonnée elle sera bientôt zero.' As the *commissaire* heard the first witness, one of the two accused, Jean Pierre François Chardon, 'dit la Panache,' offered to take the Guard to the printer and author of the pamphlet he had read from. After consultation this was agreed, and he went off with a patrol which returned to make a long report on its successful hunt.³⁷

The *commissaire* began by questioning Chardon, a native of Paris, 24, and a *colporteur* by *état*. He said he had bought the pamphlets at seven that morning, speaking to the smaller of the two printers. He claimed to have read it out 'entre son camarade et lui' out of simple curiosity as to the contents. He confused the *commissaire* by saying he could not read when asked if he knew of the Martial Law decree posted up two days before. The second seller cleared this up by admitting to doing the reading at the request of someone else, but only in order to encourage sales. He was Louis François Dufour, also a Parisian by birth, 36, and a *garçon papetier* who had been reduced to *colportage* for the last few days for lack of work. He too did not know about Martial Law, he said, but recalled that the printer had said there was no risk in selling the pamphlet.

Following this, one of the printers was called. Jacques Dumoulin was 71, and owned the printworks at 7, rue Thibotaudé jointly with a M. Libron, upon whom he placed all the blame for any trouble, having himself merely done the work of printing the sheets without reading them, even when he was handing them out to sellers. The second printer announced himself as Louis Livron, and signed as Delivron. He claimed that, knowing the purity of the writer's principles, he had not troubled to read the copy before it was set in type, and in correcting the proofs he had missed the offending phrase. Like all the others, he was in ignorance of any new law on the freedom of the press, as he phrased it. He had sold thirty-six dozen copies that day to *colporteurs*, but denied telling any of them that it was safe to sell, or otherwise.

³⁷APP AA153:16

He added that the copy had come in partly on Monday 18th and partly on Tuesday 19th, and the print-run had been finished at around 9 p.m. that day.

The writer was questioned now, Charles Foulhioux, 36, a Lyonnais resident in Paris since 1776. Like the others, he stressed his lack of firm association with his fellow defendants. He claimed to have written the piece, 'La Grande Maladie du Père Duchesne,' on the 17th 'dans la matinée,' and had it collected at 6.30 a.m. on the 18th, before he could have known of the new law - of course if he had, his love for the Constitution and his devotion to the *patrie* would have made him respect it. On the other hand, he had absolutely nothing to do with the printing and distribution, and it was up to the printer, he said, to be sure of what he was selling. He added that he had written several works on the spirit of the Law and the Revolution, and that having been three times a victim of the *ancien régime* he had more motive than anyone for loving the Constitution.

Faced with this parade of buck-passing, the *commissaire* referred the matter to the *Département de Police*, where consideration was taken of the remorse and love for the law shown by all concerned, and they were released with a stern warning. The haphazard and fragmented world of printing and *colportage* is here clearly on display.³⁸ The work of Foulhioux (or Fouilhoux) can be traced in the Bibliothèque Nationale. He published a total of twenty *Père Duchesne* pamphlets in 1791, a series of six in July and fourteen in September. The printer's address is that of Dumoulin and Livron, but while in the July editions it is 'L'imprimerie du véritable père Duchesne' - the habitual notation on the at least six different versions then circulating - by September it has become 'L'imprimerie de Sallière.' Dumoulin perhaps sold out after his brush with the law.³⁹

The pamphlet seized on the two *colporteurs* is bound fifth in the July collection, but there is scant internal evidence to date the others precisely.⁴⁰ This one is entitled 'La grande maladie du père Duchesne, causée par tout ce qui s'est passée au Champ de Mars, le dimanche 17.' It is a typical *Père*, more diatribe than sense, interrupted by torrents of oaths as the readership had come to expect. The passage its sellers were reading out comes on the second page:

³⁸C. Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*, (Berkeley, 1991), considers in some depth the careers, politics and circumstances of some of the more successful Parisian printers, but she cannot approach the ephemeral world apparently inhabited by men such as Foulhioux and Dumoulin, still less the scavenging existence of their vendors.

³⁹To continue the digression, 7 rue Thiboutaudé is the address from which the *Mercure National* of François and Louise Robert was published up to January 1791, and it was then identified as 'L'imprimerie de Roland'.

⁴⁰BN 8-LC2-517.

Tout le monde a tort, foutre, excepté la loi, quoiqu'elle soit atroce: faisons une pétition bien raisonnée, et cette loi de sang [evidently the decree reinstating the King] va devenir, sinon un pâté d'encre, au moins presque zéro. Mais aussi, comportons-nous avec un tel ensemble, que les bougres de gueux qui nous en veulent, ne puissent jamais pénétrer dans l'épaisseur de nos colonnes, sacré mille jean-foutres.

In other words, the Assembly seems to have done wrong, but will come around, and the first danger is that of being swept away by dangerous agitators. Foulhioux obviously had the news of the two lynchings of the 17th when he began to write, since he blames them on 'un tas de pendants que l'on a envoyé dans Paris, et qui prènent le soin atroce de calomnier votre civisme.' If his readers meet such agitators, he urges them to offer short shrift: 'foutez moi leur des coups de barre.' He calls for unity between the people and the Guard and the promotion of tranquillity. The idea of forming a petition seems to have been dropped after its first mention, and the rest of the pamphlet concentrates on driving home the message of reconciliation. The obvious reason for this switch would be that he heard some news of the Champ de Mars events after he had begun to write, and was unsure as to how to continue, so completed the piece in the most bland style he could manage, buried under further heaps of the *Père's* oratory. Clearly his printer's deadline carried more weight than discovering exactly what was going on.

Foulhioux's opinions as expressed in the other pamphlets he wrote in this month are less restrained. There are rants against speculators in and exporters of coin, and against the Assembly which lets this happen under its nose, because it too is in the hands of *intrigants* and serves the rich against the people. This class of popular enemy extends as far as the section *comités*, who are all working to do the people out of the wealth that should be theirs - the *biens nationaux* came from the church, where they were held, originally, for the poor, so that is who they should go to now. Alongside this is a stream of indignation against the King subsequent to his flight and calling for a trial.

Such may be his opinions, sifted from some fifty pages of verbiage, but when it comes to putting them into practice, he hedges his bets so far that it is impossible to find one call for positive action in the whole series, with the exception of the hastily-regretted example above. His standard ploy for calming the ire he may have stirred in his readers is, as with this example, to warn them against falling into the hands of agitators, and that, paradoxically, they must ultimately put their trust in the Assembly. Foulhioux reveals himself as someone whose contribution to the revolutionary atmosphere was even more shallow than that of the Tremblay writer(s) - a man without decided opinions of his own, making a living in the 'Père Duchesne industry' without attaching much significance to what he wrote. Fortunately for him, neither did the *Département de Police*.

The Administrators, however, found justification in the general post-Champ de Mars situation for a prohibition, in a municipal Decree of 27 July, of the *colportage* of 'feuilles incendiaires,' naming particularly the works of Marat and Fréron. On the 30th, they imposed a blanket ban on the verbal embroidering of headlines, justifying this as follows:

Les colporteurs se permettent souvent d'annoncer les feuilles et journaux d'une manière contraire à ce qu'ils contiennent réellement et toujours inquiétante pour le public. Ils sont, sans doute, guidés par l'espoir d'une vente et d'un débit plus considérables. Mais, comme une pareille infidélité est toujours en opposition avec la loi et ne peut qu'induire en erreur une infinité de citoyens, le Département de police a cru qu'il était de son devoir de faire cesser cet abus.

Confiscation and imprisonment were ordained as punishment for crying anything but the title of the piece for sale.⁴¹

The Guard *état-major* supplemented this crackdown with its own orders, sometimes leading to confusion. On 12 August a patrol brought to *commissaire de police* Deneux of the Section des Arcis a *colporteur* arrested while reading aloud from the *Thermomètre du Jour* - very far from a radical organ. The arrest was in accordance with 'l'ordre d'aujourd'hui . . . d'arrêter et de conduire devant les commissaires de police, tous lecteurs publics.' The *commissaire* was nonplussed in the face of such a general instruction, which moreover had not been communicated to him. Touched in his revolutionary sensibilities, he wrote 'nous ne pensons pas qu'une instruction aussi insuffisante puisse nous autoriser à prononcer la détention d'un citoyen, détention qui nous paroit arbitraire et dès lors tyrannique . . .' So he released the *colporteur*, although just to be on the safe side he warned him not to read from his wares in public again, and confiscated his stock. Given the doubts Deneux had just expressed, this outcome demonstrates the authoritarian basis of police practice, subverting the revolutionary rhetoric of its practitioners. It will be recalled from previous chapters that Deneux himself had demonstrated an extremely vigorous commitment to order in what he regarded as criminal matters.⁴²

Other incidents involving the politics of *colportage* will be considered in their chronological setting, but for now we can offer the following conclusions. The Parisian press operated in an intensely competitive market, a fact which oriented its output towards sensationalism. This drift was reinforced by the pre-revolutionary 'apprenticeship' of many of the writers, by the inclinations of its readership, and simply by the intensely hostile political atmosphere. We may allow the possibility of political subornation

⁴¹Lacroix, vol. 6, pp.22-3, 28-30. The decree of the 27th was withdrawn after Condorcet and others protested at its implied pre-publication censorship of the two journalists, but the general ban on incendiary materials was restated, and the decree of the 30th went unchallenged.

⁴²APP AA57:34.

and subsidy, but its effect on the products of the press is moot. The already incendiary nature of much press output was then reinforced by the prevalent method of sale - public hawking - itself made more competitive by the desperate economic situation of many *colporteurs*. Overall, therefore, even without coming to examine the deeply troubling events of 1791, we can already see that many factors pointed to the escalation of public tensions through the diffusion of the press. Furthermore, we have begun to suggest that this incendiary production concealed a fundamental flaw in the radical outlook - its lack of a viable political alternative.

Early 1791 also saw a significant addition to the radical dimension of Parisian politics - the popular societies. It was here that such a political alternative might be sought. From May 1790 the Cordeliers Club had stood alone as a political body admitting the common people to its discussions.⁴³ In late 1790, the *Société fraternelle de l'un et l'autre sexe, séante aux Jacobins*, was organised to educate the people in the laws and Constitution. Its founder was a paternalistic schoolmaster, Claude Dansard, and the society seems to have soon attracted several hundred members. By the end of the year, the radical press was exhorting others to form similar clubs to promote civic virtue. The result was a stream of new foundations, reaching double figures by February 1791. This movement was extensively documented in 1937 by Isabelle Bourdin.⁴⁴ Many of the new clubs which were to be most active drew their leadership from the educated cadres of the Cordeliers - even the original *Société fraternelle* had parted company with Dansard by April 1791, under a group of such figures, including the journalist François Robert, who led it beyond its original modest aims.⁴⁵

It would appear that this mutation was in line with the wishes of a membership which was on the whole of popular origins, and the publications and reported meetings of the societies rapidly veered from a humble respect for the powers-that-be towards an extremely radical position. A pamphlet recording various communications of the *Société fraternelle* in late November and early December 1790 addressed Charles de Lameth as 'illustre citoyen', and perorated 'vive! vive notre brave et généreux défenseur!'⁴⁶ By early June 1791, the same society was publishing a sixteen-page *Appel à la Nation des Décrets*

⁴³See A. Mathiez, *Le Club des Cordeliers pendant la Crise de Varennes et le Massacre du Champ de Mars*, (Paris, 1910).

⁴⁴I. Bourdin, *Les Sociétés populaires à Paris pendant la Révolution*, (Paris, 1937), this covers the activities of the clubs into 1792.

⁴⁵*ibid.* pp.30-3, 171-7.

⁴⁶BN 8-Lb40-849.

inconstitutionnels, which while focusing on the decree of 10 May against collective petitioning, also denounced in passing the active citizenship and *marc d'argent* distinctions, the executive powers afforded to the King, and the royal veto - the agenda of Lameth and the 'Triumvirate'. It concluded that the May decree was 'pour vous empêcher de demander la réformation des lois anti-constitutionnelles' such as these, having previously made clear its view on the relation of the Assembly to the rights of the people: 'si l'Assemblée nationale a décrété des lois qui attaquent les bases de la déclaration des droits . . . elle n'a pas le droit d'exiger que la nation reconnoisse ces lois et leur prête obéissance.'⁴⁷

Quite clearly it was the educated adherents of 'Cordelier politics' who shaped this political discourse, but a large body of evidence suggests that the normal run of society business, and the bulk of their membership, was rapidly imbued with an intemperate and visceral interpretation of popular sovereignty.⁴⁸ As Bourdin observes, it was this doctrine, in its more elevated form, that the societies had set out to teach, and the results of its meeting with Parisian popular mentalities was dramatic:

Le peuple de la Révolution réclamait l'exercice de sa souveraineté, et elle prenait tout naturellement dans son esprit le caractère et les prérogatives de celle du roi à laquelle elle succédait. Elle était absolue et, par cela même, ne se couvrait de l'autorité des principes que pour mieux s'étendre aux réalités . . .

Le droit de contrôle que le peuple s'attribuait développa chez lui le sentiment de la défiance, fruit naturel du désir de bien faire allié au défaut de culture; il devint jaloux et tyrannique et fit une constante association de la vertu et de la haine. Ignorant l'indifférence et le scepticisme, mais souvent inconscient de l'évolution qui l'entraînait, il allia un respect presque mystique de la loi aux transformations incessantes qu'il tentait de lui imposer.⁴⁹

In many ways, then, the popular societies, whose membership appears to have been largely drawn from genuinely popular circles, and constituted a core of up to several thousand, could be seen as the 'shock-troops' of the radical democratic movement.⁵⁰ But to regard that term in any way literally would be a mistake. Although a handful of the seditious persons arrested around the time of the Champ de Mars Massacre proudly admitted to society membership, as we shall see later the vast majority denied this frequently-imputed affiliation, without, it would seem from their general tone, intent to deceive.

Even if the societies entered into correspondence with each other, the Cordeliers and the Jacobins, they do not seem to have ever formulated a positive agenda beyond outraged responses to the ever-growing evidence of counter-revolution. In early May 1791 François Robert tried to organise a Central

⁴⁷BN 8-Lb39-4989.

⁴⁸Bourdin's work is filled with examples drawn from both the texts of the societies and from more-or-less hostile observers, all of which point in this direction.

⁴⁹Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, pp.10-11.

⁵⁰*ibid.* ch. 5, for membership analysis.

Committee of Societies, attracting, according to his own report, delegations from over thirty groups to the initial meeting. Major difficulties over funds, premises, and co-ordination, and possibly the jealousy of the Cordeliers, meant that by the end of the month the Committee was only just ready to begin functioning. Two weeks later a newspaper reported a session at which twelve delegations were present, and after that there are no more signs of its existence.⁵¹

At every incident from January 1791 onwards, popular societies can be found commenting, outraged, at the exploits of *aristocratie*, and making righteous demands for the authorities to act in the popular interest. It must be said, however, that there is no evidence of their having influenced political events, other than by contributing to a highly-charged rhetorical atmosphere. This in itself may not have been a negligible factor in the escalation of political tensions, but whether this function, allied to that of offering a certain radical education to some of *le peuple*, is sufficient to afford them the title of revolutionary vanguard, is a moot point.⁵² Moreover, it is possible to see aspects of the popular societies' behaviour which clash with a view of them as desperate social radicals.

On occasions such as the abolition of the hated customs-barriers around Paris, on 1 May 1791, the popular societies showed that they shared a certain unease at the possible reactions of the people. For months before this event, it had been feared that popular disorders would follow from it. As we shall later see, this was a common pattern at this time, in which all political factions blamed others for stirring riots in the interests of counter-revolution. On this occasion, the societies were fervent in their appeals for calm, a calm which followed, although probably not as a result of their exhortations.⁵³ The popular societies were quite capable of falling into the same distrustful view of the actions of the *menu peuple* as was shared by the police and other authorities, although in their case it was mitigated by a belief in their ultimate goodness.

When, however, the situation became desperate, in July 1791, and real social conflict appeared on the cards, radical attitudes became even more ambivalent. On 15 July, the *Cercle Social*, not a genuinely 'popular' society but one with distinct radical sympathies, which had regularly attracted large audiences to lectures on Rousseau, hosted a mass meeting of popular society members to discuss the decree

⁵¹Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, pp.167-70.

⁵²Rose, *Making*, pp.89-93, is most eager to invoke this perspective, seeing the societies as the direct heirs of the Districts, denied *permanence* since mid-1790, and using their existence as an explanation for the political quietism of the Sections in 1791 - 'the locus of popular political involvement' had switched (miraculously) to the societies.

⁵³Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, pp.180-2.

exculpating the King over the Flight to Varennes. This meeting, a 'séance orageuse', ultimately voted to support calls for resistance and an appeal to the Nation, but meanwhile it was observed that

à la faveur des troubles dans l'enceinte du jardin [of the Palais-Royal] et de l'invitation faite à toutes les sociétés patriotiques, quelques ennemis de l'ordre et de la vérité, se sont glissés dans l'assemblée, où ils ne l'ont pas emporté, mais, ils nous ont averti de quelques inconvénients que dans ces momens de fermentation il nous seroit difficile de prévenir, comme nous l'avons toujours fait. Les nouvelles mesures que nous avons prises à cet égard, prouveront toujours que les amis de la vérité sont les plus sévères amis des loix et de la tranquillité publique.⁵⁴

What the new measures were is not clear, but they were apparently ineffective, as a few days later the society announced that 'dans ces instans de trouble, le Cercle Social ferme instantanément sa Tribune'. Meetings would continue, they went on, in private, open only to *bona fide* members, and it was specifically noted that 'les femmes n'entreront pas' - thus reversing what had been one of this and other societies' major innovations.⁵⁵

The *Cercle Social* quite clearly possessed an extremely jaundiced view of the kind of popular disorder that was being stirred up by the political tensions of the moment, and took refuge in social and gender exclusivity. In all fairness, we have already observed that this group did not class itself as one of the popular societies, although it claimed kinship with them, therefore its attitude at this time might not be seen as excessively hypocritical. However, a document published by the journalist Gorsas on 2 August, with the apparent consent of the *Société fraternelle*, and signed by one of the police administrators, raises more serious questions.

The society was responding to what Gorsas called a 'mensonge exécration' being put about by its enemies to the effect that it had planned after 15 July to topple statues of kings around the city. Its leadership had turned to the police on 16 July, presenting the administrator Jolly with a deliberation of the society in which they formally disavowed any such scheme, although it had apparently been mooted by one or two hot-heads. On 24 July, barely a week after the mass petitioning meeting organised by the popular societies had been fired on by the National Guard, the society had returned to Jolly and obtained a certificate confirming the substance of this statement, which Gorsas published in full. Jolly observed that he recalled to his satisfaction that the deliberation had been 'conçue dans des termes qui annonçoient

⁵⁴Report in *La Bouche de Fer*, newspaper of the *Cercle Social* (of which the *Amis de la Vérité* was the public manifestation), no.96, 18 July 1791.

⁵⁵*ibid.* no.99, 21 July 1791.

l'indignation que cette proposition avoit causée à la société.'⁵⁶

This evidence of a cordial relationship with the highest police authorities, at a moment when Martial Law was in full vigour and other popular societies were afraid to meet for fear of arrest, is quite remarkable. What it suggests is a concern for respectability among the cadres of the *Société fraternelle* (and perhaps, therefore, among the larger Cordelier cadre whence they originated) distinctly at odds with their image of political radicalism and appeal to the sovereignty of the whole people. Having already encountered the odd attitudes of some radicals when confronted with notions of the *populace* and social disorder, and the difficulties the revolutionaries clearly had in getting away from pre-revolutionary models of popular psychology, we might now suggest that the radicalism of the popular societies was not as unambiguous as its rhetoric appeared. While clearly a force for advancing a radical political agenda in the Revolution, it must be questioned whether the societies were as socially radical as their language and the appearance of their membership would suggest.

There is a certain difficulty in advancing this notion, as very little additional material has come to light on the popular societies since Bourdin's study. Certain incidents have emerged from the police records for 1791, and in the following narrative chapters they will be discussed at the relevant points. The activities of the popular societies will not, however, occupy a central place in this account, which focuses on the 'un-organised' popular response to events. Nonetheless, their influence should not be forgotten, as a part of the political complex within which Parisian events evolved, and their comments will be brought in where appropriate to illustrate this. Discussion of the events of 1791 will cast more light on the point of ambiguity raised above, and it will be returned to in the conclusions to this thesis, where the whole relationship between the radical and the popular in the Parisian revolution will be reassessed. Meanwhile, we shall move on from this exploration of some of the background to Parisian events in 1791, and in the next chapters begin to consider the import of the events themselves.

⁵⁶Gorsas, *Courrier*, 2 August 1791. Bourdin confirms this incident indirectly, noting that 'deux femmes de couleur' were expelled from the *Société fraternelle* in August 1791 for proposing such a demolition, and for claiming the society's support for their violent public *motions*. She passes no comment on the socio-political implications of this, and it comes in a general discussion of the disciplinary frameworks of the societies. (*Sociétés populaires*, p.40.)

PART TWO: THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN PARIS, JANUARY-JULY 1791

CHAPTER 5 - BEGINNING THE DESCENT: CONDITIONS IN PARIS IN EARLY 1791

Popular demonstrations in response to political events had not ceased after October 1789 - we have seen the type of disturbance that erupted in May 1790, and November of that year saw a major clash when a crowd wrecked the Hôtel de Castries, after its owner had wounded Charles de Lameth (at that time still a popular hero) in a politically-calculated duel. This provocation had prompted the *Moniteur* to be more neutral in its treatment of the rioters:

Le peuple, qui s'est assemblé dans une espèce d'ordre, s'est attroupé sans tumulte, et s'est porté, rue de Varennes, dans la demeure de M. Castries. Tous les meubles, les glaces, les bijoux ont été jetés par la fenêtre.¹

Clearly here the popular intervention was seen as an act of justice, although it was rapidly brought under control by the National Guard before any more permanent damage could be done. Incidents such as these kept the press and politicians concerned with the possibilities of faction and subornation, but the course of the Revolution in 1790 had nevertheless been fairly smooth, and much of the work of constructing a new administrative order had been done. As the new year approached, however, and the governance of the Church became a major issue, more of the internal contradictions of the attempted revolutionary settlement began to become apparent.

Tensions in the early months of 1791 would continue to surface in fears of action by overtly aristocratic elements, while criticism of the authorities tended to focus on their weakness in dealing with this, rather than accusing them of active collaboration. Nonetheless, the way was being prepared for the people and the authorities to come into direct conflict, while the complexity of fears displayed about aristocratic action indicated how that clash would be justified by both sides.

5.1 - POLITICAL SUSPICIONS BEFORE EASTER

By January 1791 Parisian politics were boiling with doubt and fear. The National Assembly had decreed that all clergy should take what amounted to an oath of loyalty to the Revolution and its works - an oath

¹*Moniteur*, 15 November 1790.

refused by the vast majority of the bishops sitting in the Assembly itself. The parochial clergy of Paris were to take this oath at their Sunday services in the first two weeks of January, and attention was focused on this polarising moment. Meanwhile, a group of *Monarchien* deputies had formed the *Société des Amis de la Constitution Monarchique*, commonly called the *Club Monarchique*, which in the first weeks of its existence had already become the preferred target of radical accusations concerning aristocratic conspiracy of all types.

In the haze of half-truths and disinformation that made up the blanket-coverage of the press, credulousness and suspicion went hand-in-hand. The relatively moderate writer Gorsas scorned rumours of an assassination-plot by leading politicians against Lafayette on 5 January, but a few days later found himself the victim of false information when he published an account of the taking of the clerical oath in St-Roch, parish church of the Section du Palais-Royal. The next day, he had to publish a disclaimer, since it was common knowledge by then that the clergy of the parish were in full resistance to the oath, led by the curé - 'Un prêtre, *se disant de cette paroisse*, est venu lui-même surprendre notre bonne foi.' It is odd that Gorsas should have been so easily taken in, since only a few days before he had accused the clergy of wanting 'd'allumer une guerre de religion.'¹ Like most of the press, Gorsas reproduced rumour and hearsay, sometimes critically, sometimes not, as his prejudices (and perhaps his mood) dictated. We shall consider the overall effects of the clerical oath later, after first exploring the ways in which general political tensions poisoned the atmosphere of Paris at this time.

In the last week of January the whole of Paris was aflame with the news of a 'massacre' at La Chapelle, to the north of the city, on 24 January. The actual incident was a skirmish in confused circumstances between the *garde soldée*, supporting the work of customs officials, and the locals of the town, in which shots were fired and several people killed. Lacroix comments that 'dès le premier jour' the patriotic clubs and journals turned on the *Club Monarchique* as instigator of this outrage. Fréron wrote on 26 January that

30,000 ouvriers sont inscrits chez le sieur Clermont-Tonnerre [president of the Club] . . . Tous les anciens gardes-du-corps sont admis . . . Paris est à la veille de la contre-révolution; et, si nous perdons un instant, un seul instant, nous sommes dévoués à la mort.

The actual total registered with the Club for subsidised bread was around 2,500, but the radicals were less

¹A.-J. Gorsas, *Le Courrier de Paris dans les LXXXIII Départements*, 7, 10, 11 January 1791. Gorsas' position as 'relatively moderate' can be defined as support for both Lafayette and the popular societies, combined with opposition to aristocracy and *maratisme*. He was later to become a Girondin *conventionnel*.

concerned with accuracy than with invoking the image of mass brigandage under preparation.²

On the day following these outbursts Clermont-Tonnerre's house was put under siege by an enraged crowd, but Mayor Bailly and the forces of order were well able to retain control of the situation, as he reported to the Assembly that day. He also noted, however, that it had been necessary to take cavalry to the Barrière de Sèvres at 10 a.m.:

Je n'y ai trouvé ni tumulte ni attroupement; mais les commis m'ont déclaré que, les fraudeurs se présentant en groupes de 60 ou 80, les préposés et les chasseurs se trouvaient de leur côté en trop petit nombre pour pouvoir résister . . .

And so the smugglers had worked unhindered, insulting the clerks as they passed. This gives some idea of the opposition the customs-men were facing, and an alternative explanation for the violence at La Chapelle.³ The register of La Force prison at this time contains a number of cases of people arrested for 'avoir frappé' or 'maltraité' the *commis des fermes*, 'ameuté le peuple' against them, or even 'levé le sabre,' either in arguments over dues, or quite simply 'pour que les contrebandiers passassent plus aisément.' The hostility towards the *chasseurs des barrières*, who were the armed branch of the customs service, made itself felt elsewhere too - on 31 January in the Section des Thermes-de-Julien three workers from the *travaux publics* tried to start a swordfight with two such soldiers.⁴

The day of the siege of Clermont-Tonnerre's house, 27 January, also saw the Kabert incident in the Faubourg St-Antoine. The Faubourg had been aroused for several days prior to the dismissal of the defamation suit against Fréron which triggered this unrest. Placards had been appearing in the streets against English goods, blaming these imports for the troubles of French industry. Lafayette had ordered the Guard to remove them when they appeared, but the patriots saw in them a plot to discredit the workers - the *Révolutions de Paris* said by making it appear that they were dictating policy to the government - while Tallien of the Minimes Club published an appeal for calm blaming the agitation directly on the *Club Monarchique*. Despite their suspicions of popular stirrings on this front, the radical press were happy to gloat over Kabert's fate.⁵

The 27th seems to have been a day for suspicious happenings. In the Section du Louvre a baker

²Lacroix, vol. 2. pp.230, 237. Desmoulins' paper echoed the figure for enrolled workers, feeding the 'myth' surrounding this total, while the *Révolutions de Paris* was more conservative at 15,000.

³Lacroix, vol. 2, p.281.

⁴APP AB322:888 (16 January), 918 (19 January), 1055 (1 February), 1126 (7 February), and 1034 for the fight, one of whose proponents was deported from the city for his pains. The dues on goods entering the city were voted out of existence on 19 February, but were not actually lifted until 1 May. As they were one of the great pre-revolutionary grievances of the Parisians, hostility to this dilatory procedure is understandable.

⁵Lacroix, vol. 2, pp.289-91, 293.

reported to the evening session of the *assemblée générale* that at 6:30 that morning a man ‘qui lui paroit être un maçon’ had tried to force him to sell a loaf below the usual price. When he refused the man said that ‘il le feroit mettre à la lanterne et . . . lui a encore dit que sous quatre jours il le donneroit à six sols, et par force.’ The Section thought enough of this to inform the National Assembly’s *comité des recherches* and the public prosecutor.⁶ Again, in the Section du Palais-Royal a half-dozen ‘affiches d’une proclamation de la municipalité concernant les fonctions des prêtres qui n’ont pas prêté leur serment’ were discovered torn down, with no clue as to the culprits.⁷

In the following weeks, the *commissaire de police* of the Section du Louvre received further reports of suspicious incidents. On 4 February a tobacco-vendor reported an encounter with a strange man on 16 January who claimed to be taking 700 *livres* to the Faubourg St-Antoine ‘pour soutenir des menages,’ and who came back on 2 February to offer her and her husband 6 *livres* per day to be ready to take up arms for his ‘parti,’ saying ‘que la nation ne seroit pas la plus forte.’ On the next day, the Section’s secretary and another *bourgeois* reported on nightly meetings in the rue de Chevalier that blocked the road with carriages until 4 a.m., arousing local suspicions and disquiet that this was a cell of the *Club Monarchique*. On the 9th a surgeon overheard three Germans, including two *chasseurs soldés*, in a billiard-hall saying ‘qu’ils esperoient bien avoir leur revanche de l’affaire de la Chapelle,’ that the German powers were arming against France and that ‘leur premier coup seroit pour les parisiens.’⁸ Such *prima facie* evidence of aristocratic brigandage and conspiracy is suggestive, but unverifiable. Given that the brigands never did rise, we may observe only that such reports show the fear that ran through the streets of Paris, carried by hearsay and rumour.

If patriots of all shades were alarmed by tales of *Monarchien* cells and treacherous soldiers, those who subscribed to Marat’s views also saw treason and plot in the ranks of the National Guard itself. On 6 January the *Ami du Peuple* published a letter from a grenadier in the Carmes Battalion, alleging that although their blank cartridges were functional, those with bullets would not fire, even when tossed into flames. In the same issue, Marat reported that the Recollets Battalion had purged itself of suspect elements, and that others such as Henri-Quatre, Filles St-Thomas and St-Roch were in dire need of the

⁶APP AA182:56.

⁷APP AA82:152.

⁸APP AA182:67, 68, 74. The last incident, to unbiased ears, sounds less suspicious when it is noted that the men went on to wish they were back home in Germany where ‘ils ne seroient pas obligés de vivre avec des bougres de bourgeois.’ Nonetheless, the authorities took all these reports seriously, forwarding them to the central administration.

same treatment, containing as they did many men 'trop riches pour avoir des moeurs.' On 9 January, he reported that the Val-de-Grace Battalion had been purged, but that the Petit-St-Antoine and Pères de Nazareth were still suspect.⁹

Marat also denounced individuals as spies for Lafayette, such as one Plainville, who worked on the staff of the *état-major*, and had worn the insignia of a major until a patriot had threatened to rip them off, or Buot 'l'inspecteur de police, qui a l'audace d'étaler deux épauettes de commandant de bataillon . . . quoiqu'il ait été rejeté par la garde nationale.' Each of these men at officer level also seemed to control others more lowly - Bruyant, formerly a sergeant of the *Gardes françaises*, discharged 'pour bassesses', or a sergeant from the St-André-des-Arts Battalion, 'chassé par les citoyens pour fait d'espionage.'¹⁰ By mid-February, Marat had gone on to a critical analysis of the system of finding replacements to do Guard service - such men 'sont toujours pris par les officiers vendus au divin Mottié dans la bande de mouchards que le grand général . . . a placé dans chaque bataillon, pour égarer les soldats de la patrie.' As a result, he says, there are universal complaints that men are avoiding their service, but this is understandable, as no 'citoyen honnête et délicat' would want to spend the twenty-four hours of a duty with 'des infâmes mouchards.'¹¹ It would be easy to dismiss Marat's warnings as ravings, had we not already seen that he was sometimes in possession of accurate information on the Municipality's spies.¹²

On 7 February a case was brought before the *commissaire* of the Section d'Henri-Quatre which also shows that Marat's accusations were not wholly disconnected from others' preoccupations. Stanislas Maillard, hero of the Bastille and the October Days, was detained by Monsieur Carle, commander of the Henri-Quatre Guard Battalion, a man Marat had denounced as receiving 3700 *livres* to pay his *mouchards*.¹³ Carle accused Maillard of alleging publicly that Carle had paid three men to kill him. This complex little issue, which is explored (though without reference to this manuscript) by Lacroix, seems to have begun when Maillard acted as counsel for Rotondo, a writer and alleged Orléanist agent assaulted

⁹*L'Ami du Peuple*, nos. 332 and 335.

¹⁰*ibid.* nos. 329 and 361; 3 January and 4 February 1791.

¹¹*ibid.* no. 373, 15 February 1791.

¹²Recent work emphasises Marat's role as more than just an isolated polemicist - O. Coquard, 'Le Paris de Marat,' in Vovelle, *Paris*, pp.173-184. See also J. Massin, *Marat*, (Aix-en-Provence, 1988, orig. pub. 1960), esp. pp.143-173 on the 1790-91 period.

¹³*L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 343, 17 January 1791.

by agents of Lafayette late in 1790.¹⁴ Maillard said that Carle 'lui en voulait à ce sujet et avoit gagé trois grenadiers pour l'assassiner.' These men, however, thought better of it and told all to Maillard over some wine. Lacroix adds the information that Maillard had been suspected by Marat of Fayetteism in December 1790, but had cleared his name at a meeting of the *Vainqueurs de la Bastille* on 19 December. Somehow from here he ended up in the courtroom at the Fréron case on 26 January, at which point Carle is said to have personally threatened him, and he responded by publicising the threat. By 4 February things had got to the stage that a procession of over 200 Guards from Carle's Battalion went to the Jacobin Club to protest against the latter's support for Maillard's accusation. The president of the Club told them that they could sue if they wished. However, it seems that the intimidation of hauling Maillard into the office of the *commissaire* was sufficient to end the dispute. Maillard deposed for six pages about the alleged assassination-plot, but in the end had to admit he could give no precise details of the men who told him about it. Since there was no evidence for a charge on either side, he was sent on his way.¹⁵ In this dense plot we may see the machinations of *parti*, or simply clashes of personality and purpose carried to extreme lengths. The result was simply yet more suspicion and conflict.

At this time the *Club Monarchique* was attempting to prove its good faith by transferring the money it had collected, for poor-relief or brigandage depending on one's point of view, to the Sections. It would seem that the subscriptions of Clermont-Tonnerre's club had had a positive effect on some opinions. On 11 February a man who had come to receive a passport to leave the city (presumably as an indigent) was jailed after making 'menaces et invectives' against the judicial and police authorities of the Sections - 'il a Beaucoup parlé de M Clermont-Tonnerre en faisant son éloge attendu qu'il lui avoit donné du pain.'¹⁶ Probably a more typical reaction to the controversy is that of a *mendiant sans asile* who was jailed 'comme très suspect' on 20 January for having said 'hautement que M de Clermont-Tonnerre recevoit chez lui quantité de Personnes qu'il enroloit pour la contre-révolution.' There is no indication that he approved of this concept, but it was dangerous enough that one so lowly should be repeating it, no

¹⁴Rotondo, whom we shall meet again, had been in the crowd at the Hôtel de Castries riot, and had accosted Lafayette to protest at the rough treatment the Guard were meting out to the people present. As a result (supposedly) of making a pun on Lafayette's family name, which received some circulation, Rotondo was beaten up by eight armed men on 28 November, arrested three times over the next two weeks, and spent most of December and January in jail. Acquitted of all charges on 20 January, he proceeded to lodge a counterclaim against the General and his men, and hence by this point was already involved in a tangled conflict with the Fayetteists. (See Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, p.65n.2)

¹⁵APP AA215:388-93, Section d'Henri-Quatre, and Lacroix, vol. 2, pp.564-5.

¹⁶APP AB322:1173. He was released on 19 February.

matter how many times it appeared in the press.¹⁷ While the Club tried to polish its image, however, Gorsas commented on 4 February that at the same time it was having free tracts distributed against himself, Lameth, the Jacobin Club and others, and that many Sections had refused its 'maudit' cash, raising their own subscriptions instead. Meanwhile, Clermont-Tonnerre had supposedly been speaking to the officers of the *garde soldée* about the reliability of their men. Gorsas also reported that the Section du Luxembourg had kept the list of paupers in its area the Club had provided and checked it - 'en général tous les inscrits étoient forts, vigoureux et en état de travailler.' Therefore, in other words, they were being recruited for brigandage.¹⁸ The *Révolutions de Paris* reported more rumours which may have come from the activities of the Club:

Mardi soir on prévint les boulangers forains de se tenir sur leurs gardes le lendemain mercredi, jour de marché, et de distribuer de bonne heure leurs fournitures, attendu qu'il devoit se délivrer une grande quantité de pain au-dessous du prix courant, dans l'espoir d'insinuer au peuple d'exiger des boulangers la même diminution. Il n'est pourtant rien passé d'extraordinaire mercredi; la mine étoit éventée.¹⁹

On 8 February Gorsas called for the royal family to be considered 'autant d'otages de la tranquillité publique,' after it had been mooted that the King's aunts - Mesdames - might travel to Rome. This was necessary considering

les brigands aux gages des prêtres déchus, dont la Capitale abonde . . . beaucoup d'hommes suspects, revêtus de l'uniforme de la patrie; vingt mille habits bleus prêts à être endossés par nos contre-révolutionnaires . . .

Amongst all this, mid-February saw renewed attacks on customs-posts by night, and although Lafayette and the Guard stood by to intervene, no-one was brought to book.²⁰

Some idea of the prevalent mood in the population, or at least among the active citizens, can be gained from a motion passed by the *assemblée générale* of the Section de la Place-Vendôme on 22 February. They firstly appointed two sets of *commissaires* to investigate the La Chapelle incident (now a month in the past) and Mesdames' departure, and then voted to ask the Municipality to proclaim 'conformément aux anciens règlements de police, une défense de fabriquer et de vendre des cannes et bâtons contenant des armes offensives'; further, that it should seize such weapons held by dealers, and explore ways of removing them from the possession of individuals. Not only this, but the Section also

¹⁷APP AB322:1015. Released with *passport* 31 January.

¹⁸*Courrier*, 4 and 5 February. One need hardly add that there were a great many men in Paris that winter fit for work who were nonetheless going hungry.

¹⁹*Révolutions de Paris*, 12-19 February. Note the reluctance to admit that a rumour may have no substance.

²⁰Lacroix, vol. 2, p.601.

wanted strict enforcement of the order against non-members of the Guard wearing its uniform, and an order for the police *commissaires* and 'tous les bons citoyens' to investigate the identities of people 'qui arrivent successivement dans Paris et habitent les maisons des personnes émigrés.' Last but not least, Guard patrols by day and night should be stepped up 'jusqu'à ce que les inquietudes qui ont donné lieu à la présente délibération aient cessé.'²¹ Such demands clearly reflect the scare-mongering of the press. While Gorsas himself had written on 12 February that 'nous engageons tous nos concitoyens à ne point se laisser séduire par des récits que la soif du désordre fait naître dans la capitale,' on the 22nd he fulminated, linking Mesdames' departure to a plot by the *fermiers-généraux* to blow up the *barrières* (in league, somewhat improbably, with the smugglers,) and to 30,000 brigands preparing to kidnap the Queen and Dauphin, dispose of the King as a liability, and have a new St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of the patriots. Meanwhile, he alleged that some (unnamed) Guard officers were unreliable and should be removed - none of this could be called in any sense conducive to public tranquillity.

Much of the strain, and the *leitmotif* of brigandage seen above, came from the fears we have already noted about the number of unknown people coming into the city. The Police Department had ordered a survey of people letting furnished rooms - *logeurs* - in January, in order to gain an overview of the situation of the transient population. This survey was carried out on 18-20 January, and the results transmitted to the Administration, where they were lost to us, presumably in 1871. Gorsas alleged on 27 February that collation of the survey revealed 30,000 people in this form of accommodation, which he regarded as confirmation of the notion that these were the 'trente mille brigands' everyone believed to be in Paris. One Section's data has survived in the Police Archives, that of Grange-Batellière in the north of the city. Such a small sample alone cannot prove or disprove city-wide tendencies, but we can gain from it some idea of the world of *hôtels garnis* the press, population and government were so fearful of.

There were 24 *logeurs* in this Section, including ten women. Only one man called himself an *aubergiste*, with some justification, since he had 44 tenants. No-one else approached this total, though one widow had 28. The other traditional names for innkeepers - *marchand de vin* and *limonadier* - were held by one and five people respectively (including one *limonadière*), but these people had only between one and seven tenants. Six men had artisanal trades, and the others are merely noted by name. Some *logeurs* were clearly specialised - a mason had five of the same trade among his eight tenants, a tailor had eleven

²¹Lacroix, vol. 2, p.723.

cab-drivers among his seventeen, and one who was a *cocher de place* himself let exclusively to seven of his fellows. One woman had seven *menuisiers* among her ten tenants, and another catered for eight unskilled labourers. At a more elevated level, three women shared between them two *bourgeoises de Paris*, with servants, two army officers and a former King's Bodyguard, with families, a *Chevalier de St-Louis*, an *avocat*, an 'Americain,' a gentleman from London and an 'ancien maître des ballets.'

The total number of tenants was 205, divided as follows - sixteen workers on the *travaux publics*; thirty-four unskilled males, plus one dependent female; eighty-four artisanal males, plus one dependent female; fourteen female needleworkers, six *marchandes*, fourteen washerwomen and other unskilled females; and twenty-six others with nine dependents, from students at the *École des Ponts et Chaussées* to those already mentioned. Of this total, 72 had taken up their present residence before June 1790, 96 between June and December of that year, and 37 in the first three weeks of January 1791. Of this last group, eleven had moved in between the 17th and 19th - that is, in the previous two days. The eleven covered all the social categories, and five of them had moved in with the *aubergiste* in his large establishment, which nonetheless also had tenants including a *brocanteur* and a *gagne-denier* who had been there since 1785.

The thirty-seven arrivals in January compared with none in the previous month, twelve in November and eight in October. However, forty had arrived in September 1790, suggesting that these peaks of mobility could be accounted for by factors such as the quarterly rent-date and the availability of seasonal work. A small peak of eleven in June would seem to confirm this, bearing in mind that in a high-mobility milieu elapsed time will tend to distort such earlier figures downwards.

The fears of the patriots were concentrated on the unskilled and unemployed who were thought easiest to suborn, and who supposedly were flooding the city in unprecedented numbers. Of the sixteen workers on municipal relief-works, it is true that five had taken up residence in January 1791, but four had been in place since 1789, and another five since prior to June 1790. The general unskilled workers present a similar pattern - of thirty-four, twelve dated from 1789 or earlier, three from January-June 1790, no less than seven from September alone, and only six from January 1791.²²

Such a 'snapshot' view of a highly mobile population is likely to accentuate the significance of recent arrivals, but as can be seen, even without attempting to compensate for this effect, this Section does

²²APP AA174:1-5. For reference, the month-by-month arrivals for 1790 (all categories) are as follows: 2-2-8-9-9-11-5-9-40-8-12-0.

not seem to have been deluged with undesirables in its lodging-houses. One should scarcely be surprised at this, given the knowledge through hindsight that fears were highly exaggerated, but they were very real to the patriots of the time. Not only the lurking threat of brigandage, but some very specific terrors gripped Paris. On 26 February the Section de Notre-Dame met in *assemblée générale* and voted, as had Place-Vendôme four days before, for the banning of all hidden weapons. They linked this to 'l'exposé fait à l'assemblée qu'il existait à Paris des fabriques et approvisionnements de poignards mécaniques, de stylets à ressorts enchaînés à un gantelet, et autres armes perfides et cachées . . .' This revelation was supposed to come from the Cordeliers Club, which had 'fait la découverte du modèle et de la fabrication de ces poignards,' whose 'invention infernale' ought to be pursued by the rigours of justice.²³ On 28 February Gorsas wrote of these 'poignards subtils,' alleging that a factory for them had been found 'dans le quartier des Cordeliers,' the products supposedly bound for Bordeaux, but to someone the worker found in charge could not name. This was the very day that the young aristocrats rapidly dubbed 'chevaliers du poignard' occupied the Tuileries, when the National Guard had rushed off to defend the *donjon* of Vincennes from the wrath of the Faubourg St-Antoine.

To many minds this day's events were the culmination of the previous months' counter-revolutionary plotting. They followed only days after mass demonstrations of popular disquiet at the final departure of Mesdames for Rome, a supposed pilgrimage feared to be the first stage in an evacuation of the royal family. A large Guard presence had held the crowds in check as they flooded the Tuileries on 22 and 24 February, on the former occasion escorting an uneasy Monsieur - the King's brother - from the Luxembourg to demonstrate his continued presence. The personal attentions of Bailly helped the drama pass off peacefully, but it represented nonetheless a serious escalation in the confrontation between the Court and Parisian opinion.²⁴ There were many different strands to the perception of the situation at this time, as can be seen from the multiple demands of the Section de la Place-Vendôme on 22 February. The unauthorised wearing of Guard uniform was a particular concern, considering both the revolutionaries' highly-tuned sense of visual identity and the licence such an imposture gave to go armed. Nor was it entirely an empty fear - on 18 January a man who worked on the fish-boats was arrested wearing the full uniform and equipment of a grenadier, and passed nearly a month in prison before being released with a warning. On 5 February a *compagnon serrurier* dressed as a *canonier* was arrested, for that fact and for

²³Lacroix, vol. 2, p.796.

²⁴*ibid.* pp.695-6.

's'être répandu en invectives contre l'assemblée nationale.' He spent eleven days in prison. The next day a man threatened a *député* with a sabre, which was confiscated. He was allowed to keep the *chasseur* uniform he was wearing, however, so he may have been just an enraged patriot.²⁵

Whatever the reason for such impostures (and it is likely that the second-hand clothing trade had something to do with it) there was also a very real undercurrent of popular hostility to the Guard. Considering that we only have city-wide records for those cases thought serious enough to be referred to the centre, clashes show up with remarkable frequency. In the first two weeks of January eight incidents resulted in imprisonments. In most cases the detainee spent no more than two or three days in La Force before being either vouched-for or released on his own recognisance. It is probable that some of the unspecified 'insultes' and 'injures' were the result of enforcing closing-time in bars, but two others involved 'avoir ameuté des personnes' against the Guard, another having 'attroupe le public' to the same end, and a fourth arose from the Guard attempting to 'dissiper un attroupe sur la place de Grève.'²⁶ Several more cases in late January include a *travaux publics* worker who set his dog on a sentry, an unidentified man who included Lafayette in his curses, and a *garçon cordonnier* who served two weeks for hitting a Guard.²⁷

The cases are fewer in February, but what there are seem to have been more serious. On the 7th a man struck a Guard and insulted Lafayette, earning a one-month sentence from the Police Tribunal. On the 19th, a *travaux publics* worker and other unidentified men set upon a Guard seriously enough to earn the worker a six-month sentence. As for opinions, on the 21st a *compagnon menuisier* remarked as a patrol passed, 'que les Bayonnettes ne dureroient pas longtemps.' He only, however, spent two days in jail, as he was vouched-for.²⁸ These conflicts were later to grow in magnitude and significance, but at this time they were still overshadowed by the actions of aristocrats.

Returning to 28 February, news of the disturbance at Vincennes reached the streets at about the same time as word that a *Chevalier de St-Louis* had been arrested in the palace carrying a dagger. It seems that both the people and the aristocrats saw the possibility of harm coming to the King from this, and both

²⁵APP AB322:1013, 1101, 1125. There is no indication of what political colour the *député* was.

²⁶APP AB322:715, 769, 772, 783, 787, 796, 806, 874. Of these, the *état* of six perpetrators can be identified - a *colporteur*, an unemployed *commis*, a *garçon tapissier* and a *garçon tailleur*, a worker on the *travaux publics* and an *ancien principal clerc de notaire*.

²⁷APP AB322:958, 980, 1051.

²⁸APP AB322:1132, 1271, 1282.

sides rushed to the Tuileries to guard him from the other. The result was an approximation of chaos only resolved when Lafayette returned with armed force, dispersed the crowds and arrested several dozen young army officers and other Court gentlemen.

Several of these were questioned by Section authorities, with attention focusing particularly on links to the *Club Monarchique*, but in general little impression seems to have been made on their aristocratic *sang-froid*.²⁹ It is clear from another case that the hysteria over 'poignards subtils' had penetrated official circles. The man whose arrest had sparked the disturbances, Mathieu Jean-Baptiste de Court de la Tonnelle, 'major de la milice de St-Domingue,' was held at the Abbaye while the Police Department tested his knife by wounding a pigeon and shutting it in a box for two days, with some food. Its survival seemed to prove at least that the blade was not poisoned, but de Court was further suspect for having been seen making 'les propos les plus incendiaires' in the Palais-Royal and elsewhere, and remained in custody until the general dismissal of such cases on 13 March.³⁰

Concerning the incident at Vincennes, it is difficult to go beyond the general observations that the march on the *donjon* was carried out by several thousand working-people, and followed from a growing concern over the previous week that its refurbishment by the Municipality as an overflow prison had sinister connotations. Such concern was noted, and to some extent shared, by the authorities of the Sections des Quinze-Vingts and de Montreuil.³¹ Some of the Guards of the Popincourt Battalion, while at Vincennes, manifested disapproval of Lafayette, but their colleagues maintained discipline. Sixty-four men were detained on the site, and a hostile armed crowd made a show of force at the Barrière du Trône when the Guard attempted to bring them into the city. The Guard, however, forced its way through without needing to open fire, and the only definite casualty was a *cavalier* hit in the leg by a bullet as they passed through the Faubourg. This incident was clearly a significant mobilisation for 'patriotic' motives by the workers of the Faubourg, and the reported fears of the population about the 'new Bastille' being erected show that the Municipality was as widely distrusted in some quarters as the overtly aristocratic party. This confrontation of Guard and population seems to point forward to the events of the summer in

²⁹See especially APP AA206:130, Section de la Place-Vendôme, where the Marquis de la Motte, captain in the Regiment Royale Cavalerie, stonewalled with some elegance before being dispatched to the Abbaye.

