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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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THE CONSTITUTIONALISTS
AND
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by

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Graduate Studies of the University
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SUMMARY

Historical research on the political history of the first three years of the French Revolution (1789-1791) has been left relatively unexplored by modern scholars. As a result, no adequate study of the Constitutionalist, the men who drew up France's first written Constitution and who had to deal with the crisis of Varennes in July 1791, has so far been produced. The object of this thesis is to examine the conduct of the Constitutionalist during the turbulent months of the spring and summer of 1791. In the introductory chapter, readers are acquainted with the major issues and events to be examined in this thesis through a summary of historians' views on the Constitutionalist from the time of Madame de Staël until today.

Chapter 2 explores the events and issues that arose during the spring of 1791. The Constitutionalist's relationship with the Court, one of the main questions studied in this thesis, is first dealt with in this chapter. Their constitutional views and their stance on various pieces of non-constitutional legislation during this period are also discussed.

A greater portion of the present study is devoted to a reassessment of the events which transpired after Louis XVI's flight from Paris on June 20-21, 1791. An attempt is made to determine whether or not the Constitutionalist's decision on July 15 to keep Louis XVI on the throne was defensible. An examination of the National Assembly's debates on the king's inviolability, which took place between July 13 and July 15, is conducted in Chapter 3.

A closer study of the Constitutionnalists' relationship with the Court and of its policies to strengthen the constitutional monarchy is also made in this chapter.

Two of the most important events of the summer occurred within a period of two days after the Assembly's decision to keep Louis XVI on the throne. These were the schism in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution (the Jacobin Club of Paris) on July 16 and the massacre of the Champ de Mars on July 17. The specific roles of the Constitutionnalists in these two events are reviewed in Chapter 4. Apart from a recapitulation of the major findings of the four preceding chapters, the Conclusion also briefly traces the Constitutionnalists' position on the constitutional revisions effected in August 1791.

The primary sources most frequently used in the research of this thesis were the Archives parlementaires, the Réimpression de l'Ancien Moniteur (a semi-official newspaper in 1791), Sigismond Lacroix's multi-volume Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution, and Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française, edited by P. J. B. Buchez and P. C. Roux. Another useful source was Marie-Antoinette et Barnave: Correspondance secrète (juillet 1791-janvier 1792), edited by Alma Soderhjelm. Georges Michon's Essai sur l'histoire du Parti feuillant and E. D. Bradby's and Jean-Jacques Chevallier's biographies of Barnave were the most valuable secondary sources.

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CHAPTER I

THE CONSTITUTIONALISTS IN HISTORY

The French Revolution is without a doubt one of the most controversial events in modern European history. Since 1789 many attempts have been made to explain its causes and significance, and until comparatively recently these have primarily concerned its political aspects. Political history predominated during the nineteenth century; but it was generally literary and polemical in character. The twentieth century witnessed the expansion of social-economic history and of monographic studies on specific areas of the Revolution, most of which focused on the events connected with the establishment and fall of the First French Republic. As a consequence, modern political studies on the period 1789-1792 have been relatively neglected.¹

The present state of revolutionary historiography is indeed such that no adequate investigation of the Constitutionalists,² the men who endeavored to consolidate the constitutional monarchy in 1791, has so far been conducted. The "ideological conflicts" evident in nineteenth-century historical writings³ appear to a certain extent to turn up in twentieth-century accounts of the Constitutionalists. In their general histories, a large number of modern historians,

mainly interested in the social and economic aspects of the Revolution, may have perpetuated a political interpretation of the Constitutionnalists that dates from 1847-1848, apparently without having submitted it to the rigors of the modern historical method. Certainly there is a considerable degree of disparity of views regarding the Constitutionnalists' attempts to establish the constitutional monarchy.

Every historian who has studied the events of 1791 has been compelled, either directly or indirectly, to explain why the Constitutionnalists failed to establish a durable government. A study of this sort necessarily entails an evaluation of the Constitution of 1791 and of the character, goals and policies of the Constitutionnalists. Conclusions about their all-important conflicts with the democrats and republicans, who managed to topple the monarchy in August of 1792, have also to be reached. Of course, at the very foundation of such a study is the problem of determining the practicability of the Constitutionnalists' decision, following the Royal Family's flight from Paris on June 21, 1791, to preserve Louis XVI's crown and to maintain the constitutional monarchy.

These matters have been interpreted in a variety of ways by different historians, and this diversity of opinion still requires attention. A review of the literature written on the Constitutionnalists will illustrate the salient issues that merit closer examination. With one important exception, this review will be confined to an analysis of the views of

major French historians whose writings have contributed most directly to the existing pattern of interpretation on the subject.⁴

Madame de Staël, Thiers and Mignet published their works during the Restoration, at a time when the returned émigrés, steadfast defenders of the ancien régime, were still quite vocal in their wholesale condemnation of the Revolution. As constitutional monarchists, they were interested in justifying the Revolution, particularly during the period 1789-1791, and in disparaging the ancien régime, which they feared might yet be reestablished. Presumably to defend the major achievements of the Revolution, they turned responsibility for the overthrow of the monarchy away from the revolutionaries, whose faults they nonetheless singled out, and onto the "irreversible" conditions whose roots were deeply planted in the corrupt ancien régime. This deterministic outlook, in which the volition of men is subservient to the force of circumstances,⁵ did not, however, prevent Mme. de Staël, Thiers and Mignet from passing judgment on the Constitutionalists and on their adversaries.

Madame de Staël, whose Considérations were published posthumously in 1818,⁶ witnessed several revolutionary events and even briefly collaborated with the Constitutionalists in 1791. The principal goal of the Revolution was for her the establishment of representative government.⁷ As an advocate of England's constitutional monarchy, she understandably criticized the Constitutionalists for their preponderant

role in drawing up the more liberal and fundamentally different Constitution of 1791. In her view the revolutionary principles⁸ upon which the government was founded were at variance with basic monarchical beliefs and thus profoundly weakened royal authority.⁹ For this reason, she argued that the Royal Family's flight was completely justified.¹⁰

If Mme. de Staël discredited the Constitutionalists for their inordinate love of "abstract ideas" between 1789 and 1790,¹¹ she applauded what she perceived was a distinct shift in their attitude toward the monarchy during the flight. She made no attempt to explain this transformation; although elsewhere she suggested that the extralegal activities of the clubs either strengthened or gave birth to their conviction that they had advanced too far along the revolutionary path.¹² In any event, she spoke of the Constitutionalists as honest, well-intentioned monarchists who secretly hoped that the flight would succeed and that constitutional provisions could be negotiated on an equal basis between the "sovereign" king and the nation's deputies.¹³ Moreover, as might be expected, she praised the Constitutionalists' inviolability decree and their intention to effect some "useful" constitutional revisions in August of 1791.¹⁴ But she claimed that their weakness, their fear of being labeled as aristocrats, kept them from proposing the most important reforms.¹⁵ Despite the constitutional imperfections, which she attributed to the nobility's irresponsible opposition to all forms of free

government,¹⁶ Mme. de Staël believed that the monarchy would probably have been saved had the Constitutionalists been eligible to sit in the following legislature.¹⁷

Thiers and Mignet were close friends who produced more detailed accounts of the Revolution. They, too, were apologists for the constitutional monarchy and reached similar conclusions. Thiers was a respected journalist and politician whose views on the French Revolution appeared between 1823 and 1827.¹⁸ He described the Constitutionalists as spokesmen of the enlightened middle classes who endeavored to consolidate the constitutional monarchy in 1791.¹⁹ He also detected an alteration in their attitude toward the monarchy in June 1791 and agreed with Mme. de Staël that they viewed the flight as a possible opportunity to construct a durable government acceptable both to the king and the nation.²⁰ Moreover, he commended their able support of the monarchy after the evasion.²¹

A long-standing advocate of public order, Thiers approved of the Constitutionalists' demands for strict law enforcement during the summer of 1791. He justified the "massacre" of July 17, when national guardsmen shot upon petitioners assembled at the Champ de Mars, as a much-needed demonstration of support for the National Assembly, whose authority had been challenged by the "plébicistes de la multitude."²² He pictured this confrontation as primarily a battle between the constitutional monarchists, who occupied

the legitimate positions of authority, and the democrats and republicans.²³ The split between the revolutionaries, who had previously united to combat the aristocracy, was for Thiers illustrated when the Lameths and other constitutional monarchists deserted the republican-leading Jacobin Society and opened the Feuillant Club.²⁴

According to Thiers, the Triumvirate of Alexandre Lameth, Andrien Duport and Barnave began to advise the Court after the flight, although it received no money for its services. Next it sought an agreement with the émigrés and requested the Right's adhesion to its plans to revise the constitutional articles that encumbered the king's authority. However, both the émigrés and the Right refused to deal with men whom they despised as much as, if not more than, the Jacobins.²⁵

Thiers followed Mme. de Staël's line that the revolutionary principles enshrined in the Constitution of 1791 were injurious to royal authority. But he saw the Constitution-
alists as honest, sincere, talented constitutional monarchists whose drawbacks were shaped by historical forces beyond their control.²⁶ He speculated that if Louis XVI had fully cooperated with the Triumvirate, who had repeatedly advised him to convince France of his unswerving attachment to the Constitution, his considerable "legal" authority (provided by the Constitution) would have been further fortified by the force of public opinion, -and the monarchy probably would have been saved.²⁷ Yet, to Thiers, this was impossible. The

Constitutionalists were doomed because neither they nor anyone else could check or alter the "natural and progressive" course of the Revolution.²⁸

An historian by profession, Mignet published his findings on the Revolution in 1824.²⁹ Like Thiers, he portrayed the Constitutionalists as leaders of the middle classes who established a limited monarchy.³⁰ They instituted a representative government in which the nation was the source of all governmental authority but exercised it only during primary elections; members from the enlightened middle classes were at that time selected to govern on its behalf.³¹ Since this type of regime was attractive to Mignet, it is not surprising that he extolled the Constitutionalists' decision to preserve the limited monarchy and to uphold Louis XVI's inviolability. He was the first historian to suggest that the Triumvirate and the Fayetteists,³² the two major constitutionalist factions, joined forces on June 21 and later tried to compete with the Jacobin movement by opening the Feuillant Club.³³

In his description of the Champ de Mars massacre, Mignet highlighted different points than Thiers; but his conclusions are similar. He put forward the assertion that republicans like Brissot, Camille Desmoulins and Danton,³⁴ who had been miserably unsuccessful in blocking the passage of the inviolability decree, attempted to raise the Parisians in revolt against the National Assembly and the monarchy on

the day of the repression. The petition drawn up by Brissot, he asserted, questioned the government's power to decide on the king's fate. Thus the suppression of the "insurrectionaries" was for Mignet, as for Thiers, totally warranted.³⁵ Mignet was convinced that the Constitution³⁶ excessively subordinated the king to the legislature. He claimed, however, that the Constitutionalists' gravest error was to have permitted the passage of the non-reeligibility decree, which prohibited deputies from the Constituent Assembly from being elected to the following legislature.³⁷

A somewhat different account of the Constitutionalists was brought forward by Joseph Droz in 1839. In Histoire du règne de Louis XVI,³⁸ Droz was apparently the first notable historian to argue that the Constitutionalists' shift to the monarchy occurred in April, not in June, of 1791.³⁹ He did not offer an explanation for this changeabout, other than mentioning that it was not until the spring of 1791 that the Constitutionalists finally recognized that they had unwittingly (because they had always been monarchists) introduced republican laws into the Constitution.⁴⁰ He also contended that the Lameths started to advise the Court and planned constitutional revisions during this period. In exchange for the king's promise to break with the ancien régime, the Constitutionalists proposed to strengthen the authority of the executive, to allow refractory priests to celebrate mass in public⁴¹ and to reinstitute the nobility.⁴²

Like earlier writers, Droz commended the Constitutionalists for rushing to the rescue of the monarchy after the flight. The French people, he pointed out, were still very much in favor of the monarchy.⁴³ He also approved of the government's role in the shootings at the Champ de Mars. In his estimation the troops of the National Guard were legally obliged to disperse the "anarchists" because the municipal government had prohibited all assemblies.⁴⁴

Although Droz praised the Constitutionalists for the support they gave to the king after June 21, always stressing their good intentions,⁴⁵ he claimed that the precarious circumstances in which they found themselves at that time was a consequence of their blind admiration of abstract ideas and of their political ambitions during the first two years of the Revolution.⁴⁶ However, it was their weakness, their inability to act in unison, that prevented them from adopting the rigorous measures needed to save the monarchy: the abolition of all clubs, the prolongation of the Assembly's term and the conservative revision of the Constitution.⁴⁷ Droz dismissed these mistakes as products of political inexperience⁴⁸ and reserved his most scathing criticism for the Right. He especially censured it for refusing to support Barnave's and Le Chapelier's revision proposals. The Right's duty, he argued, was to secure the passage of the best constitution the circumstances would permit. Contrary to the general interest and to all standards of prudence, it obstinately held

to its principles.⁴⁹

Those who wrote on the Revolution before 1840 were generally inclined to stress the probity and the political inexperience of the Constitutionalists; and they unanimously praised them for their efforts to strengthen the monarchy in 1791. A difference of emphasis is apparent after 1840, when Jules Michelet and Louis Blanc, opponents of the Orleanist monarchy (1830-1848), published their views on the Revolution. Unlike their predecessors, they were extremely hostile to all forms of monarchical government.

The publication in 1847-1848 of Michelet's conclusions on the first three years of the Revolution marked the inception of this new trend in revolutionary historiography.⁵⁰ Underlying his work is a philosophy of history that, although much different, is no less deterministic than that of earlier historians. The Revolution was for Michelet the mystical incarnation of Reason and Justice instituted by the sovereign People in the form of the democratic Republic.⁵¹

Not unexpectedly, Michelet was critical of the Constitutionalists for not having peacefully completed the Revolution by proclaiming the democratic Republic after Louis XVI's flight.⁵² He explained that their support of the king stemmed in part from their mistaken conviction that France's salvation rested in the maintenance of the royal fiction and in part in their vanity and ambition.⁵³ He admitted, however, that another factor that influenced their conduct was their fear of anarchy.⁵⁴

He belittled the Constitutionals for failing to understand that the king, as the flight unmistakably proved, would never be content to govern within constitutional limitations.⁵⁵

Michelet agreed that Duport and the Lameths opened the Feuillant Club;⁵⁶ but his version of the Champ de Mars massacre differed considerably from that of his forerunners. His brief discussion on the nature and possession of national sovereignty reflected a fundamental change in perspective from earlier writers. Whereas Thiers, Mignet and Droz accepted the National Assembly's assertion that its decrees were legally binding on all Frenchmen, Michelet contended, or so it appears, that the Parisians who signed the petition of July 17 actually represented the sovereign will not just of Paris but of the entire country. In other words, he argued that the national sovereign will was, in this instance at least, expressed and exercised not by the elected representatives in the National Assembly but by the people of Paris.⁵⁷

As for the massacre itself, Michelet contested the assertion, held by Thiers and Mignet, that the petitioners at the Champ de Mars were insurrectionaries. In his estimation, a large majority of them were peaceful and law-abiding.⁵⁸ He also rejected the Jacobins' contention that the Constitutionals planned the repression. The massacre was instigated by the royalists and brutally executed by the gardes soldés, who were royalist sympathizers.⁵⁹

According to Michelet, the Triumvirate's relations with

the Court dated from April 1791. Alexandre Lameth replaced Mirabeau as the king's chief advisor, but Barnave became more influential after the evasion.⁶⁰ After realizing that the Feuillant Club was not successfully counteracting the Jacobin movement, the Constitutionnalists sought a rapprochement with the Right. However, their pleas for aid in the constitutional revisions fell on deaf ears.⁶¹ Michelet did not believe, as his successors would, that the Constitutionnalists established a "bourgeois" regime. He pointed out that unlike the governments which existed between 1815 and 1848, a large number of people were granted the franchise by the Constitution of 1791.⁶² Thus it appears that his major criticism was that the Constitutionnalists abandoned the people in a futile attempt to save the monarchy in June 1791.

Louis Blanc's Histoire de la Révolution française,⁶³ written at the same time as Michelet published his findings, was also a political broadside against the constitutional monarchy. To Blanc, the Revolution was the struggle for the establishment of a democratic Republic. It is thus not surprising that his assessment of the Constitutionnalists was unsympathetic. Blanc identified them as ambitious, incompetent, egotistical politicians who set up a middle-class government which suited neither the Court, the nobility nor the people.⁶⁴ In contrast to Michelet, he categorically argued that the Constitution of 1791 instituted a government run by and for the bourgeoisie.⁶⁵ He did not dispute Michelet's

observation concerning the liberality of the suffrage. To him, what was "bourgeois" about the government was that it "arbitrarily" disqualified citizens from the political arena and thus set a precedent for the more restrictive suffrages established between 1815 and 1848.⁶⁶ Blanc also made the unique assertion, adopted by successive historians, that the Constitutionalists incorporated the monarchy into the Constitution because they thought that it would help them to eschew the democratic Republic demanded by the people.⁶⁷

As might be expected, Blanc regarded the Constitutionalists' decision to keep Louis XVI on the throne as an act of treason against the Revolution, inspired not by a superstitious belief in or devotion to the monarchy but by their selfish determination to defend and maintain the exclusive political privileges of the bourgeoisie.⁶⁸ In his view, this myopic outlook, which ignored political as well as social realities, unnecessarily forced the people to complete the Revolution in a violent and extralegal manner in 1792.⁶⁹ It also induced the Constitutionalists to take steps that lacked honesty, probity and dignity.⁷⁰ Blanc argued, for example, that the unpopularity of the inviolability decree led to the confrontation between the government and the people at the Champ de Mars.⁷¹ In contrast to the accounts of Thiers, Mignet and Droz, Blanc stressed the legality of the petitioners' actions. He claimed that they had obtained permission from the municipality to assemble on July 17; and like Michelet

he dismissed all suggestions that there had been an insurrection.⁷² He also contended that the petition was respectful towards the government.⁷³ Although he did not have the "mathematical proof" needed to show that the Constitution-
alists planned the massacre, he nevertheless asserted that "...les meneurs du parti constitutionnel dans l'Assemblée" promoted it.⁷⁴

Blanc was the first historian to conduct a detailed study of the Constitutionalists' foreign policy during this period. He contended that the Lameths, who served as the Court's advisors after the flight, formulated an artful policy designed to neutralize the subversive plans of the émigrés and to convince Leopold II, the Austrian Emperor and the brother of Marie-Antoinette, that it was in Europe's interest to accept the Constitution of 1791 and to abandon all plans to interfere into France's internal affairs.⁷⁵ However, the Count of Artois and the Count of Provence,⁷⁶ the king's brothers, sabotaged this policy by persuading the reluctant Leopold to publish the declaration of Pillnitz (August 27, 1791), a declaration which invited Europe's monarchs to form an alliance for the purpose of reestablishing the monarchy in France, by force if need be.⁷⁷

Blanc made numerous stabs at the constitutional monarchy as an institution and took special pleasure in criticizing the Constitution of 1791. If the Constitutionalists were going to maintain the monarchy, he argued, they should

have at least constructed a strong one.⁷⁸ He disparaged them for failing to recognize that a monarchy could not operate without the possession of certain royal prerogatives and the existence of the nobility.⁷⁹ Yet he objected, no doubt in principle, to their unsuccessful attempt to effect a "counterrevolutionary" revision of the Constitution.⁸⁰

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, significant contributions to revolutionary historiography were made by Albert Sorel, Alphonse Aulard and Jean Jaurès. These men ushered in the era of modern history, with its systematic and critical examination of sources. In L'Europe et la Révolution française,⁸¹ Sorel examined the events of the French Revolution from the perspective of European diplomacy. He approved of the inviolability decree and of the Constitutionalists' plans to revise the Constitution. However, he questioned their motives. He identified them as opportunists who saw the post-flight period as an excellent time to force Louis XVI to capitulate to their constitutional opinions. He did not view them as genuine monarchists, believing that above all they wanted a powerless king in whose name they could govern France.⁸² Their desire for constitutional revisions was also selfishly motivated. They supported them not out of regard for the king but in order to solidify the ministry which they planned to occupy.⁸³ Like Michelet, he asserted that another pressing concern which drove them into the royalist camp was their marked uneasiness about the spread

of anarchical ideas among the Parisians.⁸⁴

Sorel repeated the argument put forward by earlier historians that the Constitution of 1791 was too "republican" to be suitable to the king. In fact, he claimed that although the government was nominally a monarchy, in reality it was a republic.⁸⁵ Furthermore, it was a poorly constructed government: the separation of powers was effected in such a fashion that one branch of the government of necessity dominated the other, a situation that was bound to lead to the despotism of a Convention or to that of a usurper.⁸⁶ Like Mme. de Staël and Droz, he blamed the Constitutionals for having created the circumstances that resulted in the crisis of 1791 and for having failed to take the steps needed to consolidate the monarchy. One prerequisite for consolidation which escaped their grasp was the repeal of the non-reeligibility decree and of the Four years law, which prevented members of the National Assembly from serving in the ministry until the Constitution had been operating for four years.⁸⁷

Sorel detected other factors that contributed to the instability of the Constitution. The aristocrats and the republicans in the Assembly, he stressed, blocked all measures that would have strengthened the government.⁸⁸ However, he attributed the greatest blow to the monarchy to the counter-productive activities of the émigrés. Sorel, like Blanc, traced the negotiations between the Constitutionals and

Leopold II. He claimed that the latter secretly hoped that the king would come to an agreement with the former.⁸⁹ But the émigré-inspired declaration of Pillnitz reduced the chances of a peaceful settlement of the Revolution by making it appear that Louis XVI was personally involved in a conspiracy with the European monarchies to restore the ancien régime. In point of fact, Sorel made the interesting suggestion that by questioning the sincerity of the king's oaths of allegiance to the Constitution, the émigrés helped to destroy the Court's credibility in France and prepared the way for a violent revolution.⁹⁰

Alphonse Aulard was the first historian to occupy the prestigious Chair of the French Revolution at the Sorbonne. In his comprehensive Histoire politique,⁹¹ he approached the Revolution from the standpoint of the "origins and development" of the democratic and republican movements. The logical consequence of the Declaration of Rights was for him the establishment of the democratic Republic.⁹² Aulard repeated Blanc's argument that the class considerations of the bourgeoisie induced the Constitutionalist⁹³ to preserve the monarchy and to save Louis XVI. He portrayed them as unprincipled bourgeois who betrayed their revolutionary principles, as evidenced in their refusal to establish the democratic Republic in July 1791.⁹⁴

Although Aulard is usually described as a political historian, there is evidence supporting the view that he was

aware of the class conflicts stressed by his successors.