³⁰APP AB322:1377. De Court's position in the colonial militia may well explain his vehemence - the colonists' position vis-à-vis their non-white fellows was a live political issue at this time. AB322:1372, 1375 and 1407 list eight other aristocratic detainees from these events who passed through La Force, but all were held ultimately in the Abbaye.

³¹Lacroix, vol. 2, pp.763-4.

the same way as other more minor incidents, and we shall see that bitterness over its consequences spilled into a court-case as late as June. However, at the time it was swept up into the mêlée of anti-aristocratic accusation.³²

Everybody blamed everyone else for the events, and on 3 March the Section des Quinze-Vingts called the detainees 'des citoyens séduits par les ennemis de la chose publique enfermés comme de vils criminels dans des cachots,' and offered 'certificats de probité' for all of them, as they had been led on by 'un trop grand zèle pour la chose publique.'³³ The *Révolutions de Paris* of 26 February-5 March expressed the difficulties even the most 'advanced' patriots had with such events. It observed that 'Quant à l'expédition de Vincennes, il est évident qu'elle a été provoquée par les aristocrates' to enable them to seize the Tuileries. On the other hand

le bon sens du peuple vaut mieux cent fois que toute la suffisance de ceux qui le gouvernement. Il a senti, ce peuple, qu'une citadelle placée à une demi-lieue de la capitale . . . pouvait être dangereuse pour le succès de la révolution.

In other words, its destruction saved it from being used for aristocratic plots, while at the same time, its destruction *was* an aristocratic plot!

In any case, the general situation was not helped by the authorities' decision to keep the Vincennes detainees locked in the Abbaye after the Tuileries culprits had been released - Gorsas noted on 15 March that placards had gone up in the Faubourg St-Antoine calling for the people to march and hang Lafayette, although there is no sign of real disturbance.³⁴ Popular feeling was certainly aggrieved at the release of the *chevaliers*. The Fayettist *Feuille du Jour* noted ironically the notions of the crowd at the Tuileries that 'manquer d'accusateur n'étoit qu'un défaut de forme' and that 'l'utile habitude de pendre d'abord' was necessary 'pour l'intérêt et la gloire de l'état.'³⁵ On 16 March a 67-year-old ex-mason was arrested for tearing down the official *affiche* of the aristocrats' release. The *commissaire* questioning him was intent on discovering a connection between him and them - did he think them innocent, or had he been 'inspiré' by someone to tear the notice? No, he said, he had done it because he viewed their names 'avec peine' and thought them 'très coupables.' Nonetheless, he was sent to La Force with a note that 'il nous a paru l'avoir fait avec dessein et peut être par quelque suggestion étrangère,' once again making it clear that the

³²Lacroix, vol. 2, pp.774-5, and vol. 3, p.10.

³³*ibid.* vol. 3, p.14.

³⁴The same notices are remarked on by the *Feuille du Jour* of the same date.

³⁵*Feuille du Jour*, 14 March 1791.

authorities doubted the concept of genuine popular interest in political events.³⁶ They were willing to accept less ambiguous actions, though, like that of the *ouvrière en linge* who reported on 2 March 'par suite du patriotisme dont elle est animée et du grand intérêt qu'elle prend à tout ce qui peut intéresser la chose publique,' that the previous night as she walked home she had overheard two men bemoaning the failure of the Tuileries *coup*, saying that:

M. de Buisa [Dubuisson? De Brisac?] avoit une charge de pistolets cachés dans l'oeil de boeuf pour armer ses cent suisses, mais qu'il n'avoit pas osé leur proposer en armes en voyant tant de gardes nationales.³⁷

The first two weeks of March passed relatively peacefully, since aristocratic plotting seemed to have been brought under control on 28 February. According to the general press coverage, concern for the health of the King perhaps also dampened public fervour in the second week, and a certain amount of relief is reported to have greeted his recovery from fever by the 18th.³⁸ On the 17th, however, the authorities succeeded in stirring the hornets' nest themselves, publishing a *Ordonnance* from the Police Department, one of the aims of which was clearly to counter the fears that had existed in February about concealed weapons. It did so, however, in terms so ineptly draconian that outcry from the popular societies and the Jacobin Club forced its withdrawal only four days later.³⁹ The document had gone so far as to ban the sale of old keys, and to order that new ones could only be made in the workshops of recognised master locksmiths. A mere two weeks after the Assembly had voted the final abolition of guild mastership (Loi d'Allarde, 2 March), it is not surprising that the *Révolutions de Paris* called the measure's stupidity 'étonnante.' Gorsas observed that in any case no-one would obey the prohibition on going armed 'à moins que la très-nonchalante et très-pusillanime police ne ballaie la capitale des brigands qu'elle a laissés s'y accumuler.'⁴⁰

A patriotic mob carried out another assault on the meeting-place of the *Club Monarchique* on 28 March. Clermont-Tonnerre later wrote to protest that the mob had been allowed to penetrate the building, breaking and stealing various objects, while 'la garde restée dans la maison a menacé plusieurs membres,

³⁶APP AA182:119, Section du Louvre. Once in La Force it was not long before the inconsequence of the matter was perceived - case AB322:1524, release ordered on 18 March.

³⁷APP AA206:147, Section de la Place-Vendôme.

³⁸See all journals for this period, some of which, predictably, were more sardonic about the daily reports of the royal motions and sputum than others.

³⁹See Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, pp.205-7.

⁴⁰*Courrier*, 21 March, and *Révolutions de Paris*, 19-26 March.

au lieu de les protéger.’⁴¹ Evidently not all the Guard could be accounted tools of counter-revolution. There seem to have been generally fewer reports of aristocratic goings-on as the spring wore on, although they did not disappear completely. On 4 April a *garde soldé* reported to the Place-Vendôme *commissaire* that he had been at the Hôtel de Ville at 11:45 the previous night, and had seen three men lurking in the shadows, keeping the sentry outside the entrance to the *état-major* under observation. They were ‘habillés en bourgeois et sans cocardes.’ But what had really ‘excité son inquiétude, c’est que . . . il les a reconnus pour être ci-devant officiers au Regiment des gardes françaises.’ They made off after seeing him go up to the sentry to alert him.⁴² On the theme of popular hostility to the authorities, similarly, it must be acknowledged that March and early April saw fewer day-to-day skirmishes recorded than the previous two months. However, what incidents there were once again seem to indicate an escalation in feelings. For example, on 4 April again, at Mirabeau’s funeral, the Guard was lining the route when a *tailleur d’habits* raised the cry ‘à bas les bayonnettes,’ which the charge said had ‘exposé ladite garde à se voir forcée par la foule des gens qui ont repeté le même propos.’⁴³ These sentiments would only gain in strength with the passage of time, and the relative lapse in apparent activity meanwhile did nothing to dampen concerns.

Early April saw a flare-up of another kind of suspicion linked to counter-revolution, illustrated by a letter published in the *Bouche de Fer* on 1 April from ‘S.G., Garde national’:

Les moindres choses sont importantes dans les révolutions, et je suis étonné que personne ne remarque ces *variantes* dans la couleur des cocardes nationales, signe sacré de ralliement auquel les patriotes ne devroient jamais se permettre d’altération.⁴⁴

The writer went on to report the subtle variations in colour and design of cockade he had seen ‘avec indignation’, and concluded that their wearers ‘me paroissent suspects; et qui nous assure que ces modifications ne sont pas des moyens de reconnaissance entre des ennemis de la chose publique?’

Whether as a result of reading this, or by his own independent inspiration, two days later the 38-year-old *domestique* Louis Jean Gobrou was to be found in the Jardin du Palais-Royal tearing off various peoples’ *cocardes*, crying ‘en voila encore un qui a une cocarde blanche du Club Monarchique’, while ‘enveloppé d’un cercle de femmes’ who seconded his efforts. Under questioning, he stated that among the crowd were some

⁴¹Lacroix, vol. 3, p.609, letter of 14 April to Municipality.

⁴²APP AA206:181.

⁴³APP AB323:202, released 6 April.

⁴⁴*Bouche de Fer*, no.37. This was an organ of the *Cercle Social*, whose political views we have already commented on.

qui portoient des cocardes fond blanc avec une petite ajoutée au milieu qui annonçoit dans ces cocardes une difference avec les cocardes nationales et que son but, ainsi que celui de plusieurs personnes qui étoient à ses cotes étoit de tâcher d'éviter par ce melange des atroupements de gens suspects.⁴⁵

This concern with the minutiae of visual symbolism was not confined to isolated paranoiacs. The registers of La Force show that it was not unknown for a person to be arrested 'à la clameur publique' and jailed 'comme suspect' for wearing a non-standard cockade, or for not wearing one at all - the Guard sentries around the Tuileries appear to have made a habit of arresting those their enquiries about missing cockades prompted into insults.⁴⁶

From the same period, a note from the minutes of the *Conseil général* of the Municipality indicates that one of the *instituteurs publics* present on 12 April to take the civic oath had tried to amend its wording. 'Improbation générale' followed, and 'la rumeur s'est encore accrue lorsqu'on a remarqué que ce particulier, revêtu d'un habit de garde nationale, portait des boutons différents de ceux de l'uniforme parisienne.' Thanks to this, he was detained and questioned personally by Bailly. The detail of his uniform seems to have absorbed concerns to the exclusion of any mention of the act which had first drawn attention to him. The difference arose, he said, 'parce qu'il avait acheté son uniforme de hasard et que sa fortune ne lui avait pas permis de substituer d'autres boutons . . .' His release, however, rested on three active citizens from his Section who were found to vouch for him.⁴⁷ Lacroix recorded this episode as an 'incident bizarre', but it clearly fits into the pattern of excessive suspicion that enveloped Parisian life. Having now observed how this pattern coalesced around the general dread of counter-revolutionary activity, we shall pass on in the next section to a closer look at its effects on, and the reinforcement it gained from, the issue of clerical resistance to the Civil Constitution.

5.2 - THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY IN DISORDER

The level of local tension aroused by the potential and actual resistance of the clergy is evident from the records of several Sections. One of the richest in this regard, possessing both a non-juring *curé* and a particularly diligent *commissaire de police*, is the Section du Palais-Royal and its parish of St-Roch. The

⁴⁵APP AA83:54, Section du Palais-Royal, 3 April, 5:30 p.m.

⁴⁶See APP AB322:1300, a 19-year-old arrested by the Bastille labourers for wearing a red cockade (21 February, released 1 March); AB323:387, an unemployed *garçon marchand de vin* wearing a yellow and black cockade (19 April, *reclamé* 21 April); AB322:1478, two men, including the *secrétaire au comité colonial*, arrested for insulting the sentry (12 March, released 14 and 15 March); and AB322:1522, a *domestique* detained for the same offence (16 March, *reclamé* 18 March.)

⁴⁷Lacroix, vol. 3, p.543.

record shows that trouble was expected generally at the time of the oath-taking, as can be seen on 14 January, when Toublanc, the *commissaire de police*, received a circular from the municipal *Département de Police* which he annotated as an 'invitation relative aux installations des prêtres.' This document was a repeat of one issued on the 9th, without the clarifying note added. It requested the *commissaire* to make a patrol outside the local *hôtels garnis* on the following Saturday night to watch for 'mouvements extraordinaires,' and to remain at home ready to take action on the Sunday morning. On both occasions, Toublanc made the patrol and found nothing amiss.⁴⁸ Clearly, the municipal administration was anticipating the use of the 'floating population' to stir trouble at the oath-taking ceremonies, in the classic association of plot and *populace*.

However, the first signs of trouble elsewhere came from another direction - on 9 January an angry congregation of patriotic citizens had forced the Guard to hide a priest in the *salle des mariages* of St-Germain-l'Auxerrois (Section du Louvre) after his sermon had appeared 'comme contraire aux principes que tous les bons citoyens doivent avoir d'après les décrets de l'Assemblée nationale.' It is unclear just what he had said wrong, since he claimed to be going to take the oath that Sunday, and the text he was reading from appeared innocent to the *commissaire*.⁴⁹

Back in Toublanc's Section we find the curé himself provoking disorder. On the evening of 18 January he interrupted a baptismal ceremony in the church of St-Roch, taking over from the officiating priest at the font. This might have passed off quietly had the sectional *assemblée générale* not been in session in the main body of the church. The presence of a considerable number of people created a situation that hovered on the brink of danger, as one Jean Louis Thouvenin, *marchand ébéniste*, testified:

. . . qu'étant dans l'assemblée générale il a entendu un grand bruit du côté de la chapelle des fonds Baptismaux de ladite église qu'il y a été au moment où le trouble s'étoit accru considérablement qu'il a percé la foule et est parvenu jusque près de M. le curé qui célébroit la cérémonie du sacrement de baptême que le croyant en danger il l'a invité comme les autres bons citoyens à cesser, que M. le curé a cessé . . . que lui déclarant a aidé à protéger M. le curé jusque chez lui.⁵⁰

Another priest was found to finish the service, and Toublanc was summoned afterwards to take down this and other accounts. There is no clear record here of the exact nature of the 'trouble,' whether a portion of the Assembly made itself menacing, or whether word spread to the surrounding streets and a crowd gathered. There was clearly, however, a rapid angry response to the curé's presence. We may

⁴⁸APP AA82:60, 48, 93, 111, 115.

⁴⁹APP AA182:24.

⁵⁰APP AA82:126.

presume, since the 'bons citoyens' led him to safety, that the trouble came from less respectable elements. As we have noted, 'respectable' people at this time viewed all agitation as seditious, regardless of its political content. The angry popular resistance to the curé was liable, in this incident and later, to be re-interpreted as trouble created by the priests for their own dark purposes.

The curé of St-Roch was one Claude Marduel, and he was in the process of becoming one of the more famous refractories of the capital. Gorsas in particular retailed news of his doings, in an unfavourable manner, delving also into his past to allege that he had only obtained the living originally by fraud and influence - there had been 'un procès fameux à cet égard,' he intimated on 2 March. Ironically, however, Marduel would not be put out of a job until April, as the Assembly was forced to ask refractories to continue in their functions until replacements could be found.

Not everyone viewed the situation with such equanimity, and the furore over the oath was such that any hint of unusual behaviour concerned with religion became suspicious. On 25 January a former *procureur au Châtelet* felt it was worth reporting to the *commissaire de police* of the Section du Louvre that 'petites croix' were on sale in the rue des Arcis, and that 'ces debits et achats peuvent annoncer quelque chose de dangereux.' One of the merchants confirmed 'qu'il en vendait beaucoup depuis plusieurs jours et même par douzaine.'⁵¹

On 6 February a man was arrested for shouting during the sermon in St-Roch, and a *bédeau* testified that he had been frequently there in the past weeks, harassing the 'prêtres assermentés' and loud in his praise for Marduel. He was Joseph Augustin Guerin, 36 years old 'mendiant et n'ayant jamais eu d'autre état,' having crippled his left hand in a fire at the age of ten months. He was lodged on the rue du Faubourg Montmartre, having arrived from Lorraine on 10 December. His statement is both vague and unclear, and his action seems on this occasion to have been a protest against the fact that the priest was reading his text rather than speaking from memory. He was sent to La Force prison, where it is noted that he was sent on to the Hôtel-Dieu for treatment, thence to be deported home.⁵² Was he just a demented beggar with a distrust for the written word, or had someone paid him to cause trouble? The Revolutionary authorities gave him the benefit of the doubt, but within a month Gorsas would be alleging that Marduel

⁵¹APP AA182:54.

⁵²APP AA82:215; AB322:1111. Guerin was arrested again on 21 June, in the Section des Enfants-Rouges, 'pour avoir, étant au coin de la rue des Filles-Dieu, tenu des discours tendantes à troubler l'ordre publique. . .' The register went on, 'Par l'interrogation il paroît que ce particulier a la tête exaltée,' but rather than refer him to the Hôtel-Dieu again, he was simply released on 27 June, again with a *passport*. (APP AB323:1229)

was making such payments.

In the third week of February religious issues again caused a flare-up of anxiety over counter-revolution, coinciding with the popular agitation over the King's aunts' departure for Rome. On 20 February the curé of St-Philippe-du-Roule read from the pulpit a pastoral letter from the Archbishop of Paris which effectively argued against the validity of the clerical oath. Over the next few days copies of the text appeared around the city, distributed by people like Marie Françoise Leclerc, *maîtresse d'école* in the Luxembourg Section, arrested on the 20th for handing out these 'imprimés incendiaires.' One of her pupils testified that she had said several times to her class 'que si l'on recevoit la première communion des nouveaux prêtres on seroit damné,' while another said she had seen Leclerc receiving the pamphlets from a priest of St-Sulpice.⁵³ This and later incidents make it clear that the refractories did have a *parti* at their disposal, although women such as Leclerc probably acted out of religious rather than political motives - difficult as that distinction may have been for most Parisians to perceive.

In the Section du Palais-Royal, meanwhile, Toublanc took a declaration on 26 February from Jean-Baptiste Suret, *dessinateur*, who had taken three days to decide to testify as follows:

. . . que mercredy matin 23 du présent mois s'est présenté chez le sieur Billard marchand limonadier où lui déclarant était à lire les papiers publics une femme qu'il ne connoit pas et qui venoit chercher du caffè qui dit à la maitresse de la maison madame Billard voulez-vous donner votre signature pour demander que votre nouveau cure ne soit pas reçu, que la dame Billard lui a répondu qu'elle ne se mêloit pas de celà que cependant ladite femme a fait voir un papier de la grandeur du papier à memoire sur lequel il y avoit environ 20 signatures au pied d'un invitation aux bons citoyens de signer pour que leur curé reste, que lesr. Billard a pris ce papier qu'il a pris une plume que son épouse lui a demandé ce qu'il alloit faire, et que lesr. Billard a dit qu'il alloit signer pour que l'ancien curé [i.e. Marduel] s'en aille que la femme qui portait ledit papier voyant les plaisanteries qui lui étoient faites elle a changé de ton en disant que c'étoit un papier qu'elle avoit pris aux Bigottes pour leur jouer le tour de les en priver, que son caffè lui ayant été servi elle s'est en allé . . .⁵⁴

There is no more than this, so we can only hypothesise as to the woman's identity and the authors of the petition. The *bigottes* were probably bourgeois or even artisanal *dévotes* of the parish, since the whole thing seems to have been female-oriented - the woman offered the petition to the Dame Billard rather than to the customers. From her behaviour it seems likely she had been paid for her services, but did not herself care much about the project - unless she was an expert at dissembling, but the situation was not yet so tense that a partisan of the curé might not have dared argue back. At this point, Gorsas was accusing the clergy of mobilising prostitutes in their favour - an unlikely alliance, but an accusation well-

⁵³APP AB322:1266. Leclerc was sent before the Police Tribunal, but no sentence is recorded here.

⁵⁴APP AA82:295.

suites to the moment.⁵⁵ The café-owner may have turned this incident into a joke, but that a citizen should report it, and the *commissaire* file it, reflects again the uncertain atmosphere of the city. As usual, journalists like Gorsas only contributed to this. On 2 March he embroidered this petition for Marduel into an allegation that the curé 'fait distribuer trois livres à chaque personne, brigands ou autres, pour obtenir des signatures.' He went on to list a *bourgeoise*, a *mercière* and a *marchande de modes* who were acting as his agents - information that was probably accurate, but it is doubtful whether those women saw themselves as agents of a conspiracy.⁵⁶

The capital's tensions over the clergy thus clearly remained, despite the general decline in counter-revolution that was perceived after 28 February. They are reflected in a letter from the *Procureur de la Commune* to all *commissaires de police* on 18 March:

On m'a assuré, Monsieur, que demain matin dès avant six heures peut-être, il doit se faire dans une ou plusieurs Eglises de Paris qu'on indique pas affirmativement, une cérémonie qui exige la présence d'un évêque; qui ne se fait communément que dans les églises cathédrales ou dans celles des Séminaires et qu'il est de l'intérêt public d'empêcher.⁵⁷

Hence all *commissaires* were advised to take all possible measures to prevent such ceremonies taking place, and further to hold curés personally responsible for any illicit usage made of their churches. Toublanc found nothing to note in his parish, and we have no indication from other *commissaires* of any secret ceremonies being discovered. The wording of the warning suggests that the *procureur* was fearful of illicit ordinations, but there is no other evidence of such concerns.⁵⁸

On the same day, however, Martin Sylvestre Boulard, 'imprimeur-libraire de la commune de la section du Palais-Royal,' testified as to the shocking action he had discovered in the church of St-Roch, where the names of the confessors were habitually posted:

. . . on avoit supprimé avec une affectation scandaleuse, et couvert ou d'un papier blanc, ou d'un autre nom, celui de tous les prêtres qui ont prêté le serment civique, ce qui ne peut être un effet de la malveillance de quelque particulier, puisque les susdits tableaux, au nombre de trois au moins, sont recouverts d'un verre, et attachés assez haut, pour qu'on ne puisse y atteindre facilement. J'ai remarqué en outre, que les verres et les cadres étoient fraîchement nettoyés, ce qui indique un dessein prémédité de faire injure à ceux qui ont donné des preuves de Patriotisme.⁵⁹

It would certainly seem that way, and the Section committee went *en masse* to note the alteration -

⁵⁵*Courrier*, 26 February, commenting on the demonstration of the 24th at the Tuileries - 'pour la plupart des fonctionnaires publics de la rue St-Honoré . . . aux gages des fonctionnaires publics non-assermentés.'

⁵⁶*ibid.* 2 March. On 13 March Gorsas alleged that Marduel was plotting to attack the new curé, using 300 children from the *écoles chrétiennes*.

⁵⁷APP AA82:436.

⁵⁸Lacroix, vol. 3, p.197, notes the sending of the circular, but cannot clarify its subject.

⁵⁹APP AA82:438.

which was only four defaced names of twenty-seven, indicating something of the scale of non-juring. However, they chose to take no action, a laxity rewarded two days later by a minor riot when a full congregation noticed the changes, ending by smashing at least one of the glass plates.⁶⁰ At a service later on that day, there were complaints that the text chosen for the sermon was clearly designed to reflect negatively on the issue of the oath. Four parishioners recorded their protest, while a fellow-priest backed up the *prédicateur* in his plea of innocence. Toublanc obviously found the theological question beyond his scope, and referred it to the *Département de Police*, who took no observable action, as they had not done in the Section du Louvre in January.⁶¹

The resistance of the clergy, meanwhile, continued, entering a new phase as replacements for the refractory curés had finally been found. On 3 April, a priest complained that, acting on the instructions of the new curé, M. Legrand, he had tried to gain access to the church of the Convent of Ste-Anne in the Section du Palais-Royal, where he was to catechise a group of children. The Superior of the convent had refused to admit him, saying she recognised no other curé but M. Marduel. Two lay witnesses confirmed her words. *Commissaire* Toublanc went to the convent on rue neuve St-Roch, to find there that word had spread and ‘il y avoit un grand atroupement de personnes de l’un et de l’autre sexe’ in front of the doors, which he managed to partially disperse before knocking. He spoke to the Superior, who went into a long explanation of how the convent had no obligation to lend its church for the catechism, but had done so for the last twelve years on the request of M. Marduel, and that it was no longer possible for them to do so. She felt bound by her conscience to admit that she could not bring herself to recognise the new curé, but nonetheless she had ‘depuis longtemps’ asked his predecessor to find a new site for the catechism. That was that, as far as the issue of the church went, but meanwhile outside the trouble had been growing, fomented by some suspicious bedding that had been thrown from a window. Toublanc investigated, and found two women, guests in the convent, who had done it ‘par suite de la frayeur qu’elles avoient eu en voyant augmenter le trouble dans la rue, ayant l’intention de sortir et sauter par ladite fenêtre étant à la hauteur d’environ 10 à 12 pieds.’ This ends the *procès-verbal*, and we must assume the crowd was pacified, or drifted away.⁶²

It is worth noting what Gorsas reported of this incident on 6 April. He described how the enraged

⁶⁰APP AA82:452.

⁶¹APP AA82:455.

⁶²APP AA83:52.

parents battered down the door of the convent after the first refusal to admit the priest, and seized two nuns who tried to resist - 'leurs vêtements résistent moins que les portes, et des mains vigoureuses s'appliquent à plusieurs reprises sur leurs fesses anti-constitutionnelles. On les chasse après cette bienfaisante et publique correction.' This is a far cry from the rather dignified exchange Toublanc noted, and such reports, whether journalistic malice or the uncritical acceptance of café gossip, no doubt contributed to a slide towards real violence that followed.

On 6 April, the authorities of this Section were again confronted by clerical stonewalling. At 11 a.m., a deputation of six named and various unnamed 'voisins et paroissiens' came to the *comité de section* to complain that the 'frères des écoles Chrétiennes', contrary to the normal usage, had sent their children home from classes that morning without taking them to Mass. The President of the *comité* himself summoned the monks to offer an explanation, and seven of the eight brothers arrived, the last being occupied with his 'fonctions.' Brother Boniface, their Superior, explained:

... que croyant leur conscience engagée et voulant la conserver dans toute sa pureté, ils avoient arrêté unanimement de ne point conduire les enfants confiés à leurs soins aux offices qui seroient célébrés soit par M. le curé actuel soit par ses vicaires, ne reconnoissant d'autre pasteur deladitte paroisse que M. Marduel et les prêtres délégués par lui.

All the President could do was send a copy of this to the Mayor, as Toublanc could only inform the *Département de Police* when the next day the servants of the Marquise de Vibraye were found emptying a chapel inside St-Roch of furniture she had provided, once the lady had proved this with an 'état des effets' dating from 1763. The day after this, the *commissaire* of the Section de la Place-Vendôme recorded that the *Frères des écoles chrétiennes* of the Madeleine parish had disappeared overnight.⁶³

Incidents such as these seem to have been taking place across the city, and by 7 April, no doubt aided by the inflammatory press coverage, they had raised tensions to the level at which open violence was committed. Lacroix notes the report in a sober journal of a rampage by women in the rue St-Antoine, breaking into several *communautés* of nuns and leaving their occupants 'charitablement fustigées.'⁶⁴ The Municipality at once banned gatherings in front of ecclesiastical buildings and ordered the Guard to defend religious property and personnel. In its passage through the bureaucracy this became an order to religious communities to close their churches 'pour ne laisser aucun pretexte aux contraventions des Ecclesiastiques et aux Excès du peuple,' as *commissaires de police* were told by a letter on 8 April ordering its

⁶³APP AA83:66, 77; AA206:185.

⁶⁴Lacroix, vol. 3, p.475.

enforcement. This measure was officially confirmed by the Municipality on 14 April.⁶⁵

The growing confidence of the refractories, sure now of papal support and the sympathy of the King, may well have provoked this disorder, as it was widely believed they were now concentrating their efforts on corrupting the young in convent-schools. The public caning of nuns combined a violent and painful assault with a heavily symbolic chastisement, and such measures had the less sober of the Parisian patriots in a frenzy of titillated glee - pamphleteers went to town on the theme of *culs*.⁶⁶ This episode evidently entered the popular consciousness, as on 17 April two nuns who refused to donate a pick to a man for use on the *travaux publics* were threatened that he would 'les faire fouetter comme les autres.'⁶⁷ Although it seems to have been a brief explosion, fears of its repetition lingered, and on 27 April an order came to Toubanc from the *mairie* to watch over the 'soeurs de la charité' of St-Roch, who were threatened with being 'insulté' by persons unknown. Evidently Toubanc did so successfully, as his laconic note reads 'Tranquil.'⁶⁸ The attacks, it should be noted, were no light matter. On 7 May the Municipality approved funds to hospitalise two nuns 'tombées en démence, vraisemblablement par le frayeur que leur ont causée les mauvais traitements du peuple.'⁶⁹

Meanwhile, however, on Easter Day, 17 April, a congregation of the refractories' supporters who had hired the church of the Théatins monastery on the Left Bank for a service were attacked and driven out by a large crowd.⁷⁰ This incident, not widely reported in a press caught up with the King's paschal affairs, seems to have been an unqualified victory for the crowd, which broke up the mainly female congregation, assaulted some of the women, and hung a placard announcing their triumph over the door of the church. They then remained in possession of the conquered ground for the rest of the day, twice forcing the replacement of the sign, the second time after its removal on municipal orders.⁷¹

At this point, the King's choice of a refractory priest for his Easter communion would help to shift the focus of Parisian agitation onto secular affairs, but the religious issue did not die away completely. The months from January to April had seen the refractories steadily defeated in a war of attrition, pushed

⁶⁵APP AA83:82, and Lacroix, vol. 3, pp.475, 565.

⁶⁶Lacroix notes that lists of alleged victims of the attacks ran to over 300 - all 'pure fantaisie.' (*ibid*, p.481.)

⁶⁷APP AB323:334, Section des Thermes-de-Julien. He was released on 22 April.

⁶⁸APP AA83:196.

⁶⁹Lacroix, vol. 4, p.159.

⁷⁰*ibid*, vol. 3, p.622.

⁷¹See BN 8-Ld4-7094, a sympathetic and somewhat hyperbolic account, but one to which Lacroix gives credence.

back from defiant repudiation of the clerical oath to attempts to hold on to their jobs, then to petty resistance to the new priests and retreat to the interior of religious houses, finally into a vain attempt to worship openly apart from the new order. Nor was there to be any let-up in the control over priests. In late May the authorities of Section de la Bonne-Nouvelle faced disorders when they were ordered to amalgamate their parish with that of St-Sauveur. On 16 May female parishioners 'suspendues aux cordes des cloches' reportedly caused mayhem as they resisted attempts to remove the parochial regalia to its new home.⁷² On 22 May the *commissaire de police* hurried to the church to find 'un grand rassemblement de femmes et de quelques citoyens' being addressed by the priest, the abbé de Damalix. Some two to three hundred women were present, along with about a dozen men, as Damalix said

que dans les decrets de l'assemblée nationale il y en avoit qui étoient reconnus mauvais et que comme les Ennemis du Bien public cherchoient à égärer le peuple sur ses vrais intérêts il proposait à cette assemblée de se réunir tous les dimanches issu de l'office en assemblée elementaire de citoyens pour leur expliquer les decrets.

We may note that the language of this statement is perfectly consistent with revolutionary discourse, but its implied content, and context, made it highly suspicious. After this proposal had been warmly applauded, some of the women began to voice complaints that the administrators of the parish, one of whom was a Section *commissaire* present, had not done enough to resist its demise. Before this could turn ugly, the *commissaire de police* persuaded Damalix to close the meeting and leave. The next week, armed with a municipal *ordonnance* prohibiting these meetings, the *commissaire* went to the church with a Guard detachment and detained the priest in front of some 250 women who had again gathered to hear him. This arrest shows how determined the authorities had become by this time to contain dissent with a religious basis, as well as hinting at their fear of unruly women - 'cette assemblée n'étant composée presque en totalité que de femmes' had had equal place with the unconstitutional words of the priest as reason to prohibit it.⁷³ Damalix was detained until the *procureur de la commune* had examined his case, then released on his own recognisance, although reported to the *accusateur public* 'comme perturbateur du repos public.' This decision had twice involved the *Corps municipal*, showing the strength of concern over this issue.⁷⁴

It would seem that Damalix's enemies were not only the authorities. On 2 May two men had been

⁷²See *Feuille du Jour*, 19 May 1791.

⁷³APP AA76:7, 8-13; 22 and 29 May 1791.

⁷⁴See Lacroix, vol. 4, pp.437, 466; *Corps municipal* sessions, 30 May and 1 June. Although recording these decisions, Lacroix was ignorant of Damalix's identity and offence.

arrested 'pour avoir ameuté le public devant le presbitère du cy-devant curé de Bonne-Nouvelle et cherché à faire audit curé un mauvais parti en disant que c'étoit un gueux, un gredin et qu'il falloit le pendre.' Once again, the authorities had been firm, and the second man was also marked down 'pour avoir excité ce même peuple contre une patrouille qui venoit pour rétablir l'ordre en disant qu'elle alloit tirer sur le peuple.' This latter offence sufficed to earn him a one-month prison sentence while the other man was released three days later.⁷⁵

Much of the evidence we have looked at suggests that popular hostility to the refractories was a significant feature in their defeat, although as this incident, and *commissaire* Toub Blanc's peregrinations, demonstrate, the authorities were anxious to prevent the expression of this hostility. This may be due in part to the kind of responses that emerged when a crowd again broke up a Thératins congregation on Ascension Day, 2 June. Although the Municipality had refused the congregation any special protection, the general press reaction was to blame the refractories themselves, suggesting that the disturbance had been arranged to add force to abbé Raynal's polemic against the Revolution delivered in the National Assembly on 31 May.⁷⁶ Once again we are faced with the consequences of a 'triangular' political field. Two men were arrested in the course of this disturbance, one of whom was later convicted of having shouted, 'Il faut pendre les chasseurs, pendons les chasseurs. Il faut désarmer les grenadiers et leur donner les coups de bayonnettes. Les gardes nationales sont des traitres, ils protègent les aristocrates.' His sentence, perhaps coloured by being passed in the aftermath of the Champ de Mars repression, was firstly to make *amende honorable* with a sign saying 'violateur de la loi, et insultant la garde nationale,' then, for a crime of mere words, to be flogged, branded, and sent to the galleys for nine years.⁷⁷ Whatever else occupied their minds, the revolutionary authorities were determined to enforce respect for the National Guard amongst the people. That is not to say, however, as the following chapters will show, that the relationship of the Guard to authority was entirely unproblematic.

⁷⁵APP AB323:562 and 564. The released man was a *travaux publics* worker, no *état* is recorded for the other.

⁷⁶See Lacroix, vol. 4, pp.473-7.

⁷⁷APP AB323:1001, 5 June [?] Section des Quatre-Nations. The sentence is reported by the *Feuille du Jour*, 6 August. The man was François Paré, a *garçon sellier*, who may not have been entirely sober at the time of his outburst.

CHAPTER 6 - FROM ARISTOCRACY TO SEDITION: THE SHIFT IN SOCIAL TENSIONS, APRIL-JUNE 1791

Events at Easter were to further expose the fault-lines in the constitutional settlement, and would help to turn radical attitudes to the authorities from muted hostility to outright opposition. This process, as it impinged upon the people, was exacerbated by the city's economic difficulties, raising the spectre of famine-plot through accusations of official collusion in currency speculation, and by a series of clashes over the control of work-practices, which set official *laissez-faire* on the side of former masters, while workers claimed that revolutionary justice and the *droits de l'homme* backed their arguments for regulations and collective bargaining. Outbursts from the population suggested a similar attitude, despite a continuing crackdown in the name of social order, as both indigence and alleged sedition grew through May and June, and attitudes hardened among both moderates and radicals.

6.1 - THE EASTER CRISIS

On Easter Sunday, 17 April 1791, perhaps at the very moment that *dévotes* were being whipped out of the church of the Théatins, Louis XVI gave in to his spiritual conscience. Rejecting the political option of receiving paschal communion from a constitutional priest, he took the course he felt was dictated by religion, and was served by a refractory. One of the *grenadiers soldés* on duty in the church was outraged at this, and felt bound by patriotic duty to spread this sentiment. Concern and rumour fermented overnight, especially as the King was due to leave the capital the next day for his summer residence at St-Cloud. When he attempted to leave the Tuileries by carriage with his family on Monday, the *Moniteur* reported the result in euphemistic style:

Un grand nombre de citoyens l'entourèrent et lui représentèrent que, dans la circonstance actuelle, on le voyait avec peine s'éloigner de Paris. Le roi, ne voulant pas augmenter les inquiétudes que son

départ occasionnait, a consenti à le retarder pour quelques jours.¹

Many people can have had little doubt but that this trip was intended to be the first stage of a longer flight. Gorsas reported on the 20th that Louis had been bound 'malgré lui' for Rouen and a royalist army. Not only did the crowd blockade the royal convoy, but the National Guard on duty, and some of the reinforcements rushed in, stood with them. A *volontaire* from the Bataillon des Carmes later told the Cordeliers Club how officers from the *état-major* had harangued them:

Nous entendons cette poignée d'individus provoquer les horreurs du carnage et un massacre universel: ils continuent de nous menacer; mais nous jurons fermement qu'il faut fouler nos corps avant que nos âmes cèdent et que nous abandonnons un homme au gré d'un caprice qui expose le salut de la patrie.²

Swords waved in the troops' faces had no effect, nor did the later presence of both Lafayette and Bailly.

The next two weeks saw the fervour previously directed at the refractories turned on secular politics. Lafayette tendered his resignation within days, since he could no longer, he said, command obedience. Gorsas noted that 'le bruit court . . . que le départ du Roi n'a été qu'un jeu concerté, et la démission de M. de la Fayette la suite d'un plan,' all designed to lead up to a massacre.³ The majority of the Guard rallied to their General, not only persuading him to withdraw his resignation with a mass-meeting at the Hôtel de Ville on the 24th, but also circulating a pledge of loyalty that was signed by thousands. Radical opinion was outraged, firstly since it asserted that Lafayette's reappointment was constitutionally a matter for the Section assemblies, and secondly by the display of slavish and aristocratic spirit involved in this oath. The *Révolutions de Paris* was forthright - 'les Sections seules . . . avoient le droit' to reappoint the General, 'il est donc criminel de lèse-nation.' The implications were clear:

Dans son système, visiblement combiné avec celui de la cour, il importe que les soldats citoyens subissent le même joug que les troupes de ligne, et obeissent sans raisonner. Comment faire pour les amener à ce point? Profiter de l'engouement encore assez universel, et exiger, comme une condition de sa rentrée, le serment de fidélité aveugle à ses ordres.⁴

We can see here new permutations of the alarm over 'military aristocracy' that had dogged the Guard since its formation. Ordinary people spoke out, such as Jean Louis Jupin, a *domestique sans condition* arrested on 23 April

pour, par ses improbations à ce que le Bataillon presta le serment d'obéir à M Delafayette et avoir dit qu'il ne falloit lui obéir que quand il commanderoit bien, avoir cherché à mettre le désordre parmi le peuple en lui faisant partager ses sentiments.⁵

¹*Moniteur*, 19 April 1791.

²Lacroix, vol. 3, pp.631-2.

³*Courrier*, 22 April.

⁴*Révolutions de Paris*, 23-30 April.

⁵APP AB323:423, Section des Arcis, released as *reclamé* 27 April.

More bluntly, a *garçon vitrier sans ouvrage* employed in the public works attacked the sergeant-major of the Notre-Dame Battalion on the same day, tearing off his epaulettes - decorations commonly used as a metonym for military authority in press and public comments.⁶ The majority of the Guard evidently rallied rapidly to the defence of order, but seeds of political doubt had been sown with some, which would re-emerge in the harsher conflict of July.

Immediately after the Easter events, the Cordeliers had led the radical attack, first turning on the King. They published an *arrêté* in unprecedentedly strong language, condemning 'le premier fonctionnaire de l'état,' accusing him of authorising rebellion and provoking civil war, and denouncing him in the face of the Nation. The publicity this text received was remarkable, not only did the Club have it plastered across the city, but it would seem that a number of publishers seized on it, reprinting it with accompanying texts, some of which were genuine comments, others a specious cover for this piracy.⁷ Most reported Lafayette's resignation in tandem with the Cordeliers' proclamation, as the two items of news seem to have burst upon the Parisians on the same day, 21 April. That tempers were inflamed on both sides of these issues is clear from one incident in the Section de la Place-Vendôme that day.

Groups of people were reading the freshly-applied Cordeliers' *affiches* near to the Madeleine guardhouse when the sergeant on duty attempted to disperse them and take down the incendiary material. He claimed that a *domestique* had then 'ameuté le peuple contre lui en le traitant de mouchard de M. delafayette [and said] qu'il falloit mettre [the sergeant] à la lanterne.' As two other Guards would testify, these words endangered the sergeant, who retreated to the guardhouse and gathered men to arrest the culprit.⁸

This man was François Geoffrenet, 48, who worked for the former Genevan chargé d'affaires. His version of events was rather different:

Sortant ce matin vers huit heures du marché d'aguesseau il a vu un groupe de monde . . . [he approached] . . . il a entendu tout le monde se plaindre de ce qu'un particulier en redingotte avait arraché une affiche du Club des Cordeliers qu'il leur a montré comme étant incendiaire. Que voyant tout le monde échauffé contre lui, [Geoffrenet] s'est approché et lui a dit qu'il falloit qu'il ne connut pas les droits de l'homme et du citoyen d'après l'infraction illegale qu'il commettoit, qu'il ne pouvait y avoir qu'un mouchard qui puisse faire une pareille action.

⁶APP AB323:427, Section de Notre-Dame, released 27 April.

⁷There are two versions in the Bibliothèque Nationale, 8-Lb39-4867 and 4868, and another in the British Library, F.R. 118(19). Also, at APP AA83:166 is a text identical to BN 8-Lb39-4867, with a slightly altered title, seized on a sixteen-year-old *colporteur* in the Palais-Royal on 21 April. This in particular is a very 'rough' production, untrimmed and smudged, apparently printed from worn type. These two texts preface the Cordeliers' document with a spurious account of Lafayette's resignation and subsequent transatlantic flight to the arms of his 'papa Waxingthon.'

⁸APP AA206:217-9.

The *commissaire* ignored this version of events, notably that the sergeant had been in civilian dress ('en redingotte'), which would perhaps have modified Geoffrenet's approach to him, and the latter's denial of any incitements to violence. He pounced on his admission of a link to the Cordeliers - 'il n'en est pas membre, mais par suite de son patriotisme il y a ses entrées' - and interrogated him about the origins of the *affiche*. The case was taken very seriously, Geoffrenet was led to the Police Department and then into La Force, where his dossier was forwarded to the public prosecutor. The Section du Théâtre-Français officially protested against this arbitrary oppression, and complained to the Jacobin Club, to no evident effect.⁹

The *Société fraternelle* that shared the Jacobins' quarters was meanwhile voicing its own opinions on recent events. After 18 April, the Directory of the Department of Paris had published two addresses, one to the King and one to the people of the city. The *Société* commented:

La Société fraternelle, ayant entendu la lecture d'une adresse au roi présentée par les administrateurs . . . , a applaudi au zèle et à la fermeté avec laquelle les mandataires d'un peuple libre ont parlé au roi des Français. Mais quelle a été la surprise de la Société à la lecture d'un arrêté du département affiché cejourd'hui, arrêté dans lequel ce même corps administratif semble reprocher aux Français qui habitent Paris des craintes exagérées ou mensongères! Si nos craintes étaient exagérées ou mensongères avant-hier, celles que vous avez portées au roi le lendemain sur le même sujet l'étaient donc aussi! . . .

We can see once again in the interchanges revealed here the difficult double position of the authorities. As revolutionaries themselves, they were fearful of the possibility of aristocratic plots and the flight of the King, but they still viewed the *peuple* as a body prone to panic and to primitive reactions, and of course to subornation, fit only to be lectured to and ordered around. The advanced patriots had quite different ideas. They had no particular reason to trust the authorities, whose behaviour was often questionable, whereas the people, in their idealised view, had solid revolutionary credentials. As the *Société fraternelle* went on in the same pamphlet to observe:

. . . quand le peuple de Paris a attaqué la Bastille, il n'avait pas reçu des pouvoirs du reste des Français: il a marché en avant, il a vaincu, et il n'a pas été désavoué . . . Les pouvoirs qui nous ont été donné implicitement pour conquérir la liberté nous sont donnés très positivement pour la conserver, et nous serons très fidèles à ces mandats.¹⁰

The events of the following days begin to show a pattern of attitudes that would intensify through the months to come, as ordinary people confronted the compromises inherent in the stance of the authorities, who responded with unhesitating repression. Such repression did not even need a political

⁹See APP AB323:403, and Lacroix, vol. 3, p.717. The *affiche* itself was briefly the subject of a referral to the prosecutor by the *Corps municipal*, but the full *Conseil municipal* quashed this a few days later. (*ibid.* pp.706, 719.)

¹⁰*Observations sur la journée du 18 Avril*, in Lacroix, vol. 3, pp.641-3.

statement to set it off. In the Section de Beaubourg on 23 April the Guard were clearly taking no chances, arresting one man 'pour avoir, par son ivresse et le ridicule de sa phisionomie qu'il s'étoit noircie, amassé une foule du monde qui auroit pu devenir dangereuse.'¹¹ Meanwhile, one of Lafayette's aides-de-camp caused a scuffle in the Palais-Royal by seizing incendiary material from a *colporteur*. Following the arrest of a man who threatened the officer with a stool, another man caused a disturbance by following the Guard and saying that 'il ne faut pas le maltraiter.' He was also seized, and severely dressed-down by the *commissaire* when he turned out to be an active citizen - it was 'étonnant' that he should stir up discontent against the Guard 'dans un moment où tous les esprits sont en fermentation.' His rather acid response was to recall that the Guard had handled him 'avec beaucoup de brutalité' and dragged him into the guardhouse.¹²

At first sight it appears curious in this context that the first arrested man, another *colporteur*, when questioned should observe that seizing material such as the 'Ami et Orateur du Peuple' was done 'avec grande raison.' He went on to claim, however, that he could show them others 'aussi dangereux, tels que ceux intitulés D'orléans ne regnera pas, La lettre de Mr Laclos à Mr D'orléans, à toi même Laclos, Régicide D'orléans, et enfin celui intitulé seulement D'orléans.' Some of these very publications were reported by the *Journal* of the *Club Monarchique* as being burnt on consecutive days by *colporteurs* belonging to pro- and anti-Orléans *partis*. Events of this kind would no doubt appeal to the *monarchiens'* image of the Revolution as *complot*, but declarations such as this one seem to show a more complex awareness even at the level of a humble street-vendor.¹³

Publications such as the list above were nonetheless part of an ongoing flow of material dedicated to the thesis that the duc d'Orléans was behind every new crisis of the Revolution - at this point one pamphlet had already blamed the 18 April *journée* on a signal from the Palais-Royal fountains, coinciding with the Cordeliers' *arrêté*, which in reality was several days later.¹⁴ Respectable right-leaning newspapers such as the *Feuille du Jour* mentioned such things as the tale about the fountains without seeming to give them entire credence - 'on assure que ce signal est celui qui rallie les séditeux.' The

¹¹APP AB323:425, the man was a worker on the *travaux publics*, and was released on 27 April.

¹²APP AA83:184.

¹³*Journal de la Société des Amis de la Constitution Monarchique*, no. 20, 30 April 1791. The exact pamphlets reported burnt were Marat and Martel (Fréron's cover-name), and 'Non, D'orléans, tu ne regnera pas' and 'à toi-même Laclos.'

¹⁴BN 8-Lb39-4828. The British Library has a pamphlet collection on d'Orléans, the vast majority hostile, running into hundreds - see BL F.255-263.

same journal, however, made dark hints in this direction when explaining unrest over a municipal decision on 26 April to cashier a company of *grenadiers soldés* - the company of the sixth Division, quartered at the Oratoire - for their disobedience on the 18th. 'Des groupes instruits par les moteurs infâmes des troubles qui nous agitent' were using the opportunity to pour scorn on Lafayette for this supposed assault on liberty, it reported. Even when the Duke seemed to be in public disfavour, this was grist to the mill, as on 2 May - 'Nous prévenons M. d'Orléans . . . que ses agens négligent d'entretenir le public dans de bonnes dispositions pour lui.'¹⁵

Amid this maelstrom of event and comment, the authorities continued to strive for order. On 26 April the Municipality and the departmental Directory addressed a joint plea to the National Assembly, asking for urgent action to complete and implement the new penal code, and to regulate the right of petition and the freedom of the press. Their reasoning was plain:

Depuis longtemps, les ennemis de la constitution ont placé leur espoir dans l'anarchie; ils ont compté sur l'exagération du patriotisme et sur l'excès de cette ardeur impatiente que produit la conquête rapide de la liberté. Ils ont calculé cette habitude de défiance d'un peuple toujours abusé; cette haine longtemps comprimée d'un gouvernement oppresseur; ces mouvements de crainte et de mépris qu'inspirent tous les actes d'autorité, quand elle est usurpée. Ces sentiments, qu'ils ont dû trouver partout, ils les ont employés avec la plus funeste adresse contre tous les pouvoirs légitimes conférés par un peuple libre.¹⁶

In other words, patriotism is not patriotism when it does not do what the authorities want, and the people, damned with faint praise (which incidentally seems to share elements of the analysis of more modern commentators such as Bourdin and Farge), cannot be trusted. We should note that, despite their insistence that all this trouble was fomented by the enemies of the Constitution, the authorities could not put names, or even clearer labels, to these forces. In the revolutionary atmosphere, to invoke shadowy enemies seems to have served well enough, and the Municipality was soon to have its extra powers. Meanwhile, regardless of any such convenient explanations, troubles continued to accumulate. Following what seemed to be the King's abortive example, emigration accelerated, while rumours of mutiny and disaffection in the frontier garrisons reached the city in growing numbers.