For instance, he claimed that the crisis following June 21 did not involve whether or not the monarchy or the republic should be established (since most Frenchmen were monarchists and approved of the passage of the inviolability decree).⁹⁵

It was in essence a class struggle between the bourgeoisie, which fought to preserve its political predominance, and the people, who demanded universal suffrage.⁹⁶ In addition, Aulard described the "illegal" repression at the Champ de Mars as "...un coup d'Etat de la bourgeoisie contre le peuple...", the first episode of violent class conflict of the Revolution.⁹⁷ He contended that the government used the victory to its own advantage by arbitrarily arresting political adversaries and conducting a conservative revision of the Constitution. This "terreur bourgeoise", as he called it, split the revolutionaries into two hostile groups.⁹⁸

Aulard was the first historian to assert explicitly that the Constitutionalist and the democrats were divided over the question of how the national sovereignty was to be organized.⁹⁹ Aulard, like Michelet, never elaborated upon this. But his description of the Champ de Mars massacre sheds light at least on that particular conflict between the government and the democrats. Aulard claimed that the repression resulted from the "advanced" democrats' insistence that Louis XVI's destiny be decided by a popular referendum; and he also pointed out that the advanced democrats were adherents of the

doctrine of direct democracy.¹⁰⁰ It appears, therefore, that the massacre was the consequence of a conflict between the advocates of popular democracy, the petitioners, and of the constitutional monarchy, the National Constituent Assembly.

Jean Jaurès, Secretary of the French Socialist Party at the turn of the century, published Histoire socialiste between 1901 and 1905.¹⁰¹ He was the first genuine economic and social historian of the Revolution. Like Michelet, Blanc and Aulard, he viewed the Revolution as a struggle for the democratic Republic. To Jaurès, the Constitutionals, who represented the upper and middle bourgeoisie which was dominant during the Revolution,¹⁰² created a regime that contained what he believed were contradictory elements: the national sovereign will and the monarchy.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, he was convinced that if Louis XVI had sincerely accepted his role as constitutional king, the Constitution of 1791 would have been firmly established.¹⁰⁴

Jaurès accepted Droz's thesis that the Triumvirate entered into the service of the Court in April 1791.¹⁰⁵ He claimed that their alarm over the rapid growth of the democratic movement explained their efforts to appease the Court and the royalists and their decision to introduce "reactionary" legislation.¹⁰⁶ The Loi Chapelier, which disallowed all workers' and employers' associations, was one of these laws.¹⁰⁷ But unlike Aulard, he argued that the battle for the democratic Republic was primarily a political, not a social, struggle.

Because in his view neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat had a clearly-defined class consciousness until the nineteenth century, the spring legislation and the Champ de Mars massacre stemmed from the political, not the social, considerations of the National Assembly.¹⁰⁸

From a practical standpoint, Jaurès accepted the Constitutionalists' attempts in April and May to reconcile Louis XVI to the Revolution. But he strongly disapproved of their decision to keep the king on the throne after the flight. The king's desperate attempt to flee Paris in June 1791, he asserted, proved that the monarchy and the Revolution were irreconcilable.¹⁰⁹ Without Louis XVI's support, the Constitution of 1791 was destined to be unstable, and it would sooner or later be crushed by the "force of events."¹¹⁰

Albert Mathiez, Georges Lefebvre and Albert Soboul are the most renowned twentieth-century historians of the French Revolution. And their general interpretations of the Constitutionalists are similar.¹¹¹ For this reason, their views will be examined simultaneously, with due consideration being given to the few areas where they differ. Like their predecessors, Mathiez, Lefebvre and Soboul described the Constitutionalists as first and foremost the representatives of the upper bourgeoisie.¹¹² They believed, like Sorel, that the government was only monarchical in name, that "this constitutional monarchy was a bourgeois republic."¹¹³ Lefebvre concluded that the Constitution established a wholly representative

system in which the delegates in the National Assembly wielded unlimited power and in which the national sovereignty was exercised by the people only during primary elections.¹¹⁴

Mathiez, Lefebvre and Soboul agreed that the rise of the democratic movement and the proliferation of strikes during the spring of 1791 revealed the instability of the Constitution, which had support neither from the popular classes, which demanded a democratic government, nor from the royalists.¹¹⁵

This alarmed the Constitutionalist to such an extent that they immediately sought to check the Revolution and to quell the democratic movement. Mathiez was alone in indicating that the leaders of this movement were strong advocates of direct democracy.¹¹⁶ Lefebvre and Soboul argued that the Constitutionalist's fear of the people forced them to seek a reconciliation with the Court and the royalists during this period.¹¹⁷ The Triumvirate, asserted Mathiez and Soboul, replaced Mirabeau as advisors to the Court. Alexandre Lameth was charged with the distribution of the Civil List, the funds provided by the government to maintain the Court; and he transferred money from this source to his brother, Charles Lameth, and Andrien Duport, who promptly started the Constitutionalist's newspaper, Le Logographe.¹¹⁸

Lefebvre and Soboul repeated Droz's contention that the Constitutionalist decided to revise the Constitution during the spring. In their view, they intended to increase the king's power and to establish an upper chamber. Lefebvre and Soboul

were convinced that they enacted socially repressive legislation and proposed increasing the electoral qualifications and restricting the freedom of the press during the spring.¹¹⁹ Lefebvre added that they even considered reinstituting the nobility, though not until August 1791.¹²⁰ For his part, Mathiez rejected these assertions, contending that the conservative revisions (the reestablishment of the nobility and the creation of an upper chamber) were not contemplated by the Constitutionals until September 1791.¹²¹ sw

Mathiez, Lefebvre and Soboul believed that the flight was concrete proof of the futility of the Constitutionals' attempts to reconcile the king to the Revolution. Not without surprise, they argued that the Constitutionals' desire to protect the political primacy of the property-owning bourgeoisie was behind their staunch support of the inviolability decree.¹²² Mathiez offered a supplementary explanation. He asserted that the Triumvirate feared that if they did not actively support executive inviolability, their monetary dealings with the Court would be exposed. They also wanted a weak king in whose name they could govern France.¹²³

Mathiez, Lefebvre and Soboul shared the opinion that the Champ de Mars massacre was the first violent class conflict of the Revolution. Like Aulard, they maintained that the bourgeoisie used the repression of the "legal" demonstration on July 17 as a means of annihilating all political opposition.¹²⁴ Mathiez placed responsibility for the killings on the National

Assembly and, with Lefebvre and Soboul, contended that a "brutal" persecution of the democrats and the aristocrats followed the massacre.¹²⁵ They alternatively termed this "la terreur tricolore" and "la terreur bourgeoise."¹²⁶ Mathiez alone characterized the struggle that arose over the question of Louis XVI's inviolability as principally a fight between the adherents of direct democracy and those of "la nouvelle aristocratie bourgeoise."¹²⁷

The only historians who have produced monographs on the Constitutionals are Georges Michon, E. D. Bradby and Jean-Jacques Chevallier. Michon's Histoire du Parti feuillant was published in 1924.¹²⁸ A devoted student of Albert Mathiez,¹²⁹ Michon approached the Revolution from an economic and social point of view and, like other modern French historians, described the Constitutionals as corrupt, ambitious, power-thirsty liberal nobles who set up a bourgeois regime under their own leadership.¹³⁰ Their government, which served the interests of the upper classes, was monarchical; but in reality "...le roi n'était qu'un mannequin et la monarchie un décor...."¹³¹

Michon believed that the rise of the democratic Republic was inevitable and therefore condemned the Constitutionals for saving Louis XVI. He viewed the conflict between the Constitutionals and the democrats as basically a social one. The fourth estate, which represented the majority of Frenchmen, were denied full political rights by the bourgeoisie.

When their demands for equality began to multiply in April 1791, the Triumvirate called for the halt of the Revolution and sought a rapprochement with the Court.¹³² With the Fayettists, they also agreed, in a revision of the Constitution, to increase the king's power and to ensure the domination of the property-owners over the propertyless.¹³³

According to Michon, the Constitutionnalists were foolish to believe that a mere decree could keep Louis XVI on the throne when public opinion was clearly against this. To ignore public opinion was irresponsible and revealed the political incompetence of the Constitutionnalists. Michon was the only historian to assert that the Constitutionnalists encouraged and perhaps even advised Louis XVI to flee Paris and to write the manifesto of June 20, which contained the king's complaints about the Revolution.¹³⁴ He contended that the manifesto was intended to serve one of two purposes: if the escape was a success, it was to be used as "...une base de transaction..." between Louis XVI and the National Assembly. If it was not successful, it was to serve as "...un véritable programme de révision."¹³⁵

Michon strongly believed that the Constitutionnalists left nothing to chance between June 21 and the end of September.¹³⁶ The inviolability decree, the opening of the Feuillant Club, the massacre of the Champ de Mars and the "reactionary" revision of the Constitution were, in his view, planned by the Constitutionnalists.¹³⁷ Their goal was to bring

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about a total counterrevolution. Their plan was to keep Louis XVI on the throne despite the fact that public opinion was violently opposed to this. Expecting the democrats to react in a forceful manner, they were to provoke a riot which would furnish them with the opportunity to repress their political adversaries. The country's reaction against the revolutionaries, spurred by the tainted reporting of papers supporting the government (and by implication the bourgeoisie), would then be used to make counterrevolutionary changes in the Constitution. Furthermore, the ~~Peuillant~~ Club, opened by the Triumvirate, would seize the Jacobin Club's affiliated societies and as a consequence control public opinion in France.¹³⁸ Michon concluded that the Constitutionalist failed because they were incapable of recognizing the unfeasibility of their position: the democratic movement was for all practical purposes unstoppable.¹³⁹

E. D. Bradby's two-volume Life of Barnave was first published in 1915.¹⁴⁰ It contains conclusions which stand in direct contradiction to those put forward by Michon and other modern French historians. She rejected the long-standing contention that the Constitutionalist, the Triumvirate in particular, were at bottom motivated by greed, ambition, the thirst for power and the exclusive interests of the bourgeoisie. Honesty, probity and a profound love of liberty were among the virtues she believed best characterized these talented men. But their strong conviction that liberty

could only be safeguarded in a monarchical form of government forced them to oppose all efforts to establish the democratic Republic. Moreover, Bradby dismissed the argument that the Constitutionals became royalists or even adopted royalist policies in 1791 and that they had secret relations with the Court.¹⁴¹ She argued that the opening of the Feuillant Club and the massacre at the Champ de Mars were spontaneous events for which the Constitutionals have been unfairly held responsible. The Triumvirate, she claimed, objected to the establishment of a new club but their wishes went unheeded.¹⁴² Furthermore, Bradby went to great lengths to disprove the assertion that the Constitutionals intended to increase the king's authority and to establish a two-chamber system in August 1791.¹⁴³

According to Bradby, the Constitutionals kept Louis XVI on the throne because they sincerely believed that the representative, constitutional monarchy was the best government ever to have existed and that democracy, at least as they conceived of it, would only bring a state of anarchy.¹⁴⁴ By democracy, the Constitutionals meant "...the immediate exercise of the sovereignty by all the voters."¹⁴⁵ They believed that the moral tradition of France, not to mention its population and position in Europe, required that a monarchical government be retained. Their aversion for the republic was based in part on their conviction that only the king was capable of maintaining France's newly-found unity.¹⁴⁶

These considerations, together with the desire to avoid a civil war and a foreign invasion on behalf of the king, stood behind the Constitutionnalists' decision to uphold executive inviolability.¹⁴⁷

Bradby asserted that the Constitutionnalists took concrete steps during the summer of 1791 to consolidate the Constitution. Their basic objectives were to remove the country's fears of a counterrevolution and to increase the king's popularity. The key element in their foreign policy was Leopold II. Their plan was to persuade Leopold to declare himself in favor of the Constitution. A treaty between Austria and France would then be concluded and, by dividing the foreign powers, this would destroy the chances of an invasion. The king was to invite his brothers and the émigrés to reenter France after this treaty was signed. Realizing that without Leopold's support their cause was hopeless, the émigrés would be compelled to reconcile themselves to the Revolution. As a consequence of these steps, the king would be credited with restoring peace to France and preventing counterrevolution, and his popularity would grow immensely. The democratic movement, on the other hand, would crumble because it would no longer be able to advance its cause by playing on the people's fears of a return of the ancien régime. The Constitutionnalists took great pains to demonstrate that it was in everyone's vital interest to bring the Revolution to a peaceful end.