On 29 April the Cordeliers posted some 'Réflexions' on the Guard's oath to Lafayette, and as the press reported, the Palais-Royal in particular was a battleground between those putting them up and those tearing them down.¹⁷ The arrest of two men in the Palais-Royal involved the depositions of no fewer than

¹⁵*Feuille du Jour*, 28 April, 1 and 2 May 1791.

¹⁶Lacroix, vol. 4, pp.6-7.

¹⁷See *Courrier*, 30 April, and *Feuille du Jour*, 1 May.

thirteen witnesses, the great majority hostile. Joseph Chaney, a Swiss merchant and Cordeliers member, had observed the tumultuous groups trying to read the posters, and had thought to aid the cause by sticking up a spare one he had in his pocket. After doing this, he read it out, and in response to a sympathetic question, had said that he would strike the hand from anyone who tried to remove it - this was the cue for the Guard to intervene, as they made their round systematically taking down these posters. His attempt to invoke the *droits de l'homme et du citoyen* earned him a rough handling (as indeed any mention of this topic seems to have predisposed the Guard to intolerance), and he ended up being transferred to the Châtelet.¹⁸

It is clear that the Guard on duty were in an inflamed mood. Pierre Lenoble, a 19-year-old *auteur*, was seized for defaming the arresting Guard and attempting to raise a mob to rescue Chaney. Several people testified to this effect, but Lenoble claimed to have managed to say no more than 'c'est affreux' before being seized. He observed that people in the crowd who had arrived after Chaney's arrest were calling the Swiss a *gueux* and *coquin* who should hang, not even knowing what he had done, while the Guard fixed bayonets just upon hearing someone say that the arrested Lenoble was 'bon et excellent patriote.' An Assembly *député* eventually vouched for him.

The events of this day earned the ire of the *Révolutions de Paris*, which described

Les vexations commises le 29 au Palais-Royal, aux Tuileries et dans plusieurs autres quartiers . . . Les citoyens maltraités, accablés d'injures par les soldats assermentés, ont été, au mépris de toutes les loix, trainés dans les prisons, sous le bon plaisir de la municipalité . . . Jamais oppression ne fut plus manifeste, et les circonstances qui l'ont accompagnée sont un détail d'atrocités.¹⁹

The same issue also reported that Lafayette had disavowed the oath that had stirred all this trouble - it alleged this was because too many Guards had foresworn it to make them an effective force for counter-revolution. Repercussions, however, continued to reach the streets. Gilbert Pinot, a worker for a *chapelier*, went on a drinking-spree on 2 May, and ended up perorating to 'une très grande quantité de personnes.' In his perhaps confused state, he mixed Lafayette up with the issue of the ending of customs-dues on imports to the city, asking why wine had not fallen in price since their removal the previous day. He knew what he thought of the General, though - he 'meriteroit d'être foutu à la lanterne.' Pinot had then 'menacé de donner de son couteau qu'il a ouvert dans le ventre de celui qui diroit du bien du général.' The *commissaire* noted that he 'doit être regardé comme un perturbateur et un homme dangereux surtout dans

¹⁸APP AA83:207-212. He was even accused of passing a false *écu* to buy the glue to stick up the poster, but this seems to have been opportunism on the part of the shopkeeper.

¹⁹*Révolutions de Paris*, 30 April-7 May.

les circonstances presents.’²⁰

At a slightly more sophisticated level, there is the tale of Edmé Champigny, a printer, who had produced a *Père Duchesne* pamphlet praising the Guards who had backed Lafayette. The *colporteurs* he had sold it to, upon discovering its message, returned to his shop on 4 May and put it under siege - a rare instance of concerted action by such men. Champigny had to be taken into protective custody by the Guard. The plot thickened when Fréron and the *Révolutions de Paris* alleged that the authors of the pamphlet had been two municipal officers, and there was a brief flurry of activity amongst the *municipaux* as various of them denied this.²¹ Gorsas on 5 May also chose to paint Champigny as at least partly a villain, but his position closer to the views of the Municipality led him to put the blame for the text on the *aristocrates*.

The *Club Monarchique* itself intervened in the debate, with an *affiche* ‘à nos camarades’ denouncing false patriots trying to exalt the patriotism of the Guards and ‘le pousser au delà des bornes.’ Two men were arrested in the following days for tearing down copies of this, one of whom appears to have been a messenger for Marat - the *Ami du Peuple* reported his arrest, for ‘un acte non-seulement licite, mais méritoire’ at the same time as the ‘prévaricateurs’ of the Municipality were sending men round night and day to remove Cordeliers posters. The records of La Force note that the man in question was carrying ‘une lettre à l’adresse de Marat signé Ducieux, Grenadier du Bataillon de l’Oratoire membre des Jacobins amis de la constitution, lequel contient les invectives les plus grandes contre M. delafayette etc.’²²

Marat must finally have received this letter, or another copy, since on 12 May he published ‘Les parties honteuses du Général Mottier [Marat’s appellation of Lafayette, his family name], ou dénonciation de François Ducruix, grenadier de l’Oratoire, l’une des quatorze victimes de la journée du 18 Avril.’ The ‘fourteen victims’ were those members of the cashiered Guard company who had been refused readmission to the re-formed unit, supposedly for misconduct, allegedly for their patriotism. To thicken the plot further,

²⁰APP AA56:134, AB323:561, Section des Arcis. He was released from La Force on the 6th. The abolition of the dues presented problems for the Section de Bondy, which had just arrested seventeen men for breaching the customs-wall and extorting fees for smuggling - they were released without charge on 4 May. (APP AB323:536, 29 April.)

²¹See APP AB323:593 for Champigny’s brief stay in La Force. Lacroix, vol. 4, pp.143-7 contains various notes on this matter, including Lacroix’s own conclusion that the authors were municipal officers who also produced the *Journal des Clubs et Sociétés Patriotiques*.

²²See *L’Ami du Peuple*, no. 444, 30 April, and APP AB323:503, 28 April. Section de Ponceau - the man, François Feneau, was vouched-for and released on 2 May. The *Journal* of the *Club Monarchique* for 30 April confirms that they were the publishers of ‘à nos camarades.’ The other man arrested was the editor of the *Journal du Soir*, who compounded his crime by resisting the Guard and crying ‘aux voleurs’ to ‘ameuter le peuple.’ (APP AB323:471, Section des Quatre-Nations, 26 April, released 29 April.)

on 17 May Marat reported that Ducruix had disappeared, and called for patriots to search the prisons for him.²³ Gorsas noted on the 15th that a rumour was running that one of the fourteen 's'est noyé, dit-on, de désespoir,' but no conclusion to this appeared in the press.

For several weeks this matter was a *cause célèbre* for patriotic opinion. A number of Sections and the Jacobin Club made official representations to the Municipality in favour of the dismissed men, receiving short shrift in return, while rumours about the character and fate of the men ran wild. Gorsas reported on one occasion that a coincidence of names was being used to accuse them of a robbery.²⁴ As early as 28 April, a group of ten or twelve *savoyards* had set upon two *cavaliers de la garde nationale*, 'sous prétexte qu'ils étoient du nombre de ceux qui avoient fait mettre bas les armes aux grenadiers du bataillon de l'Oratoire.' A 'decroteur', a 'froteur' and two 'gagne-petits' spent a week in prison for this, persisting in their claim that the Guards had provoked them with words and blows. The *commissaire de police*, in sending them down, had noted that the statement about the grenadiers 'pouvoit exciter la plus grande rumeur et les plus grands soulèvements.'²⁵

The events of the Easter crisis show that the coalition of sentiments that was holding together the revolutionary administration was fragile at best, at worst unsustainable. The issue of the King, whom advanced patriots were now beginning to see as incompatible with the Revolution, still united those of less sophisticated views. Yet what this unity meant was that the 'crowd' and the Guard resisted both the Court and the administration on 18 April, even if the Guard rallied hurriedly to oppose the supporters of the Cordeliers' declarations, going so far as almost to sell their souls to the General (a bargain that some would argue, of course, had been struck long previously.) The one tenet that all agreed on was the incessant activity of counter-revolutionary plots, and it was on this theme that the rulers of Paris were to lean to defeat the radicals. This process was to reach a climax in July, but before describing the events which led to that point, we need to consider some underlying features of the political landscape of 1791, and how they contributed still further to the persuasiveness of the idea of deliberate destabilisation.

²³*L'Ami du Peuple*, nos. 456, 461. This latter issue also reported that Lafayette's chief spy, Estienne, had been 'congédié par le dieu Mottié' for embezzling the funds confided to him.

²⁴*Courrier*, 26 May. See Lacroix, vol. 4, pp.43-7, 49-50, 59-65, 325-333. Lacroix suggests that one of the reasons for the original defiance of the troops was a long-standing grudge against their captain over purely material motives. Information on this *affaire* can also be found in Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, pp.213-6.

²⁵APP AA182:199 and AB323:533, Section du Louvre.

6.2 - SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS

While political tempers had yet to cool after the Easter crisis, the press began to report that 'les ouvriers sont en fermentation.'²⁶ As early as 26 April, the Municipality had responded to stirrings among the workforce by publishing an *Avis aux ouvriers*, which principally sought to remind them how fortunate they were to live now in a free labour market, and to warn them gently not to seek to combine.²⁷ On this very day, according to the *Moniteur* of 28 April, 'attroupements' of workers had been seen 'dans plusieurs quartiers de Paris,' agitating for higher pay and stopping others' work through intimidation. Bailly responded at once by ordering the Guard to watch over an assembly of carpenters meeting in the Archevêché palace, and to patrol the *ateliers* where coercion might be employed - such activities were described as 'actes de violence' and 'désordres dangereux' that could easily become general.²⁸

The following week, the *Corps municipal* published a formal order to forbid groups of workers from passing *arrêtés* or halting others' work. The next day, a delegation from the workers on the Pont Louis XVI, a project of the public workshops, came to the *Corps* to request a pay-rise. They were told that they would be 'coupables s'ils persistaient dans leur coalition,' and that they should earn the sympathy of the Municipality by returning peacefully to work. A delegation of the *ouvriers charpentiers* who had been meeting at the Archevêché received equally short shrift, and on 16 May the Municipality registered an *arrêté* from the departmental Directory which reinforced its stand against coalitions.²⁹ By this stage the National Assembly, responding to the Municipality's pleas for more powers, had added the weight of its infamous decree of 10 May against collective petitioning to this position.

These events drew the battle-lines for a 'wages movement' that had begun with apparently isolated events around Easter - such as a mason's labourer arrested for inciting a stoppage of labour in several workshops and threatening to hang his master.³⁰ It continued to expand into June, bringing in trades as diverse as blacksmiths, hatters and cobblers, and ultimately led to the repressive measures of the Loi Le Chapelier of 14 June. As a 'movement' of economic grievance, this has attracted the attention of historians, particularly as some links seem to have been forged with the popular societies.³¹

²⁶*Courrier*, 1 May 1791.

²⁷Lacroix, vol. 4, p.8.

²⁸*ibid*, p.20.

²⁹*ibid*, pp.123-4, 136-7, 139.

³⁰APP AB323:387, Section de la Bibliothèque, 18 April.

³¹See Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, ch.4, and Rose, *Making*, pp.108-9.

Wages, however, were not the only economic factor which led to tension. Since the beginning of the year the *assignat* paper-currency had been failing to hold its value compared to coin, and its steady decline had bred a new species of social parasite, the *marchand d'argent*. These men, in turn, had bred a new kind of fear. As early as mid-January, when the newly-issued fifty-*livre* note was the smallest in circulation, and paper was discounted against coin by a mere five per cent, Gorsas was writing of an 'odieux agiotage' concocted between the clerks and administrators of the *Trésor royal* and the *marchands d'argent* of the rue Vivienne.³² A few days before, the Police Department had informed *commissaire* Toublanc to be on his guard against 'des mal-intentionnés' who had disturbed the *Bourse* and were supposed to be planning to gather in the Palais-Royal 'dans l'intention d'y insulter les agens de change qu'ils pourraient y trouver.' Such was their concern that Lafayette had been warned to have troops ready, and the *administrateurs* themselves would be standing by in a nearby café. In the event, no trouble was reported.³³ On the 18th, however, Gorsas reported that four or five *marchands d'argent* had been 'assommés de coups' by an irate crowd. The *Feuille du Jour* noted that 'les douces motions de corde, de lanterne furent agitées,' and that a movement led by 'un orateur pendable' to besiege a bar where the dealers were hiding had to be headed off by cavalry.³⁴

On 21 January, a man was stabbed in the Palais-Royal, and the consensus of opinion was that the *marchands* had revenged themselves on him for speaking out against them. The *Révolutions de Paris* carried a detailed account of how the man, a *bijoutier*, had said, after learning that the price of coin had risen again, that 'jusqu'à ce qu'on ait pendu un marchand d'argent, il haussera toujours,' whereupon a crowd of forty or fifty of the latter had gathered and he had fallen to the blade of one of them. One man, a *portier* in the Palais, took the opposite view and the next day 'fait une motion incendiaire contre la garde nationale en disant qu'elle n'étoit composée que de fripons et de voleurs à epaulettes'; in his opinion the charges were false, because the *marchands d'argent* 'étoient tous d'honnêtes gens'.³⁵ The *Révolutions* disagreed on this score, but demonstrated here the contradictory economic attitudes which were to plague this issue:

Nous croyons que le meilleur moyen de faire cesser les brigandages . . . est de rendre libre le

³²*Courrier*, 14 January 1791.

³³APP AA82:35.

³⁴*Feuille du Jour*, 20 January.

³⁵APP AB322:949, Section de l'Oratoire, 22 January, the man served a one-month sentence in La Force for his outburst.

commerce d'argent; l'honnête homme ne rougiroit plus de vendre le sien; et la concurrence des vendeurs en feroit bientôt baisser le prix.³⁶

On the 22nd, however, another incident illustrates the popular hostility towards the dealers. A Guard patrol rescued three men 'desquels le peuple vouloit s'emparer,' an operation involving considerable reinforcements before it was successfully completed. Various witnesses recognised them as having been dealing in assignats and 'louis en or' at five or six per cent discount on the paper. Rather than being the rapacious *bourgeois* that one might expect, they are rather a pathetic sample - an unemployed servant and a *marchand de bas* both surviving as *colporteurs*, and an unemployed *garçon parfumeur* from Normandy. They denied the charge of being *marchands d'argent*, and were released with the usual warning to be 'plus circonspects' in future.³⁷ It appears from the words of the Guards and some of the witnesses that they felt the men to be guilty of trading in money, whereas this was not actually an offence - indeed, a few months later, on 16 May, the National Assembly was to specifically guarantee the liberty to deal in currency.

The social status of *marchands d'argent* seems to have been highly variable. All classes of society had recourse to them, and there were doubtless gradations among them. Some of those singled out for public vengeance may have been no more than messengers for more affluent dealers. The penny-ante variety persisted, however. On the day of Mirabeau's funeral, 4 April, a *limonadier* and National Guard was returning home from duty when he 'il avoit entendu faire des motions contre les marchands d'argent.' He arrived at his establishment to find one such openly dealing at a table, and threw him out. A few days later the dealer returned, and a fracas ensued, in which virtue does not seem to have been wholly on the side of the bar-owner. His protagonist was, however, much more willing than the men arrested in January to admit that 'il achette et revend de l'or et de l'argent.' Furthermore, one of the impartial witnesses the *commissaire* called on to unravel the fight was himself a *marchand d'argent*. Thus it would seem that respectability was creeping into the dealers' identity, even as they remained widely disliked.³⁸

The shortage of coin, meanwhile, continued to press on ordinary people, like Louis Hallet, a *garçon boulanger* who tried to change a fifty-*livre* assignat in a wineshop, was refused, and went to complain to the nearest guardpost, where the unhelpful treatment he received led him to insult the Guards and thus

³⁶*Révolutions de Paris*, 15-22 January 1791. The *Feuille du Jour* of 23 January, on the other hand, thought the murder 'probablement un vengeance particulière,' despite noting the wide circulation of the more dramatic version.

³⁷APP AA82:149.

³⁸APP AA83:85, Section du Palais-Royal, 9 April.

spend three days in prison.³⁹ Two weeks before this, a *commissionnaire* was arrested ‘pour avoir cherché à soulever le public’ after protesting to the crowd in the courtyard of the *Caisse extraordinaire* (the body charged with the official trade in assignats) that ‘on lui avoit retenu les intérêts’ on several notes he had changed.⁴⁰ By March, pamphlets were abroad sowing panic by alleging ‘que la municipalité alloit faire banqueroute.’⁴¹

Florin Aftalion has recently attempted to blame the assignat for the decline of the Revolution into Terror. This is an extreme view, based on the improbable notion that politics were ‘a prisoner of the mob’ from the October Days onwards, and that the superficial demands of the semi-literate forced the Assembly down the paper-money road.⁴² Had this been so, none of the events that are covered in this thesis would have taken place, but nonetheless, Aftalion makes some valid points about the revolutionaries’ economic foolhardiness. Their response to the effects of Gresham’s Law removing coin from circulation was to print more paper, and an attempt to put copper coin into circulation drove the commodity price of copper above its face value, so the coins were just hoarded and re-sold to the mint.⁴³

If Aftalion administers a corrective to the long-held view that the assignat ‘saved’ the Revolution, he is not the first to doubt its benefits. As long ago as 1925 one writer was setting out the same tale - coin-hoarding, rising prices, discounts on paper, economic dislocation, and suspicion, so that ‘le populaire, se refusant à subir des pertes au change, voyait en chaque commerçant un agioteur sur l’assignat.’⁴⁴ We have already seen some of the violent consequences of this perception. The assignats themselves were only one aspect of the complex money-crisis that seemed to envelop Parisian life in 1791. In this realm, economic realities and simple criminality met with the darkest political suspicions.

Consider for example the Comte de Toussaint, denounced on 6 March for plotting to print counterfeit 500, 1000 and 2000-*livre* assignats. He told his plan to a *négociant*, saying that ‘il avoit du papier assez pour faire tout culbuter,’ if only he could find a good enough engraver.⁴⁵ We cannot

³⁹APP AB322:994, Section de Notre-Dame, 27 January.

⁴⁰APP AB322:848, Section des Postes, 14 January. He was released the next day. This case may also demonstrate popular ignorance about the exact nature of the assignats - they were interest-bearing bonds, but the first payment was not due until April 1792.

⁴¹APP AB322:1477, Section des Enfants-Rouges, 11 March, *colporteur* arrested for crying this headline, released three days later with *passerport* to leave the city.

⁴²F. Aftalion, *The French Revolution, An Economic Interpretation*, (Cambridge, 1990); pp.4-5, 55.

⁴³*ibid*, p.98.

⁴⁴J. Morini-Comby, *Les Assignats*, (Paris, 1925); p.56.

⁴⁵APP AA82:347, Section du Palais-Royal, the information was passed on to the Police Department.

completely dismiss this as an idle boast, when we know that false notes were in circulation - their discovery seeming to accelerate through the year until by late July and August they were becoming a plague. Most of them seem to have been what were called *assignats de quinze livres*, and were in fact small interest-coupons detached from larger notes, paying thirty *livres* in April 1792. That they should be changing hands, and serving in fact as part of the currency, at half face-value, shows clearly the monetary plight of the Parisians.⁴⁶ By early August forged versions of these coupons were turning up regularly - the Section des Arcis noted four separate incidents in the space of two weeks, including one note that had passed through the hands of the *commissaire de police* of the Section du Faubourg-Montmartre - unwittingly, of course.⁴⁷ Forgeries of all types were reported regularly in the press - for example, the *Feuille du Jour* spoke of false écus in March, false louis in May, and false 200-*livre* notes in August.⁴⁸

The situation around the assignats could give rise to complex fears. On 13 May the *directeur-général des transports de l'artillerie* tried to change five 1000-*livre* notes with a *marchand d'argent* near the Palais-Royal. One of the notes aroused some suspicion in the mind of the *marchand*, but before this could be resolved, his customer became alarmed:

voyant les marchands d'argent s'attrouper devant la Boutique, et craignant d'en être maltraité, ce qui aurait pu arriver, attendu la crainte où ils sont continuellement d'une insurrection de la part du public à cause de la hausse extraordinaire du numéraire porté aujourd'hui à neuf pour cent . . . craignant lui même le sort d'un jeune homme qui fut assassiné sur cette place il y a quelques mois, ce qui a été relaté dans plusieurs papiers publics . . . [il] s'est sauvé au corps de garde.⁴⁹

There followed a complex interchange between the Guard, the customer and the *marchand d'argent* who came after him, before first the *juge de paix* and then the *commissaire* were roped in to smooth things over. The *marchand* finally decided that the note was probably good, but by then his customer no longer wanted it, 'dans la crainte de passer pour un porteur ou complice de fabricateurs de faux assignats.'

The production of these fakes seems to have been a regular prison industry. On 15 April one *commissionnaire* from the Châtelet was found trying to pass a forged coin. He admitted getting it from a prisoner, who was found with melted tin in the stove in his cell. On 22 April another prisoner's sister-in-law denounced him for giving her a false coin from within the same prison.⁵⁰ On 15 May the authorities

⁴⁶See APP AA85:146 (Section du Palais-Royal, 28 July) where an actual example of such a coupon is attached to the *procès-verbal*. The five-*livre* coupons that the *Caisse patriotique* had put into circulation also seem to have been easy to fake - see APP AA85:151, 29 July.

⁴⁷APP AA57:8, 12, 33, 36.

⁴⁸*Feuille du Jour*, 20 March, 17 May, 1 August. On 29 August, a false 200-*livre* note was handed to the Palais-Royal *commissaire* - APP AA85:388.

⁴⁹APP AA84:67.

⁵⁰APP AA182:174, Section du Louvre, and AA83:167, Section du Palais-Royal.

of the Section de la Place-Vendôme apparently captured another coin-forgery with plans to turn his hand to 1000-*livre* notes - he was still in prison untried in August 1792, as the court had lost his papers. At the same time, this Section apprehended one of the few gangs of assignat-forgers working outside the prisons - an ex-farmer, the former porter for the Venetian ambassador, and a deserter who had come all the way from Languedoc. They were sent to the Conciergerie, where a month later the *commissaire* of the Section d'Henri-Quatre swooped on a gang of forgers of the fifteen-*livre* notes - nine names were dragged out of the men caught with the evidence, but apparently these were a different group altogether. On 6 June a raid on the Châtelet by the police of the Section du Louvre had also found plates to print these notes stuffed under a loose plank in a cell.⁵¹

Beyond the question of the genuineness of notes, we might also ask how it was that people of no social standing got into fights with *marchands d'argent* over the discount on large assignats - people such as the soldier Jean Michel Perrin who came to blows with a *marchand* on 14 March.⁵² The exchange was of two 1000-*livre* notes, and the dispute over whether it was to be at six or 6½ per cent discount. Thieves in the Palais-Royal area were regularly tricking people, particularly women, out of sums in assignats, by offering to exchange them at a prime rate - on 7 June a *cuisinière sans place* gave 300 *livres* to a man who offered to get her face-value for them, and then vanished.⁵³ Servants began to disappear with the notes given to them to change or deliver - on 3 June the servant of a *marchande corroyeuse* went off with 100 *livres*, and on 4 July Mme. Clermet de Villiers reported that one of her *domestiques* had robbed her of 500 *livres* by claiming to have lost the note, and on being dismissed after a second attempt at this trick, had stolen 890 *livres* from her *coffre-fort*.⁵⁴ The proceeds of such crimes had to be cashed, and the enormous sums that went into the gaming-houses around the Palais-Royal had to emerge somewhere too. Some of the stakes for these games themselves came from theft - on 5 May a *domestique sans place* came to complain that he had given 200 *livres*, the legacy from his dead master, to a *valet de chambre* to change for him, but it transpired that it had disappeared straight into a card-game.⁵⁵

Out on the streets, everyone wanted coin, but the *marchands d'argent* had their agents out gathering it brazenly, and allegedly buying the takings from wineshops by the day - On 25 February the *Feuille du*

⁵¹APP AA206:257, 245-252; AA215:445, AA182:247.

⁵²APP AB322:1504, Section de la Bibliothèque.

⁵³APP AA84:207.

⁵⁴APP AA56:224, Section des Arcis; AA85:15, Section du Palais-Royal.

⁵⁵APP AA84:18-19, Section du Palais-Royal.

Journal said that ‘beaucoup des marchands en détail sont soupçonnés de livrer, chaque soir, le produit de leur vente, aux vendeurs d’argent de la rue Vivienne.’ On 15 August a *porteur d’eau* was arrested for starting a fight when a barman refused to change a note for his drink. He began to shout that ‘les marchands sont des accapareurs,’ but was later found to have over sixty *livres* on him, half in coin. He claimed to be departing ‘à son pays,’ but the *commissaire* noted that he ‘merite bien sans doute d’être rigoureusement puni.’⁵⁶ The collection of coin did not raise only economic fears, as the *Feuille du Jour* intimated on 6 April:

. . . un des symptomes d’insurrection prochaine est celui-ci: Quand on recueille dans les cabarets, de la petite monnaie blanche pour des écus, et que cette récolte continue pendant trois jours, tenez pour certains qu’on fait les fonds d’un attroupement, et qu’il n’est pas éloigné.

Meanwhile, the emigration continued, and if people could not always see the complexities of the monetary situation, it was not hard to blame the fleeing rich for absconding with the nation’s wealth. Even those who did not criticise the fugitives could not but acknowledge the situation: ‘Les émigrations continuent: elles emportent de la capitale un numéraire effrayant.’⁵⁷ The Lille mailcoach held up by a crowd in February may not have contained the rumoured millions, but there were several hundred thousand *livres* of coin aboard labelled as other goods, as well as a very great deal of money being moved out of Paris ‘legitimately’. On 26 February, presumably because of this incident, a merchant made a declaration to *commissaire* Toublanc that he was sending a total of 24,000 *livres* to Lille on the next *diligence*, and on 1 March he sent a further 25,200 *livres*, all to various *négociants*.⁵⁸ However honest and upstanding such business may have looked to the authorities, to popular eyes it was probably indistinguishable from exportation.

To revolutionary journalists brought up on the economics of the Enlightenment, the way to halt this flight was ‘d’encourager le commerce, d’augmenter l’industrie nationale . . . et sur-tout de déclarer libre le change intéressé des écus contre les assignats.’ For the same writers, however, when it came to the problems of internal circulation, ‘Il n’y a plus de doute que les trois caisses, d’escompte, du trésor public et de l’extraordinaire, ne s’entendent pour tarir les sources de la circulation de toute espèce de numéraire.’ The crowds that constantly blocked the doors to their offices could only be the agents of a cabal, forcing people to go to the *marchands d’argent* for their business - ‘Le partage de ces extorsions ne se feroit-il

⁵⁶APP AA57:15, Section des Arcis.

⁵⁷*Feuille du Jour*, 25 April.

⁵⁸APP AA82:296, 315. See AA74:414, Section de Mauconseil, for a *procès-verbal* of the mailcoach affair.

pas le soir entre les agioteurs apostés, les commis, et peut-être les administrateurs?’⁵⁹

As time wore on, despite such palliatives as copper coin and five-*livre* notes, paper continued to fall against bullion: from 5% in January, through 10% at Easter, to 15% in a panic in mid-May. The *Feuille du Jour* observed on 16 May that two days before a *marchand d'argent* who had dared to sell at 12% had been narrowly rescued from a lynch-mob. The Assembly decree protecting exchange was a response to actions such as these, but as the same paper noted on 20 May, the result was unproductive:

On vendoit hier l'argent à quinze, dix-huit et vingt pour cent; et les personnes qui l'achetoient étoient obligés de se cacher aussi soigneusement que celles qui vendoit. Tous les groupes sont échauffés contre l'Assemblée nationale, depuis le décret qui met les marchands d'argent sous la protection des loix; ils ne s'accoutument pas à considérer l'argent comme une marchandise . . .

Besides this, prices were rising - rural producers in particular, unhappy at paper payments, were avoiding the markets and provoking scarcity, while in the city, for want of change, prices were hiked to rounder figures.⁶⁰ It was in this climate that agitation over wages began, although this simple economic stimulus brought out issues of socio-economic identity that will require more careful examination.

One trade where these issues were particularly strongly felt was printing, as a recent case-study has shown. The massive expansion in publishing under the Revolution had led to a similar growth in print-shops, from a tightly-regulated group of thirty-six *ateliers* concentrated in the Quartier Latin in 1788 to possibly in excess of 200 across the city by 1790. The pre-revolutionary printers had been a tight-knit body with 'un fort sentiment de puissance collective.' They clung to the ideology of corporate pride even while facing up in reality to the 'caste patronale' that their masters had become, and conducting an 'efficace activité rebelle' under the cover of their *confrérie* of St-Jean-de-Latran.⁶¹

The explosion of their trade created a huge labour-shortage, which made the workers' position both powerful and precarious. On the one hand, their wages all but doubled and 'poaching' of staff was reportedly endemic; on the other, the corporate ideal was broken down, the employers now called themselves proprietors rather than masters, and in the words of the workers' own protests, had no respect for the ways of the craft - 'S'ils pouvaient, ils l'enseigneraient encore à des hommes de bois.'⁶² To resist this breakdown, in late 1790 the workers organised themselves into a *société de secours mutuel*, the title

⁵⁹*Révolutions de Paris*, 2-9 and 9-16 April.

⁶⁰See Aftalion, *Economic Interpretation*, pp.98ff., and Morini-Comby, *Assignats*, pp.54-8.

⁶¹P. Minard, 'Identité corporative et dignité ouvrière: le cas des typographes parisiens, 1789-1791', in Vovelle, *Paris*, pp.23-33; p.24. G. Feyel, 'Les frais d'impression et de diffusion de la presse parisienne entre 1788 et 1792', in Rétat, *Révolution du Journal*, pp.77-99, contains some interesting information on the labour and costs involved in press production.

⁶²Minard, 'Identité', pp.25-7.

of whose rules illustrates their debt both to the corporate idiom and to the new modes of political action: 'Règlement général pour le corps typographique, rédigé par le comité de l'assemblée générale des représentants des ouvriers imprimeurs en lettres de Paris.' Besides specific arrangements for sick-pay and so on, the society stressed union and zeal in work, for the cause of fraternity and the honour of their *état* and 'connoissances.' Revolutionary zeal was also on display, and the workers took great pride in laying out the link between the press and freedom - their banner for the Federation of 14 July 1790 read 'Imprimerie, Flambeau de la Liberté.'

By early 1791, the negative side of the growth in the industry was beginning to trouble them more severely. The society became embroiled in running campaigns for the recognition of craft skill and some control over the admission of apprentices to the trade, campaigns that the masters denounced as self-interested cabals. Arguing from their corporate background, the workers articulated a claim that 'nous sommes redevenus propriétaires de notre industrie,' having invested their time and skill in it, going on finally to see the wheel of the corporate ideal turn full circle, and to press claims for some new form of *police de métier* that would safeguard what was precious in the *corps*, inviting 'patrons véritablement amoureux de leur métier' to join with them.⁶³ Ultimately, of course, they were whistling in the wind, as the Loi d'Allarde of March 1791 erased all trace of corporate life, and the authorities took violent exception to any attempt at workers' organisation.

It was not only the authorities that took this view. As early as January of 1791 the Municipality received a petition from a group calling itself the 'Assemblée Encyclopédique, composée de tous les artistes, entrepreneurs, ouvriers et fournisseurs, tenant ses séances aux Grands-Augustins.' This concluded by denouncing the 'société nouvelle, formée par les ouvriers imprimeurs' as an iniquitous body:

C'était sans doute le plus ingénieux à imaginer par les ennemis de la patrie pour détruire la liberté de la presse et conséquemment la liberté individuelle de tous les citoyens de cette vaste empire.⁶⁴

The *Assemblée Encyclopédique*, on the other hand, proclaimed itself dedicated to 'assurer au pauvre laborieux des secours toujours certains' and 'donner au génie de l'industrie plus d'activité,' while removing 'privilèges . . . accaparements . . . rivalités . . . esprits de corps aussi funestes aux individus qu'à la chose publique.' If the print-workers could appropriate revolutionary rhetoric and forms to their own

⁶³Minard, 'Identité,' pp.27-9. The printers' concerns can also be traced in their own newspaper, the *Journal du Club Typographique et Philantropique* [sic.], particularly no. XX, 15 March 1791, on their fears of de-skilling, and no. XXV, 19 April 1791, which contains an indignant rebuttal of the charge of being a seditious assembly intent on interfering with others' employment.

⁶⁴Lacroix, vol. 2, pp.57-8.

uses, evidently so too could this group, which it transpired was interested in obtaining a contract to oversee all municipal *travaux*. They offered value for money, precision, speed, and ‘l’extirpation de toute rivalité entre tous les ouvriers.’ If such a large-scale undertaking did not attract the Municipality, the *Assemblée* also had a proposal for a ‘national laundry’ (*buanderie nationale*) in every Section, and a wood-distribution scheme for the capital. None of these offers were taken up, but this body seems to have survived for a while at least, establishing a *Bureau de Construction* in February that offered credit for building-work and sold stock. In the same month, however, they were themselves denounced to the Municipality by an ‘assemblée des citoyens de la Section de la Grange-Batelière’ as ‘inconstitutionnelle et nuisible au bien public.’⁶⁵

These confusions of economic and political intent, whether naïve or wilful, could generate intense bitterness, as the dispute of the Parisian carpenters proved between April and June 1791. The workers were seeking to impose a uniform wage-rate for the trade, the ‘entrepreneurs de charpente’ to prevent this. As we have noted, throughout April a series of petitions by both sides to the authorities and a series of decisions and decrees in favour of the employers had followed, all of which were equally scorned by the workers meeting in the Archevêché. Even the forcible closure of this meeting-place had not halted their campaign, and on 22 May the employers asked the National Assembly to act, reminding them of ‘les dangers irréparables d’assemblées corporatives d’ouvriers’ which could ‘porter le coup le plus fatal au commerce.’⁶⁶

On 26 May the workers responded with their own petition, which told a very different story. They claimed to have first sought mutual accommodation with the old employers, which failed, and then

Plusieurs d’entre les ouvriers ont trouvé des ouvrages à faire, les ont entrepris et ont offert d’eux-mêmes de donner cinquante sous pour le plus bas prix des journées des ouvriers qu’ils occupaient, et ont demandé d’avoir des règlements fixes, afin de pouvoir tableer sur des bases solides pour faire leurs marchés avec les propriétaires.

What the employers condemned as a ‘délibération’ was no more in fact than ‘des conventions de gré à gré,’ the approved revolutionary form of pay-bargaining. Regulations in eight articles had been drawn up to the satisfaction of all, agreed to by all the new employers and even ‘la plus grande partie des anciens.’

The entire dispute, they claimed, was the work of ‘un très petit nombre d’anciens entrepreneurs de charpente,’ who, deprived of the ‘droit affreux’ to pay low wages and profit from the sweat and skill of

⁶⁵Lacroix, vol. 2, p.641. The last trace of the *Assemblée Encyclopédique* appears to be in April 1791.

⁶⁶*ibid.* vol. 4, pp.349-50, which reproduces in full the employers’ *Précis* of their situation.

their workers, were harassing them by defaming them to the authorities. They had no ill intent - as their own article seven said, 'les ouvriers s'engagent à ne jamais profiter de ce qu'un maître aurait de l'ouvrage bien pressé, pour le faire payer davantage que les prix convenus.'

Yet again revolutionary rhetoric was pressed into socio-economic service - when the National Assembly had destroyed corporate privilege and declared the rights of man, it 'a certainement prévu que cette déclaration servirait pour quelque chose à la classe la plus indigente, qui a été si longtemps le jouet du despotisme des entrepreneurs.' If denunciations were wanted, the workers went on, then the *ci-devant* masters 's'assemblent journellement . . . ils se coalisent, et . . . ils s'entendent ensemble pour ne donner aux ouvriers que le moins qu'ils pourront' - they had even in some cases paid less at the end of a job than had been agreed at its start. The workers' conclusion condemned the employers as

ennemis jurés de la constitution, puisqu'ils méconnaissent les droits de l'homme; qu'ils sont les plus zèles partisans de l'aristocratie la plus outrée et, par conséquent, ennemis du bien général.⁶⁷

The entrepreneurs published a *Réponse* to the workers' claims, which has been lost, but which prompted a further *Réfutation* from the workers, dated 2 June. Since they had gained no satisfaction from addressing their case to the Assembly, this time they spoke to 'Citoyens,' and rehearsed their grievances in more forceful and direct tones:

Qu'ils [the employers] fassent attention que ces grandes et rapides fortunes ne sont pas dans l'esprit de la Révolution, et que la liberté veut que tous les hommes jouissent des bienfaits qu'ils nous ont enlevés et desquels ils voudraient nous ôter la participation!⁶⁸

The workers described their actions for the benefit of the trade and the *patrie*, their formation of a *caisse de secours mutuel*, and an *école fraternelle* - 'où l'on démontrera tout ce qui est nécessaire à cet art si utile à la patrie et aux citoyens en particulier'. All these undertakings were 'vues que le patriotisme seul inspire,' but opposed by the *ci-devants* - 'des gens qui n'avaient, la plupart, pour tout talent que d'être agrégés à ces droits de jurande et de maîtrise.' This document was signed by 120 names, four more than their previous publication, headed by the same four *commissaires*.

The rhetoric of these documents, oriented around liberty, despotism and patriotism, could be seen as echoing François Robert, who around this time was organising the *Point central des arts et métiers*, which was intended to get the message of the popular societies, and of Robert's brand of republicanism,

⁶⁷Lacroix, vol. 4, pp.351-2. Unlike the employers' document, there is no sign that this *Précis* was ever accepted by the National Assembly.

⁶⁸*ibid*, pp.353-4.

into the economic sphere.⁶⁹ There is, however, no direct evidence for such a link, and it might indeed be suggested that it devalues the workers' own grasp of events to imply one - the printers and the carpenters, in their own words, were clearly capable of articulating their position forcefully and in relation to revolutionary aspirations.⁷⁰

What is evident from other sources, however, is that across a wide spectrum of opinion the movements of the workers were regarded with disquiet, and seen as factionally motivated. The *Feuille du Jour* noted on 9 May that

Les ouvriers sont inquiets; ils forment des groupes dans les lieux publics, et des assemblées dans d'autres lieux. Les amis du désordre ont soin de fomenter leur mécontentement, et de calomnier auprès d'eux les intentions de la municipalité . . .

It went on to observe that the workers would put themselves all out of jobs if they carried on prompting the flight of capital from the city. Around the same time, the impeccably radical *Révolutions de Paris* was making a different, but equally unsympathetic, point about the carpenters' dispute:

Une assemblée où ne peuvent être admis que les hommes qui exercent la même profession, blesse le nouvel ordre des choses; elle porte ombrage à la liberté; en isolant les citoyens, elle les rend étrangers à la patrie . . . Nous croyons qu'en général il n'est pas de l'intérêt des ouvriers d'établir un prix uniforme: la concurrence est la mère de l'émulation, et celui qui possède bien son art, et qui a l'amour du travail, est toujours sûr d'être occupé et payé à son valeur . . .⁷¹

Quite how this paper could reconcile its economic panglossianism with its political paranoia is unclear, but it is clear that the carpenters received no satisfaction from any quarter. On 18 June, seventeen *ouvriers charpentiers* who had been 'trouvés rassemblés à l'hôtel de Brigy, malgré l'arrêté du Corps Municipal,' were dispatched to La Force by the *commissaire* of the Section du Roi-de-Sicile. The police were continuing to operate on normal assumptions - 'les non-domiciliés sont emprisonnés et . . . les domiciliés ont été relaxés avec injonction de ne plus recidiver.' Thirteen of the former were released on 30 June, but the remaining four seem to have still been caught up in a tangle of referrals and re-referrals in mid-August.⁷²

The breaking-up of a meeting of *garçons chapeliers* on 5 July in the Section des Quatre-Nations shows that worker-solidarity was still attempting to operate, but not with entire success. They had called the meeting to raise strike-funds for their fellows in Lyon, and to arrange sanctions against those who

⁶⁹See Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, ch. 4

⁷⁰We may recall here the argument of Kaplan, 'Character and implications', that pre-revolutionary guild manoeuvrings had prepared the artisans for political contestation.

⁷¹*Révolutions de Paris*, 7-14 May.

⁷²APP AB323:1318, no final outcome noted.

refused to contribute. As the report said, the latter 'sont par un usage très abusif, empêchés de travailler dans aucune boutique.' Disagreement appears to have emerged over this, becoming a free-for-all in the street after one of the *garçons* had been 'taxé d'être fripon.' Guard intervention seems to have restored unity rather too late, and they collectively made 'rebellion à la garde,' disarming several soldiers before eighteen of them were detained. All but two of them, including two who seem to have been moonlighting as *gardes soldés* (or vice versa), were released on 30 July - a relatively lengthy confinement for this period, reflecting the unease with which workers' collective actions were viewed.⁷³

Before considering the socio-political consequences of the economic events of this period, it is worth recording at this point what could be seen as a definitive statement of patriotic perception of the relation between the various forms of disorder we have noted:

[Les aristocrates] ont répandu de fausses terreurs pour provoquer des émigrations qui font refluer notre argent chez l'étranger; la plupart d'entre eux ont préféré, dans le remboursement de leurs charges, perdre une certaine somme, et avoir des écus . . . ils ont éloigné de Paris de timides capitalistes, en les effrayant par de fausses listes de proscription; et leurs émissaires, en faisant commettre des violences envers les marchands d'espèces, ont fait nécessairement hausser le prix du change.

To what end has all this been?

. . . en accaparant nos espèces, ils ont presque paralysé nos manufactures, ils les ont mises dans un état précaire; un nombre infini d'ouvriers demande du travail, et le travail les fuit . . . Lorsque les ouvriers seront privés du nécessaire, les aristocrates regardent comme très facile de leur faire échanger leur patriotisme contre du pain . . .⁷⁴

We have recorded the evident depth of the economic crisis, and its ability to destabilise relations on many fronts, exposing people to further exaggerations of pre-existing fears. The obsession with aristocratic plotting, coupled with the age-old vision of the working population as lacking in any kind of valid self-consciousness, and ignorance of both the strength of popular feeling and the principles of the economic situation, would tip the perception of this situation slowly but surely towards repression. The crushing of *cabales* of workers was a step on the road to the Champ de Mars, even if not all patriots could see the link.

⁷³APP AB323:1469. The fate of the final two is, again, not noted.

⁷⁴*Révolutions de Paris*, 14-21 May.

6.3 - POPULAR POLITICAL AWARENESS, MAY-JUNE

The situation of the capital after Easter was one of constantly aggravating social and political tension. These tensions, created by the perception of the aristocratic and brigand threat and exacerbated by the clerical challenge of the spring, now began to impinge, as we have seen, on all aspects of social relations - reactions to disorder were swift and violent, and economic grievances provoked bitter rhetoric. A continued undercurrent of confrontation with *aristocratie* heightened the atmosphere of instability. For example, on 2 May Clermont-Tonnerre made a speech to the Assembly condemning the idea of annexing Avignon, and two days later a mob hounded him from outside the Tuileries back to his home, where they lingered abusively all afternoon, not dispersing until after the presence of Lafayette and Bailly had been required.⁷⁵

The police continued to attempt to maintain a model of order, but their understandings were constantly threatened by the actions of the people. This can be seen even in minor incidents. On 16 May a *gazier*, 'à défaut d'ouvrage travaillant à la demolition du quai d'Orsay,' was arrested 'pour avoir sans aucun sujet insulté et maltraité un abbé . . . qu'il avoit d'abord interpellé de lui dire s'il étoit aristocrate.'⁷⁶ This term *sans aucun sujet*, which appears as a formula in many cases of insult and assault, is often, as here, belied by the evident content of the incident. Yet again this demonstrates that the police could not believe that members of the *menu peuple* might act out of non-personal, political motivation.

This incomprehension is despite clear evidence that lowly persons had taken up at least some of the Revolution's rhetoric for their own purposes. Its possible use in even minor incidents can be seen as early as January, when an architect scuffled with four Auvergnat *gagne-deniers* carrying some poles in the rue Dauphine. They rounded on him 'en l'appellant aristocrate et lui disant de passer son chemin attendu qu'à present tout le monde étoit égal.' The weight of this *propos* can perhaps be seen from the fact that when questioned, the men would admit that their protagonist had been struck in the clash, but not that any of them had spoken out in this way.⁷⁷

When in February two brothers working on the *travaux publics* saw a wagon nearly run down one

⁷⁵See Lacroix, vol. 4, p.126, and *Journal de la Société des Amis de la Constitution Monarchique*, no. 21, 7 May. This ceased to publish shortly thereafter, having repeatedly appealed for re-subscriptions as its first *semestre* expired. It seems the *Club Monarchique* died of apathy as the King's own difficulties with the Constitution became more evident. (See no. 26, 11 June.)

⁷⁶APP AB323:742, Section de Popincourt, released, *reclamé*, 21 May.

⁷⁷APP AA215:367-8, Section d'Henri-Quatre, 22 January. The four were sent to La Force. and released with a warning on 26 January - AB322:948.

of their comrades while a *cavalier national* stood idly by, they burst out with a furious round of denunciation and curses, which various witnesses differed over, but which all more-or-less agreed indicated a criticism of the Guard - 'qu'ils ne prendroient pas les intérêts d'un citoyen' or 'n'étoient pas foutus pour soutenir les citoyens', and that generally 'il n'y a pas de justice'. The tenor of their fury was exacerbated by their partial inebriation, which is perhaps why they were merely temporarily detained in the Guardpost and reprimanded for their lack of respect.⁷⁸

The ability to claim justification from the revolutionary settlement extended into the *demi-monde*, as *commissaire* Deneux found out on 12 May when five *femmes publiques* were brought before him at 11 p.m. for quarrelling in the street. Three of them claimed employment in garment trades and a fourth admitted being 'un peu putain mais honnête femme d'ailleurs.' Questioned on their actions, they unanimously 'ont répondu que depuis la liberté elles peuvent aller la nuit comme le jour.' They then fell to 'les propos les plus obscènes,' prompting a swift closure of the *procès-verbal* and detention in La Force.⁷⁹ None of these incidents show any inclination to regard 'political' statements from such elements, in which we may discern an alternative interpretation of the message of the declaration of rights, as anything other than dangerous aberrations.

This harsh interpretation of the popular mind was echoed in an equally harsh approach to their physical needs. One incident speaks for itself: on 5 May an unemployed labourer was detained 'pour avoir insulté le sieur Garson, commissaire de section, parce qu'il a refusé de lui faire la charité étant encore d'âge à travailler.'⁸⁰ By the middle of June the poor unemployed, flocking to Paris for want of work elsewhere, were being rounded up in batches, like the ten men found asleep in boats tied up in Section de la Fontaine de Grenelle on 12 June - 'desdits particuliers sont à Paris depuis peu de temps, n'ayant ni état ni domicile et paraissant suspects.'⁸¹ It is clear from the register of La Force that the numbers of people falling foul of the police began to swell from April onwards - by June the overall total of admissions recorded was some 25% above the relatively constant level it had displayed in January-March, and it would remain significantly higher into August, even discounting the leap caused by arrests for

⁷⁸APP AA182:95, Section du Louvre, 24 February.

⁷⁹APP AA56:168, Section des Arcis.

⁸⁰APP AB323:603, Section de la Halle au Bled, released with *passport*, 9 May.

⁸¹APP AB323:1108, all were released on 16 June with *passports*. See also AB323:1070 and 1082, a total of twenty people found sleeping in the *fours à plâtre* at the Butte de Chaumont (Section du Faubourg St-Denis, 7 and 10 June.)

sedition in late July.⁸²

We have already seen the anger and harsh response that the ‘crime-wave’ of May-June induced in *commissaire* Deneux, and there is some evidence that the growth in indigence also heightened general social tensions. When on 30 May a *porteur d'eau* ‘a jetté de l'eau sur un homme nu pour l'engager de couvrir sa nudité, l'homme l'a frappé avec une pierre.’ On 3 June, a female stallholder on the Place de Grève hit a man sleeping outside her premises, and explained ‘que l'homme vouloit pisser devant sa boutique et c'est pourquoi elle l'a frappé.’ In both cases the aggressor was imprisoned.⁸³

The swelling ranks of the completely indigent do not appear to have expressed any interest in politics, their attentions doubtless being rather focused on survival, despite fears of their subornation. Others of *le peuple* continued to speak out, such as the *cocher* who said in a *cabaret* on 12 May ‘que l'on pouvoit chier sur l'habit de la garde nationale, et que la constitution française s'exécutoit en France comme en Angleterre.’⁸⁴ Part of this at least is rather obscure, but the underlying sentiment is clear, as was that of a *marchand de vin* who was detained on 11 May ‘pour avoir insulté et tenu des propos malhonnêtes à deux soldats de la troupe du centre auxquels il a reproché de s'être mal conduits comme cy devant gardes françaises dans l'affaire du sr. Reveillon.’⁸⁵ There is no indication of the context of this remark, but it suggests both a long memory and a reluctance to accept the reconciliations sought by the more orthodox revolutionaries. The *Gardes françaises* had been whitewashed of their rather unsavoury past after their patriotic stand in June-July 1789, but there is evidence to show that some of them had not renounced the *moeurs* that had previously condemned them. On 17 May Joseph Ficier, *garde soldé*, was arrested along with ‘sa maîtresse’, Louise Bellinger, *femme publique*, for an assault on a *brocanteur* who had been her client, while the ‘amoureux’ of Catherine Eubellione, one of two *femmes publiques* arrested outside their lodgings on 31 May, was also a *garde soldé*.⁸⁶

⁸²These figures cannot be given precisely, as time available for research did not permit a comprehensive audit of the registers. However, approximate extrapolations from dates and numbers recorded would indicate some 320 cases per month before April, reaching 360 in that month, and rising thereafter month-on-month to 400, 420, 560 and 490 by August. The July figure includes some 200 cases for the week following the 17th. It should also be noted that the actual rise in detentions may have been steeper, since ‘batches’ of prisoners under the same number seem to have become more common in later months, these being mainly arrests of suspicious indigents.

⁸³APP AA137:105, 110, Section de l'Hôtel de Ville.

⁸⁴APP AA157:110, Section des Enfants-Rouges, sent to La Force.

⁸⁵APP AB323:697, Section de la Place Royale, released 14 May.

⁸⁶APP AA56:184 and 219, Section des Arcis, and AB323:778 indicating that Bellinger was vouched for on 24 May, Ficier was referred to the Tribunal, whose verdict is not noted. See Mercier, *Tableau*, p.200. for an earlier opinion of the *Gardes françaises*, although he noted that reforms in the early 1780s had improved them somewhat.

Above the level of the *menu peuple*, the strange politics of *parti*, with their destabilising implications, also continued. On 19 May Louis Nicolas Hion reported to the *commissaire* of the Section du Palais-Royal that he was the victim of ‘un complot affreux ourdi contre son honneur et sa vie.’ He was a lieutenant in the centre-company of the Oratoire Battalion, and deposed across six folio pages about the actions of various members of the *état-major*, who since mid-1790 had taken him for an Orléanist agent and had systematically denigrated him in the eyes of colleagues and the public. On the Champ de Mars in July 1790 the *aide de camp* Desmottes (whom we shall shortly meet again) had called him ‘le plus mauvais sujet de l’armée . . . du parti d’Orléans . . . un ingrat qui devoit tout à M. delafayette qui cependant le trahissoit.’ Rumours of his ‘motions incendiaires’ were spread, and an *aide-major* claimed he had backed out of a duel.

After further incidents like these, he had threatened in late 1790 to publish their details, which had eased the pressure, but since Easter the calumnies had recommenced. The *aide-major* had in April insulted him to his face, and he had recently received an anonymous letter threatening to ‘le trainer dans la boue’ if he published. Nonetheless, he had resolved to do this, following which more threats had been made by the same officer. Now he was lodging this complaint ‘persuadé que la Commune de Paris ne l’a pas revêtu du grade d’officier . . . pour y faire un cours de spadassinage, mais au contraire pour donner l’exemple de la soumission à la loi.’ There is no evidence of any consequences following from this denunciation. On 24 May, however, passing from the politically sublime to the financially ridiculous, Hion returned to complain that he had found a woman in the Palais-Royal offering for sale the pamphlets he had printed for free distribution. Investigation revealed two men involved in the chain of supply, but not how they had come to be sold in the first place - our model of the precarious world of *colportage* suggests a role for simple economics.⁸⁷

The Fayettists, although probably the only true *parti* at this time, were not the only people conducting politics by insult, as we are by now well aware. In a late-night incident on 22 May the Guard Reserve from the Hôtel de Ville had been summoned at 10 p.m. to break up ‘du tumulte qu’il y eut à la porte d’un marchand de vin sur le quai Pelletier.’ Two men were arrested for having said ‘d’un air

⁸⁷APP AA84:106, 108. Lacroix notes some details of this case, including that Hion’s ‘précis historique’ of the plot ran to 35 quarto pages. (vol. 4, p.365, and BN 4-Ln27-9810.) He cannot trace any repercussions. Hion appears to have survived the calumnies, and went on to serve on the Commune of 10 August and as a *commissaire des guerres*. He was arrested on 27 nivôse II, ‘à la suite d’une dénonciation de la société populaire de Toulouse’, but apparently released, since he was disarmed and detained following the prairial rising, although subsequently rehabilitated. (See A. Soboul and R. Monnier, *Répertoire du personnel sectionnaire parisien en l’an II*, (Paris, 1985); p.80.)

mocqueur et de derision . . . ah voila les amis de la constitution, à moi la Nation.’ They were hustled off for this, and compounded the Guard’s suspicions when one of them tried to write to a ‘cy devant chevalier’ to vouch for him. When in the morning they were interrogated, this man, a nineteen-year-old *perruquier et musicien*, could give no reason for his words, while his companion, a former clerk in the Parlement, openly mocked the questions put to him. They were sent to La Force, although soon freed.⁸⁸

Another man was detained in the same disturbance, a *garçon cordonnier* who, although he claimed he had been ‘soul et ne se rappelle réellement de ce qu’il a dit,’ seems according to the record to have made a decidedly incendiary statement: ‘fou . . . nous sommes [illegible] nous casserons et brulerons demain la Municipalité et si quelques uns de nous sont mis au Châtelet nous en feront autant au Châtelet.’ This is strong stuff for what started as a tavern-door gathering, and it seems to have attracted popular sympathy - ‘On l’a conduit par prudence à la reserve parce que le peuple faisoit des demonstrations pour le retirer des mains de la garde.’⁸⁹

Clearly here it would seem the alcohol loosened this man’s tongue, but such an outburst of apocalyptic threats would have required a background of basic hostility to the authorities to bring it into being. Even if this statement, like that of the other two detainees, was only a response to the Guard’s interference, its awareness of what popular power might do, and its willingness to invoke that outcome, show just the kind of popular sentiments that the authorities were most afraid of - sentiments which seem to have grown stronger since Easter, since nothing of this ilk can be seen before then (excepting the extraordinary circumstances of the Vincennes expedition). The press also reported this incident in alarmist terms:

Sur les dix heures du soir, une foule immense s’est portée sur le quai qui fait face à la place de Grève. Elle a manifesté l’intention d’incendier l’hôtel de ville; avant tout, il falloit s’en rendre maître. Le siège a commencé par une bordée de pierres . . .⁹⁰

Although the Guard seems to have had every justification for breaking up this incident, in other cases the same fear of disorder led them into over-reaction and heavy-handedness. On 28 May a *charretier* was arrested ‘pour avoir porté au col par dérision, même de son aveu, un Etolle qu’il avoit acheté.’ In other words, for satirising the sash of an official.⁹¹ With people and authorities apparently looking for

⁸⁸APP AA56:199, AB323:832. The first man was vouched-for on 25 May, the second released with a warning on 1 June.

⁸⁹APP AA56:201, AB323:834. His papers were sent to the Tribunal, which returned them ‘faute de preuves’ two months later. He was released with a warning on 1 August.

⁹⁰*Feuille du Jour*, 25 May.

⁹¹APP AB323:895, Section des Quinze-vingts, released 30 May.

confrontation, one could be manufactured out of the most unlikely material. The *Feuille du Jour* reported on 31 May that a crowd had surrounded a carriage and prepared to lynch the occupants after 'un polisson, vendant des fleurs' had yelled 'à l'aristocrate' after it. The intervention of a merchant ensured that this culprit was apprehended, whereupon he was 'reconnu pour s'être métamorphosé plusieurs fois en femme. C'est un adjutant fort distingué de l'armée des perturbateurs.' Whatever the truth of this particular charge, some odd incidents did occur - on 3 June a *domestique* and an *élève en architecture* were held 'pour avoir excité la plus grande révolte parmi les citoyens contre la garde nationale, relativement à un attroupement sur le pont-neuf qui avoit lieu à l'occasion d'un cheval attaqué de la morve.'⁹²

Members of the population could use any issue to raise a protest against the troubles of the time. We have already noted the vehement protest outside the Théatins on 2 June, and the harsh fate of one man arrested there. Another, Etienne Cassac, 'n'ayant pas d'état,' was detained

pour s'être permis de tenir des propos inconsequents contre la manutention ou administration du Trésor Royal, au sujet non seulement des Assignats, mais encore sur la rareté de l'argent, prétendant que c'est le Trésor Royal qui en fait le commerce.⁹³

This, of course, is the accusation already sustained for months in the press. Once again we see elements of the people associating all the actions of authority into an aristocratic conspiracy, while the press which had done much to inflame them, in this case as in others, blamed the resultant popular agitation on subornation.

Repercussions of this incident were felt elsewhere. François Jean Lebel, 19½, *compagnon orfèvre*, was arrested in the Section d'Henri-Quatre for saying 'que M. Carle étoit un coquin, un gueux, un gredin ainsi que son sacré bataillon.' A party of citizens who made the arrest was led by a *garçon épicier* who had been 'scandalisé' by this outburst. Lebel claimed that 'il n'avoit aucun motif' for the words, and 'il n'a été excité par personne.' He explained 'qu'ayant été cet après-midi aux Théatins il a entendu dire des propos contre M. Carle, et que ce soir il repetoit les propos qu'il avoit entendu.' At the time of his arrest he had simply been passing on his way home with a friend after a drink. His father, a *menuisier*, was summoned, and was 'Etonné' by news of the offence. His son was released into his charge, and he

⁹²APP AB323:986, Section du Louvre. The servant, who had struck a Guard, was sent before the Tribunal, no sentence recorded. The other was vouched for. *Morve* is a form of respiratory disorder, apparently serious, since there were two 'experts nommés pour constater les maladies des chevaux morveux' on the municipal payroll - see Lacroix, vol. 6, pp.180-1, confirmation in office, 24 August.

⁹³APP AB323:1002, Section des Quatre Nations, sent to Tribunal, no sentence noted.

's'engage à faire des efforts pour empêcher qu'ils se permettent à l'avenir aucun propos.'⁹⁴

While some incidents such as this indicate a fairly unsophisticated response to events, others show that some people had developed a more complex view of their position. One such was Pierre Jean Charles Chenant, 29, a *garçon boulanger* reduced to working in the *ateliers publics*. He was picked up on 5 June for declaiming against Lafayette in a street-corner group, and his questioning is worth recording at length:

[I have omitted the repetitive formulas]

Interrogé pourquoi il est arrêté, a répondu parce que les personnes qui l'entouroient vouloient l'opprimer. [Q] pourquoi il a injurié la garde nationale parisienne, [A] parce qu'elle l'avoit maltraité. [Q] s'il a dit que tous les gardes nationales étoient des foutus gueux [etc.] et que c'étoit lui qui les habilloit, [A] que c'étoit tous le public qui les habilloient, et qu'il ne leur avoit point dit d'injures. [Q] quels motifs l'ont déterminé à insulter M delafayette, [A] qu'il ne connoissoit pas ce que M le commissaire lui demandoit. [Q] s'il n'a pas été payé pour exciter quelque mouvement populaire et quelque soulèvement, [A] qu'il voudroit qu'on lui donneat cent louis, qu'il viendroit déclarer ceux qui lui avoit fait de pareilles propositions. [Q] pourquoi il disoit que M delafayette portoit un nom qui ne lui appartenoit pas, [A] qu'il avoit vue dans les papiers publics qu'il s'appelloit moitié. [Q] s'il a été quelquefois mis en prison, [A] avoir été mis au violon à la section des Petits Pères pour avoir soutenu son ami dans le caffè Yon qui avoit un Bonnet sur la tête au lieu d'un chapeau . . .⁹⁵

Chenant clearly read the radical press, the only ones to use the name Mottié; he knew the language of 'oppression'; he scorned the idea that he might be suborned; he gave a clear signal of his view of the relationship of the public and the Guard; he seems to have been involved in an earlier incident where he defended the right of a friend to wear worker's headgear in a café. All in all, a regular democrat. The authorities were probably glad to let him sit out the next few months in a cell.

As sentiments such as Chenant's were fermenting throughout Paris, the stage was set for the next major confrontation of radicals and authority when the case of Santerre versus Desmottes and Lafayette came before the *Tribunal civil* near the Place Royale on 6 June. Santerre, popular commander of the Enfants-Trouvés Battalion from the Faubourg St-Antoine, claimed that he had been defamed by the General and his *aide-de-camp*, who alleged that the latter had been shot at on Santerre's orders as he rode from Vincennes to Paris on 28 February. Even before the hearing, tensions were running high. The newly-instituted journal *Le Babillard*, which recounted the ravings of open-air democracy with a conservative commentary, noted on 4 June that 'il paroît que beaucoup de va-nu-pieds se disposent à aller à l'audience le jour que cette affaire se plaidera. Ils ont même annoncé le dessein d'écraser le tribunal, s'il donne gain de cause à l'aide-de-camp.'⁹⁶

⁹⁴APP AA215:442, 2 June. The confusion of numbers in the last statement appears to be because two men were detained, possibly brothers, but only one appears to have been actually interrogated.

⁹⁵APP AA206:284, Chenant was sent to La Force, where the record indicates that he was given a one-month sentence on 20 August, by which time of course he had already served over twice that - AB323:1011.

⁹⁶*Le Babillard, ou Journal du Palais-Royal*, no. 2.

This episode offers a particularly concentrated example of the confused and confusing discourses of the press. On 4 and 5 June, no less than five *colporteurs* were arrested on separate occasions in the Section des Enfants-Rouges, for selling a pamphlet entitled *Découverte d'une Grande Trahison contre les Habitans du faubourg St-Antoine, à l'occasion du Procès de M la Fayette avec M Santerre*.⁹⁷ The opening lines of this work seem to offer good reason to seize it:

Citoyens, soyez sur vos gardes, défiez vous de tout ce qui vous environne; songez que vous vivez au milieu de vos plus grands ennemis; des ennemis les plus cruels, les plus scélérats, qui ne vous pardonneront jamais d'avoir brisé le joug honteux dont ils vous accabloient; oui, tant qu'il y aura en France un seul aristocrate, vous pouvez dire qu'il y a près de vous sans cesse un monstre prêt à vous égorger, à s'abreuver de votre sang.

Les plus à craindre pour vous ne sont pas ceux qui vous menacent le plus; mais ce sont ces traîtres à qui vous avez imprudemment donné votre confiance, qui vous avez honoré des fonctions publiques et chargés du soin de votre défense.

However, while continuing in this sanguinary tone, the pamphlet went on to denounce rumoured plans to disrupt the court hearing as a plot by these very same Lafayette-led aristocrats to give them an excuse to crush the people - mouchards have been infiltrating the Faubourg, inciting people to besiege the Tribunal and force it to render a verdict against Desmottes: 'Quelle joie pour les ennemis de la nation, si les citoyens du faubourg commettoient alors la plus légère indiscretion!' So, as the pamphlet continued, if the *faubouriens* do come to the trial, it will be to bear witness to their 'probité,' and to disappoint those it addressed as 'lâches, qui brûlez de tremper vos mains sacrilèges dans le sang de vos frères . . .'

Another pamphlet, *Nouvelle COMLOT Découvert, sur le Procès de M SANTERRE*, contained much the same message, this time in an 'Adresse de la Société Fraternelle des Halles,' which observed that

Tous les moyens sont employés pour vous égarer, afin de pouvoir plus facilement trouver les prétextes pour vous calomnier. Vous vous êtes montrés avec trop de courage dans cette révolution pour n'avoir pas de grands ennemis, et ils ne peuvent vous vaincre et vous perdre qu'en vous entraînant dans des erreurs.⁹⁸

There was a significant popular presence at the trial sessions, but no particular disorders. *Le Babillard* announced on the 7th that a speaker in the Tuileries gardens, supposedly 'l'un des rédacteurs du prétendu *ami du peuple par Marat*,' called Vallé, 'excitait les citoyens à se porter jeudi aux Minimes [the site of the Tribunal] pour forcer les juges à prononcer en faveur du Sr Santerre. Des sans-culottes l'appuient.' The same agitation was going on in the Palais-Royal, and on the 8th it reported a consensus that Orléans was backing the radicals - 'on a assuré que M d'Orléans aurait demain plusieurs personnes

⁹⁷APP AB323:1037, 1040-1, 1045, all released 14 June. Variations are noted in the title, but only one pamphlet matching this description can be found - BN 8-Lb39-4681.

⁹⁸BN 8-Lb39-9962.

au tribunal des Minimes . . .'⁹⁹

Having seen denounced the Fayetteists, the Orléanists, and the radicals, we can turn to Gorsas, who on 10 June published a letter accusing one Comte de la Touche of going cloaked about the Faubourg, where he 'payoit la bière et cherchoit à égarer les citoyens . . .' Thus, for a disorder which never finally occurred, everyone had already blamed everyone else. Calm was maintained despite the unsatisfactory outcome of the trial - the court declared itself incompetent in the matter, since the incident occurred between Guard personnel on duty, and should be tried in a court-martial. One was never held - Santerre let the matter lie, possibly because of business difficulties, and later events overtook it. Rumbings of popular dissatisfaction continued for a few days, but died away peacefully.¹⁰⁰

From this point on, *Le Babillard* is a useful source for popular opinions, once its sardonic tone has been discounted. It appeared daily, with reports from the Palais-Royal and Tuileries of the public debate, as well as from the main cafés, the Faubourgs and the popular societies. This was too large a remit for any one author, and the *rédacteur*, Jean Pierre Sarrasin, employed agents to collect the *propos* from around the city. We know this because a former *commis aux barrières* he had taken on to record the debates of the *Société fraternelle* had him arrested on the Pont Neuf on 21 June. This man, Thomas Vanière, had gone to work, but had been seized by the membership, his paper 'lacerée,' and had been 'traité de mouchard des aristocrates.' Since then, Vanière said,

Il a appris que le particulier qui l'avait chargé de prendre les extraits . . . était un Enrolleur de mouchards qui se repandaient dans les differents sociétés pour Epier ce qui s'y passait et qu'il présume que toutes ces personnes enrrollées étaient pour faciliter l'évasion du Roi.

Sarrasin was given the chance to explain himself, and justified his use of agents by his state of semi-invalidity. His journal, he said, was meant 'de calmer l'esprit du peuple sur toutes les motions incendiaires qui se faisaient journellement au Palais-Royal et au Thuileries.' This was sufficient for the *commissaire de police* of the Section d'Henri-Quatre, who released him.¹⁰¹

Sarrasin's method of calming the public seems to have been to write off most of what he recorded as either naïve excess or the subsidised ravings of prostitutes and criminals. Despite this device, a reading of the first seventeen issues of his journal, up to the King's flight, does not present a reassuring picture of the state of popular opinion. The Santerre trial occupied the public for a week, as we have seen, and

⁹⁹*Le Babillard*, nos. 4 and 5.

¹⁰⁰See BN 8-Lb39-4682 and 9971, two pamphlet accounts of the trial itself, and *Le Babillard*, nos. 6-8. See also Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, p.222.

¹⁰¹APP AA215:450.

general complaints about the Municipality were a constant refrain, usually expressed as personal hostility to Bailly and especially to Lafayette. Above this background, complaints were recorded in ten of the seventeen issues about money and *agiotage*, in nine about the refractories, and in the same number about the general aristocratic threat. In seven, discontent by or about the workers was noted, in six about gambling and *tripots*, usually linked with allegations of official collusion, and the same number about the threat of war, once linking this to a threat to the food supply. Of the seventeen issues, no less than fourteen included comments by the author on the suspicious nature of speakers, but his evidence usually seems to have been no more than a dislike for certain vociferous groups of women.¹⁰²

Many of these issues could be rolled together in the public discourse, heightening the atmosphere of disquiet:

Jeudi 16 Juin, Palais-Royal . . . [Hier] on se plaint que les receveurs de poste, et des differens bureaux des dons patriotiques vendent de l'argent . . . Plusieurs ouvriers se plaignent du décret qui rend aux maîtres la liberté de récompenser les talens et l'activité; cette loi contrairie les fainéans et les ignares qui forçaient les entrepreneurs à les payer comme bons ouvriers . . . On a rapporté que des brigands se répandent dans la campagne, dévastent les récoltes et incendieront les châteaux si on les laisse agir. On assure qu'ils sont excités par les ennemis de la Constitution.¹⁰³

Mardi 21 Juin . . . Palais-Royal le soir [20 June] . . . Plaintes amères et bien fondées contre la Municipalité, qui ne s'occupe pas de faire diminuer le prix des comestibles, qui souffre et semble autoriser les tripots . . . Thuileries le soir . . . On parle beaucoup des attroupements multipliés des ouvriers de toute espèce, de leurs motions, de leurs menaces et de leurs projets. La plus part se plaignent de manquer de pain et veulent faire la loi aux maîtres, pour leurs salaires.¹⁰⁴

On 16 June the *assemblées primaires* were summoned to begin the process of electing a new National Assembly. Although there was considerable enthusiasm for disposing of the old Assembly, the *marc d'argent* qualification for eligibility caused some difficulties. A patriot as moderate as Gorsas felt it was unacceptable, and along with other 'excellens citoyens' who paid that much, they 'se sont exclus volontairement de ces assemblées, où l'intrigue a devancé le patriotisme et l'écartera peut-être.'¹⁰⁵ *Le Babillard* noted on this day in the Palais-Royal that

deux particuliers mal vêtus étaient d'avis que tout le monde fut admis indistinctement à l'éligibilité. On leur a représenté avec douceur que tel homme qui était propre à faire des souliers, n'était pas propre à faire de bonnes lois . . .¹⁰⁶

Even blinkered by this disdainful attitude, this journal was able to record the ebb and flow of a massive popular interest and concern about contemporary events, and a more sympathetic observer may have had

¹⁰²*Le Babillard*, nos. 1-17.

¹⁰³*ibid.* no. 12.

¹⁰⁴*ibid.* no. 17.

¹⁰⁵*Courrier*, 17 June.

¹⁰⁶*Le Babillard*, no.13.

more to say about the mind of the people.

The nearest Paris came to such an observer, however, was Marat, whose determined belief in the necessity for immediate insurrection tended to blind him to more tentative developments in popular consciousness. He did stand up for the participants in the Théatins riot - 'On seroit bien surpris d'apprendre que cette scène a été exécutée par des émissaires de la police,' despite the consensus of 'les citoyens éclairés' on the subject. In the same issue he mentioned the upcoming Santerre trial, with the inevitable plot to declare Martial Law and attack the people. He later reported his dissatisfaction with the outcome, and the popular acceptance of it:

que le peuple n'a-t-il le bon esprit de vous [Lafayette, the judges, etc.] accrocher haut et court. C'est par là qui doivent finir toutes les scélératesses des fonctionnaires publics, conjurés avec le roi pour rétablir le despotisme.¹⁰⁷

As the *assemblées primaires* met, Marat published long lists of the mouchards and *vendus* in them, while also denouncing the 'Indignité des citoyens qui désertent les assemblées de section par lâcheté.'¹⁰⁸

Turning to Audouin's *Journal Universel*, as fervent an enemy of aristocracy and counter-revolution as one could wish for, one finds no great sympathy for the masses. He made allegations of aristocratic subornation of the people no less than seven times in the first three weeks of June, and 'crois très-fermement' that the Théatins agitation was thus inspired.¹⁰⁹ Audouin gave a picture on 1 June of his view of the fears of counter-revolution:

. . . il y a d'abord les peureux qui croient toujours voir l'ennemi à leurs côtés, et qui ne veulent pas se fourrer dans la tête que le peuple français, devenu libre, est invincible; il y a ensuite des mal-intentionnés qui, en menaçant continuellement la France . . . n'ont d'autre but que de perpétuer l'anarchie, de faire disparaître le numéraire, afin de vendre plus cher; il y a aussi des citoyens qui, craignant toujours que le peuple ne perd son énergie, l'aiguillonnent sans cesse, en lui représentant les contre-révolutionnaires aux portes . . .; il y a enfin ces mêmes contre-révolutionnaires qui ne rêvent que guerre, que carnage . . .

This says a good deal about the mental world of the journalist, who was constantly inserting into the public discourse such images of disorder and menace, but it cannot answer the question of why a *marchand brossier* from the Faubourg St-Antoine chose to court arrest on 18 June 'pour avoir . . . fait des motions incendiaires, avoir dit tout haut que les assemblées primaires n'étoient composées que de coquins, voleurs, etc.'¹¹⁰ A *maître tailleur* who tore down a list of active citizens was prepared to admit that he thought 'que puisque toute étoit citoyen il n'y avoit pas besoin de liste de citoyens actifs.' Oddly,

¹⁰⁷*L'Ami du Peuple*, nos. 479, 491; 4 and 16 June.

¹⁰⁸*ibid.* nos. 493-6, 18-21 June.

¹⁰⁹*Journal Universel*, 4, 6, 8, 13, 14, 15, 21 June.

¹¹⁰APP AB323:1181, Section des Thuilleries, referred to *accusateur public*, no outcome noted.

however, given that this occurred on the very day of the Flight to Varennes, he denied saying 'qu'on pouvoit bien arracher les affiches puisque l'on rayoit bien le mot royal ou il se trouvoit.' He was released with a warning.¹¹¹

Figures in authority, witnessing such democratic stirrings, seem to have become hyper-sensitive to criticism. On 14 June, one Sieur Beauregard, *chevalier de St-Louis, capitaine de cavalerie et aide-major du corps de la gendarmerie nationale*, was walking with a friend in the Palais-Royal when two people, apparently beggars, came up to him and addressed him as 'camarade.' This is the same *aide-major* who had harassed lieutenant Hion, and he displayed another facet of his political attitudes in this incident. He dismissed the beggars, and remarked to his friend 'que s'il vouloit il pourroit les faire arrêter.' Jean Charles Brunet, *pharmacien suivant les cours*, was strolling with a friend just behind them, heard this remark and 'n'a pas crue commettre une indiscretion en disant au chevalier de St-Louis qu'il croyoit que comme particulier d'après la nouvelle loy il n'avoit pas le droit d'arrêter ny faire arrêter personne.' Beauregard said he did, Brunet repeated that he did not, their raised voices drew public attention to them, and Beauregard 'ayant trouvé ce langage Extraordinaire de la part d'un homme qu'il ne connoit pas,' took him by the collar and led him 'assez tranquillement' to the guardpost, and thence to the *commissaire*.

Both the principals, and their respective companions, gave similar accounts of the incident. Beauregard's friend, Charles Beaupoil St-Aulaire, *grenadier volontaire du bataillon des filles St-Thomas*, noted that Brunet had added to his interpellation 'ne sommes nous pas tous citoyens?' There can be little doubt that the 'patriotic' aristocrats of the military command had a very different answer to that question than the popular patriots.¹¹²

It seems that student chemists were not the only such group taken up with revolutionary fervour. Ten days before this incident, the *Bureau municipal* had heard from some law-abiding student surgeons 'qu'il règne dans les écoles de chirurgie . . . un esprit de discorde et de désunion . . . ce mal avait pris naissance et s'accroissait tous les jours par une assemblée dite le *Club Chirurgical*, tenue par une partie des étudiants . . .'¹¹³ A Police Department investigation was instructed to restore order and union. The outcome of this is unknown, and no mention of this gathering can be found elsewhere. Evidently, however, the spirit of discord that flowed through Paris was not restricted to the suborned masses and the

¹¹¹APP AA157:135, Section des Enfants-Rouges.

¹¹²APP AA84:248. Brunet was allowed to go free after a grilling over his identity and intentions, and after producing a cousin who was a Guard sergeant to vouch for him.

¹¹³Lacroix, vol. 4, p.478.

motionnaires publics. Around this time, the *Révolutions de Paris* was drawn to comment on another form of incipient conflict - 'ces petites divisions qui existent entre le peuple en uniforme et le peuple en habit de couleur; divisions qui entrent dans le calcul des factieux.' It was remarking with approval on the scheme of one *commandant de bataillon* to invite all citizens to take part in drill-sessions, a move that the journal believed all Battalions should emulate, but which it was sure that they would not, because the *état-major* and officers 'craindraient que les assermentés, confondus avec ceux contre qui on prétend les armer, ne s'aperçussent enfin qu'ils ont été trompés, et que la cause dont on veut les séparer est la meilleure.'¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, on the other side of the fence, according to one denunciation on 19 June, a Sieur Nadam had condemned the chiefs of his local Battalion with various 'propos incendiaires . . . notamment que ledit état-major gagnoit dix [écu?] par jour.'¹¹⁵ This apparently growing disenchantment with the Guard was to bear bitter fruit in the following month.

How a city so obviously and bitterly divided would have coped with the transition to a new constitutional order is impossible to gauge, and in any case, the King chose to present all parties with a new conundrum when they awoke on the morning of 21 June to find him absent from the Tuileries.

¹¹⁴*Révolutions de Paris*, 4-11 June.

¹¹⁵APP AA157:129, Section des Enfants-Rouges.

CHAPTER 7 - TENSION BECOMES CONFRONTATION: FROM VARENNES TO THE CHAMP DE MARS, 21 JUNE-16 JULY

The Flight to Varennes stimulated a complex of actions and attitudes. Although hostility to the Court was strongly and immediately expressed, along with the lauding of radical heroes, commentators in general remarked on a surprising calm. Beneath the surface of this, however, the expressed fears of citizens and authorities revealed the continued distrust of the population. On the radical side, the National Guard was a focus for hostility and accusations of complicity.

Once the King was safely back in Paris, the city remained agitated - the dissolution of the public workshops occasioned fears of subornation from all sides, and in the press at least, the aftermath of this episode faded almost without pause into the beginning of radical demonstrations against the line the National Assembly was taking on the rehabilitation of the King. The acceleration of suspicion sent all sides headlong towards the confrontation of 17 July.

7.1 - RESPONSES TO THE FLIGHT

In the midst of their turmoil, the King's departure came as a shock to Parisians, but hardly a surprise. On the 21st (and writing therefore on the 20th) Gorsas announced that 'le bruit s'est répandu hier qu'on avoit cherché à enlever le Roi et la Reine l'avant dernière nuit.' On the 22nd, his bald headline was 'Evasion de Louis XVI et sa famille.' Other journalists were equally calm on this day. The *Feuille du Jour* reported that

Hier dans la soirée, les armes du roi, son nom et celui de la reine ont été retranchés, effacés, biffés de tous les endroits où ils étoient placés . . . Il ne s'est rien passé d'ailleurs qui fut contraire au bon ordre.

Audouin took a slightly more sardonic line - 'Il est donc parti, ce roi patriote, ce roi qui aimait tant le peuple.' He asked if the people would now credit what the 'journalistes patriotes' had been warning them

of for so long. *Le Babillard*, however, while equally projecting calm - 'les mouvements de quelques factieux ont été arrêtés dans leur origine, et l'ordre n'a pas été troublé' - nonetheless took an opposite view:

Nous osons même dire que le Roi ne se serait peut-être pas livré à une démarche aussi inconsidérée, si ces journalistes n'avaient constamment ameuté le peuple, sous prétexte de l'éclairer.

Marat and Fréron took the inevitable incendiary line on the *affaire*, and were duly condemned on all sides.

The *assemblée primaire* of the Section de l'Hôtel de Ville happened to be in session when 'la nouvelle de l'évasion du Roy et de la famille royale s'est répandue dans toute la capitale.' They went into permanent session, and left their record of this in the police files.¹ A few hours later, the official version of events arrived, in the form of a report that the Municipality had just received a decree of the National Assembly 'portant différentes précautions prises pour le maintien de bon ordre, et la découverte et arrestation de ceux qui ont coopéré à l'enlèvement du Roy et de la famille royale.'

This slide from *évasion* to *enlèvement*, and the priority of maintaining good order, had been determined very early in the course of events. Immediately after informing the other authorities of the King's flight, Bailly had:

conjointement avec MM les administrateurs de police . . . pris des précautions et donné les ordres nécessaires pour que les propriétés ne fussent point violées et que la tranquillité publique ne pût pas être troublée . . .

Their next move was to order the printing of a proclamation beginning 'Le roi a été enlevé . . .' This fiction, as they must have instantly realised, was the moderates' only chance of saving their Constitution from this crisis.²

Meanwhile, if the people had not begun to riot *en masse*, there was not the atmosphere of calm which then and later all parties interested in order would recall. While *Le Babillard* observed that 'le peuple paraît mettre toute sa confiance en l'Assemblée nationale,' it also reported a few lines above that 'Marat et d'Anton ont paru dans les Thuilleries; le peuple les a entourés vers le grand bassin, et les a conduits, comme en triomphe, jusqu'à l'Assemblée nationale.' A wave of striking out royal insignia was crossing the city, and on the 22nd the Municipality had to decree that this should stop, and that people should not insult troops whose uniforms incorporated such emblems.³

On the 21st itself, crowd action threatened the *ci-devant* duc d'Aumont, a *chef de division* in the

¹APP AA137:139.

²Lacroix, vol. 5, pp.2-3.

³*Le Babillard*, no. 19, 22 June; Lacroix, vol. 5, p.46.

National Guard, who was spotted in civilian dress and seized by ‘des mal-intentionnés . . . pendant qu’il se rendait à l’Hôtel de Ville; le peuple était égaré; des cris séditieux se faisaient entendre; M d’Aumont était en peril.’ It took four municipal officers and a Guard detachment to get him to safety. The workers on the Pont Louis XVI attacked an *aide-de-camp* attempting to leave in search of the King’s route, and a rumour was current in the National Assembly, possibly provoked by the d’Aumont incident, ‘que M de la Fayette était arrêté à la place de Grève par le peuple.’⁴ On the Place du Carroussel, a *domestique à la journée* nearly got himself lynched by ‘un grand atroupement’ for having ‘meprisé la cocarde nationale et en ayant une à la main, s’est permis d’en froter son derrière l’a jetté par terre et marché dessus en disant qu’il marchois sur la nation, qu’il chiois sur la cocarde.’ A *compagnon tabletier* and a *garçon serrurier* were also accused in the Section du Louvre of having trampled on a cockade, and got themselves harassed by the surrounding crowd, and finally arrested, although they pleaded that it had fallen from the *tabletier*’s hat. They were detained as ‘perturbateurs du repos public.’⁵

While the public response to isolated suspicious acts caused trouble in itself, the lower orders in general came in for a fresh dose of social fear. The prisons were supposedly stirring, and in particular ‘la maison de Bicêtre devenait depuis quelques heures l’objet d’une sollicitude générale dans les quartiers St-Jacques et St-Marcel.’ This was investigated by the Municipality, as were murmurings of trouble in the quarries to the south of the city. The Section des Thermes-de-Julien informed the Municipality that it had checked its *hôtels garnis* for suspicious movements, and asked that this be generally ordered.⁶ Despite the general consensus that the people were behaving themselves, the fears of a suborned *populace* ran deep. Nonetheless, in this crisis, a certain amount of social solidarity was on show. The commander of the St-Jacques-la-Boucherie Battalion requested extra arms for the *forts de la Halle* that had joined his unit, and received 100 muskets. The main preoccupation of the Hôtel de Ville section assembly was with moving several piles of builder’s rubble from the Place de Grève where they might prove useful to a mob, but they also recorded ‘que permission avoit été donné aux citoyens non-actifs armés de piques de se retirer dans les bataillons de leur arrondissements . . .’⁷

However, even the movement to arm the citizenry led to some confusion and disquiet. Santerre was

⁴Lacroix, vol. 5, pp.3-4, 33.

⁵APP AB323:1325, Section des Tuileries, referred to the *accusateur public*; AA182:258.

⁶Lacroix, vol. 5, pp.14, 25, 73, 89-90.

⁷*ibid.* pp.57, 76; APP AA137:139.

particularly quick to take up this task, and seems to have drawn large numbers. Some of these, however, fell more-or-less by the wayside. Four of them were arrested at 12:45 a.m. on the 22nd, armed with muskets but unable to give the password to a sentry, claiming that 'ils avoient été remis au bataillon de M Santerre, mais qu'après ils s'étoient attardés.' One, an *ébéniste*, resisted the Guard that disarmed them, and spent three days in prison as a result.⁸ The *Feuille du Jour*, recording the decision of the St-Roch Battalion to admit 'tout citoyen connu,' observed that they would receive a certificate 'qui servira à leur légitimation et à les distinguer des gens sans aveu, qui ne manqueront pas de mettre cette occasion à profit, pour se répandre en armes dans tous les quartiers de la ville.'⁹ The Guard was alert for any signs of suspect behaviour, arresting two men in different parts of the city for making marks on buildings - what could have been *signes de ralliement* but were probably just idleness.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the rounding-up of indigents continued - including on the 21st five boys aged between 12 and 16 sleeping on the quai de la Megisserie. All claimed to be working as *commissionnaires*, and to have lodgings, but only one convinced the *commissaire* not to send him to La Force.¹¹

Other arrests on the 21st, however, went beyond mere confusion of aims or general suspicion. For example, Christophe Labbé, *garçon cordonnier*, was 'arrêté pour avoir insulté M Goujon commandant du 3e bataillon de la 6e division, dont il a critiqué les épauettes, ainsi que la garde nationale.' Jean-Baptiste Duthy, *charron*, was detained 'pour avoir osé dire qu'il falloit pendre M Bailly et M Delafayette.' While under arrest he 's'est porté à des actes de violence envers la garde et a arraché les épauettes d'un officier . . .' It was also alleged that he claimed to have done the same to several others, but he denied this in his interrogation.¹² The popular scorn for the notion of military authority designated by these adornments is clearly on display. Seditious remarks on this occasion seem particularly to have been directed towards officers, like those of René Valentin Pierson, *compagnon potier d'étain*, arrested near the Hôtel de Ville

pour avoir tenu des propos incendiaires tant contre M le commandant-général que contre M Delaheu Chef de Division. Ce particulier s'est revolté contre M Leclerc, lieutenant . . . qui vouloit qu'il lui remit un sabre dont il étoit porteur.

Men were arrested in a further five Sections on the 21st for insulting the Guard relative to the King's

⁸APP AB323:1212.

⁹*Feuille du Jour*, 23 June.

¹⁰APP AB323:1208, Section du Roule, and 1218, Section de Notre-Dame, 21 June. One man was a mason now in the *travaux publics*, the other was a 'faiseur de moules de ballets.' Both were released on the 25th.

¹¹AA182:257, Section du Louvre.

¹²APP AB323:1206, Section du Temple; 1228, and AA206:305, Section de la Place-Vendôme. Labbé was released on 25 June, but Duthy was referred to the Tribunal - no sentence noted.

flight, usually commenting, like Nicolas Beuzard, *cocher*, 'sur ce qu'elle avoit laissé partir le Roy.'¹³

On the 22nd, as the deluge of immediate press reaction hit the city, dangerous popular comment seems to have been less widespread. One *colporteur* was picked up 'pour avoir tenu des propos incendiaires contre les citoyens de Paris . . . entr'autres choses que les Parisiens étoient des j. f. d'avoir laissé partir le Roy.' This arrest was 'à la clameur publique,' as was that of Leonard René Vaquier, *chef des ateliers publics*, 'pour avoir dit tout haut, que si le Roi étoit parti c'étoit la faute du Général qui en avoit répondu sur sa tête et qu'il étoit étonnant que sa tête ne fut pas au bout d'un pique.' The witnesses to this, besides the 'Président de Section,' were a *garçon épicier* and three wives of artisans. As in other cases we have noted, it is clear that the conflicts of the city did not run along simple 'class' lines.¹⁴

The spontaneous angry reactions of the people were soon seconded by the productions of some sections of the press. As early as the 21st, one *colporteur* had been arrested 'muni d'un nombre de 78 exemplaires ayant pour titre Manifeste du Roy commençant . . . par des mots, Les peuples ont fait des Roys et peuvent les détruire.'¹⁵ It took until the 23rd, apparently, for more *colporteurs* to fall foul of the law. One was picked up for reading from *L'Orateur du Peuple*, 'portant que MM Bailly et Lafayette étoient des Traîtres qu'il falloit égorger.' Another was more generally guilty

pour avoir colporté et distribué des imprimés intitulés l'ami du peuple et le brave Duchesne, lesquels contiennent des Calomnies contre le Général aussi que contre la garde nationale, la maréchaussée de l'Isle, l'Assemblée nationale et autres.¹⁶

Other incidents continued to trouble the next few days, sufficient to show that calm and order were not the mood of all Paris - a beggar making seditious remarks about the royal family on the 24th, a *marchand forain* who tried to get people to seize an army general the same day, and several incidents of insults to the Guard, in one of which a whole patrol was set upon, 'dont quelques fusiliers ont été frappés.'¹⁷ In the midst of this, the Municipality put great effort into assuring that the Fête-Dieu parades on 23 June passed off 'avec une pompe religieuse qui inspiroit le respect,' as Gorsas observed the next day. Lacroix notes that the authorities had in fact been planning to make this a great display for weeks, not for any motive of devotion, but 'de prouver à la population que l'installation du clergé constitutionnel

¹³APP AB323:1239, Section de la Hôtel de Ville, released 27 June. APP AB323:1252, see also 1219, 1229, 1255, 1260. All were released by the 28th at the latest.

¹⁴APP AB323:1301, Section des Lombards, released 30 June. APP AB323:1210, Section des Postes, referred to Tribunal - no sentence noted.

¹⁵APP AB323:1295, Section des Lombards, a 27-year-old *gagne-denier*, released 28 June.

¹⁶APP AB323:1237, Section des Gobelins, released 2 July; 1249, Section des Enfants-Rouges, released 25 June.

¹⁷APP AB323:1289, 1270, 1312, 1292, 1296. All the culprits were released by the end of the month.

assermenté ne nuisait pas à l'éclat des cérémonies religieuses traditionnelles.'¹⁸ Such was the zeal for conformity in the circumstances under which the processions finally took place that one man was arrested 'pour avoir causé du scandale . . . ayant refusé d'oter son chapeau de dessus sa tête quoiqu'il ait été invité par la garde à trois reprises différentes et ayant d'ailleurs fait resistance à la garde.'¹⁹

Some incidents can be examined in greater detail through the individual Sections' records. At 6 p.m. on the 21st in the Section du Palais-Royal, two men were arrested for tearing down notices posted by the National Assembly. A *maître tailleur* testified 'qu'il leur avoit fait des representations sur cette conduite reprehensible, avec d'autant plus de raison qu'il avoit entendu dire qu'ils en avoient déjà arraché plusieurs . . .' They refused to listen, and he and 'plusieurs Citoyens' seized them while a friend went for the Guard.

The culprits were a *domestique* and a *jouaillier*. The first explained that:

ayant ouï dire les mots d'enlèvement inserée dans l'affiche, il s'étoit permis de dire que le Roy n'avoit point être enlevé qu'il s'étoit absenté de son plein gré, et qu'alors il s'étoit permis d'effacer ce mot de l'affiche.

The second went further in his interpretation:

que voyant le mot d'enlèvement inseré dans l'affiche il s'étoit persuadé que c'étoit encore des affiches incendiaires et qu'il avoit cru bien faire de les [supprimer?], qu'effectivement il en avoit supprimé deux, et qu'il s'en alloit lorsque la garde nationale s'est saisi de lui . . .

Note that this last phrase suggests that the tailor and his friends may have been in uniform off-duty, a common practice. The men's quite legitimate sentiment that the use of the term *enlèvement* was a falsehood, even an inflammatory one, passed for nothing, since the authorities had another model of truth and order to pursue. As both men were *domicilié*, they were not imprisoned, but 'pour faire un exemple' they were put in the *salle de discipline* at the Palais-Royal guardpost at the pleasure of the *commissaire*.²⁰

On 22 June the Cordeliers Club posted a notable *affiche*, in which they formally took up a republican position - '[La Société] ne peut donc plus se dissimuler que la royauté, la royauté héréditaire surtout, est incompatible avec la liberté.'²¹ One of the *afficheurs* was arrested by 'le public' in the Palais-Royal around 4:45 p.m., along with the activist François Robert, who was himself carrying a packet of the posters. A third man was detained for yelling 'qu'il falloit les arracher des mains de la garde,' again

¹⁸Lacroix, vol. 4, p.552.

¹⁹APP AB323:1300, Section des Lombards, 23 June. The detainee was a master-tailor and *principal locataire* of a building reduced to working in the public workshops. He was released on 30 June.

²⁰APP AA84:270.

²¹The full text is in Lacroix, vol. 5, pp.111-2.

after public clamour. The identity of the two unnamed men is unclear, as the *procès-verbal* became monopolised by Robert's immensely verbose declaration. He began by having 'le sieur' deleted from in front of his name, and persisted in discussing events in the 'Palais dit Royal,' after having listed the clubs and societies he belonged to, and noting his authorship of 'Républicanisme adapté à la France,' and of the motion which led to the *affiche*. He went word-by-word through various exchanges in the open air, before and after his arrest, concluding with an account of events inside the guardpost which is both unintentionally amusing and very revealing:

Arrivé dans le corps de garde les injures ont recommencé avec une nouvelle force, un gros homme, le nez épaté, est venu à lui comme un furieux en disant: tu es un incendiaire, un Drole, un mauvais sujet et foutre tu nous le payeras: cet homme portoit les décorations de capitaine de grenadiers de la garde nationale: [Robert] lui a répondu: je ne vous crains pas, je ne crains personne, nul corps, nul individu, ne croyez pas m'en imposer, je connois aussi bien mes Droits, que mes Devoirs, je ne connois que la Loi, je ne l'ai pas violée, et tant et si longtems que je ne la violera pas je marcherai tête levée avec l'attitude qui convient à un homme libre. Ce discours a produit un tout autre effet que celui qu'on en devoit attendre, le capitaine est venu saisir [Robert] au jabot: arretez monsieur, lui dit [Robert], sachez me respecter: te respecter, dit-on, d'une voix unanime, tu es beau, toi, pour qu'on te respecter; oui messieurs, respecter, vous le devez; et vous avez manqué à la loi lorsque vous m'avez appréhendé . . . [in text. Robert] alloit dire au collet, lorsque tout le corps de garde parut transporté de rage; ils avoient compris par le mot *appréhender* que [Robert] vouloit faire entendre que le corps de garde avoit peur de lui: [il] voulut expliquer son dire, mais non, vingt ou trente hommes armés voulurent prouver qu'ils avoient du courage, et ils dirent au comparant: attends, attends, nous allons te prouver si nous t'appréhendons: au même instant, un sabre tiré au clair, [il] est assailli de coups de poings, il est pris aux cheveux, il recoit des coups à l'estomach . . . [in text.]

While one cannot help suspecting that he really was asking for it, it seems likely that he was going to get it anyway. Here we can see again the combination of insecurity and violence which made the Guard as much an inflammatory as an ordering force in social relations. Ordinary *bourgeois* armed and put in uniform, expected to deal not only with crime at saturation-levels, but also with political opposition of all shades, reacted without discipline to perceived threats. With this kind of conduct to judge them by, it is easy to see why they could be assimilated to hated *mouchards* and reactionary conspirators. It seems that Robert was not even making a formal complaint when he made this statement, as there is no attempt to record the names or even the unit of the Guards, and his indignation does not go so far as to ask that anything be done - perhaps he was merely acknowledging realities on this point. He was allowed to go free, along with the two other men. The *commissaire* perhaps felt under pressure, since as soon as it was known that Robert had been arrested, the *Société fraternelle*, the Cordeliers, and the Section des Quatre-Nations all sent official delegations to ask for his release.²²

While highlighting the Guard's excesses, it must also be pointed out that the population sometimes gave them reason to be aggressively insecure. For example, on the morning of the 21st in the Section de

²²APP AA84:276-7. Pieces 279-281 are the credentials of the three delegations sent to Robert's aid.

la Place-Vendôme a guardpost commander reported that at 10:30

il a vu un attroupement considerable sur la Place Louis XV, il s'y est transporté avec quatre hommes et il y a trouvé un particulier que le peuple vouloit assassiner parcequ'il avoit mis sur son habit de garde nationale, une redingotte bleue . . .

The final outcome, beyond that the man was saved, is not recorded, the details were 'Expedié pour la Mairie.'²³

More dimensions of the relationship between the guard and the radicals are revealed by what happened to Jean-Baptiste Martin Chabrol, a sergeant of the St-Roch Battalion, when

étant au Palais-Royal il a été reconnu pour celui qui avoit arraché les affiches de la Société fraternelle . . . dans le même instant il a été saisi et arrêté par des particuliers dont il ignore les noms, au même instant un cri s'est élevé - c'est un mouchard de Lafayette, à la lanterne . . .²⁴

Chabrol chose a conciliatory route, handing over two pistols to his captors, and although pleading justification by order of the National Assembly, and asking to be taken to a guardpost or a Section, he made no resistance as he was led instead to a meeting of the *Société fraternelle*. 'Au même instant qu'il est entré, qu'on a en appris que c'étoit lui qui avoit déchiré l'affiche, il a entendu un cri general, voila le mouchard de Lafayette et du Maire . . .' Chabrol climbed onto a chair and unsuccessfully tried to justify himself to the hostile assembly, which was having none of it and eventually booed him from the room after decreeing that he was 'indigne de porter l'habit national' and announcing that he would be denounced to the patriotic societies, the Sections and battalions as such, 'vû qu'il est un mouchard salarié et ennemi de la Constitution . . .'

What is most revealing in all of this is that before attempting to address the meeting, Chabrol 'a ôté sa banderolle et ses épauettes . . . pour paroître vis-à-vis de la société sans aucune marque de distinction.' Not only, then, did this Guard sergeant recognise the radical patriots' distaste for these 'marks of distinction,' but he was willing to accommodate their prejudices in this regard. The radicals and the moderates found themselves sharing some symbols - the *habit national*, most clearly - while being at loggerheads over others. Nor was it evidently a conflict of mutual incomprehension. Chabrol knew exactly why they disliked his insignia, and was prepared to take the initiative of removing them - under some pressure of circumstances, naturally, but with no apparent duress. When he made his declaration to the *commissaire* almost twenty-four hours had passed - he had not fled there in fear of his life, however much indignation he could summon over the 'menaces et injures' made to him.