Bradby agreed. To her, this "...was a wise and well-considered policy; the misfortune was that neither the Court, the Royalists, nor Europe, were clear-sighted enough to see how wise it was;...."¹⁴⁸

As an English historian, Bradby was not considerably influenced by the French historical tradition. Her views of the restricted suffrage enshrined in the Constitution were, as a consequence, quite different from those of Aulard, Mathiez, Michon, Lefebvre and Soboul. She contended that in reproaching the Constitutionnalists for establishing a "privileged" government, modern French historians tended to disregard the social realities of eighteenth-century France. She did not deny that the bourgeoisie was predominant; but in her view, the suffrage was very liberal, especially when consideration was given to the fact that France was an agricultural society with a largely uneducated population.¹⁴⁹

Like Madame de Staël, Mignet and Sorel, Bradby contended that the monarchy might have been saved and the Constitution firmly consolidated had the leaders of the Constitutionnalists been able to persuade the National Assembly to repeal the non-reeligibility decree.¹⁵⁰

The latest contribution to constitutionalist historiography is Chevallier's biography of Barnave, which appeared in 1936.¹⁵¹ Chevallier was the first historian to make extensive use of Barnave's correspondence with Marie-Antoinette.¹⁵² He argued that the Triumvirate's relations with the Court and

with the Fayettists began after the flight.¹⁵³ Like Bradby, he asserted that the opening of the Feuillant Club was neither planned nor effectuated by the Triumvirate.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, he was convinced that their goals regarding constitutional revisions have been unduly exaggerated by modern historians. The desire to establish an upper chamber and to give the absolute veto to the king was not part of their plans until 1792.¹⁵⁵

Chevallier contended that the Constitutionalists possessed a well-developed internal and foreign policy to which the Court rarely adhered. About their foreign policy, he concluded that "c'est supérieurement raisonné. Mais pour mener ce plan à bien, les Triumvirs ont besoin de Marie-Antoinette."¹⁵⁶ However, the queen was using the Triumvirate until help from the foreign coalition arrived.¹⁵⁷ Like Bradby, Chevallier believed that the Constitutionalists' failure to establish a durable government was partially due to the fact that they could not repeal the non-reeligibility decree.¹⁵⁸

It would seem, therefore, that from the time of Madame de Staël until today there has been a considerable variation of opinion among historians regarding the Constitutionalists' conduct in 1791. Certainly historians have allowed their personal preoccupations, political prejudices and revolutionary preconceptions to shape their assessments of the Constitutionalists, and this has resulted in a series of contradictory generalizations about what the Constitutionalists

in actuality symbolized. Writers before 1840 described the Constitutionals as monarchists who were misguided by abstract principles in 1789-1790 but who tried to rectify this in 1791 by strengthening the monarchy and combatting "anarchical" democracy. As monarchists, they approved of the inviolability decree which kept Louis XVI on the throne after the flight. They argued that a combination of unfavorable circumstances and wrong decisions brought about the overthrow of the monarchy. Conversely, modern historians, whose concern with specific economic and social questions led them to accept most, if not all, of the arguments produced by Blanc in 1847-1848, tended to question the "royalism" of the Constitutionals. They identified them as unscrupulous liberal nobles and bourgeois who attempted and failed to impose an unworkable, reactionary constitution upon the French people. Because the fall of the monarchy was for them all but inevitable after June 21, they condemned the inviolability decree, which in their view closed all doors to a legal and peaceful transition from the limited monarchy to the democratic Republic. On still another front, two biographers of Barnave, Bradby and Chevallier, regarded the Constitutionals neither as republicans nor as monarchists in the traditional sense: they were honest men with a genuine love for liberty, but they sincerely believed that a free, stable government could not be established in France unless the monarchy was maintained. Thus some historians have seen these men as well-intentioned and sincere

in their endeavor to establish a moderate regime; but on the whole historians have treated them as inept, corrupt men who betrayed the Revolution in order to satisfy their personal and class needs.

A survey of the literature written on the Constitution-
alists is perhaps most valuable in that it serves to dis-
tinguish the questions which stand at the center of contro-
versy even among the most recent specialists on the subject:
the date, if any, on which the Constitutionalists' relationship
with the Court commenced (April or early July?); the consider-
ations which led to the passage of the inviolability decree on
July 15, 1791; the causes of the schism in the Society of the
Friends of the Constitution (the Jacobin Club) and the National
Assembly's role in the Champ de Mars massacre. Other areas of
disagreement which merit attention are the considerations which
induced the Constitutionalists to oppose the non-reeligibility
decree and the Four years law; the significance of the legis-
lation enacted by the National Assembly in the spring of 1791
and the particulars surrounding the revision of the Constitution.
Of course, the most important question is whether in all these
matters the Constitutionalists can be said to have been acting
in a manner consistent with the principles they espoused.

The confused picture which emerges from this review
clearly demonstrates the need for a reassessment of the facts.
A reevaluation of the Constitutionalists was in fact made in
1965 by François Furet and Denis Richet.¹⁵⁹ However, because

of its continued predominance, the social and economic interpretation of the Revolution will serve as the point of departure in our reexamination of the Constitutionalist. The views of Furet and Richet and their connection with our research will be discussed in the Conclusion.¹⁶⁰ The purpose of this thesis is to reexamine the evidence surrounding the history of the Constitutionalist in an effort to determine their policies, goals and conduct during the spring and summer of 1791. This thesis will therefore commence with an examination of the events of the spring of 1791, the period during which the Triumvirate is said to have entered into the service of the Court and agreed to effect a conservative revision of the Constitution and during which the non-reeligibility decree, the Four years law and the "repressive" bills were enacted.

CHAPTER I NOTES

¹This holds true for the period 1795-1798 as well.

²Historians usually describe the Constitutionalists as the major architects of the Constitution of 1791, although they sometimes fail to draw the distinction between those who were at least indirectly responsible for the introduction of constitutional legislation and those who in most cases simply voted for it. For the purposes of this thesis, the Constitutionalists will be identified as the "architects" of the Constitution. Most of these men were members of the Société de 1789 founded by the Abbé Sieyès in 1790. The most notable of the Constitutionalists were elected by their fellow colleagues in the National Assembly to serve on the Constitutional Committee. They were Thouret, Sieyès, Target, Talleyrand, Desmeuniers, Le Chapelier and Rabaut Saint-Etienne. Other notable Constitutionalists were Lafayette, Emmery, Dupont (de Nemours), Larochehoucauld, Beaumez, Liancourt, Montmorency, Toulangeon, Regnaud (de Saint-Jean d'Angély), Bailly, Tronchet, Goupil de Préfelne and Treilhard. Dandré (or d'André) was also connected with this group of men. The Constitutionalists were variously referred to as the "Fayettistes" (the followers of Lafayette) and "1789" (after the Société de 1789). They did not vote as a party but were united by their common desire to establish a constitutional monarchy. Historians generally reserve a separate place for the Triumvirate of Alexandre Lameth, Andrien Duport and Joseph Barnave. The revolutionary journalist Camille Desmoulins labeled it as the septemvirat because the Triumvirate received the consistent support of Charles Lameth (Alexandre Lameth's brother), Menou, the Duke of Aiguillon and Beauharnais. These men were also known as the "Jacobins" or "Jacobin Party" and as the "Lameths." Considering the fact that their political views were extremely similar, if not identical, to those of the Constitutionalists, they will be referred to in this thesis under the heading of the "Constitutionalists" (except of course when their individual names require identification). For a more detailed examination of the individual Constitutionalists and of the Triumvirate, see Alphonse Aulard, Les orateurs de la Révolution: L'Assemblée Constituante (1st ed., rev.; Paris: Edouard Cornely Et Cie., 1905), pp. 378-510.

³George Rudé, Interpretations of the French Revolution, The Historical Association, No. 47 (rev. ed.; London: The Historical Association, 1972), p. 3.

⁴In La chute de la royauté: 10 Août 1792 (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), Marcel Reinhard offers an excellent analysis of the events of the summer of 1791. However, because his study focuses on the events that fell between June 21, 1791 and August 10, 1792, and therefore excludes an examination of the events of the spring of 1791, his book will not be included in this review.

⁵Historians refer to this as the thèse des circonstances as opposed to the aristocrats' thèse du complot, where the Revolution is considered as the result of a vast conspiracy by the members of the secret societies which existed during the ancien régime.

⁶Madame Germaine de Staël, Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française, in Oeuvres complètes de Mme. la Baronne de Staël, ed. by the Duke of Broglie and the Baron de Staël, Tomes XII-XIV (17 tomes; Paris: Treuttel Et Wurtz, 1820). The original edition is unavailable.

⁷Ibid., XII, 318.

⁸Mme. de Staël never specified which principles she was referring to, other than to argue that American principles were unsuitable for application in France. Nevertheless, by implication, she opposed the principles of the sovereignty of the people, equality and the separation of powers.

⁹Mme. de Staël, op.cit., pp. 208, 270-71, 318-20, 367, 372-73, 409, 433.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 410.

¹¹Ibid., p. 418.

¹²Ibid., pp. 399, 412.

¹³Ibid., pp. 302, 412, 430.

¹⁴She did not specify which revisions she considered as "useful."

¹⁵Mme. de Staël, op.cit., pp. 420-22.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 433.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 425-26.

¹⁸M. A. Thiers, Histoire de la Révolution française (2 tomes; Paris: Furne Et Cie., 1865), the original edition is unavailable.

¹⁹Ibid., I, 144.

²⁰Ibid., p. 135.

²¹Ibid., p. 142.

²²Ibid., pp. 143-44.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Thiers, op.cit., pp. 154-55.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 141-42, 145, 151.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 139, 144, 149-52. Like Mme. de Staël, Thiers was vague about which principles he found objectionable. By implication, since he did claim that Louis XVI should have possessed most of the sovereignty and that the nobility should have had its interests represented in a Chamber of Peers, Thiers was criticizing the principles of the sovereignty of the people and of equality.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 148, 155, 174.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 139, 150-52.