²³APP AA206:309.

²⁴APP AA84:278. This is dated 29 June, but appears in the record between 22 and 23 June. *Le Babillard* of 23 June indicates that there was trouble over an *affiche* of the *Société fraternelle* on the evening of the 22nd.

Nonetheless, in the general situation, fear of the population on the part of respectable citizens was a leading motif. Although *Le Babillard* had reported initial calm after the royal flight, its issues of 23 to 25 June are filled with lurid recordings of *propos* from the Palais-Royal, the Tuileries, the Faubourgs, the cafés and elsewhere. By the late evening of the 22nd it was known that the King had been detained at Varennes, but the rumours of plots continued to redouble. On the 25th they were summarised thus:

Une fermentation sourde, mais terrible, est répandue dans toute la capitale; tous les citoyens qui ont le moindre état en sont allarmés: ils craignent l'arrivée du roi. Déjà l'on a insinué aux compagnies du centre que leur paye alloit être diminuée, mais que pour se faire rendre justice ils seroient appuyés par le faubourg St-Antoine et les travailleurs de charité. En effect les faubourgs se tourmentent; tout le monde dit que des puissances ennemies les remuent, et l'on désire que la garde ne quitte pas les armes pour en imposer aux furieux. On dit que Santerre est assailli de gens qui viennent se présenter, et qu'il reçoit tout le monde. On porte le délire jusqu'à mettre l'argent à vingt-sept pour cent; et, pour aigrir les esprits on sème sourdement qu'à la fin du mois les assignats n'auront plus cours. Mille ouvriers attroupés parcourent les rues. Les poissardes s'assemblent; leur dessein est de remplir tous les cabarets sur le passage du roi et de la reine, et de ne rentrer chez elles que lorsqu'elles en auront satisfaction.²⁵

This was not the only paper to be reporting such things. Despite what we have seen of the relatively few cases of men detained for political outbursts, the *Feuille du Jour* reported on the 24th that 'on arrête beaucoup de gens suspects: les prisons en regorgent. La plupart de ceux dont on s'est assuré dans Paris, sont étrangers, ils étoient munis d'argent et d'assignats.' The return of the King, of course, passed off without incident, except for some heckling of the Queen outside the city limits. Some of the solemnity was by municipal order, but nevertheless a truly enormous crowd watched the royal cortège pass in dignified silence.²⁶ Regardless of the truth of this, it would seem that it had already been obscured in advance by rumour and suspicion. Radical agitation would accelerate in the weeks to come, as it became ever more clear that the authorities and the Assembly were planning to rehabilitate the King. The Guard matched this with an elevation of suspicion, as both sides were primed for an explosive confrontation.

²⁵*Le Babillard*, nos 19-21, esp. no. 21.

²⁶See *Courrier*, 26 June, for a report of 30,000 Guards and a half-million crowd. Schama, *Citizens*, p.558, gives a reasonable account of the day.

7.2 - THE CONSTITUTION IN THE BALANCE: EVENTS AFTER THE KING'S RETURN

The apparent calm which greeted the return of the King did not last long. The *Argus Patriote* reported that on 28 June 'une foule d'ouvriers se sont portés . . . à l'Abbaye, pour demander qu'on leur livrât les Gardes-du-Corps qui y sont renfermés.'²⁷ This was not a rescue, but a lynch-mob, the dispersal of which required the summoning of the Guard by sounding the *générale*. It was in response to a 'faux bruit' that the Royal Bodyguards, couriers for the Flight to Varennes, 'devaient être mis en liberté par leurs camarades'.

Some smaller incidents, meanwhile, point to the continued high level of social and political tensions. On 26 June, at around 6:30 p.m., Simeon Charles François Vallée, a former master-painter and gilder, now *marchand de tableaux et estampes*, was seized by a group of citizens in the Palais-Royal for reading from a copy of the *Ami du Peuple*.²⁸ Two witnesses deposed that he had 'occasionnait du tumulte' and had made 'plusieurs commentaires contre MM Lafayette, les Lameth et plusieurs autres députés . . . ainsi que contre M Bailly.' He had been charging them with complicity in the King's flight and general perfidy. Three other witnesses confirmed the substance of this.

Vallée said he had been passing on his way through the Palais-Royal when he had 'rencontré une vingtaine de dames qui causoient ensemble et qui lui ont demandé eh bien frere avez vous Marat d'aujourd'huy.' He had a copy in his pocket, and at their request read it out, but protested that this had lasted only 'un demi quart d'heure' - not time to make the alleged 'commentaires.' After this time, 'le public l'a interpellé en le traitant de va nus pieds, qu'il avoit été maltraité par plusieurs particuliers, arrêté et remis entre les mains de la garde.'

His answers and his social status secured his release with only a warning 'd'être plus circonspect à l'avenir.' However, this incident seems to have rankled, as he returned to the Section *comité* on 29 June, apparently to get the address of the *commissaire* who had dealt with him, and while there launched into a complaint against Lafayette and Bailly. This scandalised the Guards present, and he was forced to be more explicit. He had two grievances. The first was that he was still owed 967 *livres* 10 *sous* by the Municipality for premises he had provided for the *garde soldée* from August 1789 to January 1791. Secondly, he had been burgled during the *Fête de la Fédération* of the previous July, while patriotically

²⁷*L'Argus Patriote*, no. 7, 30 June.

²⁸APP AA84:295. It is open to speculation whether this was the 'Vallé' that *Le Babillard* noted as a supposed author of the *Ami* at the time of the Santerre trial. If it was, then he may have been less innocent than he makes out in this case.

hosting two men from Rouen. Attempting to complain to the officers of the Section d'Henri-Quatre, where he lived, 'il a été maltraité en paroles par le sieur Carle commandant du bataillon.' He had been unable to gain satisfaction 'du maire ni du commandant-général.'²⁹

All this suggests that Vallée was an active patriot, but had got on the wrong side of the municipal hierarchy. A week after this encounter, in the Section du Louvre, Vallée is visible again, in an incident which suggests why this might be so. Florent Corps, *marchand charcutier*, was walking along rue de la Monnaie when he saw some prints on display. He particularly noted

une caricature qui représentoit le Général en Elephant, et autres personnages de notre révolution qui y sont personifiés . . . il s'est emporté contre des marchands qui ont assez peu de patriotisme pour vendre des objets aussi contraires à la nouvelle constitution.³⁰

Another passer-by in Guard uniform told him that 'il ne falloit pas idolâtrer les hommes,' and that he thought Lafayette was treated as he deserved. This only enraged Corps further, and he tore up one print and threw another into the shop, telling the man he didn't think him fit to be a Guard. The latter vanished, leaving Corps to confront the irate shopkeeper, who turned out to be Vallée himself, and who 'l'a traité de gueux de coquin de voleur et de mouchard,' despite his immediate offer to pay for the prints.

Vallée claimed to have seen Corps 'lui arracher furtivement deux estampes qu'il avoit étalée devant sa porte,' and to have seized him 'au nom de la jouissance, possession et résistance à l'oppression.' His view was supported by a 'prêtre fonctionnaire public assermenté' who had been dining with him, and who noted that he saw Corps 'au mépris de la loi qui promet sûreté individuelle et de propriété' take the prints, and heard Vallée 'se servir des expressions même de la loi portée dans la déclaration des droits qui permet à tout individu lezé de résister à l'oppression,' after Corps' 'rapt inconstitutionnel.'

With all parties claiming to invoke the law, it is unclear just who called the Guard. The view that Vallée had been acting righteously towards a simple thief is somewhat overturned in the *commissaire's* summing-up:

vu ce qui résulte des déclarations cy dessus que ledit Vallée vend des estampes inconstitutionnelles comme personifiant des premiers sujets de notre révolution et pouvant échauffer les esprits, a d'ailleurs tenu en notre présence plusieurs propos qui ne denotoient pas un bon patriote, qu'il lui est même échappé au secretariat de notre comité en voyant passer des affûts [gun-carriages] conduits par des volontaires, de dire ils auront besoin de canons, nous avons cru devoir en référer pardevant MM les administrateurs au département de police.

The latter officials released Vallée because of his domiciled status, but also observed that there had been no grounds for seizing Corps. Here as elsewhere, two interpretations of constitutionality and patriotism

²⁹APP AA84:297.

³⁰APP AA182:286, 5 July,

were brought into direct conflict, and the full weight of the administrative machine used to give victory to the more conservative version. Vallée was clearly incapable of keeping his opinions to himself, which may have led someone to brand him as an opponent in the same way men such as lieutenant Hion were victimised.³¹

Returning to the end of June, rumblings of discontent at the previous week's events could still be heard. A rare open counter-revolutionary was arrested on the 29th, a Breton doctor named Putod who had declaimed in the Palais-Royal 'nous avons juré d'être fideles à la nation, à la loy et au Roy, et surtout au Roy, je suis breton, nous sommes quarante mille de mon parti, nous le défendrons.' When someone remonstrated with him that the Assembly had now amended the oath to exclude the King, he went further: 'bas, bas, les Decrets de l'Assemblée nationale, je ne connois que le Roy.' Thus 'une foule' of people of varying status seized him, but the outcome of his interrogation is missing from the record.³²

The trend of public disturbance, however, was decidedly more towards those who saw the authorities and the Court in league over this affair. On the afternoon of 27 June a *commissaire notable adjoint et électeur* of the Section de la Place-Vendôme was sitting in a café with two other men, discussing 'à voix basse' the departure of the King. A man 'qu'on leur a dit être cocher' intruded into the conversation 'et leur avoit dit hautement qui si le Roi s'étoit enfuit par la Cour des Princes toutes les gardes nationales étoient des coquins et gagnés par l'argent.' The *notable* told him 'qu'il devoit être plus circonspect ne point parler de la garde nationale dans cette affaire en mauvais termes ou en parler d'une manière respectueuse.' The 'invectives' were repeated, however, and the encounter rapidly moved towards blows. The three men grabbed the *cocher* and would have brought him in, but they were set upon in the street 'par une multitude de personnes' who helped him to escape. Among this group were another *cocher* who worked for the same *loueur de carrosses*, and this employer's wife. The *commissaire* later discovered that the offender's name was Boucher, but he could not be tracked down.³³

On 29 June, Joseph Mollier, 'vendant de la petite mercerie dans les rues,' was imprisoned

pour avoir étant monté sur une chaise dans la carré de la porte St-Denis, fait la lecture où assistoient près de trois cents personnes d'un imprimé ayant pour titre Louis XVI et Antoinette traités comme

³¹Vallée seems to have remained marginally active throughout the Revolution - he was arrested as a *septembriseur* in germinal III, but acquitted. He does not seem to have held any responsible posts, but was reported as coming armed to Section assemblies, and once speaking of his readiness for 'expéditions patriotiques.' As late as 1813 he was denounced for 'propos contre l'empereur', but talk always seems to have outweighed action in his career. (See Soboul and Monnier, *Répertoire*, p.120.)

³²APP AA84:306.

³³APP AA206:325.

ils le méritent.³⁴

On the following day in the same Section, a 'Praticien' was arrested for having said various things about the Guard 'notamment qu'ils étoient des gredins qui recevoient des ecus de six livres de ceux qu'ils conduisoient en prison' (a notion which had sparked riot a year previously). An *argenteur* was also detained 'pour avoir dit et crié à haute voix dans les rues, la Trahison de M Delafayette, ce qu'il a nié.'³⁵

To show that politics was not all that occupied the popular mind, on the 30th François Martin, *domestique*, was detained in the Section de la Place Louis XIV 'pour avoir maltraité à coups de canne le nommé Porte Terrassier comme étant le camarade d'un particulier qui vendoit de l'argent à dix pour cent et que le nommé Martin a soutenu qu'il vouloit le vendre à seize pour cent.'³⁶ While conflicts over the supply of money clearly continued to dog Parisians' lives, the major social drama of early July was the abolition of the public workshops. An investigation of their history will reveal yet another dimension to social suspicion in revolutionary Paris.

Rumours of the dissolution of the workshops had been abroad for several months, as it was well-known that their cost was ruinous to the Municipality. A decision to shut them seems to have been taken in mid-May, although it was not put immediately into effect. Nonetheless, some hints of this leaked out, as the *Feuille du Jour* reported on 23 May:

On craignoit beaucoup un mouvement samedi dernier [21 May]: le bruit s'étoit répandu la veille, que le directoire s'occupoit de renvoyer un nombre considérable d'ouvriers attachés aux ateliers publics. Il est certain qu'on s'en occupe, et que cette détermination fait craindre une secousse. Les insurrecteurs ne laisseront pas échapper une si belle occasion d'agiter la capitale . . .

The idea that the *travaux publics* were packed with aristocratic agents was a commonplace of press discourse by this stage. As early as April Marat had given this tale his own special treatment: 'Depuis long-tems les ministres et leurs agens dans les provinces avoient attirés dans la capitale une foule d'indigens, le rebut de l'armée, et l'écume de toutes les villes du royaume.' 'Agens de l'ancienne police . . . une foule de mouchards' were running the *ateliers*, excluding good patriots and recruiting others for a coming rising.³⁷ Three days later Marat published a letter from some workers, announcing that not all of them were bad, but going on to denounce various men employed as 'vérificateurs' as exactly the kind of mouchards he had talked about. On 27 May another letter began 'Soyez convaincu, mon cher ami, que

³⁴APP AB323:1359, Section de Ponceau.

³⁵APP AB323:1372, 1373, both released 2 July, as was Mollier.

³⁶APP AB323:1376, released with *passport*, 4 July.

³⁷*L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 422, 7 April.

presque tous les ouvriers occupés aux travaux publics, sont aussi patriotes, que leur chefs sont aristocrates.’ A list of some of the latter followed, along with other of their abuses, such as ‘des femmes de mouchards déguisées en hommes qui reçoivent la paie.’³⁸

Marat’s tone and his sweeping condemnation of the government were the only things which separated his view of the workshops from that of most of the press, as became evident once the workers were stirred up by their final dismissal. The official order to dissolve the *travaux publics* was given on 16 June, but such was the reluctance of the workers to accept this that by 1 July the Municipality was forced to reiterate its order in a decree:

Le Corps Municipal, informé que, malgré les ordres donnés par l’administration, en exécution de la loi du 16 juin dernier, qui supprime les travaux payés sur les fonds des ateliers de secours, les ouvriers employés aux réparations des quais et autres ont continué leurs travaux, qu’ils avaient ordre de cesser; Réitère auxdits ouvriers, au nom de la loi, l’ordre de cesser leurs travaux . . .

They would not be paid for work done since the 16th, and if they resisted legitimate authority, ‘il sera pris des mesures contre eux comme contre des perturbateurs de l’ordre public.’³⁹ The workers had not only been resisting by simply refusing to stop work. They had been gathering in large numbers on the Place Vendôme regularly over the previous weeks, and on 25 and 28 June petitions had been presented to the National Assembly in the name of more than 20,000 workers ‘qui ont tout perdu en faveur de la Révolution, instruits du décret qui leur enlève la seule ressource qui leur restait . . .’ On the 25th they came to ‘offrir leurs coeurs, leurs bras, leurs facultés, et vous supplier de suspendre l’exécution du décret qui les ferait périr d’inanition . . .’ On the 28th they protested ‘notre amour pour vos vertus et votre mérite, et . . . notre respect et entière soumission pour les justes lois que vous nous avez prescrites.’ Their delegates swore in their name ‘d’être fidèle à la nation, d’aimer, respecter et protéger les lois décrétées par l’Assemblée, de vivre libre ou mourir.’ All the protestations were worthless, although on the 29th the Municipality did put in hand, on a commercial basis, a small amount of general reconstruction work that might take up some of the excess workforce.⁴⁰

With the toughening of policy on 1 July, force was soon an option for the winding-up of the workshops. On 3 July, Bailly wrote to Lafayette asking for infantry and cavalry to go to the Champ de Mars the next day for just this purpose, as some 2000 workers there ‘se livrent à des excès contre leurs inspecteurs,’ charged now with closing down the works. Bailly also noted that ‘le poste de Richelieu a

³⁸*L’Ami du Peuple*, no. 425, 10 April, and no. 471, 27 May.

³⁹Lacroix, vol. 5, p.223.

⁴⁰*ibid.* pp.235-240.

déjà offert ses services et se porterait à assurer l'ordre' - seeming to indicate a positive eagerness on the part of some in the Guard to have done with this social menace.⁴¹ On the same day, a high-level meeting was convened between National Assembly representatives of the *recherches*, *rappports* and *mendicité* committees, Bailly, Lafayette, the Directory of the *Département*, and police and public works officials. The most evident fruit of this was an explanatory *Avis aux Citoyens* published the same day, in which the current disturbances over the dissolution were written off as 'un nouveau prétexte saisi par des malveillants pour inquiéter le peuple et surprendre sa sensibilité.' The *Avis* observed that

Les bons citoyens s'élevaient depuis longtemps contre l'établissement des ateliers de charité; ils gémissaient de voir des sommes énormes en espèces alimenter l'oisiveté et ne produire aucuns travaux utiles. Au commencement de l'hiver, le nombre des ouvriers s'était porté à 32,000; à force de soins et de recherches, l'administration était parvenue à les réduire à 20,000, quoiqu'elle en admît tous les jours de nouveaux. Dans ce nombre était beaucoup d'étrangers . . . beaucoup, gagnant leur vie ailleurs . . . un concert secret de la part de quelques chefs favorisait ces abus et trompait la surveillance des administrateurs. D'autres encore, dont le travail était désiré dans des ateliers particuliers, dans des manufactures, préféraient un prix moindre dans les ateliers publics . . .⁴²

Every type of iniquity was thus poured on the heads of the poor workers of the *travaux publics*, and if the Municipality did not explicitly stress the allegation that they were little more than a camp of brigands in the heart of the city, the journalists took to that task with gusto. The *Feuille du Jour* reported that on the night of 3 July

des ouvriers des ateliers de secours s'assembloient hors des barrières avec le projet de courir désarmer les postes pendant la nuit. La surveillance de la garde nationale a déconcerté tous les projets. Les attroupements sont fréquens dans les divers quartiers de Paris.⁴³

The same day, 5 July, Gorsas commented:

Nous avons dit hier que . . . [le comité] de constitution avoit choisi le moment de l'évasion de Louis XVI, pour licentier les ouvriers des travaux publics; nous osons certifier aujourd'hui que l'on emploie toute sorte de moyens pour corrompre ces malheureux, afin de les engager à troubler la fête de la translation de Voltaire.

Even the workers themselves, when they returned on 4 July for a third desperate plea to the Assembly, observed that 'la faim commence à les travailler, et les contre-révolutionnaires s'en rejouissent: ils ne lisent que trop sur leurs visages.'⁴⁴ The *Révolutions de Paris* commented on these gatherings, and the violence with which the Guard had kept them under control:

Ces rassemblemens, il est vrai, paroissent d'autant plus suspects, qu'on a distingué dans la foule beaucoup de cocardes blanches; mais, dans tous les cas, il est très-dangereux d'employer la force. Ou les ouvriers attroupés sont séduits, ou ils ne le sont pas: s'ils le sont, ce n'est pas le sang du malheureux, aveugle instrument des traîtres, qui doit couler, c'est celui des corrupteurs. S'ils ne le sont

⁴¹Lacroix, vol. 5, p.260.

⁴²*ibid.* pp.252, 260-1.

⁴³*Feuille du Jour*, 5 July.

⁴⁴Lacroix, vol. 5, p.262.

pas, est-ce avec des baïonnettes que l'on appaise les cris de la misère?⁴⁵

The simple answer to that question was in the affirmative, as far as the authorities were concerned, but overall even in the comments of this radical journalist we can see that 'la misère' gave grounds for suspicion. The workers had tried to enlist the popular societies in their cause, and indeed it is debatable whether the demonstrations and petitions up to 4 July were not at least partly orchestrated by the leadership or members of the clubs. Unfortunately, the patriotic journals and societies tended to have the same basic economic outlook as the authorities - that there was far more useful work the men could be doing elsewhere. In its *Avis* of 3 July the Municipality had exhorted workers to go back to the land or into the army, and the radicals could only improve on this by suggesting that there were public-works projects such as canals and river-navigations that only needed funds applied to them to remove the surplus workers from Paris.⁴⁶ On the same day, the *Société du Point Central des Arts et Métiers*, Robert's attempt to unite patriotism and worker-solidarity, although petitioning the Assembly to suspend the dissolution-decree, desired this only to allow time for such provincial projects to be put in hand.⁴⁷ Even this communication stressed that they were concerned that 22,000 workers would gather on the 4th, and that 'les divers rapports présagent des malheurs.' As it transpired, the starving workers seem to have drifted off into the economy, or into hunger, without any mass manifestations of wrath, although as we shall shortly see, not all went quietly.

It is possible to make some clarifications about the workers in the *travaux publics* from the records in the police archives. Although their petitions presented them as honest patriots, one of the first things to emerge is that this is not an entirely valid view. For example, on 24 February two brothers, Pierre and Louis Nostry, were arrested for insulting the Guard after one of their fellows had been nearly crushed by a carriage. Louis was a *garçon perruquier* who had been unemployed for ten months, and was working in the *travaux publics* for twenty *sous* a day. His brother Pierre was a *palfrenier* for a livery-stable, a job he had taken on a month before after eighteen months 'sur le pavé.' Perhaps this is why at the same time as working with horses in the morning, he left each day to catch the 1 p.m. roll-call at the Passy *travaux*. 'On n'exige que cela de lui' in return for fifteen *sous* a day from the municipal purse. He seemed to admit this quite openly, and the difference in the two wages suggests that municipal suspicions of co-operation

⁴⁵*Révolutions de Paris*, 2-9 July.

⁴⁶See for example Audouin's *Journal Universel* of 7 July, and the *Bouche de Fer* of 29 June, which at least proposed confiscating the civil list to fund such projects.

⁴⁷Lacroix, vol. 5, p.259.

between workers and foremen were well-founded.⁴⁸ As early as 10 January, an *inspecteur des ateliers publics* had been arrested ‘pour prevarication dans ses fonctions en se permettant de grater sur les feuilles de semaine les zeros qui constataient l’absence d’un ouvrier malade.’⁴⁹

Such criminal complicity was not the whole story of social relations in the *ateliers*, however. On 25 January a worker there was jailed for ‘avoir insulté et blessé le sieur Lachapelle son chef de plusieurs coups de canne.’ On 19 March another worker attacked both his foreman and the *inspecteur*, going on to vent more spleen on the Guard.⁵⁰ On 5 April an *inspecteur* was attacked by one man specifically because he ‘lui faisoit des reproches de ce qu’il ne travailloit pas et ne faisoit que paroître aux appels.’ Not only did this worker insult and threaten the official, but he had ‘cherché à soulever contre lui tout l’atelier.’ For this he was sentenced to three months in Bicêtre, followed by automatic expulsion from the city.⁵¹ On the other end of the punitive scale, a worker who had ‘insulté et menacé son chef d’atelier’ on 7 April was released from La Force only two days later, vouched for by this same *chef*.⁵² There is no indication which would allow us to explain the difference in severity in these two cases. Clearly the extent to which the works ran by complicity or compulsion varied greatly across the city, and no doubt some individuals received different treatment from the same officials.

Reviewing the arrests of *travaux publics* workers noted in the register of La Force from 1 January 1791 to their dissolution, we find the surprisingly low total of fifty-one individuals detained. It is possible that others were working in the *ateliers* but preferred to conceal the fact, but in general the police seem to have been very good at extracting details from their suspects. Compared to the legions of the unemployed who were not on relief and who litter the records with their acts of desperation, this seems to suggest that the social menace of the *travaux publics* was far more in the minds of the bourgeoisie than in reality. Of the fifty-one detentions, fifteen were for simple theft, three for assault, three for gambling, and two for threatening a clerk of admissions to the *ateliers*. Six were for disorders within the works, some of which we have just seen, and four were for generally suspect or criminal behaviour. The remaining nineteen, however, all involved some kind of resistance to the authorities or political statement.

⁴⁸APP AA182:95. As we noted in the previous chapter, the low status of these two did not prevent them voicing a ‘political’ rebuke of the Guard.

⁴⁹APP AB322:874, he was released on the 17th, but reported to the *accusateur public*.

⁵⁰APP AB322:978, sent to Tribunal, and AB323:16. In this latter case, the man was treated more leniently, being released after nine days in time to return to work.

⁵¹APP AB323:245.

⁵²APP AB323:244.

This includes a number of cases we have already seen, such as the man threatening to have two nuns whipped for refusing to donate him tools, or the one who would not uncover for the St-Leu procession on 23 June. Other cases hint at long-running disputes, such as that of Adrien Charles Hiver, a former ‘soldat du centre du bataillon de Ste-Margueritte, d’où il a été renvoyé.’ He sought to ‘ameuter le public’ on 27 March against a Guard sergeant of his old company, claiming that the latter had had him put in the Abbaye prison. The Abbaye was not the normal destination of petty offenders, so this may be some echo of the Gardes Françaises’ mutiny of June 1789.⁵³

Less ambiguously, *travaux publics* workers turned up making radical statements at every turn of events in 1791. They were blamed *en masse* for the demolition of Vincennes, in response to which on 4 March one was arrested for ‘les propos les plus indecens’ against Lafayette on this subject. Incidents we have already noted at Easter, in May, around Santerre’s court-case and the royal flight all show these workers criticising the authorities, and Lafayette in particular.⁵⁴ At the height of the crisis over the *ateliers*’ abolition, one André Le Blin insulted and threatened a sentry near the Tuileries on 3 July, going on to tear the epaulettes off a sergeant in the guardpost, and becoming so violent that the Guards broke two muskets as they beat him into submission. This shows something of the desperation of the times.⁵⁵

It would probably be an exaggeration to say that radical opinions were particularly current in the *travaux publics*, but they certainly seem to have been as evident there as in the general population. Another case from 3 July indicates some of the feelings running at that moment. Jean Germain Devrin, a 40-year-old labourer, was arrested for saying, in a group on the Place Vendôme, ‘que M le Maire étoit un gueux un scelerat et autres invectives, qu’il falloit le pendre.’ Moreover, ‘s’il n’étoit pas armé dans le moment, il le seroit quand il le voudroit, que s’il falloit du sang on en repandroit et qu’il falloit vaincre ou mourir et qu’on se porteroit de preference chez M le Maire qu’ailleurs.’ The Guard observed ‘que ceux qui étoient là applaudissoient à ses propos,’ and arrested him when he was safely away from the group. One of the deposing Guards perhaps betrayed a slight sympathy for him, noting ‘que ledit particulier ne disoit ces propos qu’à cause de la suppression des ateliers publics.’ He did however also note that Devrin had been making ‘motions incendiaires . . . monté sur une chaise’ the previous day.

Devrin tried to deny any incendiary remarks, but admitted that he had heard others speaking ill of

⁵³APP AB323:104, Section des Arcis.

⁵⁴See above, and APP AB322:1431 and AB323:427, 742, 1011, 1210.

⁵⁵APP AB323:1420, Section des Thuileries.

Bailly, particularly because he had supposedly said that the surplus workers should 'se mettre aux coins des rues pour faire des commissions'. The gathering of workers on the Place Vendôme was due to a rumour 'que l'Assemblée Nationale devoit leur faire donner de l'ouvrage.' Devrin was there 'avec ses camarades en attendant sa decision.' This may indicate that workers such as Devrin had heard only indirectly of the petitioning taking place on their behalf. He seems to have held similar views to those expressed in the petitions, saying 'veut-on notre sang le voila, il est pour l'intérêt de la nation,' and that 'n'ayant pas de pain il ne pouvoit faire autrement que de mourir.' He had served eleven years in the army, and may have been technically a deserter - 'il en a un congé expiré en 1789 au mois d'octobre,' but he was enrolled in the Section de Bondy to leave for the frontiers. This patriotic admission did not save him from incarceration, where he was sent for trial.⁵⁶

With the fading away of this agitation, Paris entered a brief interlude of tense calm. Just how tense can be seen from two commentaries from either side of the moderate/radical divide. Audouin wrote on 6 July:

Je ne terminerai ce numéro, sans avertir les bons citoyens d'avoir toujours sous la main ou leurs fusils, ou leurs sabres, ou leurs piques, en un mot leurs armes, afin d'être prêts au premier signal . . . car on manoeuvre, on cabal, on intrigue en tous sens, pour opérer à Paris une querelle sanglante, à la faveur de laquelle on pillerait, on brûlerait; enfin on commettrait toutes sortes d'horreurs.⁵⁷

On 8 July the *Feuille du Jour* reported the arrest of the eighteen *garçons chapeliers* noted in an earlier chapter. Although the police record shows them being received without disorder into La Force, according to this account they had been taken to the Abbaye, whereupon

Un peuple immense s'est rassemblé aux portes de la prison. On demandoit que les prisonniers fussent livrés à la multitude; une partie vouloit qu'ils fussent pendus, l'autre prétendoit les mettre sous sa sauvegarde. La garde nationale a repoussé les deux parties, et les prisonniers sont restés à l'Abbaye.

What this indicates is unclear; it may represent confusion with the continued detention of the Gardes-du-Corps noted at the start of this chapter, it certainly shows a city in a state of high alarm. The next day the same paper persisted with its concerns over the *travaux publics* workers - 'leur nombre grossit tous les jours. M. Bailly paroît être l'objet continuel de leurs menaces et de leur ressentiment.' The lack of funds to see them safely out of the city meant that 'de quelque côté que nous envisageons la crise où nous sommes, elle est effrayante.' It had also reported on the 8th that three thousand people had been brought to the Place Vendôme by a rumour that the King had fled again - 'c'étoit une prétexte d'attroupement que

⁵⁶APP AA206:337, Section de la Place-Vendôme, and AB323:1409, referred to Tribunal 9 July.

⁵⁷*Journal Universel*, 6 July. One may suspect from the windiness of this passage that it was no more than a filler for the last page, but plenty of other editions had been 'filled' with less alarming pronouncements.

de promptes mesures ont déjoué. La cavalerie nationale a nettoyé la place en dix minutes.’ Three days later it reported an attempt at a mass-meeting of the workers on the Champ de Mars, pre-empted by an occupation of the field with cavalry.⁵⁸

As a decision on the fate of the King drew near, the authorities’ vigilance heightened. Louis George de St-Gilles, who had the temerity to remark to a *député* that a passing Guard’s uniform ‘*étoit un grenier à coups de baton*’, and proposed to demonstrate this, was sentenced to a year in Bicêtre after insulting the Police Tribunal with his cries of ‘*Vive le Roy, la Reine, la famille Royale par affectation*’.⁵⁹ Such isolated outbursts of *aristocratie* no doubt helped to colour views of a continuing flow of more popular *propos*. A ‘*compagnon tendurier*’ [teinturier?] was arrested on 11 July for ‘*propos incendiaires contre M. Lafayette et la garde nationale*’ in the Section de l’Arsenal. A Tribunal eventually decided that this offence was only worthy of an eight-day prison sentence, but he had meanwhile been in custody until the hearing, on 7 September.⁶⁰ On the morning of 13 July, a *cocher* was arrested on the Place de Grève for saying that if he were arrested in the way the Guard were arresting a *joueur* on the Place, ‘*il auroit foutu des coups de pied dans le cul à la garde nationale*.’ Those testifying against him included a *marchand de chevaux*, an *ébéniste*, a *garçon imprimeur* and a *compagnon serrurier*, all of whom mentioned the same words.⁶¹

On 14 July, as the Guard celebrated a relatively low-key *Fête de la Fédération*, several arrests were made around the city for insults and incendiary comments to the Guard. One, detained ‘*pour avoir insulté M. Gaillot commandant du Bataillon St-Victoire*’ was a certain Jean Varlet, ‘*vivant de ses biens*’.⁶² He was not the only *Enragé* to pop up at this time, as we shall see. Meanwhile, tensions were continuing to rise perceptibly. It was reported that Dupont and Dandré, architects of the evolving compromise over the King, upon leaving the Assembly on the 14th ‘*ont été poursuivis de menaces et d’invectives, par cette populace soudoyée pour hurler contre le roi*’.⁶³ By the evening of 15 July news of the Assembly’s

⁵⁸*Feuille du Jour*, 8, 9 and 11 July.

⁵⁹APP AB324:1517, Section de Ponceau, 10 July, sentenced 16 July.

⁶⁰APP AB324:1602.

⁶¹APP AA56:338, Section des Arcis. So indignant was the arrested man, Gabriel Tramu, about the charge, that he added in his own hand after his signature, ‘*ne reconnoit pas les depositions des déposants contre moy*.’ He was released on his employer’s *aveu*, ‘*de ne pas porter atteinte au service public*,’ as he had to drive to Clichy that day.

⁶²APP AB324:1579, Section des Gobelins, released 15 July. Also, AB324:1580, *cocher et propriétaire de carrosse*. Section de la Bonne Nouvelle, fined six *livres*, 16 July, and 1692, unidentified man, Section des Invalides, vouched for 20 July.

⁶³*Feuille du Jour*, 15 July.

decision to whitewash the King was abroad, and the guardpost on the Pont au Change had posted an extra sentry 'du côté du trottoir à l'effet de faire poursuivre le chemin aux personnes qui voudroient s'arrêter pour causer entr'elles afin de ne pas donner lieu au plus petit attroupement.' As this sentry was telling two men who had stopped for just this reason to move on, a third arrived and 'le trouva mauvais, dit que l'heure n'étoit pas indue, qu'il étoit libre à tout homme de causer où bon lui semble.' He was told to mind his own business, as the other two had moved on anyway, but persisted. The sentry decided to detain him and took him by the collar, at which point the pervasive tension became manifest, as by his own admission the detainee had 'sauté sur son fusil dans la crainte qu'il ne fit usage contre lui de la bayonnette.'⁶⁴

The offender was Jean-Baptiste Duclos, a *bourgeois*, which is probably why this incident resulted in no more than 'une vive reprimande' from the *commissaire*. Slightly earlier the same evening, two men had been arrested on the Boulevard du Temple for beating a drum, even though the Guards were entirely clear about their intentions - 'en invitant tous les citoyens à se rendre à la Bastille pour y danser.' A *bourgeois de Paris* had seized the hapless drummer, who turned out to be one of Palloy's clerks touting for business on the great man's orders. His comrade was a *compagnon maçon* from the site who had gone with him on Palloy's suggestion, 'croyant que cela ne tiroit aucune conséquence.' They had borrowed the drum from a Guard *tambour*. 'Palloy, patriote,' as he signed himself, arrived to vouch for them, and they and the drum were returned to their rightful places.⁶⁵

If the responses visible in these two incidents seem excessive, others gave clearer cause for alarm, like the *tailleur* on this day who cried 'à bas les bayonnettes et les Cavaliers' at the Opéra, or the 'Chef des ateliers de charité' the next day who insulted the *commissaire* questioning him, after saying 'il falloit une contre-révolution pour remettre tout dans l'ordre parcequ'un marchand de vin n'avoit pas voulu lui changer un Billet de 25 livres pour dix sols.'⁶⁶ In the multifaceted view of popular disorder, both these incidents were equally dangerous.

Meanwhile, as the *Feuille du Jour* noted, the 15th saw a mass presence at the Assembly - the deputies 'furent investis d'une multitude immense qui se pressoit aux portes. Des insultes, des menaces furent adressés aux membres les plus estimables . . .' This was apparently the result of the popular

⁶⁴APP AA56:340, Section des Arcis.

⁶⁵APP AA239:94, Section du Temple.

⁶⁶APP AB324:1629, Section de Bondy, referred to Tribunal, and 1637, Section des Invalides, likewise.

societies' first petition on the King, which according to the *Argus Patriote* had been 'envoyée TOUTE FAITE' to the *Société fraternelle* - 'Les prétendus pétitionnaires, qui pour la plupart ne savent lire ni écrire, ayant arrêté les passans pour avoir leurs signatures . . . les gardes ont été doublées partout à cause de cette pétition.'⁶⁷

The petitioners met again the next day, one result of which was that on the afternoon of the 16th, a *distillateur* and three *ingénieurs des ponts et chaussées*, passing down the rue St-Honoré, caused to be arrested a man 'vetu d'un habit brun rayé, portans à son bras gauche un Ruban aux couleurs de la nation et un pareil Ruban sur sa poitrine, auquel pendoit une medaille.'⁶⁸ He was carrying a paper entitled 'pétition à l'assemblée nationale' and an invitation to all citizens, and was reading out this document 'à haut et intelligible voix,' calling on men, women, and children 'ayans attenues l'age de Raison,' to come to the Champ de Mars on the 17th to sign 'ladite pétition.' Here we find the beginnings of the final clash between the radicals and the authorities, and a microcosm of the formation of revolutionary suspicions.

The concern aroused by this man's behaviour was compounded when one of the engineers recognised him as having been 'dans l'étendue de son Département et notamment à Mantes proclamant et publiant plusieurs papiers incendiaires.' This was sufficient for the *commissaire* of the Section de la Place-Vendôme to subject him to brisk questioning, which he appeared to answer guilelessly. He was Jean-Jacques Larcher, 23, *instituteur*, from Rouen by birth, and presently lodged in Paris. As he explained, he had been reading the *arrêté* of 'un Rassemblement de Citoyens au Champ de Mars,' said meeting being to write a petition tending to request the Assembly to revoke its decree of the 15th 'sur la personne de Louis seize,' and the *arrêté* being an invitation for citizens to sign the completed work the next day 'vers les deux heures après midi.' He could only name one other person who had been at the meeting, but added that deputations from various societies were present, including the Jacobins, the *Société fraternelle* and the Cordeliers.

When the *commissaire* moved on to look at Larcher's circumstances, he revealed an itinerary of troubled times. Larcher was out of work as a teacher, living from the meagre remaining profits of a pamphlet he had had printed of his memorial oration to Mirabeau in Rouen's 'église métropolitaine,' made at Easter. He had been in Paris for 22 days, following up a verbal commission from a Rouen *officier*

⁶⁷*Feuille du Jour*, 16 July; *L'Argus Patriote*, no. 12, 17 July. The popular societies' role in the events of this period can be followed in Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, ch. 8, esp. pp.275-83 on the period 14-17 July. The unfolding of these events from the perspective of the Municipality can be seen in Lacroix, vol. 5, pp.371-410.

⁶⁸APP AA206:363-9.

municipal to gather certificates from his previous places of work. These had included the 'frères des Ecoles Chretiennes' in the rue de Lappe for two and a half years, six months in another *communauté* at Auxerre, and various similar institutions for shorter periods. A young man of pronounced radical sympathies, therefore, who had served in religious institutions for diminishing periods of time (two facts probably not unrelated), and now in Paris on uncertain business. All this was evidence to brand him an *incendiaire*, and more emerged when his pockets were turned out, revealing two *Société fraternelle* tracts and a manuscript of the petition in question, along with a piece of paper saying 'nous donnons pouvoir au nommé Larcher porteur et redacteur de cette pétition de la présenter à l'assemblée nationale, [signed] Larcher président, Groulon secrétaire-greffier, ce 16 juillet l'an 2eme de la liberté, fait au Champ de Mars.' The *commissaire* had made up his mind, the medallion Larcher was wearing was removed from him 'pour être remise à qui il appartient,' and he was dispatched to La Force.⁶⁹

Doubtless it did not help Larcher's case to be lumped in with two other men, detained for allegedly passing a comment about his arrest. The first of these was a 27-year-old servant of the *trésorier-général des monnaies*, Damas Joseph Drecq. He admitted frankly to having said that 'sous l'habit de garde nationale il y avoit de faux frères.' A remark he felt was justified after one such had said that all the people who were making petitions needed hanging. Was he one of these people, he was asked - no, he said. Why then, went on the *commissaire*, should he find the Guard's remark 'mauvais?' Drecq replied 'qu'il croyoit que le public étoit autorisé à faire des pétitions par [or possibly 'pour'] un decret de l'assemblée nationale.' He had no 'intérêt' in the makers of petitions, however - he merely thought the remark wrong. He had been passing by and did not know either Larcher or the third man. A search revealed his membership card for the *Société fraternelle*, where he went 'assez souvent'. Predictably, the next question was whether he had been paid to join and to 'soutenir son opinion.' He retorted on the contrary that it cost him 24 *sous* for three months and 'il ny n'a jamais jamais reçu.' His master was to turn up and vouch for him, gaining his release, but not before the waters had been further muddied by the third detainee.

This man seems to have been no more than the passer-by to whom Drecq had addressed his comment, and claimed to have said nothing about the matter or about the Guard. Nonetheless, the

⁶⁹Like the vast majority of those imprisoned for suspect activities from this point on, Larcher would be referred to the Tribunals, lingering in prison until the general amnesty marking the acceptance of the Constitution on 13 September. (See Lacroix, vol. 5, p.486.) This is the fate that should be assumed in all cases referred to from now on, unless specifically noted otherwise.

commissaire was suspicious. He had given his name as François Delatourat, 40, 'vivant de ses biens,' lodged in Paris with a *restaurateur*, but having been in the city for 18 years. While in the guardpost, he had tried to summon his wife with a note written on the back of a letter from his father, which had come into the hands of the *commissaire*. As was sharply observed from his father's signature, Delatourat was not his family name, and he explained that it was the name of 'un ci-devant fief' he had used since childhood. Nonetheless, it was now illegal to pass under such an assumed identity. He responded to this reasonably enough, that having passed as Delatourat in Paris for 18 years, to take on his 'true' name would be tantamount to adopting a false one.

Changing tack, the interrogation went on in search of culpable activities. He had not been to the Champ de Mars that day, but had passed by on the 15th 'par desoeuvrement' when 'il n'y a rien fait,' other than to have signed a petition 'qui lui a paru très sage.' A search of his person revealed a pair of loaded pistols in his pocket, which he said was 'par extraordinaire' because he intended going to a dangerous place - the Champ de Mars, since 'on lui a dit qu'il y avoit un grand rassemblement de monde qui pouvait quelquefois s'y entourer de malintentionnés et il s'était armé crainte d'événemens.' The arms merely added to the other suspicions about him, and he was sent to La Force. Were the *commissaire* inclined to believe what a great many of his fellow Parisians, including those who wrote the official account of the events of the next day, believed, he could congratulate himself on laying hands on what looked like a conspiratorial cell - a shiftless provincial firebrand, the servant of a high official who criticised the Guard and belonged openly to a subversive assembly, and an aristocrat without a permanent address who carried loaded weapons, consorted with crowds and passed under an assumed name.

If he sought confirmation of suspicious activities around his Section, the *commissaire* only had to look to the next man the Guard brought in, a bare half-hour later. Two Guards had heard him on the Place Vendôme saying that the nation was getting tired of the Assembly, 'que si l'Assemblée nationale continuoit encore à donner des foutus decrets comme ceux d'hier que dans un mois elle seroit chassée par le peuple,' and further that the Guard would not last much longer - three months at most. The man was detained overnight and hauled up first thing in the morning for questioning.

He was Anne Joseph La Porte, 47, *licencié ès loix*, living in lodgings. He claimed to have said only that the decree of the 15th 'paroissois ne pas convenir à tout le monde.' Following this a Guard had told him he was an aristocrat in the pay of Bouillé, but he had not responded, and said that the remark about the Guard's days being numbered was 'une atrocité' when it was quoted to him. He was further suspect

for wearing a Guard coat, and had to deny buying it, saying it was given him by the Nation as a *Vainqueur de la Bastille*. He lacked certification of this status, but he had been one of the ‘assaillans,’ ‘et qu’il sera reconnu par ceux qui y étoiens.’ He lived, he said, ‘par écritures qu’il fait pour ceux dont il est connu,’ which led to interrogation about any writings he might have done for the *Société fraternelle*, for example, or any mass petitions he might have had a hand in. All this he denied, having ‘aucune connoissance’ of the petitions of the 15th and 16th.

A search of his pockets revealed a sheet of paper containing an appeal to workers of the *travaux publics* to meet on 1 July and ask the authorities ‘avec cette soumission, cette prudence qui caractérisent les honnêtes gens,’ not to close down their workshops, but to offer ‘les secours dont nous avons besoin, tant pour nous que pour nos femmes et nos enfans.’ Given this, La Porte had to admit that for some 15 or 16 months he had worked there. The document’s pathetic appeal did not stop it from contributing to suspicions about him, and he was sent to La Force.⁷⁰

The records of La Force indicate that some went beyond merely protesting the actions of the Assembly. Philippe Joseph Lefranc ‘ci-devant canonier soldé ayant son congé depuis quatre mois, Ex-président et citoyen de la Section du Théâtre-Français,’ was seized in the Section des Tuileries, ‘pour avoir formé un attroupement séditieux à la porte de l’Assemblée nationale, avoir injurié M. Charles de Lameth, et avoir menacé de coups de couteau un aide-de-camp, un soldat du centre, etca. etca.’⁷¹ Meanwhile from the Palais-Royal at 11 p.m. on the 16th we find an almost unique instance of someone venting their spleen on the King personally. Pierre Toulain, an unemployed *maître de mathématique*, was in a group of people, where as a witness observed, ‘il regnoit beaucoup de rumeur’ due to the nature of his words:

que le decret de l’Assemblée nationale qui declaroit que le Roy ne pouvoit être mis en cause étoit dangereux que Louis seize étoit un imbecille ou un scélérat, il falloit le destituer ou luy faire son proces il ne puisse aller contre le voeu du peuple qui lui jettoit du trone.

He had added that the seven Assembly committees who had united to decide this issue were ‘vendus à nos ennemis et aux puissances étrangères.’⁷² Toulain admitted that ‘des expressions hazardés’ may have escaped him, but denied that he had addressed the public with any ‘intention.’ He was sent to the Hôtel de Ville, and then to La Force.

⁷⁰APP AA206:370.

⁷¹APP AB324:1708, referred to *comité des recherches*, and thence to the Tribunal. If this was the behaviour of this Section’s ex-president, it may help to explain why Théâtre-Français was one of only six Sections not to detain any *séditieux* in July 1791.

⁷²APP AA85:68.

The gatherings and agitation in the Palais-Royal continued into the small hours of the morning, reflecting the state of a city aroused by almost a month of uncertainty and confusion over the place of the King in the Constitution, and by the growing sentiment that what had been decided among the political class was not in the interests of the people. Six thousand people would sign a petition to that effect the following afternoon, and some of them would pay for their opinions with their lives. The continual intensification of political awareness promoted by this extended crisis had reached the point where massive popular involvement was inevitable. Unfortunately, the governing discourse of suspicion also rendered it intolerable.

PART THREE - THE MASSACRE: ORDER *VERSUS* DEMOCRACY?

CHAPTER 8 - THE EVENTS OF 17 JULY THROUGH THE EYES OF POLICE AND PEOPLE

This thesis has already assembled ample evidence to dissect Rudé's simplistic view of popular politicisation, and in the twenty-four hours surrounding the Champ de Mars Massacre the police records are filled with material which can only amplify the richness we have perceived. Rather than being offered with a comprehensive commentary (a project which would take much more space than we have available), this material is here presented chronologically, with occasional clarifications and observations, but principally so that the radical and authoritarian responses to events can be read, with all their complications and implicit contradictions, as they were expressed in tones of outrage and recrimination at the desks of the *commissaires*. The patterns and conceptions into which such utterances can be fitted will, it is hoped, be clear from the exposition of previous chapters, and will be reiterated as we move towards our conclusions.

8.1 - BEFORE THE HORROR

At 1 a.m. on 17 July, the same sergeant Chabrol who had been humiliated at the *Société fraternelle* the previous month brought to the Palais-Royal *commissaire* an *étudiant en chirurgie* (perhaps one of the *Club Chirurgical*) who had remarked to a group that it was 'abominable' to see patrols of Guards with fixed bayonets, and that 'tout cecy finiroit, qu'aujourd'hui ils avoient pris un arrette au Champ de la Fédération et que demain ils devoient s'assembler deux cents mille hommes audit champs et que les gardes nationales n'avoient qu'à s'y presenter.' When challenged on this by Chabrol, the student, Felix Nicolas Traisuel, claimed to have orders from the Municipality on this subject, despite Chabrol's objection that all 'atroupements' had been banned. Concluding that this group must be 'mauvais citoyens,' he seized

Traisuel with the aid of two Guard officers.

Traisuel claimed that what he had meant was that the Guard would be met 'avec fraternité' if they came to the meeting. He believed that it was 'd'après l'invitation du Club des Jacobins autorisé (soy disans) par la municipalité.' It is not clear if the parenthesis is his or the *commissaire*'s. He had called out for 'patriotes' to come forward and explain his meaning, but none had done so. He went on to complain that he had been seized by 'un particulier sans uniforme' - something we have seen before. He was, however, a member of the *Société fraternelle*, and had placed enough suspicion upon himself to be put in the *salle de discipline* at the Palais-Royal until his father could claim him. It seems the latter did arrive, but by then 'il s'est échappé' and was not seen again by the authorities. One hopes he was not unfortunate enough to come to a bloody end in the day's events.¹

The next *séditieux* of 17 July was also found in the Palais-Royal, an hour later at 2 a.m. The Guard noted that he had been arrested an hour before, but released 'sur la demande de plusieurs citoyens.' He had, however, repeated his 'motions incendiaires,' so two off-duty Guards had detained him again. He was Dominique Joseph Billot, 'Bourgeois de Paris cy-devant conducteur de Diligences.' He had been heard to say 'pourquoi applaudit on la Garde Nationale qui se comporte si mal.' Several Guards of various Battalions had chased him outside the Palais, where he had claimed that on his first arrest he had been bayoneted in the face - a manifest untruth, they protested. Moreover, he had made a more serious political comment:

Que le Decret de l'assemblée nationale qui met le Roi hors de cause ne tiendrait pas qu'il avoit diné avec des particuliers des differens départemens qu'il reponoit que le susdit decret ne passeroit pas, et qu'il ne faloit pas souffrir que la Garde nationale se porter a de tels exces vis a vis des citoyens.²

Billot tried to cover himself against the words about the Guard, claiming to have asked only 'pourquoy on applaudissoit,' but he was forthright in his radical opinion on the validity of the decree - 'les 83 départemens avoient seuls le droit de les confirmer qu'il soutiendrait son sentiment jusqu'à l'effusion de son sang.' He was fortunately able to find a *marchand teinturier* to vouch for him in the morning, and was released despite his trouble-making attitude.