²⁹F. A. Mignet, Histoire de la Révolution française (2 vols.; Paris: Firmin Didot, Père Et Fils, 1824. Paris: Ladvocat, 1824).

³⁰Ibid., I, 102, 194-95.

³¹Ibid., pp. 195-96.

³²The so-called followers of General Lafayette, Commander of the National Guard of Paris. See note 2, p. 33.

³³Mignet, op.cit., p. 184.

³⁴For a more detailed account of the activities of the republican societies, see below, Chapter 4.

³⁵Mignet, op.cit., p. 187.

³⁶Ibid., p. 197.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 191-92, 195, 198. This decree is frequently referred to as the "Self-denying Ordonance."

³⁸Joseph Droz, Histoire du règne de Louis XVI pendant les années où l'on pouvait prévenir ou diriger la Révolution française, with a Forward by Emile de Bonnechese (3 tomes; Paris: Ve. Jules Renouard, 1860), the original edition is unavailable.

³⁹Ibid., III, 290.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 342.

⁴¹These were priests who refused to take the oath required by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which put most of the temporal matters of the French church under the control of the government. Since the "refractory" priests were identified, perhaps unjustifiably, with the aristocratic order, they were often perceived by revolutionaries

as full-fledged counterrevolutionaries. As a matter of fact, there were certain instances in which the revolutionaries' fears were justified.

⁴²Droz, op.cit., p. 290.

⁴³Ibid., p. 344.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 354-56.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 360-61, 373.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 342, 396-97.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 359-62.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 395.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 367.

⁵⁰Jules Michelet, Histoire de la Révolution française (7 vols.; Paris: Editions Jean de Bonnet, 1974), the original edition is unavailable.

⁵¹Ibid., I, Introduction.

⁵²Ibid., III, 26, 28-29, 34, 43, 101.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 34, 119-20, 127.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 120.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 131.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 126, 159.

⁵⁷Ibid., Michelet mentioned that the Assembly believed that it expressed the national will, which was the law. See pp. 130, 140.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 135, 140-41, 148, 155.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 135, 147, 150-51, 154.

⁶⁰Ibid., II, 386, and III, 166-68.

⁶¹Ibid., III, 151, 165, 169, 172-73.

⁶²Ibid., p. 174.

⁶³Louis Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution française (15 vols.; Paris: Librairie Internationale: Lacroix Et Cie., 1878), the original edition is unavailable.

⁶⁴Blanc, op.cit., VII, 3, 40, 42, 90.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 167.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 3, 7-8.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 3, 7-8, 168.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 169.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 4.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 17-18, 54, 70-73.

⁷³Ibid., p. 70.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 73-75, 78.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 102-05, 110-11.

⁷⁶The Count of Artois was Louis' youngest brother; he left France in 1789 with the purpose of finding the support he needed to reestablish the absolute monarchy. Louis' oldest brother was the Count of Provence. He left France on June 21, 1791. For further details on these men, see notes 63 and 64, pp. 109-10.

⁷⁷Blanc, op.cit., pp. 102-11, passim.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 168.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 90-91, 143-44.

⁸¹Albert Sorel, L'Europe et la Révolution française, Vol. II: La chute de la royauté (Paris: Librairie Plon: Les Petits-Fils De Plon Et Nourrit, 1885).

⁸²Ibid., II, 265.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 268.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 269.

- ⁸⁷Sorel, op.cit., pp. 267-69.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 261, 267-69.
- ⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 243-44, 252, 254, 256, 259-61, 270-72.
- ⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 262-64.
- ⁹¹A [lphonse] Aulard, Histoire politique de la Révolution française: origines et développement de la démocratie et de la République (1789-1804) (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1901).
- ⁹²Ibid., pp. v, vi, 43.
- ⁹³Aulard only once mentions the Constitutionnalists by name; most of his allusions to them are placed under the term "bourgeoisie."
- ⁹⁴Aulard, op.cit., pp. 39, 45-46, 55-56, 126, 139-40.
- ⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 118, 135, 145.
- ⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 121, 145-46.
- ⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 152-53.
- ⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 153-58.
- ⁹⁹Ibid., p. 153.
- ¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 146-47.
- ¹⁰¹Jean Jaurès, Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française, Vol. I: La Constituante, ed. by Albert Soboul and with a Preface by Ernest Labrousse (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1968), the original edition is unavailable.
- ¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 1096-97.
- ¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 583-84.
- ¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 566, 584, 837, 840, 973, 1014, 1025.
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 1027.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 905.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 614-21, 840, 905-10, 1072.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 1024-26, 1050.

- 110 Jaurès, op.cit., pp. 591, 1103-04.
- 111 Albert Mathiez, The French Revolution, trans. from the French by Catherine Alison Phillips (New York: Russel & Russel, Inc., 1962); Georges Lefebvre, The French Revolution, Vol. I: From its Origins to 1793, trans. from the French by Elizabeth Moss Evanson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Albert Soboul, La Révolution française, Vol. I: De la Bastille à la Gironde, Idées: nrf (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), these are not the original publications.
- 112 Mathiez, op.cit., pp. 132, 136; Lefebvre, op.cit., p. 210; Soboul, op.cit., pp. 275, 294-95.
- 113 Lefebvre, op.cit., p. 152, these are his words; Mathiez, op.cit., p. 86; Soboul, op.cit., pp. 212-13.
- 114 Lefebvre, op.cit., p. 151.
- 115 Mathiez, op.cit., p. 86; Lefebvre, op.cit., pp. 173, 176; Soboul, op.cit., pp. 243-44, 265.
- 116 Mathiez, op.cit., pp. 122-23.
- 117 Lefebvre, op.cit., p. 176; Soboul, op.cit., pp. 252-53.
- 118 Mathiez, op.cit., p. 126; Soboul, op.cit., p. 252.
- 119 Lefebvre, op.cit., pp. 176, 210; Soboul, op.cit., p. 253.
- 120 Lefebvre, op.cit., pp. 176, 210.
- 121 Mathiez, op.cit., p. 133.
- 122 Ibid., p. 130; Lefebvre, op.cit., pp. 209-10; Soboul, op.cit., p. 264.
- 123 Mathiez, op.cit., p. 130.
- 124 Ibid., p. 131; Lefebvre, op.cit., pp. 209-10; Soboul, op.cit., p. 264.
- 125 Albert Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers pendant la crise de Varennes et le massacre du Champ de Mars (Paris: Librairie Ancienne H. Champion, Editeur, 1910), p. 192, passim; Lefebvre, op.cit.; Soboul, op.cit.
- 126 Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 150; Soboul, op.cit., p. 264.
- 127 Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 38.

128 Georges Michon, Essai sur l'histoire du Parti feuillant: Andrien Duport: Correspondance inédite de Barnave en 1791, Bibliothèque Historique (Paris: Payot, 1924).

129 Michon dedicated his book to Albert Mathiez.

130 Michon, op.cit., pp. 183, 186, 208, 217, 220, 270, 275, 284-85, 298, 307, 313-14.

131 Ibid., p. 446.

132 Ibid., pp. 200, 203, 223.

133 Ibid., pp. 198, 200, 218, 220, 224.

134 Ibid., pp. 226, 228.

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid., Michon believed that they had "...leur plan tout prêt" on June 21. From that moment, "...tout allait se passer suivant un scénario réglé d'avance." See pp. 230-31.

137 Ibid., pp. 230-31.

138 Ibid., pp. 222, 241, 243-44, 259-71.

139 Ibid., pp. 258, 270, 297-98, 447.

140 E. D. Bradby, The Life of Barnave (2 vols.; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1915).

141 Ibid., II, 41, 87, 95.

142 Ibid., pp. 194-95.

143 Ibid., pp. 204-11.

144 Ibid., pp. 225-26.

145 Ibid., p. 226.

146 Ibid., pp. 166, 170-71, 176-77, 181.

147 Ibid., p. 170.

148 Ibid., pp. 197-204.

149 Ibid., pp. 226-27.

150 Ibid., pp. 197-204.

¹⁵¹Jean-Jacques Chevallier, Barnave ou les deux faces de la Révolution: 1761-1793, with a Preface by Gabriel Hanotaux, Bibliothèque Historique (Paris: Payot, 1936).

¹⁵²This correspondence was not accepted as authentic until 1934; thus it was not available to Bradby and Michon. See Alma Soderhjelm, ed., Marie-Antoinette et Barnave: Correspondance secrète (juillet 1791-janvier 1792), with a Preface by Georges Lefebvre, Les Classiques de la Révolution française (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1934).

¹⁵³Chevallier, op.cit., pp. 223-24, 256.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 286.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 300.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 293.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 340.

¹⁵⁹François Furet and Denis Richet, La Révolution, Vol. I: Des Etats généraux au 9 Thermidor, Collection les grandes heures de l'histoire de France (Paris: Librairie Hachette Et Société D'Etudes Et De Publications Economiques, 1965).

¹⁶⁰See below, the Conclusion, pp. 160-62.

CHAPTER II

THE SPRING OF 1791

On June 20, 1789 the deputies of the National Assembly took the legendary Tennis Court oath never to disband until they had brought about the regeneration of the French Empire and provided France with its first written constitution. As the spring of 1791 approached, these illustrious men were making the final preparations for the fulfillment of that solemn oath. The laborious work of the National Constituent Assembly was quickly drawing to a close. The traditional divine right monarchy had been supplanted by a new authority: the sovereignty of the people. The "arbitrary" government of the ancien régime was to give way to the rule of law. The Constitution of 1791 was to establish a representative government combined with an hereditary monarchy. To the national representatives, the Revolution had all but reached its conclusion.

During the spring of 1791, however, the National Assembly still had to reach important decisions concerning the structure and relations of the legislative and executive powers.¹ The Constitutionalist's opinions on these matters were widely known. They favored giving the king the power to appoint deputies of the legislature to the cabinet and

to other posts at the disposal of the executive branch of the government. They also planned to propose a law that would empower legislative deputies to seek reelection to the following legislature and "constituent" members to run for office in the first Assembly established by the Constitution.² Most of the Assembly's deputies did not share the Constitutionalist's views. As a consequence, on April 7, 1791, Robespierre successfully introduced the Four years law, which banned deputies of the National Constituent Assembly and of subsequent legislatures from occupying positions connected with the executive power until four years after the conclusion of their respective sessions. On May 16, Robespierre was also instrumental in securing the passage of the non-reeligibility decree against the advice of the Constitutionalist's. This law disqualified the deputies of the Constituent Assembly from being eligible to sit in the first Legislative Assembly and excluded legislators from seeking immediate reelection for a third term of office.³

The Constitutionalist's did succeed in obtaining the Assembly's approval of the decree of May 18, which regulated the right of petition, and of the law of June 14, which outlawed all corporate organizations. In actuality, the proposal and adoption of these laws were requested on April 26 by a joint deputation of the municipal and departmental governments of Paris, whose major responsibility was to maintain public tranquillity in the capital, a responsibility which

included ensuring the safety and independence of the National Assembly and the king. In its statement to the National Assembly, the deputation stressed that the passage of these measures would contribute enormously to restoring public order in France.⁴

The Municipality and the Department of Paris, together with the National Assembly, undoubtedly wished to avoid a repetition of the kind of disturbance that had transpired at the Royal Palace on April 18. On that day, a multitude of Parisians prevented Louis XVI from embarking on his journey to Saint-Cloud, where he and his family planned to celebrate the Easter holiday. When it became apparent that the crowd was not going to allow the king to proceed on his trip, Bailly,⁵ the mayor of Paris, and Lafayette,⁶ the General-Commandant of the Parisian National Guard, ordered the national guardsmen at the scene to clear the path for the safe passage of the royal carriage. However, their commands were disobeyed;⁷ and the Royal Family was finally compelled to stay in Paris.

The unrest that broke out on April 18 was at least partially a result of the Parisians' distrust of the king. During the spring, there were countless skirmishes between the supporters and opponents of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, a series of laws adopted by the National Assembly and sanctioned, albeit reluctantly, by Louis XVI in July 1790.⁸ In April it was rumored in Paris that the king had dismissed

his confessor because he supported the Civil Constitution and therefore the Revolution.⁹ On the eve of his planned trip to Saint-Cloud, a guard stationed at the Royal Palace accused him of having willingly attended a mass celebrated by a nonjuring priest.¹⁰ Nonjuring priests, who refused to take the oath required by the Civil Constitution, were considered by most Parisians as counterrevolutionaries. It must be noted that in addition to the rumors that inundated the capital during this period, Louis' entourage, composed of counterrevolutionaries, did not help to inspire confidence in the Court's intentions.¹¹ Consequently, although the king publicly declared his loyalty to the Constitution, his personal behavior created the impression that he secretly regretted the loss of his ancient prerogatives. His ambiguous conduct probably gave credibility to the people's fears that the trip to Saint-Cloud was really a cover for a scheme to flee to Compiègne, where, reunited with an army of counterrevolutionaries, the king would take steps to dissolve the National Assembly and to reestablish the absolute monarchy.¹² It is hardly surprising, then, that the people of Paris opposed the Royal Family's departure for Saint-Cloud. On the other hand, from the government's standpoint, the multitude's all too frequent propensity for taking the law into its own hands, together with the blatant insubordination of the national guardsmen on April 18, were disturbing indications of the weakness of the constituted authorities.

The principal considerations upon which the Constitutionalists based their conduct during the spring of 1791 have long been a subject of historical controversy. Interpretations of mens' motives and goals should be based as far as possible on factual evidence. However, the study of the Constitutionalists' motives and goals is hindered by a shortage of reliable sources of information and by the relatively small number of monographs devoted to the subject. Moreover, such a study is complicated still further by the existence of a long tradition of hostile interpretations, which has contributed to an inflexibility of views regarding long-standing assertions frequently accepted as indisputable facts. A reexamination of the evidence surrounding the Constitutionalists' conduct is therefore still necessary. The views of Georges Michon, as set forth in Histoire du Parti feuillant,¹³ will first be examined in greater detail than was possible in the preceding chapter.

To Michon, the revolution of August 10, 1792, which led to the establishment of the First French Republic, was the inevitable dénouement of the social and political struggle waged between the propertyless (the democrats and republicans) and the property-owners (the constitutional monarchists, aristocrats and émigrés).¹⁴ Duport,¹⁵ Barnave¹⁶ and Alexandre Lameth¹⁷ were liberal nobles who appeared to take the side of the propertyless between 1789 and 1791. They had been, or so it seemed, the most ardent defenders of democratic

principles in the National Constituent Assembly. By March 1791, however, their advocacy of the restricted franchise as well as their opposition to the people's right to elect a Regent demonstrated once and for all that they were not democrats.¹⁸ The people recognized this turnabout and gradually withdrew their support from the Triumvirate.

Nevertheless, still according to Michon, the Triumvirate did not intend to part with the advantages bestowed upon it by its privileged political position. Propelled by personal ambition, corruption and thirst for power, it betrayed the principles which for two years it had loudly professed and made treaties with the enemies of the Revolution.¹⁹ Shortly after the death of Mirabeau on April 2, "a tight coalition" between the Triumvirate and the Court was formed. Capitulating to the Court's demands, the Triumvirate agreed to increase the king's power, to neutralize the democratic movement and to consider reconstituting the nobility.²⁰ Alexandre Lameth soon became intendant of the Civil List; he gave Charles Lameth,²¹ Duport and Laborde-Méréville²² funds from this source to establish the Triumvirate's newspaper: Le Logographe.²³ The Triumvirate associated with the king in order to acquire "...des bénéfices tangibles..." as its popularity among the people waned. The king, on the other hand, employed the Triumvirate to increase his constitutional authority; but he also continued his endeavor to subvert the Revolution.²⁴

Still according to Michon, the reactionary conduct of the Triumvirate was not solely motivated by personal considerations. In April 1791 all moderates, not just the Triumvirate, started to feel uneasy about the sudden growth of the democratic movement (supported by the "fourth estate") because it threatened to overturn the social and political predominance of the French bourgeoisie.²⁵ Fearing the rise of the people, the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes, the two major constitutionalist factions, hastened to join forces in May 1791 and agreed to increase the king's authority by revising the Constitution.²⁶ To stay in power, they supported legislation that would allow them to occupy cabinet positions and to sit in the legislature during the first Legislative Assembly.²⁷ Furthermore, they tried to weaken the democratic movement by enacting "reactionary" laws that restricted the right of petition and banned unions, thus making all social and political demonstrations illegal.²⁸ The Constitutionalists' policy during the spring is described by Michon as "...la politique de résistance et de répression sociale."²⁹

Michon's interpretation consists of two major assertions which together imply that the Constitutionalists compromised their own political principles during the spring of 1791. The first of these assertions is that the Triumvirate entered into the service of the Court in April and that it agreed to make conservative revisions in the Constitution. The second is that the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes formed an

alliance in May to revise the Constitution in a retrograde manner, to remain in power and to suppress the democrats. An examination of the evidence, however, suggests that Michon's interpretation is open to criticism.

The evidence most directly connected with the Triumvirate's relationship with the Court in April and May 1791 consists of the memoirs of Bouillé,³⁰ Montlosier³¹ and Alexandre Lameth; the diary of Gouverneur Morris³² and a letter dated April 20, 1791 and discovered in the armoire de fer, where Louis XVI stored his secret papers and correspondence. The diary of Morris and the armoire de fer letter are the most trustworthy because they were written during the spring of 1791. Because Alexandre Lameth was a major participant in these events, his memoirs, although not published until 1828, are an important source of information. The memoirs of Montlosier and Bouillé, on the other hand, are of lesser importance because their contentions with respect to the Triumvirate's relationship with the Court are based on indirect evidence.

In L'Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante, Alexandre Lameth claims that a few days after Mirabeau's death on April 2, Montmorin,³³ the minister of Foreign Affairs, paid him a surprise visit at eight o'clock in the morning. In his conversation with Lameth, he voiced his regret at having employed Mirabeau to discredit the popular party, as the Constitutionalists were labelled, and praised the moderate

addresses of the National Assembly and the Jacobin Club of Paris. Nothing more is known about this meeting (or what it possibly led to) because Lameth died before finishing this part of his memoirs.³⁴

The next indication of the Triumvirate's association with the Court can be found in the armoire de fer letter of April 20. The identity of this letter's author is unknown; but it would be reasonably safe to assume, considering the advice he furnishes, that he was a conservative (perhaps a minister or a close advisor). In this letter, Louis XVI learns of the Jacobin faction's [i.e., the Triumvirate's] desire to restore public order, conserve the monarchy, guarantee the safety of the king's person and neutralize the democratic movement. But the writer of the letter presumes that the Jacobins' goal is to dominate the Court. Accordingly, he gives this advice to the king: "...il faut paraître favoriser cette faction pour s'en servir."³⁵

Gouverneur Morris provides a more comprehensive picture of Triumvirate-Court dealings. If his observations are accurate, Terrier de Montciel³⁶ and Brémond³⁷ met with the Jacobin leaders [i.e., the Triumvirate] on or just prior to April 30. Through Montciel and Brémond, they informed Morris of their determination to act in concert with the Court, but, lest they should lose their popularity, without appearing to do so. Upon hearing this news, Morris directed Brémond to obtain a list of articles desired by the Jacobin chieftains

and, if possible, to find out what their plans were. In addition, Morris offered to have the Four years law revoked and the reeligibility decree passed. The next day, Brémond turned the requested list over to Morris who in turn informed Montmorin of his negotiations with the Jacobins. During his conversation with Morris, Montmorin expressed his dissatisfaction with the Triumvirate; but Morris did not specify the reasons for his discontent.³⁸ Morris received a further communication from the Jacobin leaders on May 10. The latter instructed Brémond "to form a selection of constitutional articles" and requested a meeting to discuss the most effective means of restoring public order.³⁹ After May 10, it appears that Morris did not refer to these negotiations again.

Montlosier sets out in his memoirs to explain the purpose behind Montmorin's visit to Alexandre Lameth. He asserts that Louis XVI, needing influence in the National Assembly following Mirabeau's death, ordered Montmorin to seek an alliance with the Triumvirate. The latter accepted the Court's offers for an alliance on the condition that Louis XVI declare himself in favor of the Constitution. In return, it promised to revise the "defective" parts of the Constitution.⁴⁰ In another section of his memoirs, Montlosier contends that Alexandre Lameth and Montmorin agreed to modify all the constitutional articles. Their principal aims, according to Montlosier, were to increase the king's authority,

tolerate the practice of the refractory cult, crush the democratic movement and perhaps reconstitute the nobility.⁴¹ In his memoirs, Bouillé does not allude to any Triumvirate-Court relations. But he does claim that by January 1791, Mirabeau, Duport, the Lameths and other members of the National Assembly acknowledged the necessity of reaching "un arrangement convenable" with the Court. They were tired of anarchy and recognized the vices of the Constitution (which if left unrevised would lead to the establishment of a republic).⁴²

The only evidence that solidly supports Michon's contentions regarding the Triumvirate's ties with the Court and its plans for the revision of the Constitution are the memoirs of Montlosier and Bouillé. Standing alone, however, these sources do not constitute solid evidence. In fact, they may be called into question for two reasons. Firstly, Montlosier's and Bouillé's accounts are not the product of firsthand observations. Moreover, not only is it impossible to find out who gave Montlosier and Bouillé their information (thus precluding a judgment on the sources' reliability), it is equally impossible to learn when this information might have been given to them. It is a fact that Bouillé was not in Paris in January 1791.⁴³ His assertion that the Triumvirate wanted to alter the Constitution at that time, an assertion which may be accurate, rests therefore upon information taken from another source. For his part, Montlosier admits that his

information came from someone else ("...si je suis bien informé....");⁴⁴ but he does not identify this person.

Secondly, the accuracy of their assertions is open to doubt because their memoirs were written over thirty years after these events took place.⁴⁵ The prevalence of factual distortion in revolutionary memoirs is, of course, common knowledge; but the real danger in this case lies in confusion over the dates and the facts. It was and still is a common belief that the Triumvirate wanted to make conservative modifications in the Constitution at the end of July 1791. Did Montlosier and Bouillé, writing after three decades had elapsed and relying on information drawn from unknown sources, project desires and plans on the Triumvirate which in fact it did not harbor until a later period? Montlosier's and Bouillé's contentions cannot be ruled out; but they cannot stand alone as proof that the Triumvirate reversed its constitutional policies to suit the Court. Indeed the very terms Montlosier and Bouillé use to describe the Triumvirate's constitutional designs are subject to innumerable interpretations.