No further incidents seem to have cropped up until 8 a.m., when a *maître bijoutier* and a *maître chapelier* brought a young man to the *commissaire* of the Section du Louvre. They had found him as he 'arrachoit une affiche apposée au coin de la rue St-Germain l'Auxerrois de la part du département Relative

¹APP AA85:71.

²APP AA85:72.

au decret Rendu le soir d'hier qui invite les français à la surveillance.'³

The culprit was Claude Gros, 21, *élève en pharmacie*. He claimed only to have 'mis le doigt dessus' the poster, which 'étant trop fraîche . . . s'est déchiré.' He was asked if he had been 'excité' to tear it by someone - 'a répondu qu'ayant entendu plusieurs particuliers dire qu'il falloit supprimer le mot Roy qui etoit dans laditte affiche qu'il a mis le doigt dessus . . . mais qu'il n'est excitté par personne.'

The suspicions of the authorities were not wholly satisfied by this explanation:

a lui observé qu'il paroissoit qu'il étoit disposé à l'anéantissement de la Roiauté puisque l'on observoit qu'il a raïé dessus ses Boutons de son habit le mot Roy. a répondu que c'est le jour du depart du Roy que l'on l'a contraint a l'effacer.

Despite the evident desire of the authorities to forget that particular episode, such an obvious explanation had to be accepted, and Gros was allowed to go free after his master had testified 'qu'il etoit un bon patriote.'

As the city began to come fully awake on this Sunday morning, the *colporteurs* were out plying their trade. The *commissaire* of the Section de la Place Louis XIV arrested one at 9 a.m. he had heard crying 'la grande colere la rage la fureur du pere duchesne contre l'infidille Louis Capet.' After reading the man's wares, he concluded that not only were they 'contraire à la tranquillité publique au respect du à la Royauté et aux principes decretés par l'assemblée nationale,' but also 'contenant des injures contre l'assemblée nationale, les officers publics et contre la garde nationale.' He marched the man to the Mairie, where no more is noted of him.⁴

By 10 a.m. *colporteurs* were causing disquiet in several areas. One was detained on the rue de Popincourt for crying 'la grande trahison du commandant du bataillon de Popincourt,' which he admitted to a Guard was not the title of any of his wares. 'Cette perfidie' brought him to the *commissaire*, where he confessed his crime, but said he had heard the substance of the accusation in 'tous les quartiers où il a passé.' His papers for sale included Audouin's *Journal Universel*, the *Journal de la Révolution* and two versions of the *Père Duchesne*. He was sent to La Force.⁵ Lacroix clarifies the issue of the 'treason.' On the 14th, the Battalion commander, Colin de Cancey, and the captain of the centre-company, Thouvenin, had been denounced to the Section *comité* for saying that Louis would be re-enthroned the next day, there would then be a massacre, and that they would keep one of the first shots for a republican like Vialle, the

³APP AA182:311.

⁴APP AA167:61.

⁵APP AA219:11, Section de Popincourt. His name was Louis Auguste Vellière. 30, a former port-labourer.

Guard captain they spoke to, and who denounced them. They were detained, and an investigation reduced the *affaire* to an imprudent remark by Thouvenin to the effect that if the republicans won the day he would take to wearing a white cockade. Meanwhile, naturally, threats had been issued to lynch them and burn their houses, but any consequences of this were lost to view in the larger events of this time.⁶

Returning to the 17th, 10 a.m. also saw the arrest in the Section des Enfants-Rouges of the *colporteur* selling the pamphlet from the Imprimerie de Tremblay, whose gratuitously incendiary production we surveyed in an earlier chapter. Tensions continued to rise throughout the morning. At 10:30 a.m. a Guard detachment was moving through the Place de Grève with some cannon when Pierre Sallandrous, a painter, said ‘ah en voila déjà qui arrivent pour tirer sur les citoyens.’ A citizen told him to be quiet and he replied ‘Est ce que l’on n’est plus libre de dire sa façon de penser.’ This ‘*propos en recidive*’ led to his arrest. Sallandrous admitted the second speech, but claimed that, concerning the cannon, he had only said that *if* they were going to fire, his nearby home would be in danger. This was a fine point of distinction, and *commissaire* Deneux of the Section des Arcis was inclined to ignore it, the *propos* being ‘de nature dans les circonstances actuelles a exciter une fermentation infiniment dangereuse’, and to lock him up. However, one of his fellow Section *commissaires*, in attendance due to Sallandrous’ domiciled status, felt that this latter meant that he ‘devoit être . . . mis en liberté,’ which view prevailed.⁷

At 11 a.m. the grande rue du Faubourg St-Antoine saw two incidents. The first was a *colporteur* who allegedly ‘crioit à haute voix . . . voila l’indigne decret de l’assemblée nationale, et faisoit invitation aux citoyens de se rendre au Champ de Mars où étoient vingt mille citoyens qui devoient protester contre ce Decret.’ A *citoyen de Paris* seized him, and was joined by ‘plusieurs citoyens qui passoient qui étoient outré de l’ombrage faite à l’assemblée nationale.’ These were a *maître jardinier*, two *ouvriers aux glaces*, a *menuisier* and an *imprimeur*, all of whom testified to the man’s words.

The *colporteur*, Denis Billiette, formerly of the *travaux publics*, claimed on the other hand only to have said ‘voila le journal universel, voila vingt mille citoyens qui doivent se transporter au Champ de Mars pour protester . . .’ and that the man who had seized him denounced him to the passers-by, putting the words about the ‘indigne decret’ into his mouth. Even so, he could not show where in Audouin’s paper anything was written about twenty thousand citizens, since he was illiterate, and admitted to having heard it from someone selling a different paper.

⁶See Lacroix, vol. 5, pp.355-9.

⁷APP AA56:346. Deneux had to be satisfied with reporting the matter to the Mayor and the Police Department.

Hence subornation rose in the mind of the police and he was 'interrogé sy ce n'est pas quelqu'un qu'il l'a porté a crier . . . pour ameuter dans le faubourg St-Antoine et persuader aux citoyens que l'assemblée nationale pouvoit se tromper.' He denied this, but was sent to La Force for insulting the 'corps legislatif' and encouraging protest against 'l'autorité souverain.'⁸

Further along the same street, André Etienne Primery, 21, *ouvrier tabletier*, was arrested by a group of citizens for 's'être présenté dans differents boutiques de la grande rue du faubourg St-Antoine un papier blanc à la main sur lequel il demandoit des signatures.' A *menuisier* and two *garçons de boutique* explained to the *commissaire* that Primery had announced himself as a member of the 'société des haies et de la liberté' and was looking for the *Société des Ennemis du Despotisme*; not being able to find it he had resorted to asking for their signatures and their presence at the Champ de Mars that afternoon. The witnesses decided that he must have 'des intentions suspects' and took him in.

Primery explained that the *Société des Halles* had heard the previous evening that there was to be a general rally of popular societies at the Porte St-Antoine at 10 a.m. Arriving to find that 'la quantité d'individus n'étant pas conséquents,' he and some others had been sent to find the *Ennemis du Despotisme* and ask them to join them. He insisted 'qu'il n'avoit demandé aucune signature a personne' in the street. None of this diminished the initial suspicion, and he was taken to the Hôtel de Ville, though his fate from there is not recorded.⁹

Meanwhile, equal suspicion was on display in the heart of the city, in the Section d'Henri Quatre. At 11 a.m. a Guard sergeant-major, leaving his house to go on duty, 'a vu plusieurs personnes attroupés,' and heard 'un particulier repeter à différentes fois que la garde nationale perdroit la France et beaucoup d'autres mauvais propos incendiaires.' He remonstrated with him, at the same time as trying to detain him, and had to chase him to do so. In the guardpost the man repeated his central charge, and the Guard concluded 'qu'il avoit un dessin premedité de semer la discorde et d'exciter les citoyens à se soulever.'¹⁰

The individual was Etienne Boinet, 31, *garçon tailleur établi*. He admitted at once that 'j'ai été arrêté parce que j'ai dit que ce serait un malheur que la garde nationale perde la France.' He claimed, however, that this was just a reply to two passing women who had said 'que la garde nationale étoit trop bonne,' whatever that may be taken to mean.

⁸APP AA173:24, Section de Montreuil. When searched he was happy to show 'qu'il ny avoit rien dans l'endroit où il met les papiers qu'il cache et qui sont defendus' - yet another example of the absurdity of policing this trade.

⁹APP AA220:142, Section des Quinze-Vingts.

¹⁰APP AA215:455.

Following up the Guard's suspicions, he was asked if he belonged to 'aucun société ou club,' and responded 'qu'il n'avoit pas le tems, qu'il étoit à travailler depuis cinq heures du matin jusqu'à neuf heures du soir, que ce fait pourroit être attesté par toutes les personnes qui habitoit la maison où il demeure.' Likewise he did not serve in the Guard because he was 'seul et que cela l'empêcheroit de travailler,' but though he was living in a furnished room at the moment, at a previous address (when presumably his circumstances were easier) 'il a ci-devant payé sa garde' - that is, presumably, made the financial contribution of non-serving active citizens. With this to support his honesty, despite another witness testifying to his repeated use of the phrase 'la garde nationale perdait la France,' he was released with a warning 'd'être à l'avenir plus circonspecte dans ses propos.'

This parade of minor incidents serves to show that, before any word of lynchings at Gros Caillou, the situation of 17 July was one of extreme tension and suspicion. In this variety of cases, we may speculate on who was genuinely an incendiary, if such a phrase has any meaning, or who was dragged in thanks to the over-active imagination of those who were inflamed by the press in an anti-radical direction. In any case, the scene was being set ever-more precisely for massacre and repression, even as the radicals stirred themselves to ever-greater heights of oratorical indignation. Two further incidents show this.

At 12:30 p.m., three *canoniers volontaires*, another Guard, an *ouvrier au département des subsistances* and a student arrested a man on the Place de Grève. The first *canonier* testified that he had seen him eight days before 'couvert d'un espèce d'uniforme' making 'les propos les plus incendiaires, disant qu'il falloit pendre M de la fayette.' Just now he had seen him again, perorating on the Place 'd'une manière à echauffer toutes les têtes, qu'il a dit que le Roi devoit être jugé, et qu'aujourd'hui qu'il y avoit deux partis, ce seroit le plus fort qui l'emporteroit.'

The witness noted 'avec plaisir' that the crowd listening 'lui donnoit tous les torts,' but still arrested him as 'infiniment suspect,' particularly as the uniform he was still wearing was the same as the Guard's except for the buttons - which he thought suggested an intention to 'faire suspecter le patriotisme de la garde nationale, et donner à croire qu'elle étoit divisée en deux partis.'

The suspect, Jean Allais, 25, *sans état*, explained that he had been in the Netherlands, serving with the 'Brabançons,' from where he had deserted. The uniform's original yellow facings had been 'absolument usés,' so he had replaced them with blue ones he had bought. He had been in Paris for six months, until recently in the Ste-Geneviève *travaux publics*. He was happy to admit saying 'que la troupe

étoit là pour aller au Champ de Mars afin d'empêcher que eux qui y étoient ne signent pour faire juger le Roy,' but protested that he had never said he wanted Lafayette hanged - 'rien n'est plus faux.'

He may have been *sans état*, but he had a silver watch, the origins of which were probed by the *commissaire*. Allais said he had bought it recently, and was living from the proceeds of the sale of 'du bien à Noisy le sec' which he had come into at his majority on 6 May. He also offered an uncle, a *fripier*, to vouch for him. However, the *commissaire* was in no doubt as to what to do with him:

considerant combien est coupable ce particulier qui revêtu d'un uniforme presque absolument semblable à celui de la garde nationale parisienne, s'est permis des propos incendiaires
considerant combien pour la tranquillité et la sûreté publique il est intéressant de punir severement ce orateur, et que celui traduit devant nous nous paroît tenir à un nombre malheureusement considerable de malveillants qui ne desirent que le trouble pour faire un coup de main . . .

He was sent to La Force with a recommendation that he be immediately interrogated further. His watch was confiscated 'pour être rendue à qui il appartiendra.'¹¹

At 1 p.m. in the Section d'Henri Quatre, a *peintre en miniature* was passing down the rue de la Vielle Bouclerie when

il a vu beaucoup de monde amassé au milieu desquels étaient deux particuliers qui haranguaient le public et qui trouvaient mauvais que l'on eût empêché hier l'assemblée du champ de la fédération, que l'assemblée nationale avait décrété qu'aucun club ni société ne pouvait s'assembler sans un certificat de la part, que lui déclarant leur a répondu qu'ils avaient eu publiée un fait faux attendu que ce décret n'existait pas; que l'un de ces particuliers a dit avec fureur que le municipalité avait fait afficher ce matin un ordre pour empêcher les citoyens de s'assembler, et qu'elle avait fait mis en tête de cet ordre *Louis par la grace de dieu roi des français*; que lui comparant a répondu que l'ordre dont il voulait sûrement parler était pour empêcher les factieux, ces gens soudoyés d'ameuter et de soulever le peuple et pour faire respecter les loix.¹²

At this the two men 'criaient avec fureur qu'on voulait les mettre dans l'esclavage et qu'ils étaient prêts à massacrer tous les Royalistes,' and one of them punched the painter in the stomach. A *tapissier*, a *chirurgien* and a *tailleur*, all members of the Guard, and an *apprenti menuisier* seized the two, and later confirmed the nature of their remarks and action.

The culprits were Jean-Baptiste Morel, 18, and Pierre Joseph Henry, 25, both *colporteurs*. Morel claimed to have met Henry only at the place they were found, but Henry said 'qu'il avait bu tout la matinée avec son camarade.' Neither had funds that might indicate they had been suborned, but Morel had stocks of the *Orateur du Peuple*, Audouin's *Journal*, and a 'lettre du père Duchesne.' They were sent to La Force. Their fate is unremarkable, but the interchange with the painter indicates just how confused the ideas of who were patriots and who 'factieux' were in operation - the speaker assumed that anyone he was

¹¹APP AA56:348, Section des Arcis. Perhaps Deneux was still aggrieved at having to release Sallandrous. Allais returned for his watch on 28 August - there is no note of contrition in the record at the supposition that it was not his in the first place.

¹²APP AA215:456.

talking to would agree that the latter had to be kept down, not seeming to appreciate that others could view the situation entirely differently.

During the afternoon of 17 July, no seditious prisoners were taken in the Sections whose records survive - in the hours when the crowd on the Champ de Mars grew and the Guard marched to put them down, it seems everyone's attention was focused there. The records of La Force indicate that a certain Busse, 'dit Glasson, ci-devant acteur à Rouen' was arrested on the order of an *aide-major général* 'allant au Champ de Mars à midy à la tête d'un groupe et tenant deux femmes par dessous les bras.' He was 'trouvé saisi d'une paire de pistolets.' His excuse in later interrogations was that he was leading the group to the Champ de Mars 'pour engager ceux qui y étoient à revenir, attendu qu'il pouroit avoir du danger.'¹³ Besides this, however, reactions waited on the news of the Massacre, which reached the heart of the city by the early evening.

8.2 - FIRST REACTIONS

At around 7 p.m. in the Section d'Henri-Quatre, the 39-year-old *professeur* Jean-Baptiste Rotondo was detained by a sentry as 'cause d'un attroupement dangereux sous tous les rapports dans la circonstance présente.' The Guard said he had picked him from 'un groupe du monde amassé au dehors du caffè conti . . . faisant des motions incendiaires contre la garde nationale et le bien public,' saying 'entre autre choses que la garde nationale n'était pas faite pour les empecher de s'assembler.'¹⁴

Rotondo's account was rather different. He claimed to have just arrived at the café when he heard the word of the Martial Law flag being flown, and was merely standing at the door in a group 'qu'il ne connait point' when:

un garde national qu'il ne connait pas est venu lui mettre la main au collet en lui demandant s'il n'ait pas M. Rotondo [he said yes] . . . il l'a serré de plus près et l'a arrêté malgré que les personnes presentes ayant voulu s'y opposer . . .

He also complained of 'mauvais traitemens,' despite having offered no resistance - 'en le frappant à la tête ce qui lui avait fait repandre du sang dont le jabo de sa chemise était taché.' No further comment was made about this; after cursory questioning, the *commissaire* consulted with the Section President and two other Section *notables*, and sent Rotondo to the Police Department, along with a sealed packet of the papers he had been carrying.

¹³APP AB324:1889, referred to Tribunal.

¹⁴APP AA215:457.

The *commissaire* was summoned to the Abbaye prison on 29 July to witness the opening of this packet in the presence of Rotondo and Administrator Perron. The papers included three letters from Marat, a ticket to the Cordeliers' meeting of 10 July and a card from an unknown popular society - 'la société des soutiens de la liberté des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen.' There was also a receipt for 'billets confiés au sr. Maillard portant somme de trois cents vingt-six livres,' and 'quatre pieces relatives à l'affaire Pierre Kabert dit Louvain.'

Recalling that the Guard of the Section d'Henri-Quatre was commanded by Carle, whose feud with Stanislas Maillard dated from Rotondo's court appearance in late 1790, and had been exacerbated at the trial which led to the Kabert riot, all this appears somehow significant. However, as the Assembly *comité des rapports* ordered Rotondo's release on 2 August, all it may signify is a continuing vendetta between men who viewed each other as members of determined opposing *partis*.

A rather more banal incident occurred at 7:30 p.m. outside the Royal Stables in the Section de la Place-Vendôme. Louis Honoré Grisel, 23, a *perruquier* 'travaillant à son compte,' had been seen to tear down an *affiche* headed 'Département de Paris, loi.' He was seized by Claude Michel le Roy de Fontigny, *major du Bataillon des Veterans*, who had seen him from a window along with 'M. de Gouvion major-général,' second in command of the Parisian National Guard. Le Roy went down and grabbed Grisel, helped by a passer-by, and had heard several people say as he was led away 'c'est bien fait, c'est ce polisson qui faisoit encore ce matin des motions au Palais-Royal.'

Grisel admitted tearing the poster, claiming that 'un particulier l'ayant echauffé, en lui disant que l'assemblée nationale se rendoit despote, il s'est pris d'une telle vehemence,' that he tore it, saying 'que puisque cet acte étoit tyrannique il falloit le dechirer.' However, he went on, 'sans s'écarter de ses principes qui l'avoit dirigé jusqu'alors dans son discours, il mettoit encore tout sa confiance dans l'assemblée nationale.' Le Roy apparently pointed out the contradiction in this, and he admitted on the spot 'qu'il avoit fait une faute et dit alors a celui qui lui avoit fait la question et l'arrêtoit, qu'il avoit commis un acte involontaire.' The authorities, however, were not inclined to treat it so lightly. Although he denied belonging to any 'Société Fraternelle' and said that the people who accused him of *motions* 'en ont mentis', indignantly demanding that this should be recorded, Grisel was sent swiftly off to La Force.¹⁵

¹⁵APP AA206:376, released by 20 September, reclaimed possessions on that date.

These last two incidents seem to be appendices to the general tensions which had led to the Massacre. The next, however, begins to show the strength of the reaction to that event. Philippe Chapelle, 33, *fabriquant de cocarde en feutre*, was arrested by a Guard sergeant and a *cavalier de la gendarmerie nationale*, accused initially of having cried 'à bas la garde nationale.' Being 'vetu de l'habit de la garde nationale ayant les epaulettes de sergent' compounded the offence. Two witnesses, a fifteen-year-old *apprenti tailleur* and a 24-year-old *garçon imprimeur*, elaborated on the incident. The apprentice had himself been coming from the Champ de Mars when

il a vu [Chapelle] courir depuis le Pont royal jusqu'au Pont neuf en criant a bas l'habit de la garde nationale tous en habit Bourgeois et a pareillemens entendu qu'il disoit au public qu'il y avoit eu trois mille hommes de tué au Champ de mars et que son camarade avoit été tué.

The printer had a different version - Chapelle had said 'que tous ceux qui n'avoient pas l'uniforme meuroient qu'à venir il les feroit donner des armes.'

Chapelle denied any specific words, but said that he 'se sauvait dans la [crainte?] que l'on ne touche sur luy.' He had held a sergeant's post in the St-Eustache Battalion, but 'il ne sert plus à present parceque sa situation ne luy permettoit plus de servir.' He continued to wear the coat 'comme luy ayant été donné par la nation etant vainqueur de la Bastille.' Nonetheless, he was sent to the neighbouring Conciergerie prison.¹⁶

An hour later in the same Section, the news was spreading further, and gaining in interpretations.

The *controlleur au département de l'habillement de la garde nationale* reported

que passant sur le quay de l'horloge au Palais il a entendu une femme qui disoit Revenir du champ de la federation qui disoit qu'on faisoit feu avec l'artillerie sur les citoyens, qu'alors un particulier s'avance a demandé qui avoit vu donner cet ordre qu'un autre particulier repondit c'est Lafayette ce coquin de Lafayette.

He followed this third individual until within sight of several Guards, then had him arrested.

Augustin Michel Riottot, *garçon orfèvre*, admitted frankly the exchange - 'qu'ayant entendu que l'on avoit fait feu sur le public sans deployer le drapeau rouge il avoit repondu il ne point y avoir qu'un coquin qui eut donné un pareil ordre.' By this, he confirmed, he meant Lafayette. He went to the Conciergerie.¹⁷ The idea that the Guard had opened fire without the proper declaration of Martial Law, while it was apparently an unwarranted assertion, was nonetheless to be one of the central charges in the public condemnation of the Massacre voiced over the following days.

¹⁶APP AA215:460. The registers of the Conciergerie which survive (APP AB130-1) are not adequate to reveal the fates of individual prisoners, being mainly a recital of the warrants authorising arrests in connection with court-cases.

¹⁷APP AA215:461.

While the detractors of the Guard might exaggerate its perfidy, the defenders of order were now, even more than before, zealous in pouncing on any hint of social insubordination. At around 8 p.m., two *citoyens de Paris* and one of Bordeaux grabbed a man in the rue Royale, one of a group of four they reported as having said of the Massacre ‘que s’ils s’y étoient Rencontrés ils auroient très de violence contre les officiers et gardes nationales.’ The one they detained was ‘armed’ with a black cane with a polished metal top. He was Pierre Forgon, 18½, *franger et galonnier*, who said

qu’il a seulement vu un officier de la garde nationale, qui frappoit de son épée, toutes les personnes qui se protestoient devant lui . . . étant avec trois de ses camarades [il] avoit trouvé cela Extraordinaire il avoit dit à ses camarades que si on lui en eut fait autant il ne savoit pas ce qu’il auroit fait; que dans sa chaleur il auroit pu se défendre.

He could only name one of his ‘comrades,’ and was sent to La Force.¹⁸

8.3 - TURMOIL AT NIGHTFALL

By 10 p.m., the news of the Massacre, with attendant distortions, had spread across the city, parts of which were in ferment. As people gathered to discuss the events, they fell foul of Martial Law, which prohibited the Parisian habit of street-corner gatherings. In the Section de la Fontaine-Montmorency, the Guard dispersed one such *attroupement*, arresting a man ‘vetu d’un habit Bleu’ who was reported to have said that ‘si l’on avoit pendu M. Lafayette tout celà ne seroit pas arrivé.’ Two servants, one of a Guard Division-Major, the other of the ‘Premier aide-major de la garde nationale parisienne,’ testified to this effect. Jean-Baptiste Legris, *marchand d’habits*, explained simply that ‘revenant du Boulevard il y a entendu ce propos et qu’il l’a répété.’ He did not say why, preferring to emphasise that he had not been in the illegal gathering, just passing it at the time, and that he had not been ‘engagé à tenir ce propos.’ He went to La Force nonetheless.¹⁹

At the same hour, a patrol in the Palais-Royal picked up Jean Etienne Wors, 38, *garçon maréchal ferrand*, for saying that ‘si les loys etoit juste il pouroit y obéir, a quoy il ne pouvoit se resoudre parce que suivant lui elle n’etoit pas juste.’ His brief interrogation revealed only that he, too, had not been ‘excité’ to this speech and ‘qu’il ne connoisse point la loy.’ He was held overnight, and vouched for in the morning by the *secrétaire-greffier* of the Section des Enfants-Rouges.²⁰

Meanwhile, a patrol coming down the rue St-Honoré ‘après avoir dissipé par les voyes de la

¹⁸APP AA206:375, Section de la Place-Vendôme.

¹⁹APP AA172:50.

²⁰APP AA85:83.

Douceur un Grand Nombre d'atroupements qu'il avoit rencontré successivement le long de la ditte rue,' was nearing the Palais-Royal when it met a large group coming the other way. One man was in the lead, and he 'poussoit de grand gémissement, d'un ton très larmoyant, tenoit à sa main son mouchoir s'en frottant les yeux, se sanglotant comme s'il est réellement pleuré.' The captain of the patrol heard him say 'nos frères, nos amis sont égorgés, nous sommes tous perdus,' amongst his wailings. Fearing that this would be 'un exemple funeste' and create 'alarme Général' amongst 'les citoyens de tous ages et de tous sexe' who filled the road, they detained this man, and another who was close behind, carrying a Guard *habit* beneath his arm.

After the arrest the Guard's suspicions redoubled, as the first man's physical condition suggested he had been running, rather than weeping, and his eyes were definitely 'sec'. Furthermore, at this point a Guard *chasseur* accused this man of having said about him, before the patrol arrived, 'c'est un garde national, il faut s'en defaire.' 'Dans la chaleur de son ressentiment,' the captain observed, this man took out his alarm by punching the prisoner in the face, 'tandis qu'il etoit entre les mains des Grenadiers.' When the *chasseur* testified to the *commissaire*, this punch was not mentioned, and he said that the man had taken him by the lapels and said 'en bas l'habit bleue, et que l'on Brule les habits bleue.'

The detainee turned out to be Jean François Marie Michel Le Gueulx, 30, *maître limonadier* and a sergeant in the Guard, who moreover had served since 14 July 1789. It was on the strength of this that he denied the *chasseur's* allegation - 'il étoit incapable de dire de pareil chose.' He had been overwrought, however, due to the sight of 'un homme mort, qu'il avoit vu porter par quatre polissons sur des branches d'arbres allant du cotez du Palais-Royal.' He admitted crying out loud, but 'tout le monde le disoit haut comme lui.' He denied the phrases the patrol had listed, claiming to have said, again along with everyone, 'que quelques uns de nos frères etoient morts.' After his arrest, his cries continued because of 'mauvais traitements', notably the punch in the face. He appeared hot because 'il rentroit chez lui Bien vitte a cause des troubles qui existoit dans le moment.'

The second man, Jean François Hébert, whom Le Gueulx knew to be a *Vainqueur de la Bastille*, was an *horloger*. He had apparently met Le Gueulx that day in a café and had walked near the Palais-Royal with him. He had taken off his coat to hurry home to his wife, who was 'indisposé,' and had done nothing else except to be accompanying Le Gueulx, who at the moment of his arrest had been ahead of him because he 'alloit plus vitte que lui attendu qu'il étoit tout en eau.' Approaching to see what had happened, he had been arrested. Hébert was allowed to go home, escorted by a Guard, while Le Gueulx

had to wait for the next day to be vouched for.²¹

The public ferment around the rue St-Honoré is reflected again in another simultaneous case. A *teinturier* noted that he had been walking on the nearby Boulevard when a cry went up to stop a man. He seized him, and ‘dans l’instant on l’a abimé de coups’ before a *cavalier* took charge. A *garçon traiteur* and a servant testified to the behaviour that had earned this treatment. The man had said in the Place Louis XV ‘que la garde nationale avoit très mal agist que M. Delafayette étoit content de voir ce qui étoit arrivé au Champ de Mars et que si il s’étoit trouvé au gros Caillou il auroit fait comme les autres il auroit jetté des pierres.’ Further, ‘tous les gardes nationales étoient des coquins et qu’il se faisoit honneur de ne pas avoir servi la nation après une pareille affaire.’ There is no note of who started the chase, nor further mention of the beating. The victim was Alexandre Caguy, 25, *garçon perruquier* ‘travaillant à son compte.’ He admitted the ‘imprudence’ of saying ‘que si M. Delafayette nous trahissoit il devoit être bien content.’ The rest he denied, claiming that ‘il a toujours donné des preuves de son Patriotisme.’ He offered a list of people who could vouch for him, and although he was sent to La Force, he was freed by the 27th, when he reclaimed his possessions.²²

A less dramatic episode, but redolent of the sensibility of the Guard, took place again close to the Place Louis XV in the Section du Roule. A group of *chasseurs* brought in a man who had called to them ‘par le flanc à droite, ha! que c’est beau, par le flanc à droite en avant marche, ha!, comme ils sont les couillons!’ He was a *valet de chambre* named Jean Pierre Huet, who claimed only to have said ‘en avant marche!’ This had been ‘sans aucune intention et comme il diroit bonjour mon ami.’ To La Force he went, trailing an unmentioned but definite hint of alcohol.²³

South of the river in the Section du Luxembourg, tensions were also running high, and at 9:45 p.m. in the rue de Sèvres the balance of forces was momentarily overturned. A Guard *cavalier* was pulled from his horse and beaten by a crowd wielding sticks, ‘sous lesquelles il auroit infailliblement succombé sans le secours de la garde nationale.’ A patrol rescued him, but only after the mob had made off with his carbine, pistols and scabbard, and had tried to steal his horse. This broke free, however, but after its rough treatment it ‘peut à peine marcher.’ One man had been seized by the patrol, and the horseman confirmed that ‘ce particulier lui a lui-même porté des coups de baton.’

²¹APP AA85:85.

²²APP AA206:373-4.

²³APP AA224:92, AB324:1634, vouched for 18 July.

Jean Maurel, 'dit Sartal,' 26, *compagnon menuisier*, claimed on the other hand to have been on the scene with three fellows, returning from an *auberge* at Vaugirard, and had been making 'quelques observations pour deffendre le cause du cavalier' when the Guard arrived and seized him. It 'n'est pas possible' that he should have been recognised as an assailant. Nonetheless, he went to La Force.²⁴

Of all the cases from the evening of the 17th, perhaps the most revelatory arose from a disturbance between 9 and 10 p.m., caused by a group of *garçons cordonniers* in the rue Tirechappe, Section de l'Oratoire, which resulted a day later in the arrest of one of them - Louis Oré, 'dit Normand,' 31, originally from Calvados, and working for a master in the above street. He had fled the scene on the previous evening, and returned in the morning to walk into a storm of neighbourhood wrath from which his arrest saved him - the record does not indicate how serious the threat was, however, but tempers were running high. On the 17th the Guard had detained four men over the incident, who witnesses now agreed were innocent - for a start they were *garçons tailleurs*, not shoemakers - and they were released without even a note of their names being kept.²⁵

The group that caused the disturbance had numbered a dozen or more, gathered on the doorstep of the house containing Oré's master's shop. Merely by their presence they were in breach of Martial Law regulations for *atroupements*, and they compounded the offence by insulting two *gardes soldés* who were passing, asking if they were coming from killing flies on the Champ de Mars, and remarking that that was all they were good for.²⁶ Since the men fled, the tone must have been menacing.

Next, a *sergent volontaire* and a cavalryman passed by, and received a heavier barrage of insults, including some hefty political judgments:

pretendant qu'ils venoient du Champ de Mars, ou ils avoient commis des horreurs, que toute la garde nationale avoit assassiné du monde, que c'étoit des queux, des coquins, qu'il falloit leur dechirer leurs habits et ne pas en laisser exister un . . . [The Guard say] que c'étoient les étrangers répandus dans Paris qui faisoient le mal, tant dit [i.e. 'tandis'] que c'étoit la garde nationale elle-même qui le faisoit, et étoit payé pour le faire.

The man who, with Oré, was accused of most of the *propos* said they should take cobblestones up in the houses and throw them out onto passing Guards, but Oré countered that it was better to lie in wait for them and stick the *bougres de cochons* in the stomach with knives when they left their houses. He went

²⁴APP AA166:16-17.

²⁵APP AA153:9-15.

²⁶There is an obvious play on words between *mouche* and *mouchard*, and they were sometimes used interchangeably. From the second-hand reports here, it is impossible to tell what exactly is meant by the phrase, but it was not complimentary.

on that if the Parisians had the sense to follow his opinion, they wouldn't leave a single one alive.

The witness who described this last outburst was Marie Anne Butot, *femme* Courroye, whose husband was a *marchand fripier* in the same street. She was present along with several other merchants and master artisans' wives and the 40-year-old servant of a *drapier*, Mlle. Marie Geneviève Raget. All of these gave overlapping and confirming testimony of the incident. When the shoemakers had done with the two Guards, who withdrew in search of support, they clashed verbally with these women, one of whom had spoken to a *garçon chandellier*, telling him to leave their bad company. They were showered with sexual insults after remarking that the group were speaking ill of better men than themselves. One answer was that 'des ouvriers comme eux, valoient mieux qu'un tas de garces, comme elles, et qu'elles prenoient les intérêts des habits bleus, parce qu'ils les f. . . etc.'

After a pause, they retracted the remark as it applied to the married women, but said it was meant for Mlle. Raget, 'cette sacré garce de Javote,' as they called her. Raget said that at this point the men also threatened to kill her master - 'ton gros cochon, ton gros ventre, nous l'étouferons.' She also noted, along with another of the artisans' wives, Marie Lionnais, *femme* Houdain, that Oré had remarked that 's'il avoit sur lui ce qu'il avoit il y a deux ans, il en tueroit plusieurs à la fois, qu'ils avoient été chercher des armes, qu'ils les avoient remis, et qu'elles servoient aujourd'hui contre eux.' Raget recalled that back then Oré had had a two-shot pistol with a dagger attached, which she said he had found and then sold during the events of 14 July 1789.

On the sidelines of this drama was François Girard or Giraz, the *garçon chandellier*. A fourth woman, Mme. Rennion, alleged that he had said to her 'voilà un beau coup que la garde nationale vient de faire, c'est un assassinat prémédité.' She thereupon told him to shut up, that he was a fool and that if he didn't go back inside she would slap him. His widowed mistress called him in at this point. He was, we may note, 27, and in his deposition claimed to have inserted the crucial words 'on dit' between the two phrases he admitted saying.

Oré could add little detail in his interrogation, since he rested his defence on being drunk at the time and now remembering nothing of it. The *commissaire* was dogged in his attempts to trap him into an admission, but none was forthcoming. he named his partner as one Manceau, the only name he knew him by, who had been his workmate up to that day, but had now vanished. Oré could not say where he might be found, and nor could their master, Claude Cornullier. The latter could testify, however, that Oré was a good worker who had been with him for three years, but he could (or would) not stand caution for

him. This no doubt disconcerted Oré, since he had been at pains to point out that he was 'connu dans le quartier' and that he had never had a complaint against him in all the time he had been in Paris. He claimed the insults against the women would never have left his mouth, although he did remember one woman saying something to him, but not what. This admission led into complexities, and he fell back on amnesia. He could not sign his name, and Cornullier's reluctance led to his imprisonment.

This incident seems to set up an opposition between the 'workers' and the female stalwarts of the artisan establishment, but a counterpoint to this confrontation was recorded the next day. Jean Louis Mirbault, *cordonnier pour femme et chasseur volontaire*, also lived in rue Tirechappe, and noted that on that evening he had been dining by his open window at around 11:30 when 'il entendit différens propos contre la garde nationale en général et contre M. Lafayette au sujet de ce qui venoit de se passer au Champ de Mars.' He recognised the speaker as 'la dame Garpant,' his downstairs neighbour, and sought to intervene in the Guard's favour out of his window:

la dame Garpant luy répondit que s'il n'étoit pas payé pour soutenir la garde nationale et les chefs il ne prendroit pas leur parti ajoutant que si [Mirbault] avoit autant de Mal que les autres à gagner le pain qu'il mange, il ne les soutiendrait pas.

He was particularly protesting against this allegation of corruption, he noted, though doubtless being told 'qu'il Baiseroit bien au cul de M. Lafayette et de son cheval' did not salve his dignity either.²⁷ Having made his declaration and left, he returned only an hour later to record another denunciation of a neighbour in his house, one Londot 'se disant garde nationale volontaire,' who

luy a dit plusieurs fois depuis plusieurs semaines qu'il étoit malheureux qu'on n'eut pas tué MM. Bailly, Lafayette et Montmorin que si on les lui livroit il leur arracheroit le coeur avec les dents que c'étoient des traitres et qu'on auroit du promener leur tête au bout d'un pique la journée du 21 juin.

Meanwhile, on the 17th, Londot had 'essayé d'entraîner' Mirbault's workers to the Champ de Mars, to swear an oath, he alleged, against royalty, and on hearing the call to arms that afternoon, had shed his Guard *habit* for civilian dress. He was a 'séditieux' who had 'l'ensemble des vices d'un mauvais citoyen.'²⁸ Both these denunciations go some way to clouding a picture of direct social conflict that the Oré incident might suggest, indicating, as the whole of our material has done, that a basic division between the propertied, voting Guard and the dispossessed *citoyens non actifs* existed, but was not the sole determinant of opinions.

Equally interesting, but for different reasons, is another incident which occurred in the Section de

²⁷APP AA153:7.

²⁸APP AA153:6 - clearly timed, however, an hour after piece 7.

la Fontaine de Grenelle, between the Invalides and the Quartier Latin, home in 1791 to Constance Evrard, whom George Rudé chose to quote in *The Crowd in the French Revolution* to exemplify 'the influence [that radical agitation] might exert on . . . many ordinary Parisians.'²⁹ She was a 23-year-old *cuisinière* from the Vosges, in service with the 'ci-devant Tresorier de France M. Foulard' at 64 rue de Grenelle. She was also a woman who already had an impressive record of activism. In January of that year she had visited the offices of the *Révolutions de Paris* to offer her condolences for the death of its editor, and went into print to praise its stance on tyrannicide - 's'il vous manquait un tyrannicide pour en compléter le bataillon, comptez sur moi; j'aurais bientôt quitté mes habits de femme pour prendre ceux d'un sexe dont je me sens tout le courage.' She would willingly shed her blood, she went on, to spill that of 'ennemis de la patrie.' In the *procès-verbal* it is noted that 'la Dame et la Demoiselle Léon étaient sa seule compagnie' on a daily basis. The 'Dame' is none other than Pauline Léon, her neighbour, but also one of the five so-called leaders of the *Enragés* in 1793 and founder in that year of the *Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires*, which Evrard also joined. In the meantime she had joined Léon in smashing a bust of Lafayette in February 1791 at Fréron's house, and in a confrontation with some *Gardes du Corps* on 21 June. She had been with the two others to the Champ de Mars on 17 July, and was known to *Le Babillard*, which mocked the radicalism of this trio several times, introducing them as 'les trois dames, qui sont payés pour venir . . . déchirer MM Bailly, Lafayette, l'Assemblée nationale et tous les gens en place.' It also noted their address, when 'plusieurs citoyens ont proposé de leur faire prendre un bain dimanche prochain' on 20 June.³⁰

The actual events leading to Evrard's arrest were not particularly dignified. Among the other inhabitants of 64 rue de Grenelle were the Mullers, a pharmacist and his wife who were evidently at daggers drawn with Evrard and her friends. At 10 p.m. on the 17th, the three women were drawn into a stand-up fight with Mme. Muller, having seen her husband marching with his Battalion and returned home to confront her, calling him 'un assassin, un Bourreau, un gredin qui tuoit tout le monde au Champ de Mars.' They threatened 'que sous trois jours elles le poignarderoit.' Evrard then hit Mme. Muller, but if she started the fight, she did not get the best of it, since M. Muller *père*, a 'bourgeois de Metz' staying with his son, grabbed her by the throat, telling her he would strangle her for threatening his son, salting

²⁹See Rudé, *Crowd*, pp.86-7, where he quotes from her interrogation.

³⁰AA148:30; other information from D. Godineau, *Citoyennes Tricoteuses*, (Paris, 1989) p.372. and see *Le Babillard*, nos. 16, 18, 29; 20 and 22 June, 12 July 1791. It had the address as 74, but this would be easily mis-heard.

this with customary remarks such as *garce*, *pute* and *salope*. A short time after, his son arrived to do much the same thing, before they all trooped off to the *commissaire*.

What is perhaps most remarkable in this case, aside from Evrard's fiery personality, is that after referral to the *Département de Police*, she was released the next day on her own caution. Evidently despite her avowed radicalism, which included trips to the Cordeliers, readings of Marat and her regular presence at the Tuileries and the Palais-Royal, her age and three years service for a distinguished gentleman merited lax treatment. We must observe that Rudé's use of her as an example owes more to the strident tone of her words than any typicality in her pattern of behaviour. Even if several members of *Sociétés populaires* did get arrested at this time, of them all Evrard is perhaps the single one with the most dedicated radical history up to this point.

More typical incidents continued, however, to arise around the city later into the evening. At the inner end of the rue St-Honoré, a man was brought to the *commissaire* of the Section de Mauconseil at 11 p.m. for having said 'que la moitié de la garde nationale étoit tous foutus Gueux.' The witness, a M. Picot, had asked him then if he was a Guard, 'il a répondu, que s'il en portoit l'habit, il le déchireroit en mille pièces.' Picot noted that he was 'étonné de pareils propos dans un moment ou [illegible] est en danger par les émeutes populaires qui se multiplient partout pour exciter les troubles que la garde nationale s'empresse de dissiper,' and arrested the man. Two other witnesses confirmed the words that had left them 'scandalisés.'

Jean Pierre Barthelemy Marchand, *employé à la poste aux lettres*, did not try to deny his words, claiming only to have been 'pénétré de voir passer sous ses yeux des cadavres qui avoient été tué au Champ de Mars.' He said also that he had seen a Guard who had torn his coat, 'outré' by these events. He mentioned what Picot had not, that in his arrest 'il avoit reçu dusr. Picot un coup de pied dans le derrière.' In questioning him the *commissaire* noted the establishment view of the current activities of the Guard - 'elle expose sa vie pour la cause commune' - and in sending Marchand to La Force observed that 'la patrie est [en] danger . . . la moindre opinion contraire peut troubler l'ordre public.'³¹

The complexities of the various positions people could take up on the role of the Guard are well-illustrated by a case from the Section des Enfants-Rouges. At some time in the evening, a Guard lieutenant encountered a group of fifteen to twenty people in the street, among whom was Jean Langreny, a

³¹APP AA74:468.

grenadier volontaire. It seems that opinion in the group was divided on the Champ de Mars *affaire*, but not heated. When, however, the officer moved on, Langreny came after him and said 'que jusqu'au present il avoit porté l'habit de garde nationale mais que d'après ce qui étoit passé cejour'huy il ne le porteroit plus parce que la garde nationale en avoit trop mal agi.' At this, the lieutenant had him arrested.

Langreny fully admitted the exchange, but said that the comment was made 'effusivement' and not 'dans une mauvaise intention,' and also that the two of them were alone at the time (i.e. he was not trying to stir trouble.) To establish his respectability, he said that he had been at Gros Caillou earlier in the evening, and had been robbed of several items of uniform by 'un groupe de monde.'

With all this borne in mind, Langreny was released, but he fell under deeper suspicion two days later, when a fellow-Guard named Marcellot reported that he suspected a *grenadier* of their Battalion of having fired a shot at Lafayette on the Champ de Mars. There is no substantiation for this incident ever having occurred, but it was a staple of accounts of the provocation leading to the general firing. Marcellot did not know this Guard's name, but had met him in a café on the morning of the 16th, and had been asked if he would be going to sign the petition against the 15 July decree. Marcellot had replied that he thought the decree just, and 'qu'il seroit un j.f. et un sacré couillardin d'y aller.' The *grenadier* replied 'je m'en f., j'irai,' but Marcellot thought he had then changed his mind after being told 'tu es un triple voulele j.f. de couillardin si tu y vas' - a ciceronian political argument.

Nonetheless, Marcellot now charged him with this crime, and after a description Langreny was recalled and questioned. He acknowledged this conversation, but unsurprisingly disclaimed any attack on Lafayette. He elaborated on his conduct on the 17th, saying he had been at Gros Caillou between 4 and 7 p.m., and had gone there principally to see the two men who had been lynched that morning. He had been with a friend and had spent most of the time in a café, upon leaving which a mob crying 'a bas la garde nationale' had set upon him, leaving him when the more tempting target of a *cavalier* presented itself, although they did not catch him.

For their pains, both men were sent to La Force pending further inquiries, although they were both freed within a few days. Later, on 10 August, they returned and swore out a retraction and apology, in Marcellot's case, and a guarantee of no further action, in Langreny's. Whether this was a genuine resolution, or the simplest way to end the matter, is of course impossible to tell.³²

³²APP AA157:140, AB324:1732, Langreny released 21 July, Marcellot 25 July.

Whatever the complications of this individual case, the prison record of detainees from Sections whose own records do not survive confirms the picture of widespread popular revulsion and *propos incendiaires* we have been building up. Men were arrested in four other Sections for attacking the *affiches* of laws - a tailor in the Section des Innocents, a *colporteur* in the Section du Luxembourg, an *ouvrier en laine* in the Section des Lombards and an actor from the Théâtre-Français in the Section des Gravilliers.³³

Jean Denis Olivier was arrested in the Section de Bonne-Nouvelle for crying that 'la garde étoit salariée pour sabrer le monde, ainsi qu'elle l'avoit fait au Champ de Mars.' In the Section du Roi-de-Sicile, Adelaïde Dufresne, *sans état*, seems to have put a female slant on events, saying that 'Marie Antoinette Reine de France étoit une garce et qu'elle vouloit la pendre.' A *commissionnaire* had 'ameuté un nombre considérable des particuliers autour de lui . . . tenu des propos incendiaires et . . . insulté la garde nationale,' in the Section de la Grange-Batelière.³⁴

South of the river in the Section des Quatre-Nations, a *garçon bottier* said 'tout haut, que M. Delafayette étoit un gueux et qu'il falloit le pendre.' A *fondeur*, a *doreur* and his wife said that 'tous les cavaliers étoient des f. gueux et qu'il falloit les mettre à la lanterne.' Again in this Section, another man was detained for unspecified 'propos incendiaires contre la garde nationale.'³⁵ The same offence generated arrests in the Sections de la Place Louis XIV, de la Halle aux Bleds (two incidents), des Gravilliers, de la Place Royale and de Beaubourg. The culprits were a journeyman mason, a hairdresser, a dressmaker, a journeyman candlemaker, a fruiterer, a coachman, and a former journeyman baker.³⁶

Actual violence seems to have been relatively limited, although as we have seen, it would seem that in the immediate vicinity of the Champ de Mars, attacks were made on the Guard. In the nearby Section de la Croix-Rouge, a *doreur sur bois* was detained for disarming and mistreating a Guard as a member of a mob. Besides that, there was only a 'rixe' in the Section de Ponceau for which a *compagnon charpentier* who claimed to be in the Guard, though he could not give his unit, was arrested.³⁷

One last case on the 17th, from the furthest corner of Paris from the Champ de Mars, shows firstly

³³APP AB324:1653, 1675, 1715, 1640. The actor and the tailor were sentenced to 15 days' detention on 23 July, the other two, one of whom had publicly thrown the law in the gutter, the other having repeated his offence several times, were referred to the Tribunal.

³⁴APP AB324:1643, 1672, 1678. The first was released with a warning on 20 July, the other two were referred to the Tribunal.

³⁵APP AB324:1703, 1691, 1676. The first vouched-for on 21 July, the others to the Tribunal.

³⁶APP AB324:1630, 1635, 1661, 1684, 1685, 1698, 1704. Of these, one was simply released on 19 July, four were vouched-for, and two were referred to the Tribunal, but no reasons are extant for these differences.

³⁷APP AB324:1705, referred to Tribunal, and 1701, released by Police Tribunal, 25 July.

the continuing aggression of the Guard, but also something of the distortion possible in the rapid oral transmission of news. The *commissaire* of the Section du Temple, making a round shortly after midnight, found in a guardpost two detainees, with a written report from a patrol:

à onze heures et demie, une patrouille de St-Martin, composée de vingt hommes . . . ont entendu une dame qui portoit un enfant sur sa bras et accompagnée d'un homme qui se dit être son mari . . . ladite femme disoit voilà ces coquins qui assassinoit les Bourgeois ce sont des gredins; ladite patrouille a couru vite sur eux et s'en sont saisis . . .

Catherine Nuller, wife of Nicolas Guillaume, *figuriste en porcelaine*, admitted having heard 'qu'un detachment de cavalerie et un des chasseurs des barrières avoient tiré sur les bourgeois,' and that she had commented that 'ce n'étoit que des coquins d'assassiner ainsi les bourgeois.' They were released, as she was a nursing mother.³⁸ Catherine's interpretation of the news into something like a rerun of the La Chapelle 'Massacre' of January might have made it more comprehensible, and possibly less socially divisive. Over the next days, however, there were to be many who would tell of it in its full horror.

³⁸APP AA239:96.