The rest of the evidence examined above is reliable. However, it does not indicate that a Triumvirate-Court alliance existed in the spring. The results of Montmorin's visit with Alexandre Lameth at the beginning of April are unknown; the object of his visit is in itself a mystery. Gouverneur Morris did make attempts to reach an understanding with the Triumvirate, but his reaction to the list of articles it drew up and sent

to him on May 1 is unknown. The contents of this list cannot be discovered either. Furthermore, the Triumvirate's reaction to the Court's proposals for constitutional modifications (if indeed such proposals were ever submitted) remains obscure.

What this evidence does indicate is that Duport, Barnave and the Lameths were extremely concerned about the continued state of lawlessness in France (and especially in Paris). It is significant that their first overtures to the Court, as reported in the armoire de fer letter, were made just two days after the Saint-Cloud incident. In fact, one of the Triumvirate's major goals was the reestablishment of public order. Since the beginning of 1791, Duport, Barnave and the Lameths had been working to establish public confidence in the new government. They had explained to the French people early in 1791 that, although insurrection had been necessary to destroy the despotism of the ancien régime, peace was now a prerequisite for the maintenance of the free government established by the National Assembly.⁴⁶ In his address of March 11 to the Jacobin Club's affiliated societies, Barnave had expressed his conviction that France "...ought to desire peace, because we must have peace if the edifice of our Constitution is to be made firm."⁴⁷

The evidence also demonstrates that the Triumvirate wanted to reach some kind of an agreement with the Court and that it may have considered making constitutional changes if an acceptable agreement could have been reached. But

without knowing precisely what alterations were contemplated (or if any understanding was ever reached), it is precipitate to conclude without qualification, as Michon does, that the Triumvirate consented to sacrifice some of the revolutionary gains it had fought so hard to obtain.

It appears that the Triumvirate and the Court could not find enough room to negotiate and that, as a consequence, the negotiations came to nothing. The resumption of Duquesnoy's⁴⁸ attacks against the Triumvirate on May 7 and May 15 is a positive indication that the negotiations fell through. Duquesnoy, one of Montmorin's secret agents and a consistent critic of the Constitutionals, had ceased attacking the Triumvirate in the Ami des Patriotes on April 9.⁴⁹ One fact is indisputable: there were no direct relations between the king or Marie-Antoinette and the Triumvirate until late June or early July 1791. Barnave's letter of August 5, 1791 to the queen proves this. Referring to his relations with the Court after the king's flight to Varennes, Barnave wrote of "...les circonstances où, pour la première fois dans le cours de la révolution, nous [i.e., Barnave and Alexandre Lameth] avons eu des relations avec elle."⁵⁰

If no agreement was reached, it was no doubt due, at least partially, to the Court's profound distrust of and resentment towards the Triumvirate. In Court circles, the Lameths and Duport were regarded as traitors to the nobility. As part of the Court nobility, the Lameths were particularly

scorned for their role in the Revolution. This sentiment extended as far as the king and the queen, who placed responsibility for the monarchy's woes directly on the Triumvirate. In a letter to a confidant, Marie-Antoinette referred to the triumvirs in this way: "...cette vilaine race d'hommes, qui se disent attachés ... ne nous ont jamais fait que du mal, ... leur conduite ... nous a entraînés dans la position où nous sommes."⁵¹ This resentment and distrust manifested itself repeatedly in April and May 1791. For instance, the author of the armoire de fer letter expressed his suspicion of the Triumvirate's intentions when he warned Louis XVI to be prepared for its attempts to dominate him. In her letter of May 6, 1791 to Mercy-Argenteau,⁵² Marie-Antoinette specifically mentioned Duport and Barnave in a way that leaves no doubt about her hatred towards them.⁵³ In point of fact, the Jacobin leaders were still trying to prove their sincere attachment to royalty and to Louis XVI as late as May 10. But Laporte⁵⁴ cautioned the king to be discreet until their return could be considered sincere.⁵⁵

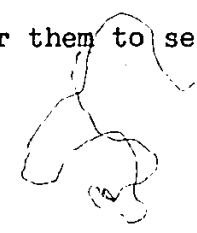
If the Triumvirate-Court negotiations did fall through, it may also be due to the Lameths' intransigence on constitutional matters. It appears that the Triumvirate opposed giving major concessions to the Court and endeavored to convince Louis XVI of the advantages and necessity of being a constitutional king. Towards the beginning of May, Laborde-Méréville, who was in the Court's confidence, advised the queen to accept

the Revolution. He explained that the Revolution "...étoit consommée..." and that "...il n'y avoit plus que ce parti à prendre,...."⁵⁶ He then urged her to bring the Triumvirate into her confidence, observing that it was not as ill-intentioned as the Court believed.⁵⁷ Louis XVI received similar advice from a non-Constitutionalist in late April.⁵⁸ This seems to demonstrate that the Triumvirate did not "capitulate" to the Court's wishes. On the contrary, it appears that Duport, Barnave and the Lameths were to a certain extent asking the Court to capitulate to the Revolution of 1789.

In support of his contention that the Triumvirate was greedy and corrupt, Michon asserts that Alexandre Lameth assumed control of the Civil List and founded Le Logographe with funds from this source in April 1791. Yet the only evidence that can be trusted shows that the editors of Le Logographe received 34,560 livres from the Civil List during the summer of 1792, fifteen months after the establishment of this paper.⁵⁹ It is a fact that Bertrand de Moleville, who served as minister of the Navy in 1791-1792, expressed his belief that Alexandre Lameth had been in charge of espionage on behalf of the Court. But he did not refer to any dates.⁶⁰ Barnave's and Alexandre Lameth's letter of September 5, 1791 to Marie-Antoinette, however, indicates that they did not receive financial assistance from the Court even during the period when they had very close ties with Marie-Antoinette.

In their letter, Barnave and Lameth informed the queen that "...nous sommes sans intérêt, car nous ne demandons, nous n'accepterions rien,...."⁶¹

The Triumvirate's attempts to reach an accord with the Court seem to have been primarily motivated by its desire to consolidate the constitutional monarchy decreed by the National Assembly. It is clear that this government could not be firmly established without the sincere cooperation of Louis XVI. It is also evident, as the Saint-Cloud incident unmistakably showed, that the Court's ambiguous conduct contributed to the perpetuation of unrest at a time when public order and respect for the law were needed to stabilize the new regime. Considering these factors, it may have made good political sense for Duport, Barnave and the Lameths to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by Montmorin's visit to Alexandre Lameth to explain the danger of supporting or appearing to support the counterrevolutionary movement to the Court. There was reason to believe that further doubts cast upon the king's intentions might discredit the institution of the monarchy, an integral part of the Constitution of 1791, and radicalize the Revolution. In any event, the Triumvirate's rapprochement with the Court need not be seen as proof that the Constitutionals had betrayed their own principles in the spring. It appears that there were very compelling "constitutional" reasons for them to seek an agreement with the king.



Louis XVI's circular to the French diplomatic representatives, published on April 23, 1791, appears as the Court's first step towards earning the trust of the National Assembly and of the French people. In this circular, the publication of which was requested by the Diplomatic Committee and the Department of Paris, the king announced to every Court in Europe that he had freely accepted the Constitution and that he fully intended to remain loyal to his constitutional oath.⁶² The National Assembly, as might be expected, greeted the circular with resounding applause. Alexandre Lameth praised it as a powerful means of keeping public opinion along constitutional lines. It was indeed a first step towards the stabilization of the constitutional monarchy.⁶³

To turn to the second aspect of Michon's allegations, the assertion that there was an agreement between the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes to effect a conservative revision of the Constitution, the only non-constitutionalist source that is trustworthy is Morris' diary. On April 20, Morris wrote that "the Jacobins [i.e., the Triumvirate] are in Treaty with the Quatre vingt neufs [i.e., the Fayettistes] for an Alliance. The Object is to prevent a decree rendering the present Members ineligible for the succeeding Assembly."⁶⁴ This passage does not establish that an alliance was concluded. It simply reveals that the two factions wanted one and that their goal was to block the passage of the



non-reeligibility decree. On April 22, Morris suggested that the alliance did not exist when he referred to the "intended Coalition between the Quatre vingt neufs and the Jacobins."⁶⁵ A note dated April 24 and addressed to Louis XVI confirms this view. The anonymous author advised the king to call for the union of the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes.⁶⁶

The memoirs of Lafayette and Charles Lameth support the argument that no coalition was formed during this period. In his memoirs, Lafayette claims that Alexandre Lameth and Emmery⁶⁷ met sometime between May 16 and June 20 to discuss the repeal of the non-reeligibility decree and the Four years law. Lafayette, however, distrusted the Triumvirate and asked for proof at the tribune.⁶⁸ If he distrusted it after May 16, it is unlikely that he trusted it enough before that date to form a coalition. Indeed Lafayette asserts in his memoirs that no alliance existed during the spring.⁶⁹ For his part, Theodore Lameth contends that a few days before June 20, Lafayette came to the Military Committee to propose a rapprochement with the Triumvirate. Alexandre Lameth, who was a member of the Military Committee, favored this idea; but he informed Lafayette that he had to consult his friends (no doubt Duport and Barnave) before making any definite decision.⁷⁰ Lameth and Lafayette subsequently arranged to have a meeting (to discuss the possibility of a rapprochement) at a later date, but the meeting had not yet taken place on June 20.⁷¹

Georges Michon produces no evidence to substantiate his assertion that the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes agreed in May 1791 to make conservative modifications in the Constitution. It is a fact that at the end of May, the most prominent followers of Lafayette and the Triumvirate, as members of the Constitutional Committee and the Revision Committee respectively, were ordered by the National Assembly to start their work on the organization and the "revision" of the constitutional decrees.⁷² However, if any reactionary proposals had been put forward, Buzot and Pétion, who were members of the Revision Committee and whose allegiance belonged to the extreme Left, certainly would have denounced them publicly. But such specific denunciations were never made.⁷³ Michon's contention about the existence of a Triumvirate-Lafayette alliance to modify the Constitution therefore seems highly speculative.

The evidence clearly indicates that the Constitutionalist were determined to revoke both the non-reeligibility decree and the Four years law. Basing his argument on Robespierre's speech of May 16, 1791 in the National Assembly, Michon supports the view that the Constitutionalist's opposition to this legislation was spurred by their unquenchable ambition for power, money and prestige.⁷⁴ However, as a vociferous opponent of the Constitutionalist, Robespierre can hardly be considered an unprejudiced writer, and more objective corroboration of his allegations is lacking. An explanation that appears to be

more in line with the Constitutionalists' political ideals and goals and with the particular circumstances that existed in the spring is that the Constitutionalists viewed reeligibility and the freedom to accept ministerial portfolios as the most practical means of ensuring the consolidation of the Constitution. On May 16, the day on which the vote on the eligibility of legislative deputies took place, Thouret⁷⁵ requested that his colleagues carefully weigh the consequences of their decision before casting their votes: "Cette question," he pointed out, "intéresse les principes constitutionnels, et aura une influence bonne ou nuisible au succès du gouvernement."⁷⁶ In Introduction à la Révolution française, Barnave emphatically argued that the greatest error committed by the Constituent Assembly was to have passed the non-reeligibility decree and the Four years law. In his estimation, "...la présence d'une partie des députés constituants dans la législature était absolument nécessaire pour mettre en mouvement et soutenir la constitution, et aurait certainement produit cet effet ... le comble de l'absurdité était certainement de prononcer la double exclusion [i.e., the non-reeligibility decree and the Four years law],...."⁷⁷ Barnave also claimed that the Constitutionalists' defeats on this legislation were engineered by the Right and the extreme Left.⁷⁸ The Marquis of Ferrières, who was a prominent deputy of the Right at the time, later confirmed Barnave's assertion. The Right and the extreme Left, he stressed, viewed non-reeligibility

and the Four years law as the only way to prevent the consolidation of the Constitution: "...ils [i.e., the Right and the extreme Left] voyaient la constitution s'affermir si la réélection avait lieu: ils redoutaient les talens et la popularité des constitutionnels,..." who certainly would have been elected to the Legislative Assembly.⁷⁹ Prominent historians like Madame de Staël, M. A. Mignet, Albert Sorel, E. D. Bradby and Jean-Jacques Chevallier argue that the Constitutionalists' failure to repeal the non-reeligibility decree set the stage for the overthrow of the constitutional monarchy.⁸⁰ Aulard described the non-reeligibility decree as "fatal" to the Constitutionalists' cause; and he considered the arguments used by those who supported this law as "sophistic."⁸¹ At any rate, the Right's opposition to the reeligibility of "constituent" deputies is in itself a potent index of the absence at that time of any "alliance" between the Constitutionalists and the Court.