CHAPTER 9 - THE AFTERMATH: REACTIONS ON 18 JULY AND BEYOND

The response of the press to the events of 17 July is a further case-study in the operation of the giant 'paranoia-engine' of Parisian public life. Gorsas was writing copy for his 18 July issue at 7 p.m. on the 17th; reflecting on the events of the previous days, he observed that

Il est possible que sous peu de jours on voie le peuple armé contre la garde nationale, dont le corps législatif s'enveloppe, lorsqu'il ne devrait s'environner que de la confiance . . . [all sides are] égaré par des suggestions perfides. À l'instant . . . la générale batte de plusieurs côtés. Puisse la crainte que nous avons temoignée ne pas se réaliser!

Two hours later he recorded further details:

les premiers coups de feu que devoient diviser la garde nationale et le peuple, sont partis au Champ de Mars. Plusieurs citoyens sont tués ou blessés; Paris est dans la fermentation qui devoit faire prévoir la coalition imprévue et véritablement incroyable des deux partis de l'Assemblée nationale.

Gorsas thus saw in the events leading up to the Massacre the consequences of the apparent *rapprochement* between the authorities and reactionary opinion over the King's status, and posited the response of the city to this as one of justified outrage, albeit leading to a dangerous confrontation. The more conservative *Feuille du Jour*, in its edition of the 18th, evidently prepared when a little more information was available, had no doubt how to paint the events of the Massacre. It gave over a long paragraph to the killing of two Guards by a mob, and the wounding of a third, while noting laconically 'Du côté des séditieux on compte neuf personnes tuées et à-peu-près autant de blessées. Douze sont faits prisonniers.' Its conclusion was equally blunt - 'Factieux! Le terme de vos succès approche; ils ont duré trop long-tems; mais tremblez!'

This was to rapidly become the accepted line on the events, and when Gorsas came to write his issue of the 19th, he had fallen back into the chorus. His account stressed the provocation the Guard had faced, and the shots supposedly taken at its leaders, while observing that some Guards had still fired only into the air. The deaths of the two men lynched at Gros Caillou earlier in the day provided the key to understanding. From this event

les bons citoyens . . . voyoient avec douleur que les milliers de brigands que l'aristocratie soudoie dans le sein de la capitale . . . s'étoient mêlés avec la multitude, dont le seul objet étoit de signer une pétition, et ils l'égaroient par des motions incendiaires et funestes.

He concluded by addressing the Guard - 'je vous aurois accusé si vous eussiez été coupable . . . vous n'avez fait que votre devoir.'

By this time the *Feuille du Jour* had taken the argument a stage further - 'On paroît convaincu que les mouvemens qui nous agitent sont fomentés par des instigateurs étrangers.' Such 'missionnaires de toutes les puissances' filled Paris, sowing gold and discord. For the *Patriote François*, on the 20th, the affair was a plot between such agents, including 'le juif Ephraïm . . . un émissaire de la Prusse', and various aristocratic officers, a plot concerning which the Municipality and *comité des recherches* 'ont beaucoup de renseignements'.

This more convoluted accusation of plot seems to have been peripheral to the general understanding of the Massacre, but the brigandage theme ran through all sides' accounts. Marat put it in his own fashion on the 20th:

Il faut user d'artifice, les faire paraître autant de mutins, de séditeux, de rebelles, d'assassins. Pour celà, une foule de coupe-jarrets, à la solde de Mottié, avaient pris les devants, et s'étaient mêlés aux citoyens dans un coin du Champ de Mars. À l'arrivée des alguasils et des satellites armés, ils leur jettent des pierres, et leur tirent quelques coups de pistolets à poudre . . .¹

The *Révolutions de Paris*, appearing when nearly a week had passed, clung to the same basic explanation, claiming first that brigands had committed the Gros Caillou murders, and continuing in the same vein:

Si la force a été provoquée par des brigands, c'est contre les brigands qu'il falloit la déployer. Mais non, on les connoissoit, les brigands, on les a fait respecter, et l'on a dirigé la fureur aveugle de la garde nationale contre les auteurs et souscripteurs d'une pétition qui alloit avoir son effet . . .²

As we shall see, the population at large does not seem to have been entirely convinced by this interpretation, particularly not in its more conservative forms, but the pursuit of possible brigands clearly entered into the concerns of the police as they set about pacifying Paris. In one case at least a patrol came up with some genuine *gens sans aveu* upon whom to foist their suspicions. Three men were dragged out at 2 a.m. on the 18th from the riverside booths in the Section du Louvre, where they had been asleep. One offered few grounds for suspicion, but the second, Joseph Cellier 'faiseur d'huile . . . demandant l'aumone', admitted to having been on the Champ de Mars, not to protest, but to gamble, at which he had won fifty *sous*. That he should be sleeping rough with this sum in his pocket was suspicious to the *commissaire*, and among his papers was found a certificate attesting to residence in Paris for five months,

¹*L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 524.

²*Révolutions de Paris*, 16-23 July, note the wishful thinking about the possible results of the petition.

though he had already admitted arriving only in June. He also had a *passport* dated for the 18th, suspicious at 2 a.m. that day. He even finally admitted that he had wanted to sign the petition ‘mais qu’étant mineur il n’a pas signé.’

The third man, François Vignier, an unemployed *decrotteur*, admitted freely

avoir été au Champ de Mars, y avait mangé du cervelat et du poire qui lui a été donné par un garde national et avoir vu les commencements c’est-à-dire tous les ouvriers perruquiers et autres venir en ordre au devant des canons . . . que la garde nationale ayant reçu des pierres avait tiré dessus et qu’il s’étoit sauvé.

All three were sent to La Force, Cellier noted as ‘suspect’, and Vignier as ‘pouvant donner des renseignements sur l’affaire du Champ de Mars.’³

However, compared to the immediate crisis of the 17th, the authorities the next day in some cases seem to have been more prepared to listen to pleas in mitigation. When Bernard Maltelte, *cordonnier*, and his worker Antoine Lhullier fell into conversation with a man outside their shop, Lhullier was provoked into saying ‘que les Parisiens étoient des j.f.’s s’ils ne désarmoient pas aujourd’hui la garde nationale.’ The *commissaire* of the Section de la Fontaine de Grenelle was prepared to release them with an injunction to future circumspection, as he was an hour later when a 48-year-old *compagnon maréchal grossier* admitted ‘qu’il avoit dit que dans la garde nationale il y a surement des gens mal-intentionnés, et qu’il faudroit des Potences pour Pendre tous ces gens-là.’ In this case the testimony of several domiciled citizens that he was ‘un fort honnête homme’ aided the decision.⁴

Public discussion seems understandably to have been dominated by the previous day’s events, and to have stirred up fierce sentiments. In general it was working people who put across an alternative to the official explanation, focusing on the accusation that the Guard had acted precipitately, firing without warning, sometimes allegedly without provocation, and clearing the field with great brutality. Pierre Gery, 17, an unemployed *garçon orfèvre*, put a mild version of this. Having gone to the Champ de Mars ‘par curiosité’ with his father, he reported in the Palais-Royal the next morning ‘qu’il y avoit hier . . . de la cavallerie qui alloit trop vitte et qu’il n’avoit pas eu de temps de se sauver.’ Even this was enough for an angry group of citizens to seize him.⁵

³APP AA182:312. The mention of ‘ouvriers perruquiers’ has intriguing possibilities, as Mercier observed (*Tableau*, p.95) that these flour-covered ‘merlans’ were often *élèves en chirurgie*, funding their studies - the *Club Chirurgical*? This rather complicates Rudé’s use of this quote as ‘evidence of the attendance of wage-earners at the Champ de Mars’ (*Crowd*, p.91).

⁴APP AA148:32, 33. 7 and 8 a.m.

⁵APP AA85:105, vouched-for by his father.

Near the café Conti, Nicolas Clement Goidou, 30, *cordonnier*, recounted to a group ‘les propos les plus séditeux’ as he told his tale of the Massacre. He had seen stones thrown at an officer, the Guard advancing, ‘le public ayant crié a bas les armes, a bas le drapeau rouge, a bas la loi martiale.’ Next ‘la garde nationale avoit fait feu . . . un particulier a été tué a coté de lui, ce qui l’avoit revolté . . . il s’est retiré ensuite paisiblement.’ All this remains within the official boundaries of the event, but he went on to voice an opinion:

que si la garde nationale eut fait une cession d’armes seulement pendant deux minutes ce qui eut donné le tems aux bons citoyens de se retirer il n’eut pas arriver tant de malheur, et qu’il y avoit beaucoup d’indiscretion dans la conduite de la garde nationale.

When he was seized, he had further cried ‘a moi mes camarades,’ words which to the *commissaire* ‘annoncent une coalition avec les factieux.’ For this he was sent to La Force.⁶

Further divergence still from the official line came from Philippe Moisson, 34, *graveur*, arrested in the Palais-Royal by several citizens for saying that Martial Law had not been proclaimed when the firing started. He indignantly supported his version of events:

qu’il étoit assez bon citoyen pour s’être retiré s’il avoit entendu cette proclamation . . . il avoit été obligé de passer sous les coups de plusieurs personnes pour le mettre hors de danger, que depuis le commencement de la revolution, il a servi comme garde nationale . . . que sa conduite est irreprochable.

The *commissaire* allowed him to be vouched for.⁷

René Valentin Pierson, *compagnon potier d’étain*, was seized by several people with whom he had been talking near the rue de Montreuil guardpost, after they claimed he had said he saw the Guard fire without warning. Pierson, on the other hand, claimed to have been at the Champ de Mars between 6 and 7 p.m. on the 17th, having heard there that a peaceful meeting had been authorised by ‘neuf commissaires de la municipalité,’ but had retired when the *drapeau rouge* arrived. Moreover, his account of the discussion suggested he had been supporting the official view. The *commissaire* thought little of this, and Pierson was to be imprisoned when his ‘Repentir sincere . . ., ayant promis de ne plus s’écarter des principes de la Constitution pour le maintien de laquelle il jure de mourir,’ earned his release.⁸

As if it were not enough to have eye-witnesses contradicting the official story, second-hand accounts also contributed to the uproar. Jean Vigoureux, 28, ‘monteur de boucles sur le Pont Neuf,’ told

⁶APP AA215:462, Section d’Henri Quatre.

⁷APP AA85:97. The phrase ‘sous les coups’ is extremely obscure in the manuscript, and could equally say ‘sur les corps’ - a different, but equally inflammatory statement.

⁸APP AA173:25, Section de Montreuil. Pierson had been picked up in a different Section for a seditious clash with the Guard at the time of the Flight to Varennes, but this *commissaire* could not have known that.

a group in the Palais-Royal that he had just come back from exploring the site of the carnage, and 'qu'il l'avoit trouvé tant [i.e. teint] de sang et les arbres criblés de balles.' A witness denounced his lurid account of events:

que la garde soldée n'avoit pas tiré un coup, que le massacre étoit fait par les Bourgeois . . . qu'un jeune homme étant atteint qui l'avoit renversé et que s'étant relevé on avoit couru sur lui pour lui tirer un second coup de fusil et qu'il avoit été tué . . . qu'un grenadier de St-Marceau avoit tué sa propre femme qui étoit enceinte, qu'en un mot la garde nationale les chassoit d'un côté pour les renvoyer au bout des bayonnettes.

The *commissaire* made Vigoureux explain these 'propos aussi faux que calomnieux.' He said he had himself seen 'beaucoup de sang' and damaged trees on the field. Someone who had picked up the body of the young man told him his tale, while a *chasseur soldé* had said only the volunteers had fired. The rest was 'ouï dire.' A *medecin et garde nationale* vouched for him, as an 'homme honnête et paisible.'⁹ The idea that only the *bourgeois* Guards had fired persisted - Marat on 29 July asked his readers to 'Rendez mille actions de grâces aux braves, aux généreux Gardes-Françaises, à la troupe du centre, qui n'a pas tiré sur les citoyens.'¹⁰ On 2 August, the *Argus Patriote* was reporting that this was still being spread around, by 'les ennemis de la tranquillité publique . . . pour se préparer les moyens de la troubler de nouveau.'¹¹

Another Palais-Royal group heard from André Klauser, 27, *coiffeur*, that 'la loi martiale n'avoit point été publiée hier au Champ de Mars et que cependant on y avoit assassiné une quantité considérable de citoyens sans qu'ils aient été prévenus.' Two 'citoyens patriotes' seized him, and he proved far less able to justify himself than Vigoureux, at first trying to deny his speech, and only admitting that 'une vieille femme qu'il ne connoit point' had told him she knew a woman who had been shot in the arm. He went to La Force.¹²

Pierre Philippe Augustin Poitevin, 16, an unemployed *garçon orfèvre*, was alleged to have said in 'un groupe assez considérable' near the Louvre that

la garde nationale étoient des gueux qui avoit fait feu sur leurs freres et qu'ils l'avoient même fait avant le proclamation de la loi martiale, qu'il n'étoit pas vrai que l'on ait cheté des pierres avant que la garde ait tiré.

Poitevin admitted hearing both this and the opposite point of view in groups that day, but claimed to have

⁹APP AA85:88.

¹⁰*L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 525, 29 July.

¹¹*L'Argus Patriote*, no. 16, 2 August. This of course may only be a retort to Marat, but the idea will turn up again in the mouths of the people - see below.

¹²APP AA85:93.

said nothing himself. His uncle, with whom he lived, was allowed to vouch for him.¹³

Pierre Fontolivé, 17, *porteur d'eau*, was similarly able to persuade the *commissaire* of the Section de l'Hôtel de Ville that his arrest was all a misunderstanding. This was despite two Guard witnesses who had seen him on the Place de Grève

courant de groupe en groupe, et disant a haute voix que la garde nationale . . . au Champ de Mars, avoit eu le plus grand tort, s'étoit très mal comportée, qu'elle avoit tiré sur le peuple sans y être provoquée, avant même que la loi martiale fut proclamée.

All Fontolivé would admit to saying was that one of his friends had told him that no-one threw any stones where he was. He claimed to have actually offered his services to the local guardpost on the previous evening. Somehow the *commissaire* was persuaded of this and allowed him to go, noting nonetheless that the arrest was 'la suite du zèle et de la vigilance de la garde nationale, toujours bien louable en pareil circonstances.'¹⁴

Confusion also helped Nicolas Joseph Raboulais, 28, *commis au greffe des consuls*. He had been in a gathering that had begun to form on the quai du Louvre, and that several Guards were independently trying to persuade to disperse. He claimed to have been appealing for calm and denouncing Danton, 'un homme fougeux et emporté,' for his part in the Champ de Mars petition. A Guard supposedly must have heard him abusing a public figure and assumed much more - he was accused of criticising the Guard's conduct on the 17th. Despite a subsequent witness observing that he had been 'arreté au Palais-Royal pour diverses motions,' a long peroration on his patriotic motives won his release, aided no doubt by the *greffier en chef aux consuls*, who arrived to vouch for him.¹⁵

The trick of remorse and submission we saw used by Pierson earlier also worked for another man, Jean-Baptiste Joseph Delvaux, *faiseur de bas*, overheard by a Guard saying that 's'il vouloit on balayeroit les Parisiens à l'instant, qu'ils étoient tous République chez eux, et que les trois quarts des marchands étoient des gueux et des coquins.' He claimed 'qu'il ne fit que discuter des propos à la verité incendiaire qui se tenoient dans un Groupe,' and 'que son voeu est d'être toujours soumis à la loy.' He was warned and released.¹⁶

Others arrested this day were not so lucky. One of the most unfortunate appears to have been

¹³APP AA182:313, Section du Louvre.

¹⁴APP AA137:179. Section de l'Hôtel de Ville.

¹⁵APP AA157:144. Section des Enfants-Rouges.

¹⁶APP AA153:8, Section de l'Oratoire.

François Louis Valentin, 56, *sans état*, whom the *commissaire* of the Section de la Fontaine Montmorency picked up for allegedly shouting 'à bas la motion' in a group on rue St-Martin. Valentin denied this, and even having been stopped in the group - as well, of course, as having been 'sollicité par personne de se réunir avec ses camarades et amis pour troubler l'ordre public.' Nonetheless, the alleged shout was called a 'propos incendiaire,' and he was sent to La Force.¹⁷

Pierre Jourdan, 36, *compagnon menuisier*, had done more to provoke his arrest, trying to get served in a bar when he was already drunk and pushing the pregnant *marchande* who refused him. This became political when he accused the Guards present of being 'tous gueux et gredins . . . qui étoient payés pour faire deployer le drapeau Rouge.' He denied saying this and claimed to have always supported the Guard, having 'des billets de garde' - possibly receipts for payment in lieu of service. He too went to La Force.¹⁸

Sixte Leclerc, 50, 'salletier' or 'faretier', was arrested for resisting the Guard clearing the Place de Grève at 11 a.m. The Guard reported that he had said 'que si tous ceux qui étoient sur ladite place pensoient comme lui, ils ne retireroient pas.' There is no elaboration on what this meant, but Leclerc seems to have become hysterical when he was arrested, crying 'qu'on le pends', and 'a voulu se détruire avec son couteau.' He explained this by saying 'qu'il aimoit tant être pendu que conduit par la garde comme un criminel.' Although he denied the phrase in question, when the matter of subornation was raised, he seemed to contradict himself, saying 'c'est bien de son propre mouvement et qu'il n'avoit aucun mauvais dessein.' He was sent to La Force since 'il paroît essentiel de s'emparer des personnes de tous ces gens sans asile et sans aveu qui cherchent à soulever les citoyens les uns contre les autres.' Since Leclerc had a job, a home and a master, this seems a little unfair, but nothing to be marvelled at in the context.¹⁹

A last man for whom we have a *procès-verbal* on this day claimed that Martial Law was not published before the firing on the Champ de Mars. This was the end of a long rant that had included the demand that 'les juges s'assemblent publiquement,' and 'mille autres observations.' Louis Revigner, 36, *garçon cordonnier*, claimed he was not even the man in question, as he had been arrested outside a *cabinet d'estampes* after supposedly being tracked around the Palais-Royal. Three witnesses' corroboration,

¹⁷APP AA172:52.

¹⁸APP AA224:99, Section du Roule.

¹⁹APP AA137:176, Section de l'Hôtel de Ville.

added to the six lead *balles* found in his pocket, were enough for the *commissaire*, and he went to La Force. Unlike most, he was released before September, reclaiming his property on 21 August.²⁰

From the records of La Force, it seems that the Section des Quatre Nations was particularly troubled on this day. A *compagnon maçon*, a *marchand de bonnets* and a *marchand de cannes* made incendiary remarks from inside a *fiacre*; a *compagnon serrurier* made a ‘discours incendiaire et injurieux contre la garde nationale’ and struck an officer; a *cocher* said the Guard were ‘f. coquins et gredins qui avoient eu la lachetté de tirer sur le peuple’; and a *compagnon cordonnier* made a similar speech in a bar.²¹

Other incendiaries included a *compagnon charron* in the Section de Ponceau who said the Guard ‘étoient des gueux parcequ’ils avoient tiré sur le peuple’; a *terrassier* in the Section des Tuileries who had ‘voulu détourner un tambour qui battoit la générale et sur sa résistance l’avoit frappé d’un coup de poing’; a *maître menuisier* from the Section de Popincourt who said he ‘chioit sur les habits bleus’; and a *marchande de legumes* in the Section du Temple who similarly said ‘qu’elle se torchoit le cul avec les grenadiers.’²² The Section de la Grange-Batellière saw the confluence of general social concerns with the specific situation when two beggars were detained in separate incidents. One made menacing demands for money to which he ‘a ajouté des propos incendiaires et des observations capables de susciter un attroupement dangereux’; and another made ‘propos incendiaires dans un groupe et . . . voulu frapper la garde.’²³

In the Section de la Bonne-Nouvelle, a *compagnon marbrier* insulted passing Guard cavalry, while in the Luxembourg, a *marchand parfumeur* and Guard in the Bonne-Nouvelle Battalion tore down an ‘affiche de la loi et l’a jetté par terre.’²⁴ In the Tuileries, a *menuisier* made a ‘motion incendiaire’ from inside a *fiacre*, and followed this by ‘actes de violence envers la garde nationale qu’il appelloit Bourreau de la nation.’ In a *cabaret* in the Section du Jardin-des-Plantes, a ‘cy-devant menuisier’ made remarks ‘contre MM Bailly et Lafayette et contre la garde nationale, le tout au sujet de ce qui est arrivé au Champ

²⁰APP AA85:89. The prison record, AB324:1727, indicates he was referred to the Tribunal, and there is no note of his release.

²¹APP AB324:1722, 1730, 1754, 1755. All referred to the Tribunal except the *serrurier*, vouched for on 22 July.

²²APP AB324:1700, 1659, 1656, 1743. All vouched for except the *charron* - referred to Tribunal.

²³APP AB324:1716, held for later transfer to *maison des mendiants*, and 1677, referred to Tribunal.

²⁴APP AB324:1665, vouched for 20 July, and 1679, vouched for 21 July, by a ‘nombreuse deputation de sa Section.’

de Mars.²⁵

By the next day, the 19th, it would seem that the outrage over the Massacre was beginning to die down, or at least that fewer people were willing to voice their recriminations. The situation, however, had not by any means become calm. One Guard witness related an incident in the Palais-Royal at 5:30 p.m.:

il s'est approché de quelques groupes, où l'on faisoit des motions, que dans un entr'autres il a remarqué un quidam qui lui a porté la parole sur une motion asses [illegible], en lui disant, la garde nationale si elle ne se comporte pas autrement, nous sommes dix mille ouvriers, nous nous tournerons du côté des Aristocrates, et alors les habits bleus auront beau jeu.

The Guard, 'en habit bourgeois', along with a 'camarade et . . . plusieurs citoyens irrités', arrested the man. Thomas Tanquerey, 36, *menuisier*, said in his defence 'qu'il est au desespoir de l'avoir dit, et que si tel propos lui s'est échappé c'est l'effet du vin . . . qu'il aime sa patrie, qu'il est français dans l'ame et qu'il deffendrait la constitution au peril des sa vie.' This seems to have had its effect, as the *commissaire* ordered him merely to be held for the rest of the evening to cool off, and even agreed to let him spend the night in the guardpost 'par economie.'²⁶

On a number of occasions like this, drink has already appeared as an alibi, and the proportion relying on this to alleviate their guilt or evil intent seems to have risen sharply from here on - probably as the sober saw the virtues of silence. Pierre Gabriel Menager, 32, *compagnon couvreur*, was unfortunate in running into the hardline Arcis *commissaire*. Even the patrol that arrested him at 10 p.m. noted he was 'un peu ivre, il est vrai' when he 's'est permis de crier à bas l'uniforme.' This 'propos injurieux' got him into La Force, the *commissaire* grudgingly conceding that his drunkenness was worthy of recording for the administrators, though he personally gave it 'aucun égard.'²⁷

Earlier that day *commissaire* Deneux had put away another drunk, François Gougaud, *garçon tailleur*, who had walked from the Pont Notre-Dame to the Place de Grève repeatedly saying:

oui, Lafayette est un Gueux, oui Bailly est un coquin, ils devoient être pendus tous les deux ce sont eux qui ont fait sortir le Drapeau Rouge, et qui ont fait massacrer des malheureux au Champ de Mars.

Little sense could be got out of him - he initially claimed 'que M Lafayette est son cousin.' His landlady vouched for his normally impeccable character, but despite this note in his favour, he was sent to La Force.²⁸

A *scieur des pierres* working on the new church of the Madeleine also said 'qu'il avoit Bu' when

²⁵APP AB324:1682, 1731, both referred to Tribunal.

²⁶APP AA85:117.

²⁷APP AA56:352.

²⁸APP AA56:353.

asked to explain why he had remarked to a corporal who was passing through the site, 'vous allez tuer du monde, vous allez faire comme les autres', adding later that 'les gardes nationales étoient des j. f.'s.' The corporal, in seeking reinforcements to arrest him, thought the local guardpost held too few men to risk the operation 'dans un endroit où il y avoit deux cens ouvriers au moins,' but reinforced by 'plusieurs citoyens passant sur le Boulevard en uniforme' they proved enough. In these concerns the state of high social tension once again makes itself clear. Although the stone-cutter, François Corte, was forced to admit that not only had he spoken to the corporal, but that the previous day he had told two *instituteurs des écoles chrétiennes* that the Guard were 'j. f.'s et qu'ils prennent garde à eux' for what they had done, his ability to produce a second Guard corporal, who in this case was prepared to vouch for him, was enough to end the matter.²⁹

Not all the outbursts of the 19th, however, were attributable to drink. Two Guards were conversing about Martial Law in the Palais-Royal at 11 a.m. when Jacques Marie Joux, *frotteur*, interrupted their talk

en disant que dimanche dernier lors de la prétendue publication de la loi martiale, il étoit lui-même sur l'autel de la patrie, que cette loi martiale n'a point été publiée, et que néanmoins il a vu la garde nationale enfouler et tirer sur le peuple, qu'il a même vu les tambours leur caisse sur le dos, mettre le sabre à la main et monter ainsi sur l'autel de la patrie pour en chasser les personnes qui y étoient.

He then added 'ironiquement, qu'est-ce donc que cette garde nationale, et cela assez haut pour faire amasser ses partisans.' As he thus imputes malice, the witness noted that Joux was disappointed, because the people around him said he was courting arrest. His arrogance in then saying 'que personne ne pouvoit l'arrêter' provoked another man into saying he had seen Joux 'faire . . . des motions incendiaires' on the Champ de Mars on the 17th, and elsewhere since. A clamour arose, and Joux was seized.

The *commissaire* took him point-by-point through his supposed account, and Joux responded at each point by retailing the official version of the course of events. Realising later that this still put him in the heart of the seditious gathering, he amended it to say he had been moving away when the first shots came, and had heard from others all about what followed. La Force received him forthwith.³⁰

Earlier that morning, Charles Joseph Hoffmann, 32, *tailleur*, had been arrested on the Pont Neuf for looking at a sentry 'd'un air menaçant' and making 'quelques injures dont il [the sentry] n'a pas entendu les paroles.' This was after the sentry had told him to 'se taire' for saying 'que la garde nationale ne regardoit pas les citoyens et qu'elle tiroit sur eux comme sur la volaille.' Hoffmann explained that he had been talking with two or three strangers, recounting what they had heard about the Champ de Mars

²⁹APP AA206:378, Section de la Place-Vendôme.

³⁰APP AA85:113.

affaire. He had at that moment been saying ‘que l’on avoit tiré sur les ouvriers qui aidoient a relever un homme qui venoit d’être tué, on tiroit donc sur les ouvriers comme sur de la volaille.’ This had all been without ‘intention,’ he was passing peaceably with his wife, and had no idea how he could have been construed as threatening the sentry. He was released ‘attendu que lesr. Hoffmann est domicilié . . . [and] qu’il n’y avoit pas lieu à arrestation.’ One wonders if a *non-domicilié* would have had more trouble being believed.³¹

This is a case that seems to cross the line between a crackdown and an over-reaction, as does the arrest of Antoine Olivier Harant, 63, ‘cy-devant verrificateur des Droits sur les entrées de Paris.’ He had been in the Palais-Royal as a patrol passed, and remarked, as several witnesses affirmed, ‘voila une belle foutue garde.’ One witness noted the addition ‘ce n’est pas dans les cas d’en imposer.’ The Guard was actually summoned by a 25-year-old *serrurier* who had only heard the incident at second-hand. Harant explained that ‘voiant le Palais-Royal dans un état de tumulte Epouvantable il desiroit d’y avoir une garde imposante’, and thought little enough of the passing patrol to say to himself, though out loud, the words he was charged with. He was enjoined to circumspection and released.³²

It seems fairly clear that there was indeed tumult in the Palais-Royal that day - the arrests of both Joux and Tanquerey show that frenetic public discussion was under way. Madeleine Lorin, 33, *filie cuisinière*, was arrested there at 4 p.m. for ‘propos très incendiaires.’ Two witnesses described her words, the first as that ‘le Roi etoit très malheureux et que la garde nationale avoit tort d’agir avec autant de rigueur a son egard.’ The second witness, however, thought the remark about the Guard had been about ‘ce qu’elle feroit [?] vis a vis du peuple.’ He at least had followed her and testified that she had repeated these words to a group of ‘quatre autres femmes comme elle,’ and upon this ‘recidive’ he ‘s’est permis de l’arrêter.’ She denied all she was charged with, admitting only to have remarked in passing to two people

qui parloient de la fuite du roi . . . que l’on avoit Beaucoup de peine a changer les petits billets et qu’en ayant présenté un de cent sols il y a quelques jours à un Boullanger pour avoir du pain elle n’avoit pas pu en avoir parceque le Boullanger n’avoit pas pu lui rendre de monnoie.

Despite contradicting the men who spoke against her, she was released with a warning.³³

If Lorin seems to have been given the benefit of the doubt, as was Constance Evrard on the 17th,

³¹APP AA215:463, Section d’Henri Quatre, 8 a.m.

³²APP AA85:118, 7 p.m.

³³APP AA85:115.

later in the evening of the 19th the full force of public opprobrium would fall on another woman. 'Le sr. Jolly, marchand de vin' explained:

qu'étant au Palais-Royal, plusieurs personnes se sont réunis a lui se sont dit, voicy une femme qui tient dans plusieurs endroits telles que les Thuilleries, la cour du Manege, place du carrousel ainsi qu'au jardin du Palais-Royal, les propos les plus incendiaires . . . que de plus elle disoit que la garde nationale n'existeroit pas longtems encore, que sur ce lui sr. Jolly ainsi que plusieurs autres temoins ont saisi laditte particulière.

Another witness noted her last comment, and had often heard her speaking 'contre toutes les autorités, exceptant seulement dans ces propos factieux le sr. Robespierre, Reubel, Petion, Danton et Marat.' Two other witnesses included the Cordeliers Club in the list she had been 'louant beaucoup,' while a third noted that she had said 'que si elle eut été sur l'autel de la patrie dimanche au soir qu'elle n'en seroit pas sortie et qu'il étoit indigne que la garde nationale avoit fait feu sur des patriotes et mille autres propos de nature factieuse.'

She was Lallemande Loisy, 49, 'ne faisant rien' and claiming to live from 600 *livres* in *rentes* 'dont elle pouvoit produire les titres.' Nonetheless, the next question was whether she was a 'macquerelle' - a procuress. She denied this, and all other comments, except making a remark on the Terrasse des Feuillants earlier 'que c'étoit bien une malheureuse revolution et qu'on ne voyoit plus d'argent.' This raises the point of whether it was somehow felt legitimate for women to comment on the economic situation, as Lorin claimed to have done. It served Loisy less well, however - she was 'plus que suspect' and was sent to La Force. Here the suspicion continued - on the 27th the Police Tribunal ordered an enquiry into her means of support. These were presumably verified, however, as she was released on 6 August.³⁴

Lallemande Loisy seems to have been something of a minor celebrity in the world of *motionnaires*, since prior to her arrest 'Madame Lallemande' had been mentioned no less than five times by *Le Babillard*. On 9 June it recorded her presence in the Tuilleries gardens with 'quelques femmes' who 'vomissaient mille imprecations contre toutes les autorités.' Two days later she was claiming personal knowledge that Lafayette 'commanderoit de faire feu aussi bien sur les patriotes, que sur les aristocrates,' if there had been trouble at the Santerre trial. In this issue she is noted as a 'matrône de profession' - another term for a procuress. On 16 June she was reported in a group of 'mégères soudoyées par les ennemis de la constitution,' reading *libelles* on 'la désunion de la garde nationale, l'insubordination, le mépris de toute espèce d'autorité.' On 23 June she had moved to the Palais-Royal, where she joined in calls to hang those who interfered with radical *affiches*. On 5 July she seems to have been meeting more

³⁴APP AA85:121, AB324:1783.

opposition - 'n'osant plus pérorer contre les autorités,' she was now accompanied by an old woman who 's'exale en apostrophe contre tous les gens en place.' However, it was observed 'on les chasse de tous les groupes.'³⁵

Her arrest on the 19th was reported with glee - 'il est bon d'observer que sa courage l'a abandonnée' in front of the *commissaire*, and 'elle a demandé tout bas . . . si elle seroit pendue.' We have, of course, no evidence for the authenticity of this remark. When she reappeared in the Cour du Manège on 11 August the author marked this with an intimation of just who he thought she was. A bystander is reported as having taken her by the arm and warned her 'si vous n'aviez pas des amis officieux, vous risquez de passer un mauvais quart d'heure: croyez-moi, soyez sage, et ne les compromettez pas.' With this, she and her 'deux amies' passed from view.³⁶

With this suggestion of friends in high places, we are reminded yet again of the supposed link between popular agitation and Court subornation. Two Guards must have thought of this when someone reported to them on the evening of the 19th that in a nearby café a man was not only making 'motions incendiaires contre la garde nationale,' but 'cherchoit a accaparer du froment pour se faire un parti . . . disoit qu'on ne pouvoit l'arrêter . . . [and] offroit quatre livres dix sols par jour' for unknown work. They seized a man, having burst into the café, and marched him out despite his insults. The *peintre en miniature* Jacques Barre, 42, indignantly denied all these charges - 'il a été arrêté sans doute pour un autre.' The *commissaire* showed no inclination to believe this, and his admission that 'il est arrivé de Bruxelles à Paris' six weeks before was underlined heavily in the *procès-verbal*.

All changed when a 'garçon de bureau au Secretariat de M. Bailly maire de Paris' appeared and vouched for Barre. This was presumably the son-in-law he said he was staying with. All the dark suspicions melted away, and he was released without further ado.³⁷ Once again the police seem to be assuming that anything is believable of a person *sans aveu*, but once that crucial avowal is found, all must be well. In no instance does it appear in the records that further action was taken against a person for whom a domiciled male citizen was prepared to vouch. This may seem obvious, since the avowal would not be recorded if it was inoperative, but the records sometimes break off, as here, in the midst of harsh interrogation, or even the committal process, when a claimant arrives. The simple fact of producing such

³⁵*Le Babillard*, nos. 6, 8, 12, 19, 23 [break in publication, 26 June-3 July.]

³⁶*ibid.* nos. 38, 21 July, and 59.

³⁷APP AA206:380, Section de la Place-Vendôme.

a person changed the authorities' whole view of a suspect. Revolutionary paranoia, on the part of the constitutional authorities at any rate, had very sharp limits, despite their apparent ability to believe almost anything ill of someone outside those bounds.

Beyond these various exercises in convoluted suspicions, resentment at the events of the 17th continued to be felt and expressed more directly across the city. A *compagnon menuisier* in the Section de l'Arsenal said in a bar 'qu'étant sur l'autel de la patrie M Delafayette lui avoit porté un coup d'épée dans son chapeau, qu'il y a riposté par des pierres et que s'il ne l'a pas tué ce n'est pas sa faute.' In three other Sections the Guard was accused or insulted (in Beaubourg, by a *domestique*, by a *brocanteur* in the Section des Innocents, and in Notre-Dame by a *gagne-denier*.)³⁸

In the Section de l'Hôtel de Ville, two *compagnons maçons* and a third man who shared a surname with one of them were arrested 'soupçonné d'avoir jetté des pierres et de la matière fécale sur la garde nationale et d'ailleurs comme suspects.' Much to the regret of the Guard, no doubt, they had to be released on 23 July for lack of evidence.³⁹

Trouble continued south of the river, in the Section des Quatre Nations a *peintre en mignature* was detained for 'propos injurieux contre la garde nationale au milieu d'un attroupement.' In the nearby Section des Gobelins, a *garçon amidonnier* was found in possession of 'un mousqueton no. 1777 appartenant à un cavalier de la garde nationale demonté au Champ de Mars.' A *fourbisseur* in the same Section had 'occasionné du trouble' as he read an 'annonce d'assemblée' in the streets by making 'des propos tendants à compromettre M Adogne, commandant du Bataillon de St-Marcel.'⁴⁰

After 19 July, however, the number of Champ de Mars related arrests declined dramatically, and of those who were detained between then and the end of the month, many could blame their behaviour and remarks on overt inebriation. One case that is less clear is that of Joseph Noiriél, 27, an *écrivain public* who slept in his booth near the Sainte-Chapelle. At 5 p.m. on 20 July a group of Guards 'à boire une verre de vin . . . chez un marchand de vin' heard him say 'qu'il assassinerait M de la Fayette . . . et que M de la Fayette avoit renouvelé . . . l'affaire de Nancy.' One of them slapped him, and he told them 'qu'ils étoient comme le regiment de navarre braves, quand ils étoient quatre contre un.' They arrested him.

³⁸APP AB324:1702, 1723, 1745, 1768; *gagne-denier* sentenced to one month in Bicêtre by the Police Tribunal, 27 July, others referred to the Tribunal.

³⁹APP AB324:1664.

⁴⁰APP AB324:1734, 1724, 1697, *fourbisseur* released 22 July, others referred to Tribunal.

Noiriel claimed he had been saying, hypothetically, that if Lafayette had acted as badly as Bouillé had at Nancy, he should hang, but that he had not judged the matter. He was sent to La Force. As we are on the general subject of alcohol, we should note that the corporal who deposed first, one Vernot, said he was drinking at the time of the incident, whereas two other witnesses described him as the leader of a patrol that came to arrest Noiriel. They may just be confused, or perhaps they had more scruples than Vernot about the fact that he had been drinking in a bar when he was 'on patrol.' No-one troubled to mention the slap Noiriel had received - he was, after all, just a 'mauvais sujet sans domicile.'⁴¹

The next day, Sulpice Bernardet, *fabriquant de chocolat*, insulted the Guard, the Municipality, and Lafayette in a bar, and admitted saying that he thought the Guard on the Champ de Mars could have surrounded and captured the *factieux* without firing. His plea of drunkenness was accepted after referral to the *mairie*, and he was released. A *rapeur de tabac* was less lucky, since his drinking led him to express republican sentiments, and then to hit a passing priest - he was imprisoned. A *compagnon menuisier* who sang ribald songs about the Guard, Bailly and Lafayette was also locked up for his pains, despite pleading drunken amnesia.⁴²

On the 22nd, a *menuisier en carosse* managed to get a *commissaire de section* to vouch for him after he had drunkenly insulted the Guard on the rue Montmartre, and on the 25th a drunken German-teacher claimed to be repeating the sentiments of the citizens of Le Havre when he insulted a patrol. He was vouched for by a *fourbisseur*.⁴³ On 30 July, Jean Raimond Berthaud, *porteur à la Halle et marchand de chansons*, was less fortunate. He too claimed inebriation as a defence for having stopped outside a guardpost manned by *gardes soldés* and said 'que les volontaires qui avoient tiré au Champ de Mars étoient des j-f's, mais que les soldats du centre sont des braves garçons.' Upon this, they arrested him. A *potier de terre* who commented on this was also taken in, but released. The *commissaire*, however, seems to have vented his spleen on Berthaud

attendu que la tranquillité du quartier est perpétuellement troublé par les menaces faites à la garde nationale, que l'esprit qui veut s'établir dans le quartier à cet égard auroit la funeste consequence de semer la division entre ceux qui doivent être unis . . .

He sent him to La Force, as one who 'va à l'aide de ses chansons repandre le trouble et le désordre.'⁴⁴

⁴¹APP AA182:324, Section du Louvre.

⁴²APP AA182:326, Section du Louvre; AA157:147, Section des Enfants-Rouges; AA206:386, Section de la Place-Vendôme.

⁴³APP AA167:65, Section de la Place Louis XIV; AA85:132, Section du Palais-Royal.

⁴⁴APP AA198:62, Section de l'Observatoire. Note that this is on the Left Bank, where although few records survive, tension seems to have been particularly high.

By now we are deeply familiar with the harsh spirit in which Paris was policed. Of all the arrests for sedition after 19 July, only one appears as a realistic possible threat to public order - a *colporteur* on 20 July reading and orating against the authorities in the rue de Charonne, Faubourg St-Antoine.⁴⁵ On the 24th a *garçon tailleur* was arrested for saying 'ces sacré --- d'habits bleus.' The blank may have been 'coquins', as this is what he admitted to having said after the Guard had hit him with a musket-butt and knocked him down, for the crime of not clearing the way fast enough as they came through with a prisoner. He went to La Force.⁴⁶ Paris seems to have been so heavily patrolled that perhaps only drink or such provocation gave people the courage to speak out.

An extraordinary case from 29 July shows how far the Guard stretched their suspicions. Two *cuisiniers sans place* were in a café in the Section du Roule when a number of 'citoyens gardes nationales' heard one of them, Antoine Guillet, say that he was a Guard *chasseur*, and that on the night of the 17th 'il avoit par ordre de ses superieurs aidé à porter un cadavre au Palais-Royal.' The citizens rounded on him - 'cette acte étoit infame . . . contre la loi . . . aucun superieur ait donné un pareil ordre,' and the two were arrested. After Guillet retracted his claim to be a Guard, his attempt to stick to the basic story grew increasingly suspicious, and he ended up in La Force, although his companion was freed. Guillet claimed that he had been one of four volunteers solicited by an officer after a corpse had been brought into the Palais-Royal, in order to move it away, but that he personally had declined after seeing the bloody state of the body. While there is nothing inherently implausible in this, the Guards clearly found the whole concept outrageous.⁴⁷

Yet there is every reason to think it likely that just such an episode occurred that night. It will be recalled that at 10 p.m. on the 17th, Jean François Marie Michel Le Gueulx was arrested, distraught at the sight of a corpse carried 'par quatre polissons sur des branches d'arbres allant du cotez du Palais-Royal.' Jean Pierre Barthelemy Marchand also claimed to have been 'pénétré de voir passer' such corpses at 11 p.m.⁴⁸ Furthermore, we have the report of a *commissaire de section* from the Palais-Royal, who at eleven that night, along with two *notables adjoints*, supervised the identification and removal of 'un particulier que l'on avoit rapporté du champ de la fédération où il avoit été tué.' Not only did this involve

⁴⁵APP AA173:27, Section de Montreuil, sent to La Force.

⁴⁶APP AA182:332, Section du Louvre.

⁴⁷APP AA224:110.

⁴⁸APP AA85:85, AA74:468 (Section de Mauconseil), and see above.

moving him around the Palais, and eventually putting him in a coach to the morgue, assisted by various 'porteurs', but even at this stage the suspicion was strong that the body had been left there to cause trouble - it 'pouvoit exciter quelques rumeurs' and 'avait été apporté sans doute à ce [illegible] du champ de la fédération.' (The inference is clear, despite the lacuna.)⁴⁹

While we are on the subject of the actual victims of the Massacre, recalling how vigorously the Guard put down any unofficial version of the events of the afternoon of the 17th, it is worth quoting the account of a man actually wounded in the charge of the Guard. Nicolas David, *cuisinier sans place*, was found on the field and taken to the *commissaire* of the Section du Luxembourg. Somewhat disingenuously, he claimed to have been there to copy the inscriptions from the *autel de la patrie*:

à l'approche de la troupe qui y est [entré?] les personnes qui étoient pres du comparant se sont evadé et le comparant ayant voulu en faire autant comme il se trouvoit a la rencontre de la troupe il a été culbuté par plusieurs volontaires de la garde nationale et a reçu un faible coup de bayonnette dans le cote droit et un autre audessus du sourcil gauche.

A doctor certified his wounds 'très superficielles' and he was apparently allowed to go, despite the lack of popular provocation in his account of the murderous, but rather inefficient, charge of the enflamed bourgeoisie.⁵⁰

Assembling an overall picture of the Champ de Mars repression is not entirely possible. The patchy survival of the records of the Section police *commissaires*, due to the destruction of the Prefecture during the Paris Commune, means that it is impossible to get a full correlation between detainees arrested and those imprisoned - for the latter, we have the full register of La Force prison, which was the destination of the vast majority, and which shows prisoners received from over 80% of Sections for seditious offences at this time.⁵¹ With only twenty-two of the Sections' records surviving, and some of them fragmentary, some arrests have been lost to us - since the surviving records indicate that as many, at least, were detained and released as were imprisoned.

The prison register indicates 105 detainees for the period 10-31 July with relevant offences, including 37 on the 17th alone and 24 on the next day, 12 the day after and only four on the 20th - clearly Paris rapidly learnt to keep its head down under Martial Law. We have records of a further 48 non-imprisoned detainees among the 96 cases which survive from the Section records. As our examination of

⁴⁹APP AA85:76.

⁵⁰APP AA166:14. 10 p.m., 17 July.

⁵¹The only exceptions are the backwaters of the Champs-Élysées and the Île-St-Louis, the radical enclave of the Théâtre-Français, and the distant northern Faubourgs - Montmartre, Poissonnière and St-Denis.

these cases has shown, arrests often came for offences which cannot be clearly said to indicate radical sentiments, as opposed to merely saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Thus is it hard to assign a definite value to the social profile revealed by these cases, but it remains worth stating. The identities of these documented detainees range from five men who are simply *sans état*, through nine *colporteurs*, five of whom offer previous occupations lost in the economic crisis, eight domestic servants, and nine unskilled workers; on to thirty-four artisans who still describe themselves as *garçons* or *compagnons*, twenty-eight who merely give the title of the trade, and eight who call themselves *marchand* or *maître* in a trade. At the upper end there are three teachers of various descriptions, three painters, two clerks, a postal employee, a student chemist and a student surgeon, a former mail-coach driver, an actor and three men living from private means, not to mention two who are *grenadiers volontaires de la garde nationale* (and as we have noted, several detainees, some of whom were quite clearly given to radical expressions, recorded active or previous Guard membership along with another occupation).

Performing an age breakdown on the 64 cases for which there is information, we see that only seven detainees were under 20, and fifteen between 20 and 25. Eleven were 26-30, and eight 31-35. Fully fifteen were between 36 and 40, and eight were over forty, including two over sixty - speaking out, then, was not the preserve of impetuous youth.

By way of comparison, the identities of 180 people who acted as witnesses against these detainees can be noted. Excluding those on-duty Guards who were evidently acting only as formal 'arresting officers,' this sample comprises 22 who designate themselves simply as *citoyens*, *bourgeois* or similar formulae; 30 who were at the mastership level in a trade, or independent merchants; 38 who gave a trade but did not specify their social level; 14 who were at the 'worker' end of the trades - journeymen or *ouvriers*, plus two apprentices; and seven servants, including one female. There were also three artisans' wives, a *limonadière*, a student, a *chantre*, a merchant's son and an 11-year-old boy. Of the bourgeois category, two also noted that they were Guards, as did seven of the masters and eleven in the non-specific trade group. No less than 61 witnesses felt that their identity was adequately expressed by the fact that they were Guard volunteers, and gave no other social status. The social disjuncture between this sample and that of the detainees is evident, albeit a matter of differently-weighted hierarchies rather than two distinct social groups. The meaning that can be attributed to it will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10 - CONCLUSION

10.1 - AUGUST 1791: AFTERSHOCKS

The pacification of Paris achieved by Martial Law quelled the response to the Champ de Mars Massacre, but though the city became quieter, none of its underlying problems went away. Through the month of August the press record indicates that troubles rumbled on: Gorsas on 2 August reported the rumour that 'on travaille les ouvriers' to persuade them to attack the Guard. He construed this as a calumny on the people - 'Les aristocrates ne cherchent qu'à indisposer les soldats-citoyens contre le peuple.' Two days later he alleged that there were five thousand former Gardes-du-Corps and other military aristocrats in the city, 'tous prêts à faire un coup-de-main.' In the same issue he reported that five suspicious men had been found in the home of a Sieur Gozel, along with baskets of stones for an unknown purpose. On 7 August, the *Feuille du Jour* carried the same story, noting that the men, 'mal vêtus', had been carrying 294 livres in écus, and that the house was close to the Récollets guardpost, where one of the sentries 'venait d'être dangereusement blessé'. The *Feuille* was likewise three days behind with news of arson attempts - Gorsas noted on the 10th that 'plusieurs maisons de Paris' had faced this threat on the night of the 8th, and on the 13th, the *Feuille* reported that 'on a decouvert dans plusieurs caves, des mèches souffrées.' The quality of this news is uncertain - some of these events may have been mere rumour - but a certain level of agitation in the public domain was certainly maintained. *Le Babillard* was never short of material for its daily eight pages of popular outbursts and suspicious musings, such as this from 19 August:

Palais-Royal - Il paroît que les factieux ont ajourné l'exécution de leurs projets au 25 du courant. Le peuple est excité à la sédition, sous des prétextes divers . . . [that the Constitution gives the King dangerous powers, or that the Champ de Mars suspects are martyrs to the authorities' revenge] . . . Toutes les positions qui peuvent agir fortement sur des hommes simples et crédules . . . sont

adroitement dirigés contre l'exécution des lois et contre leurs ministres.¹

Reports from the police show a similar continuation of tensions. On 3 August two women were arrested for disturbing the peace by selling small change openly in a café - having demanded the said coins from the waiter with menaces after presenting an assignat in payment. They were wives (in fact if not in law) of two men 'sans condition', and served six hours in the *salle de discipline* for their enterprise.² On the 12th, a Section *commissaire* carrying out the census found a man in a *chambre garnie* wearing a Guard *habit*. His reproach, upon learning that the man was not enrolled, was met with the response 'qu'il étoit libre à tout le monde, de porter l'habit qui luy plaisoit suivant les droits de l'homme.' The *commissaire* disagreed, calling him 'très suspect', and deciding that 'l'abus et le danger' of letting him keep the coat were too great, confiscated it.³

Meanwhile, it seems that aristocracy was rearing its head among the crowds in the Palais-Royal since the defeat of the radicals. On 14 August, six men, including a *député* and a *chevalier de St-Louis*, were arrested for insulting a sentry at 1 a.m., but managed to talk themselves out of trouble.⁴ The press was growing alarmed at such manifestations, and it is likely that tensions were rising amongst the habitués of the area and its cafés. On the 16th a brawl under the *rotonde* of the café de Foy was widely reported in the press. Gorsas gave it space over three days, calling it a victory for patriots. The same line was taken by the *Argus Patriote*, who reported that *aristos* had attacked outnumbered patriots, but had been fought off, and that now the Tricolour flew over the café. The *Feuille du Jour* took an opposing line, that it had been an attack by 'demagogues' on an innocent man offering an opinion.⁵ All noted an intense factional division in the crowds around the café (who were not the *populace*, but a respectable clientèle).

The brawl of the 16th appears in the police record, where its relative magnitude is confirmed by the space given to it - five folio sheets recording the testimony of eleven witnesses and four detainees, and a questioning process that started at 7:30 p.m. and went on well beyond midnight. The testimony is rarely consistent, but it appears that some men were discussing Audouin's *Journal Universel* of that day when one of the culprits objected to a 'patriotic' statement made by someone. A fight ensued among the tables of the café, in which, however, the only positively recorded casualty was a Guard who suffered

¹*Le Babillard*, no. 67.

²APP AA85:185, Section du Palais-Royal.

³APP AA85:234.

⁴APP AA85:251.

⁵Gorsas, *Courrier*, 17, 18, 19 August; *l'Argus Patriote*, *Feuille du Jour*, and *Le Babillard*, 18 August.

severe bruising to his 'testicule du côté gauche' from an aristocratic boot - painful, but hardly a *coup d'état*.⁶

Meanwhile, the *peuple* had evidently not entirely forgotten what had happened in July, as two *compagnons imprimeurs* showed when threatened with the Guard because of their disruptive behaviour in a bar - they 'ont répondu qu'ils se foutoient de la garde nationale parceque ils étoient tous des gueux qui avoient tué plus de cent personnes au champ de Mars', and subsequently resisted arrest. Martial Law having been revoked, they were generously only held overnight.⁷ Two other themes we have seen were reflected in an incident on the 20th - a *cocher* was arrested for telling a Guard he 'pouvoit aller se faire foutre avec sa sacré cocarde' after he had been stopped for not wearing one. The *cocher* claimed to have tried to buy one, but having only a six-*livre* écu, he had not wanted to change this for paper, which was all he had been offered. He too was given the relatively light penalty, for his disrespect to the Guard, of a spell in the *salle de discipline*.⁸ On the next day, *aide-major* Beauregard appears again, having seized a man in the Palais-Royal who had been expelled from the Guard cavalry, and whom he found still wearing the uniform coat. The culprit said that it was the only coat he had, and that he had lost his place in the Guard by being absent without leave, but could have reclaimed it, had his horse not died and had another man not been put in his place. He was sent to La Force.⁹

For the rest of the month, the press was occupied by the spectre of agitation brought on by the annual rise in the price of bread. Gorsas on the 20th reported this, and subsequent unrest in the faubourgs. He observed that the public workshops had been shut when Louis was planning his escape, and that now such a move was feared again, '*le pain renchérit*'. The *Feuille du Jour* noted on the 21st that the rise was an annual phenomenon, a fact which was escaping most people, and perceptively observed that the trouble was because 'on a dit au peuple qu'il étoit le souverain, et le souverain sent assez sa force pour être despote.' Nevertheless, on the 25th it recorded that:

de nombreuses patrouilles sont répandues dans Paris. On semble craindre du trouble de la part des mal-intentionnés. On menace les boulangers et les marchands d'écus. Le jardin d'Orléans est l'asile de tous les hurleurs républicains. La moderation et la sagesse y sont aristocrates, il faut flagorner la

⁶APP AA85:266-70. The witnesses were a *garçon limonadier*, a *bourgeois* from Nantes, two *marchands papetiers*, a surgeon, one of Palloy's clerks, a *fabriquant de bas*, an *entrepreneur de bâtiment*, a *marchand horloger* and a *marchand de vin*, as well as the injured Guard. The culprits included a *chevalier de Malthe* and two former officers, one from St-Domingue. In questioning, they refused to discuss the *chevalier's* actions unless he was referred to by his title, rather than his name.

⁷APP AA85:290, Section du Palais-Royal, 17 August, 9:45 p.m.

⁸APP AA85:303.

⁹APP AA85:318.

populace, ou se taire.

As usual, then, all sides feared trouble, and saw movements of the people as the work of their opponents. This discourse would retain its dominance, although in the immediate future the universal joy which greeted the decision of the King to accept the Constitution - another issue about which the press had raised a host of anxieties - would allow the new order to begin with a semblance of reconciliation.

10.2 - ANALYSIS

The conventional left-right distribution of political views, although coined in the Revolution, will not suffice to describe the complex of attitudes on the Parisian streets in 1791. In one sense the concentrations of aristocrats, bourgeoisie and people can be seen as the points of a triangle, each antagonistic to the others, and suspecting them of collusion. Even this picture, however, is a simplification of the social dimension. Moderate (i.e. pro-constitutional monarchy) and radical (i.e. hostile to accommodation with the Court) views could be found at many social levels, and the ubiquity of social fear is emphasised by the fact that the supposedly radical press commentators believed in brigandage as a contributory factor in the Champ de Mars Massacre. Political opinions were partially aligned with social status - they could hardly be otherwise, when the revolutionary *peuple* was divided by the line of active citizenship - but the very partial nature of this was to add to confusion and conflict. Moreover, anyone who counted himself a partisan of the Revolution was inclined to see all divergence of opinion as leading to counter-revolution - as if politics were not a spectrum, but a circle, where all movement from a given point of rectitude approached its antipodes of evil intent, whether the movement 'appeared' to be leftwards or rightwards (as everyone knew, after all, the Revolution's enemies were all in league . . .)¹⁰

Once the momentum of revolution had begun to slow, and the political development that had carried it through 1790 became mired in the difficulties of religious and economic policy, these attitudes grew steadily more corrosive. The lines of conflict can be traced through early 1791. With the open face of *aristocratie* apparently crystallised into the *Club Monarchique*, the radicals in the press led a drive to discredit this institution, with apparently thorough-going success. Meanwhile, spreading from the educated core of the Cordeliers, popular societies were coming into being, one of whose first campaigns was to add

¹⁰This is the same logic which would power Robespierre's denunciation of *ultras* and *citras* in 1793-4, but as this thesis has consistently argued, it was not merely a product of ideological inspiration or terrorist attitudes.

a mass base to hostility to the *monarchiens*.

These novelties of organisation impinged on a city already highly attuned to the nuances of political and social conflict. The members of the National Guard, although some were of a radical persuasion, in the majority clung firmly both to the control of their neighbourhood streets and to their General, Lafayette, whatever disputes may have afflicted the Guard's control-structures in its early existence. Mutual suspicion between the Guard hierarchy and certain radicals, conjuring up the spectre of a Fayetteist-Orléanist faction war, was a self-fulfilling and escalating phenomenon. Figures such as Rotondo, Maillard, Santerre, Desmottes, Carle and Beauregard fought each other through slander and accusation, with apparent innocents, such as lieutenant Hion and Simeon Vallée, caught in between. At street level, a Guard which faced insults from the people, radical cries from *colporteurs*, men falsely wearing their uniforms and occasional large-scale attacks by smugglers or rioters, could quite see in all this, with the crowds who harassed royal events, evidence for some kind of subornation.

All this, moreover, was only the background to the popular frenzy that accompanied the resistance of the non-juring priests. This episode, as the record of incidents in the Section du Palais-Royal alone would suffice to indicate, was deeply disturbing to the social fabric, stirring some to violent anti-clericalism and accusations against the authorities who tried to keep order, and others to cling to their priests in ways which provoked yet more suspicion. It was also, of course, this issue which drew the royal family, and ultimately the King, into visible expressions of dissent.

While all this was going on, other aspects of the Revolution's changes were working through to their logical conclusions. Assignats were losing out to coin in desirability, and economic ignorance amongst people and commentators alike led this to be attributed to malice and corruption. The dislocations of revolution were also playing havoc with the economy in general, and this lent bitterness to employer-worker disputes. The revolutionary ideology of liberty was deployed on both sides in these, uneasily mixed with a desire for regulation which meant that neither side was acting in the spirit of *laissez-faire* which had driven the legislation. Naturally, the authorities favoured order in all such matters, so rioters against *marchands d'argent* and combining workers were alike castigated and set upon. Radical thought here was more confused than in any other area, but it was still fuel for condemnation of arbitrary and violent actions.

It is extremely difficult to assess the relative impacts of any of these strands of conflict, and in the end such an attempt may have little worth. What is clear from the words of commentators, and on many

occasions from detainees themselves, is that what we discern as a multi-stranded, multi-levelled situation was faced by its contemporaries in very stark terms. One such as Marat viewed events with paranoid consistency, but even the relatively thoughtful radicalism of the *Révolutions de Paris* was prepared to link all aspects of the financial and employment difficulties to aristocratic destabilisation. On the side of the higher authorities, it seems reasonable to accept the argument that their conviction of popular political incapacity (helping to strengthen the model of radicalism as an aristocratic *politique du pire*) was as deeply-rooted as its supposed object. If these were the attitudes of the educated, we can hold out little hope of more moderation from the general population, in uniform or out of it. The press and the politicians were informing them, day by day, that Paris hovered on the brink of an abyss, and as the summer months saw the streets and squares fill with idle immigrants and unemployed, and every clash with a patrol seemed to be a potential riot, few reasons were available to doubt that assertion, whether it was the Guard or the crowd one held to be in the wrong.

One might argue that the relative calm that followed the Flight to Varennes ought to have demonstrated something of the falsity of this vision. Yet it would seem that by this stage suspicion had become a free-standing phenomenon. What stands out in the record of the assembly of the Section de l'Hôtel-de-Ville is their fear of riot, as the municipal reports indicate the concern that surrounded the prisons and the transient population. Disturbances by crowds or individuals, on the other hand, seem to have focused on certain officers, as if establishing a distinction between them and the body of the Guard, which was then admitting passive citizens temporarily to its ranks.

The build-up to the Champ de Mars Massacre is, in this reading, no more than a continued heightening of pre-existing tensions. Moderates read radical resistance as an attempt to stall a constitutional settlement (and republicanism as disguised Orléanist), while radicals saw an accommodation with the King as effective surrender to aristocracy. The Guard, in its official capacity, along with a majority of the citizenry, appears to have favoured the former view, and had no trouble in diagnosing statements which were hostile to the official account as *propos incendiaires*.

There is, however, a subsidiary reading of these events, which concerns the diversity of viewpoints evident in popular responses. One element, visible in the strand that absolved the *garde soldée* from blame, and in Louis Oré's declamations on the night of the 17th, was almost one of class war, in which the distinctly bourgeois Guards had opposed and struck down ordinary people or workers. Here the role of the authorities, and the original purpose of the conflict, is almost lost to sight. Another came close to

this, denying that the proper formalities had been followed in declaring Martial Law, and hence suggesting a plot. The victims again in this scenario were not identified with a specific politics, but simply as citizens, people or patriots.

Whatever view was taken, what is clear from the records of these and earlier incidents is the pervasive negativism of approaches to politics. From its origins the Revolution had been caught in the cleft between fear and optimism, and while people from that time on had been able to articulate their desires for a better world, for liberty and equality, their hostility to those who seemed to be placing obstacles on the path to this state seems to have grown to overshadow these aims, until the expectation of opposition, the fear of sedition or repression, was so great it drove events towards the conflict all feared so much. A kind of apocalyptic fear seems to have gripped Parisians at this time, which for some was realised by the Massacre, while others (who saw it as apocalypse averted) continued through August to expect a counter-revolution every fifth or tenth day.

Given that the Massacre was at once a climactic and also anticlimactic event, resolving nothing in many minds, we may ask what were its consequences over the longer term. Under the Republic it became the iconic representation of the repressive nature of the constitutional monarchy - David prepared to paint it, and Bailly was dragged out of retirement and guillotined for ordering it. However, it was not Bailly who had fired the shots on 17 July, nor he who rounded up the suspects and *motionnaires* afterwards, and what became of the forces of order deployed on that occasion is a significant issue. We have commented on the social distribution of witnesses and detainees from this period, and our commentary can be carried further by a comparison with the sectional personnel of the Year II inventoried by Albert Soboul and Raymonde Monnier.

From this exhaustive summary of the surviving records it emerges that while none of the nearly one hundred *séditieux* of the Champ de Mars episode for whom we have a full record, nor those listed merely in the prison register, appears to have been a later sans-culotte (or at least one who made it into the records), some eight of the 180 witnesses can be matched with reasonable certainty to their later identities as *sectionnaires*. These are:

Jacques Sulpice Carré, on 18 July 1791 a Guard clearing the Place de Grève, describing himself as 'ancien sous-lieutenant de la compagnie volontaire des chasseurs du bataillon de popincourt.' In the Year II he was an *armurier* with five employees and a militant in the Section de Popincourt, wounded on

10 August 1792 and later arrested for involvement in the prairial days of the Year III.¹¹

Etienne Cochois, *tapissier et garde nationale*, witnessed at 1 p.m. on 17 July the seditious remarks of Morel and Henry in the Section d'Henri Quatre. He was president of the *comité révolutionnaire* of this Section in frimaire II, arrested in floréal as an *hébertiste*. It was noted he had fought on 14 July and 10 August, been a member of the Commune of 10 August, been in the *journée* of 31 May and served as an assessor for the *juge de paix* and as a captain in the Section's armed force. Released in prairial, in Year III he was persecuted as a *septembriseur*.¹²

Antoine Pierre Poupart witnessed Jean Allais' seditious outburst in the Section des Arcis on 17 July, and was at that time a *caporal volontaire* in the local *compagnie des canonniers*. In the Year II he had become captain of the same unit, and was arrested on 14 thermidor having been seen shaking the hand of the robespierrist commander Hanriot on the night of the 9th. Although released, he was still being 'signalé comme dangereux' in Year IX.¹³

Mathieu Tamisier, *teinturier et grenadier volontaire*, arrested a drunk who insulted the Guard on 22 July in the Section des Arcis. He was later an elector of 1792, and a member of the local popular society's *commission épuratoire*. In the Year III he was hunted down for participation in the prairial days and for a massacre of prisoners at Versailles.¹⁴

Jacques Boucher, *sergent des gardes soldées*, testified in Section de l'Observatoire on 30 July against a drunk who had praised them in comparison to the *bourgeois*. A man of this name from this Section served three months in detention in the Year III for unspecified political offences, and was rearmed in Year IV.¹⁵

Jean Baptiste Fleury, *graveur et soldat citoyen*, arrested a man on 18 July in the Section d'Henri Quatre for telling his version of the Champ de Mars events. He later served on the *comité révolutionnaire* of the Section des Gardes-Françaises (Oratoire), was a clerk in the war office and was arrested in Year III, accused of participation in preparations for the *journée* of 31 May, and of being a *meneur* of the

¹¹A. Soboul and R. Monnier, *Répertoire du personnel sectionnaire parisien en l'an II*, (Paris, 1985), p.279; see APP AA137:176, Section de l'Hôtel-de-Ville.

¹²*ibid.* p.417, see APP AA 215:456, Section d'Henri Quatre.

¹³*ibid.* p.229, see APP AA56:348, Section des Arcis.

¹⁴*ibid.* p.231, see APP AA56:360, Section des Arcis.

¹⁵*ibid.* p.510, and see APP AA198:62, Section de l'Observatoire.

popular society, although later released.¹⁶

Sebastien Bolback, a *caporal des gardes soldées* in the Place-Vendôme Battalion, arrested a stoneworker on 19 July for his derogatory comments on the Guard. A Bolbach was arrested in this Section in prairial III as a militant.¹⁷

Jean Fleury, a *serrurier* of the rue des Gravilliers, who involved himself in an arrest in the Palais-Royal, had become an *armurier* by the Year II, and had presided over the *assemblée générale* of the Section des Gravilliers. He was arrested for participation in the germinal troubles in Year III, and further accused of being a self-confessed *septembriseur* and a *meneur* of the rue du Vert-Bois society.¹⁸

Several other witnesses could be matched more tentatively to later sans-culottes by name or location, but these seem to be a sufficient sample to illustrate the point that the men of '93 did not all emerge from nowhere to their leadership positions.¹⁹ It is clearly impossible, however, to establish a direct correlation between the forces of order in 1791 and the sans-culottes on the basis of such a small sample, but two other pieces of information may help to give some definition to a link. The first is the way in which on 10 July 1791 Pierre Maurice Cardinaux talked himself out of trouble on the terrain of the Bastille. This *marchand rotisseur* was arrested for saying in a crowd 'que les chefs de la garde nationale étoient des cochons, et qu'il falloit mettre à bas la cavallerie.' One Guard *cavalier* swore Cardinaux was the speaker, and a grenadier sergeant said that he had 'le même sort de voye' as the remark he had heard.

Cardinaux claimed to have said something about the height of the *porte*, and that a wagon could not get through unless the workers aboard got down. Anything else 'n'est point lui.' This rather contrived denial was accepted as 'preuve suffisante' since 'le sieur Cardinaux est domicilié et connue.'²⁰ The dismissal of the charge against him, then, relied completely on his social status. This is given a certain

¹⁶Soboul and Monnier, *Répertoire*, p.125-6, and see APP AA215:462, Section d'Henri-Quatre. His address, rue des Mauvaises Paroles, also matches.

¹⁷*ibid.* p.87, see APP AA206:378, Section de la Place-Vendôme.

¹⁸*ibid.* p.319-20, and see APP AA85:118, Section du Palais-Royal.

¹⁹Tentative matches include Pierre Joannis, who testified against Constance Evrard in the Section de la Fontaine-de-Grenelle, and a Joannet who served on the *comité révolutionnaire* of the neighbouring Section de Luxembourg - Soboul and Monnier, *Répertoire*, p.481 and APP AA148:30. Robert Grevin, a *grenadier soldé* in the Section du Roule, and a Grevin listed in the same role as Joannet in the neighbouring Section des Champs-Élysées - *ibid.* p.57 and APP AA224:99. Louis François Lecamus, *peintre en miniature* from the quai des Augustins, and a Lecamus *jeune, artiste peintre* in the Section du Faubourg-Montmartre whose lengthy and complex career ended up with an arrest as a *babouviste* - *ibid.* p.241 and APP AA215:456. Expecting a greater match between the Guards of 1791 and 1793-4 would be perhaps unreasonable, given the huge drain that the war imposed on Parisian manpower, and all the possible trajectories individuals might take in a time of extreme upheaval.

²⁰APP AA205:52, Section de la Place-Royale.

piquancy by the later career summarised by Soboul and Monnier:

Electeur de 1792, porte-drapeau de la force armée de la section, membre du comité révolutionnaire, de la société fraternelle, lieutenant des fusiliers révolutionnaires dans la compagnie de la section, puis attaché au comité de sûreté générale, comme surveillant. Désarmé en floréal III; arrêté le 9 prairial: 'terroriste forcené,' accusé de propos incendiaires tenus le 10 germinal, d'avoir assisté à l'assemblée illégale du 2 prairial. Son café, place de l'estrapade, était le lieu de rassemblement des babouvistes, des exclusifs . . .²¹

He was to be exiled to the Seychelles by the *senatus-consulte* of 14 nivôse IX, where he died around 1809.

The second piece of evidence is the fact that of the twelve men arrested actually on the Champ de Mars on 17 July, no fewer than five can be matched to activists in left-bank Sections in Year II: François Millière, (Section de la Croix-Rouge) who served on the Commune of 10 August and in Year II, was arrested in vendémiaire III, but served the Directory in Year IV and as an elector in Year VI, before deportation in Year IX; Claude François Germain (Section du Jardin-des-Plantes), arrested in nivôse III; Joseph Lafonds [Lafon] (Section du Jardin-des-Plantes), arrested in Year III as a *septembriseur*; Pierre Mainvielle [Mainvieux] (Section du Théâtre-Français), serving on the *comité révolutionnaire*, denounced in floréal III; Noel Pierre Gillet (Section des Quatre-Nations) arrested in Year III, released vendémiaire IV, and member of a *cercle constitutionnel* in Year VI.²²

The release without charge of all these men came on their *reclamation* by other active citizens, without any evident attempt to explore their role in events, despite the note of their detention 'comme séditieux et perturbateurs du repos public et gens mal-intentionnés.' Quite possibly here, as evidently for Cardinaux, a respectable social identity was sufficient to override the suspicions of the authorities, and indeed the *prima facie* evidence of seditious participation. We have already had cause to remark on this phenomenon, and now it can again be spelt out: the model of sedition the authorities were operating - a few *meneurs* such as Danton and Marat and a horde of rootless *gens soudoyés* - did not match the actual picture of Parisian opinion. It achieved a partial match, enough to keep a large number of people in prison until September, because political opinions were propagating throughout the population, *domicilié* and *non-domicilié*, in a way that made that distinction meaningless. However, since this was one of the primary distinctions operated by the authorities, and apparently by the population at large also, its use could give a view of the July events very close to their preconceptions.

²¹Soboul and Monnier, *Répertoire*, p.499. Besides the identity of name and profession, information also matches Cardinaux for age, place of birth and Section of residence.

²²*ibid.* pp.466, 515n.1, 520, 459, 444. Names in square brackets are as recorded in APP AB324:1850. Mainvielle was referred to the non-political *tribunal de police*, but released without charge on 24 August.

Perhaps even more importantly in the long run, the organised patriots of the popular societies seemed to share something of this preconception - we have noted the response of the *Cercle Social* to the unaccustomed vehemence of its last session before the Massacre, and the way in which the *Société fraternelle* reclaimed its respectability with the co-operation of the police themselves.²³ Although the wider membership seems to have panicked after the Massacre, and societies met only very disjointedly for several weeks afterwards, there does not seem to have been any organised official action against them. When the *accusateur public* reported on 30 August, he named the Cordeliers, Indigents and *Société fraternelle* as having undertaken 'démarches qui ont jeté dans le plus grand péril la liberté, la constitution et la chose publique', but this did not lead any further. By late August the clubs were already meeting relatively undisturbed, and were to go on to ever-greater heights of activism in the following year.²⁴

Radicals in general, as exemplified by the press, seem to have been prepared to blame conflict on brigands, while reclaiming for themselves a kind of revolutionary purity - they had, after all, only been undertaking a peaceful petition when the authorities had attacked them. We are, then, left with a fundamental division. On the one side is the genuinely amorphous, angry, multi-levelled popular response to the events of July, which at its most radical reads them as a betrayal by the authorities, or even the bourgeoisie as a whole, but is constrained to isolated outbursts of verbal violence and a very few physical incidents. On the other is the underlying consensus of all observers and activists that these events had been brought about by aristocratic agitation of the underclass, whether through or against the radicals according to taste. This consensus, this discourse, meant that individuals, *non-domiciliés* or *sans aveu*, could be picked off and blamed for responding to a situation brewed by those who now turned their backs on them. This is not to say that patriots applauded the Massacre, as is evident, but while it was permissible to believe that patriots were assaulted there, it could not be believed that they had been responsible for provoking the attack.

With this in mind, it is possible to advance an explanation for the presence of the individuals we have noted in the ranks of *sans-culotterie*. In doing so, we may contribute to a clarification of the debate over this movement in general. Quite clearly from the evidence, certain individuals who placed themselves in a minor way on the side of revolutionary order against sedition in 1791 would later come to occupy

²³See ch. 4 above.

²⁴See Bourdin, *Sociétés populaires*, pp.286ff., and following chapters in general. Note that the *Société fraternelle* was so eager to clear itself of the charge of being run by foreign agents, it even denounced one in its ranks to the *comité des recherches*.

more or less significant places in the Sections of the Year II. It must be asked what would be the most plausible explanation for this - that they changed their world-view, or that in 1793-4 it was the sans-culottes who stood for revolutionary order against sedition?

The sans-culotte movement, as Raymonde Monnier recently observed, 'se voulait universel et fraternel'.²⁵ In so doing, it was placing itself within a current which flowed through the entire Revolution. Every progressive pronouncement since *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers État?* relied on the logic of linking revolutionary legitimacy with the unity of all Frenchmen. All those elements which contradicted this - such as the active citizenship qualification - whatever their basis in social utility, had been attempts to stop the Revolution, attempts which in the shadow of the aristocrats and the foreign powers would come to look like counter-revolution, as would Federalism in 1793, and as would ultimately the independence of the Sections themselves, dissolved under the Revolutionary Government.

This current was rhetorical, and like all rhetoric it encouraged excess. The rhetorical masters of the Revolution were the commentators of the radical press, the men who, in Michael Sonenscher's formulation, brought the sans-culottes into being, giving them their images and tropes from theatre and literature.²⁶ In 1791 it is already possible to analyse the frenzied confluence of scurrility, sensation, competition and politics that drove this press machine on, and undoubtedly as long as the press remained relatively free this process continued. The popular societies, with their educated leaderships, and counting among their ranks men who would later rise to the status of *juges de paix*, mediated this radicalism down into the general population, where as 1791 showed, it already had its partisans, including members of the National Guard.²⁷

What was all this to mean in the crisis of mid-1792? It is here that Andrews has posited the unseen birth of the sans-culottes as a movement, in this case one of *dirigiste* bourgeois bent on economic and political power. What, however, actually happened in this period? The popular societies, the Cordeliers, the Jacobins and the Sections (with their Guard units) co-operated to effect a quasi-military coup. It has often been said (most recently by Gwynne Lewis²⁸) that at this epoch the passive citizens invaded the Guard and the Sections, but it must be asked how plausible this view really is. Why should it have needed

²⁵Monnier, 'garde citoyenne', p.153.

²⁶See Sonenscher, *Work and Wages*, ch. 10, and 'Artisans, sans-culottes'.

²⁷See R.M. Andrews 'The Justices of the Peace of revolutionary Paris, September 1792-November 1794 (frimaire III)', *Past and Present* 52 (1971).

²⁸See Lewis, *French Revolution*, p.38.

their own workers and poorer neighbours to tell the active citizens how badly things had gone wrong, and why could it be assumed that those accustomed to a subordinate role in neighbourhood life would take the upper hand when admitted to the debates among their richer and more settled fellows? This, however, is the picture it has suited both sides to paint, as it had done since 1789 - either events were dictated by the *canaille*, or the people, mythified, were at once decisive and demotic, an infallible mass. Neither view seems very realistic.

How much more plausible is an alternative schema: motivated by the concern for revolutionary order that had driven them since 1789, and also with their opinions coloured by the rhetorical bath of radical discourse, in mid-1792 the respectable citizens of Paris, through their channels of Section assemblies and Guard Battalions, mustered and regimented the fervour of active and passive citizens alike against the same threat which had hung over the Revolution since its origins - catastrophic defeat bred from the heart of royal government. That it required such a crisis to achieve near-unanimity is made clear by later events: as the sans-culotte movement began to develop harder ideological edges, whatever logic drove this, the city was racked through early 1793 by conflicts in and between Sections, as Soboul so ably portrayed.²⁹

In this way, the practical and rhetorical aspects of the sans-culottes can be separated. The rampant suspicion, the anti-aristocratism, anti-plutocratism of the sans-culottes were already embedded in earlier responses, as was the tendency for downward rhetorical assimilation. This evolved and radicalised through the agency of the press and the societies - these organs may have ignored, or indeed been ignorant of, the details of practical shifts in opinion, but their pre-existing rhetorical dynamic was powerful enough to shape the understandings of those who had changed their opinions - a shift many may have been eager to disguise. As this was an escalating process, one's time of entry into politics might dictate one's rhetorical position. In this environment, the death of Bailly may well be seen as a scapegoating - an individual sacrifice redeeming the collective sin of the Massacre. The 'men of '93' took pride in their contrast with the 'men of '89' - a more *haut-bourgeois*, professionally and legally-oriented cadre - but as even a casual examination of the *Répertoire* of Soboul and Monnier will reveal, every Section had its prominent activists who had been so since at least 1792, if not before, and to have fought in '89 was always a distinction worth pointing out. Recent contributions to a study of the sectional elites, emerging

²⁹See Soboul, *Les sans-culottes*, Part I.

from the historical workshop of the heirs of Soboul, recognise the interlinking of respectable groups and the importance of local prominence in the formation of sectional politics (not to mention the increase in personal fortunes observable among many who survived the revolutionary period).³⁰

One local bigwig picked out is Claude Barthelemy Jurie: 'issue de la petite noblesse provinciale. Devenu avocat parisien, il épouse à la veille de la Révolution la fille d'un riche bourgeois du faubourg [St-Antoine].' He was an officer in the Guard on 14 July 1789, and subsequently an elector in 1791, a Battalion commander, *commissaire de police* and secretary of the *assemblée générale* for the Section des Quinze-Vingts, a member of the Commune, *juge suppléant* on the tribunal of 17 August 1792, *commissaire des guerres*, and a Jacobin, before being killed in the thermidorian repression. The researcher concludes 'il sacrifie sa profession et les trois quarts de sa fortune pour des principes auxquels il croit sincèrement.' Without calling into question his sincerity for a moment, it is possible to suggest he was doing rather well in the circumstances until the political dice rolled against him.³¹

The picture that emerges from this kind of study is one which seems to lend more weight to Andrews' views than to those of Soboul. Or rather, since we have remarked on the extreme nature of his interpretations, to re-emphasise the accuracy of Andrews' empirical perceptions of the sans-culottes' social origins and identity. A recent piece by Haim Burstin hints at a shift in views on the rhetorical plane which would contribute further to this altered perspective. Commenting on what he calls 'la dynamique de l'assemblée,' Burstin observes

un paradoxe dramatique de la révolution parisienne: la demande de démocratie, engendrée par une large participation collective à la vie publique, une fois déployée jusqu'à ses conséquences extrêmes, tend à rétrécir la base même de l'adhésion, à éloigner les citoyens de la vie politique et à favoriser la formation d'oligarchies.³²

Burstin is commenting on how, from at least 1791 onwards, this dynamic of assembly stripped representative institutions of their legitimacy, and was to go on to paralyse all forms of democratic activity. Assemblies and committees would spring up to debate and decide on affairs spontaneously, their discourse weighed down with the jargon of 'liberté, fanatisme, superstition, despotisme' - 'la prolifération des comités, la fièvre parlementaire, la hantise de la souveraineté violée, la tendance à l'abus de

³⁰E. Ducoudray, 'Bourgeois parisiens en Révolution 1790-92', in Vovelle, *Paris*, pp.71-88, esp. p.76 on personal wealth at death. See also the brief contributions on individual Sections or areas by S. Faguay, C. Dupuy, I. Guigon, P. Libermann, and M. Sicsic, pp.89-112.

³¹*ibid.* p.92, contribution of S. Faguay. Jurie, a paradigmatic sans-culotte *notable*, does not appear in Soboul and Monnier's work, presumably because of his premature death - a clear indication of the gaps in our knowledge, albeit that they are being slowly filled by efforts such as these.

³²H. Burstin, 'La dynamique de l'assemblée: de l'expérience de la démocratie à la démocratie abusive', in Vovelle, *Paris*, pp.123-33; p.132.

démocratie - produits de l'explosion de la vie publique parisienne' - all these were paradigmatic to Parisian politics.³³ Degeneration followed, as different points of view were argued in the same terms, argument and diatribe blurred into one another, and denunciation replaced refutation. Power passed to the ablest manipulators of rhetoric, with no necessary relation to social position or previous legitimacy. In the end, this process became 'une chaîne de prévarication qui mène à une impasse de l'expérience démocratique.' Politics suffered an 'extrême fragmentation' as organs of mutual surveillance accumulated, until the Revolutionary Government's suppression of the popular movement was the only practical course.³⁴

The logic of this is of course the logic of direct democracy and absolute sovereignty, the same logic that had driven the popular societies since their foundation, and which has recently been placed at the centre of a discussion of popular violence. For Paolo Viola, 'la violence est souveraine, car la souveraineté est éminemment violente. Ce que le peuple retient le plus directement de la souveraineté est le droit de punir.'³⁵ Viola is dealing with the physical violence of crowds, but this understanding might also be applied to the rhetorical escalation we have been observing. Since, he argues, the claims behind this sovereignty lay in some deferred future of imagined justice, they faced the revolutionary authorities with 'une impasse douloureuse, puisque le but final de l'ordre et de la justice s'éloigne, et que la nécessité de terminer la Révolution, tôt et mal, s'impose.'³⁶ The artisan utopia of sans-culotte rhetoric would seem to fit this model perfectly.

Burstin and Viola together highlight the overridingly rhetorical nature of the Parisian revolution's imperatives, a nature which defies attempts to pin a specific 'class' basis or programme to the advancing radicalisation of discourse. Within that discourse, it seems clear that some of the petty and middling bourgeoisie of Paris may have used their role as community leaders both to control political events and to enrich themselves personally, but there is no 'determining' level from which such actions can easily be judged - they were neither proto-socialist heroes nor a consciously manipulative *dirigiste* oligarchy.

The drift of this mix of inflammatory rhetoric and indeterminate social status might seem to be pushing us close to Richard Cobb's almost nihilistic views on the sans-culottes, who are to his mind 'only

³³Burstin, 'La dynamique', p.130.

³⁴*ibid.* p.129.

³⁵P. Viola, 'Violence révolutionnaire ou violence du peuple en révolution?' in M. Vovelle and A. de Baecque (eds.), *Recherches sur la Révolution*, (Paris, 1991), pp.95-102; p.97. See ch. 4 above for Isabelle Bourdin's parallel formulation on popular sovereignty, an observation apparently neglected for over fifty years.

³⁶*ibid.* p.101.

definable collectively in terms of what they were against - and they were against an awful lot of people, an awful lot of attitudes and an awful lot of institutions.’³⁷ In this view, Soboul (and by implication Andrews) stands condemned for an over-enthusiastic tying-up of the threads of documentary survival in the furtherance of predetermined goals. However, Cobb’s view itself is surely overstated. The Parisian sans-culottes clearly felt they had an identity as patriots and republicans, and if under the historian’s scalpel this can be dissected into no more than a web of oppositions, that was not what it represented to them. All the arguments of the sans-culottes, while ‘social’ in appearance, can be mapped to political and revolutionary concerns. The Maximum and *armée révolutionnaire* were to prevent counter-revolutionary exploitation of the food supply; the law on suspects was to guard against counter-revolutionary action in general; the battle over the permanence of the Sections was a battle over political direction and sovereignty. Wealth was not alien to the sans-culottes, as Andrews observed, only the forms of it that, by encouraging timidity and idleness, were ‘objectively’ counter-revolutionary. All these political positions seem to have been quite adequate to occupy the sans-culottes’ minds, explaining perhaps why the few ventures into post-revolutionary utopianising are so bland and unconvincing. War and Revolution had become the dominant features in their thinking, as, ironically, they were to dominate the Directorial society that suppressed the last remnants of the sans-culottes.

We should be wary, however, of making any aspect of the sans-culotte existence appear too coherent. We have already seen the individual perspective on eighteenth-century popular Paris given by Jacques-Louis Ménétra’s autobiography, and his observations on the Revolution are also worthy of note. Writing in the late 1790s, he recalled that Revolution ‘came suddenly and revived all our spirits . . . the word liberty so often repeated had an almost supernatural effect and invigorated us all.’ As he explained:

This revolution was supposed to secure the happiness of the French people by confining the king to his throne and returning to all the rights that the parlements the priesthood the nobility had usurped under the leadership of ministers . . .³⁸

However, as he went on, the priests and the nobles, through their immoral unwillingness to make sacrifices for the common good, began to provoke disorder:

Everything moved forward They flattered the ambitious and all the ills came gradually to a head Murder drowning everything was allowed Intriguers monopolised all the offices Good men could only mutter for if they spoke they were lost Hatred vengeance everything was permitted and nobody dared open his mouth or even dared refuse the positions delegated to him in the assemblies in which he was obliged to participate

It was in this state of chaos in which treachery was rampant abroad as well as at home that

³⁷R.C. Cobb, *Reactions to the French Revolution*, (London, 1972), p.117.

³⁸Ménétra, *Journal*, p.217.

I began after the Tenth of August to appear in the assemblies of my section . . .³⁹

This view is clearly coloured by the experience of later years than 1792, and Ménétra's self-justifying tone comes perhaps from writing in a period of reaction, but there is no doubt that, as Daniel Roche put it, 'Ménétra spent the Year II in a blue funk', as probably did many others. Nonetheless, an analysis of the names he mentions in the politics of his Section (Mauconseil/Bon-Conseil) reveals that the friends whose fate he bemoans were all of varying shades of radicalism, while the enemies he curses were part of the 'moderate' reaction. All of them lived within a hundred metres of him - 'Ménétra's politics had to do with the settling of local scores stemming from opposition on the vital issues of the day.'⁴⁰

His attempt to describe his entry into politics in 1792 as terrorised conformism is certainly disingenuous. He had obviously welcomed the Revolution, and Roche deduces from his separate account of the great *journées* that 'like much of the Parisian petite bourgeoisie and *le peuple* as a whole, he made the switch from loyal royalist to republican without difficulty.' If his political course was 'erratic, jolted this way and that by the assembly's sudden changes of position' and by factions and local leaders, it probably represented a fairly typical revolutionary itinerary.⁴¹

What seems to have happened in Parisian politics is this - by 1791 a set of positions had been developed, an ideological spectrum, which saw the out-and-out aristocrats at one end, then the dubious *monarchiens*, the moderate constitutionalists in power in the centre, then a spread of radicalism from Robespierre through the Cordeliers and other clubs to the extreme of *maratisme*. The sympathies of the bulk of the active population - those who attended Section assemblies and stood Guard duties - lay with the vision of revolutionary order embodied in the Constitution, and hence with the attempt to impose social order that went with it. The positive appeal of an innovatory constitutional settlement and its projection of political reconciliation remained strong enough, for most, to outweigh the cries of radicalism, especially as the dominant discourse tainted them with subornation and *parti*. The progress of events from mid-1791 to mid-1792 can be seen as the shifting of this section of the population away from the overtly collapsing agenda of constitutional stability towards the pre-existing alternative of radicalising revolution and republicanism. Once locked into this pattern, whose accelerating rhythm of suspicions was merely a development out of earlier views, the way to the sans-culotte identity was clear.

³⁹Ménétra, *Journal*, p.218.

⁴⁰*ibid.* pp.334-6.

⁴¹*ibid.* pp.331, 333.

In making these claims about rhetoric, we are moving into the territory of Lynn Hunt's work on revolutionary political culture, which highlighted the rhetorical nature of the Revolution, and particularly observed that the habit of explaining failure with reference to external and internal enemies was one reason why this rhetoric was 'constantly subverting its own basis of authority.'⁴²

Hunt's analysis in this work of the centrality of rhetorical constructions to the self-understandings and actions of the revolutionaries has been seminal, but detailed study of the type undertaken here can raise problems with the coherence it seeks to display. Most obviously, the period of intense politicisation and conflict to which this thesis is devoted does not feature in Hunt's analysis at all. With the exception of occasional references to the unifying effects of the 1790 *Fête de la Fédération*, she moves consistently from 1789 into the republican period, and particularly 1793-4.⁴³ This can lead to both confusions and simplifications, for example when she asserts that the trampling of the cockade at the Versailles banquet on 1 October 1789 'precipitated the fateful march of women', we have seen what practical socio-political considerations entered into this *démarche* - suspected interference in the supply of bread, most obviously. Hunt reckons the continuing significance of the cockade with the point that legislation required its wearing by all from July 1792, but pressures were clearly operating in this direction from the spring of 1791 at the latest.⁴⁴

In her description of revolution as a 'text', albeit one that was 'constantly changing . . . fashioned . . . in fits and starts', Hunt attributes authorship of the Revolution to a united group - 'the French', or more often 'the revolutionaries.'⁴⁵ 'Radical' is also used as a description, but covers both opposition to anti-revolutionary elements in 1789-90, and the ideologists of the Jacobin Republic.⁴⁶ In all these circumstances, Hunt is studying the discourse, and the social group, which had made itself dominant in the Revolution, as she explicitly later dissects the new bourgeois cadre of rulers in the provinces. There is no sense here of contestation among the 'revolutionaries', other than in terms of the paranoid disposals of the Terror, no appreciation that the Revolution was a series of attempts to square the circle of resistance to aristocracy, popular sovereignty, and social suspicion.

Hunt is eloquent on the multiple ambiguities of changing imagery, but silent on the very real social

⁴²L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, (London, 1984), p.49.

⁴³*ibid.* eg. p.35, and chs. 1 and 3, *passim*.

⁴⁴*ibid.* pp.58-9, and see above, chs. 2 and 5.

⁴⁵*ibid.* p.26, and eg. pp. 32, 38-9, 54-5, 89.

⁴⁶*ibid.* p.29, and ch. 3 *passim*.

and political struggles played out under their aegis. Her analysis cannot explain, for example, why in September 1793 Jacques Roux was imprisoned for his counter-revolutionary activities in calling for a General Maximum and other measures of economic terror, on the very day that the sans-culotte movement carried those demands to the Convention and had them approved as the acme of revolutionary rigour. Roux and the other *Enragés* were out of step with the trend in active opinion, being swung by leaders such as Hébert from reconciliation to hostility as the Constitution of 1793 failed to provide a miraculous solution to the socio-economic troubles of a Republic at war.⁴⁷

Our study shows that social and political contestation *between* revolutionaries was entrenched early in the Revolution, and the fate of the *Enragés* suggests that it would remain so - paranoia was not confined to the days of the Great Terror, nor, on this reading, was it a function of social isolation or dysfunction (*pace* Cobb). There was far more blood-and-guts politics involved in the constant rewriting of the revolutionary text that Hunt admits, and the discourse of unity masked more manipulations of power than can be acknowledged by a passing reference to Foucault, (not that we have the space here, alas, to take up the challenges this name invokes.)⁴⁸

We can now finally return to the questions we set out at the start of this thesis, and propose some answers. It seems that ordinary Parisians brought their understandings derived from the perils of life under an absolute monarchy to the Revolution, while at the same time rapidly absorbing, and using, the opportunities for self-assertion afforded by the language of liberty and rights. In this sense many seem to have taken the Revolution at its word, and to have expected a better world to come from it. The political compromises sought by the men in power in 1791 deprived them of this prospect, and helped to bring to pre-eminence the darker side of revolutionary expectations. The tendency amongst the people to look to violence as a solution to political problems is undeniable, but I would suggest that it was the entirety of responses to popular participation shown by the educated classes that was responsible for the breeding of

⁴⁷See J. Roux, *Le Publiciste de la République française*, (reprinted Paris, 1981), and Hébert, *Le Père Duchesne*, (reprinted Paris, 1969), vol. 8. This episode is discussed in A. Mathiez, *La Vie Chère et le Mouvement Social sous la Terreur*, (Paris, 1927), esp. pp.200-288 and 339-365; and R.B. Rose, *The Enragés: Socialists of the French Revolution?* (Sydney, 1968). See also J. Guilhaumou, 'Les Journaux parisiens dans les luttes révolutionnaires en 1793: Presse d'opinion, presse de salut public et presse pamphlétaire', in Rétat, *Révolution du Journal*, pp.275-284 - 'Pour le Père Duchesne . . . l'existence des queues de boulangerie constitue la preuve de l'action des malveillants, des agents de Pitt . . .' The *Enragé* Leclerc's *Ami du Peuple*, however, observed that 'les attitudes qui s'y manifestent mettent en évidence les difficultés de la "classe laborieuse".' (*ibid.* pp.281-2.)

⁴⁸Hunt, *Politics*, p.56n.9. The Foucaultian perspective on the French Revolution is laid out by R. Chartier, 'The Chimera of the Origin: Archaeology, Cultural History and the French Revolution.' and K.M. Baker 'A Foucauldian French Revolution?' in J. Goldstein (ed.) *Foucault and the Writing of History*, (Oxford, 1994) pp.169-186 and 187-205; although Baker's piece in particular is highly 'minimalist' in terms of the import he gives to social conflict.

growing levels of violence in the revolutionary situation - had the authorities ever tried to genuinely answer the fears that led to lynch-mobs, or to treat the general population as other than a mob-in-waiting, and a source of those same fears, they might have turned them from the path that led to the September Massacres.

Furthermore, it appears that this propensity for violence was not confined to elements dismissable as the mob - several witness statements suggest the brutality of the Champ de Mars episode, and other incidents reveal the barely-controlled violence of the National Guard's approach to policing and politics. Once again, however, it must be stressed that this approach was largely born from fear of the consequences of successful counter-revolution, and thus we might ultimately lay the blame for the Revolution's violence at the door of the men, and women, who stood against it from its first hours, and never showed any inclination to do other than crush it mercilessly, if offered the chance. Conditioned by an age whose appearance of gentility was matched by the savagery of its maintenance of social order, the people to whom the French Revolution appeared to offer liberty and equality cannot be made responsible for being forced to fight, not only for those gains, but for their very lives.

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The following cartons from the AA series (*commissaires de police, procès-verbaux*), contain material covering the events of July 1791. They are catalogued alphabetically by the name under which the Section was known for the longest period. Where this differs from its name in 1791 I have indicated the catalogued name in brackets:

AA56	Arcis
AA74	Mauconseil (Bon-Conseil)
AA76	Bonne-Nouvelle
AA85	Palais-Royal (Butte-des-Moulins)
AA134	Postes (Contrat-Social)
AA137	Hôtel-de-Ville (Fidélité)
AA148	Fontaine-de-Grenelle
AA153	Oratoire (Gardes-Françaises)
AA157	Enfants-Rouges (Homme-Armé)
AA166	Luxembourg
AA167	Place-Louis-XIV (Mail)
AA172	Fontaine-Montmorency (Molière-et-Lafontaine)
AA173	Montreuil
AA182	Louvre (Museum)
AA198	Observatoire
AA205	Place-Royale (Place-des-Fédérés)
AA206	Place-Vendôme (Piques)
AA215	Henri-Quatre (Pont-Neuf)
AA219	Popincourt
AA220	Quinze-Vingts
AA224	Roule
AA239	Temple

For all or some of the preceding six months, useful information was obtained from the following cartons:

AA56	Arcis
AA82	Palais-Royal (Butte-des-Moulins) Jan-Mar.
AA83	Palais-Royal (Butte-des-Moulins) April.

AA84 Palais-Royal (Butte-des-Moulins) May-Jun.
AA137 Hôtel-de-Ville (Fidélité)
AA157 Enfants-Rouges (Homme-Armé)
AA182 Louvre (Museum)
AA206 Place-Vendôme (Piques)
AA215 Henri-Quatre (Pont-Neuf)

Isolated pieces of interest concerning this period were found in:

AA74 Mauconseil (Bon-Conseil)
AA76 Bonne-Nouvelle
AA174 Grange-Batelière (Mont-Blanc)

For August, in addition to scrutiny of cartons covering the Champ-de-Mars period in general, material was also examined in:

AA57 Arcis
AA207 Place-Vendôme (Piques)

The registers of the prison of La Force were used to supplement this information:

AB322 (1 Nov. 1790) - 18 Mar. 1791
AB323 20 Mar. - 12 July 1791
AB324 12 July 1791 - (12 May 1792)

CONTEMPORARY PUBLISHED SOURCES

The following journals (in political order, left to right) furnished material for the whole period examined:

L'Ami du Peuple, par Marat - Daily, extreme violent radicalism, but with evidence of a certain epistolary contact with elements of popular opinion.

Les Révolutions de Paris (Prudhomme) - A weekly, hence less occupied with day-to-day events unless of a certain level of significance. Well to the left politically, but suspicious of popular agitation.

Le Journal Universel, ou Révolutions des Royaumes, par P.-J. Audouin - The daily equivalent of Prudhomme, but with less flair, almost exclusively political news, occasional comments on local agitations.

Le Courrier de Paris dans les LXXXIII Départements, par A.-J. Gorsas - Daily, mainly political news, reported with a centre-left stance, including comments on its reception on the streets of Paris, and 'low-

level' news of Parisian events and controversies.

Le Moniteur Universel (anon.) - Highly respectable centrist daily, mainly occupied with foreign news and Assembly debates, occasional news of significant Parisian events.

La Feuille du Jour (anon.) - Right-of-centre daily, containing information on everything from stock prices and theatre performances to country-house lets and bankruptcy sales, but also a fair amount of caustic comment on Parisian events, especially crowd disturbances.

Various other journals were examined, although most do not have the coverage of Parisian events which marks those above. Of these, the following (in the same order) furnished isolated material:

L'Orateur du Peuple, par Martel (Fréron) - Sub-maratiste incendiarism.

La Bouche de Fer - Intriguing 'open forum' for radicals associated with the *Cercle Social*.

Le Patriote François (Brissot) - Radical politics, but coverage of popular activities dominated by plot-mentality.

L'Argus Patriote (Charles Theveneau-Morande) - Patriotic high-mindedness from one of the greatest of the pre-revolutionary smut-merchants.

Le Babillard, ou Journal du Palais-Royal (anon.) - From early June, a rich source on popular outbursts in public places, with critical comments from a centre-right perspective.

Le Journal de la Société des Amis de la Constitution Monarchique (anon.) - House-journal of the *monarchiens*.

A number of ephemeral anonymous news-pamphlets were examined from the Bibliothèque Nationale collection, series 8-Lb39 and 8-Lb40, individual references to which are included in the relevant footnotes.

LATER PUBLISHED SOURCES

In accordance with standard practice for theses, this list includes only those works which have been drawn upon directly to provide information or to shape my argument, and not those which have merely been noted as subsidiary references.

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