Again, Michon argues that the growing strength of the democratic movement during the spring induced the Constitutionalists, who were the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie, to enact the socially and politically repressive legislation of May 18 and June 14. Since the Constituent Assembly established the régime censitaire, which in effect reserved the most important positions in the government to the bourgeoisie,⁸² there may well be some foundation to Georges Michon's argument. However, in introducing this legislation, particularly the

decree of June 14, the Constitutionalist do not appear to have intentionally discriminated against either the democrats or the workers or to have compromised their own constitutional principles.

It was Le Chapelier,⁸³ speaking on behalf of the Constitutional Committee, who introduced the laws of May 18 and June 14. On May 9, he proposed that the right of petition be restricted to individuals who were active citizens and that the right of affiche belong exclusively to the administrative bodies.⁸⁴ These proposals, however, did not meet with the full approval of the national deputies; two of the articles were altered. Firstly, it was decided that the right of petition was to belong to all citizens, irrespective of active or passive status, but this right could not be delegated: collective petitions were forbidden. Secondly, the right of affiche was not limited to administrative bodies. A special place was set aside where all laws and proclamations were to be posted. Individuals, societies and sections were forbidden to post deliberations and arrêtés.⁸⁵ After several unsuccessful attempts by the Municipality of Paris to dissolve unions,⁸⁶ the National Assembly enacted the Loi Chapelier on June 14. Basically, this law banned all associations, unions, strikes and picketing.⁸⁷

The Constitutionalist apparently had good reasons for introducing these laws. During the spring of 1791, the activities of the democratic societies and clubs of Paris were making

effective government increasingly impossible. By 1791, these clubs, the most notable of which were the Jacobin Club of Paris, the Cordeliers Club, the Friends of Truth and the Fraternal Society of Two Sexes, had become deliberating bodies which debated and enacted arrêtés on all matters, even those falling under the jurisdiction of the municipal, departmental and national governments.⁸⁸ Their arrêtés, which were frequently sent to clubs throughout France, were promulgated by sound of trumpet or beat of drum. They were in effect hardly distinguishable (except in content) from the arrêtés posted by elected officials.⁸⁹ The Cordeliers Club posted such an arrêté on April 17; and it was sent to all the patriotic societies and departments of France.⁹⁰ It is important to note as well that the clubs were not alone in exceeding their constitutional authority. A few of the sectional committees of the city of Paris, manned by the leaders of these clubs, also enacted arrêtés on matters that did not fall under their jurisdiction.

The arrêtés of the democratic societies and the sections not only competed with those passed by elected officials, they frequently contradicted them as well. Two such arrêtés were written in response to the Saint-Cloud incident. As might be expected, the municipal and departmental governments of Paris condemned the insubordination of the national guardsmen at the Royal Palace on April 18. The grenadiers of the Oratoire, who had ignored the commands of Bailly and Lafayette, were

consequently disbanded, and the entire National Guard was obliged to renew its oath to obey the orders of its officers. On April 19, the Théâtre-Français section of Paris issued an arrêté in which it praised the national guardsmen for having disobeyed Bailly and Lafayette on the day before.⁹¹ On April 24, the Cordeliers Club published its "arrêté ... sur le serment individuel d'obéissance aveugle à M. de La Fayette." On its own authority, the Cordeliers Club declared the National Guard's oath to be illegal and informed the national guardsmen who had taken the oath that their officers had duped them into committing "...un véritable délit de lèse-nation."⁹²

The Cordeliers Club and the fraternal societies also took an active interest in the affairs of the carpenters, masons, shoe-smiths and printers of Paris who were on strike during the spring. It was in fact on their advice and with their guidance that these workers formed associations which, like the clubs that influenced them, deliberated and passed arrêtés.⁹³ In this way, they fixed the minimum wage (some say arbitrarily)⁹⁴ and forced all workers, union and non-union, to comply with it. Union representatives were sent to factories where, through the use of persuasion or, if need be, violence, they forced workers off their jobs and imposed penalties on those who did not comply with their rulings.⁹⁵ According to Albert Mathiez, the fraternal societies, which established a central committee under the leadership of Robert⁹⁶

in May 1791, "...ne se proposait rien moins que de grouper et de coordonner, de diriger aussi le mouvement ouvrier."⁹⁷

Although it would be a mistake to exaggerate the extent of the power wielded by the democratic societies during the spring, it is nevertheless evident that their extralegal activities fostered unrest in Paris. The Constitutionnalists never challenged the club-members' right to debate; freedom of opinion and of discussion were basic tenets of the Constitution of 1791. They were however understandably ready to censure them for deliberating and posting arrêtés, functions reserved to duly elected officials. To the Constitutionnalists, the Revolution was over. All private actions therefore had to be subordinated to those of the public bodies elected by the people. All citizens, of course, were allowed to sign and present petitions; but these petitions now had to assume their proper place in the new regime. If the Revolution was to be consolidated, the public authorities had to execute the law without competition from non-elected bodies. Le Chapelier made this very clear to his colleagues in the Assembly on June 14: "Nous ne voulons pas que des Sociétés qui n'ont aucun caractère politique prennent la place de l'autorité publique et parviennent à rivaliser les pouvoirs délégués par le peuple."⁹⁸

Ideological as well as practical considerations were also involved in this situation. Most of the Constituent Assembly's deputies feared that further tacit sanction of

collective petitions and of the existence of unions would inevitably lead to the reintroduction of corporations into the State. The Jacobin Club of Paris, with its numerous affiliated societies in the departments, was already showing signs of becoming a "corporate" body whose authority rivalled that of the government. The Revolution of 1789, however, had been directed against the "corporate" privileges of the nobility and the clergy; and a fundamental constitutional principle was that "...il n'y a plus de corporation dans l'Etat, il n'y a que l'intérêt particulier de chaque individu, et l'intérêt général" as represented by elected governmental authorities.⁹⁹ Historians who argue that in adopting the decree of June 14 the bourgeoisie introduced socially repressive and reactionary legislation overlook this factor, apparently forgetting that the destruction of all corporate bodies, the substitution of an individualistic society for one based on privileged groups and associations, was one of the primary purposes of the Revolution. The government was to be the only "corporate" entity in France, but, as an elected body, it was to represent the interests of the French people. They apparently forget, too, that the Loi Chapelier evoked little protest from the democrats. In point of fact, Prudhomme and Loustalot, whose Révolutions de Paris was one of the most radical democratic newspapers of the period, condemned workers' unions and strikes which threatened to introduce corporations into the State again.¹⁰⁰ Even the Convention

of 1793-1795, which instituted the first democratic Republic in the history of France, continued to support the Loi Chapelier.¹⁰¹

In conclusion, therefore, there appear to be good reasons to suggest that historians have been excessively hostile to the Constitutionalists in so far as this period is concerned. There is apparently no firm evidence that the Triumvirate ever entered into any alliance either with the Court or with Lafayette. The Triumvirate's negotiations with the Court and with Lafayette, moreover, seem to have been started and abandoned for comprehensible and justifiable reasons. Similarly, the Constitutionalists' support of the "repressive" legislation can be seen as a necessary attempt on their part to establish lawful government in France. There appears to be no solid evidence that either the Triumvirate or the Fayettistes reversed their constitutional policies during this period. The Constitutionalists, in a word, emerge as men whose main concern was to complete the Constitution of 1791 and to make the new government work effectively.

CHAPTER II NOTES

¹The Penal Code and legislation regulating the convocation of national conventions also needed to receive the Assembly's attention. See the Réimpression de l'Ancien Moniteur: Seule histoire authentique et inaltérée de la Révolution française (Mai 1789-Novembre 1799) (31 vols.; Paris: Plon Frères, Imprimeurs-Editeurs, 1850), VIII, 633. (Hereinafter referred to as the Moniteur).

²Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 83-86.

³Moniteur, VIII, 77-78, 414-20. Legislative deputies were obliged to wait for a period of two years before presenting themselves for a third term of office. This represented a "compromise" to the Constitutionalists.

⁴Ibid., p. 231; see Sigismond Lacroix, ed., Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution, Collection de documents relatifs à l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution française, 2d. Ser. (7 vols.; Paris: L. Cerf, 1900-1909. Paris: Charles Noblet, 1900-1909; Paris: Société Française D'Editions D'Art, 1900-1909), IV, 13-14. (Hereinafter referred to as the Actes de la Commune).

⁵Baillly, Jean Sylvain, famous astronomer and scientist, member of the Academy of Sciences and of the Académie Française. He represented the city of Paris for the Third Estate, was elected mayor of Paris in July 1789 and is famous for his role in applying martial law on July 17, 1791 (the Champ de Mars massacre). Later forced to resign, he withdrew to Melun, was later recognized, arrested and then imprisoned in the Conciergerie. He was sentenced and executed in Paris on November 12, 1793. See Dictionnaire historique et biographique de la Révolution et de l'Empire (2 vols.; 1889), I, 86-87. (Hereinafter referred to as Dict. historique).

⁶Lafayette (Marie-Joseph-Paul-Roche-Yves-Gilbert Du Motier, Marquis of); Lafayette was born in 1757. After learning of the American Declaration of Independence (1776), he made his way to the American colonies where he fought with valor with the United States forces. In 1789, he was elected as a deputy of the nobility from the sénéchaussée of Riom to the Estates General. Imbued with American principles, he joined the Third Estate and sat on the center-Left in the Constituent Assembly. He was selected Commandant-General of the National Guard of Paris after the taking of the Bastille; and he remained in this position until September 1791. He commanded the troops which fired upon the petitioners assembled at the Champ de Mars on July 17, 1791. In the spring of 1792, he took command of one of the four armies defending France's northern border during the war with Austria. After the fall of the monarchy in August 1792, Lafayette left France; but he was arrested and then imprisoned by

the Austrians. Released in 1795, he moved to Utrecht and returned to France after 18 Brumaire. He died in Paris in 1834. See Dict. historique, II, 276-81.

⁷Lafayette resigned in protest of the guardsmens' disobedience. He agreed to return as General-Commandant, but only on the condition that the insubordinate guardsmen be dismissed and the National Guard be obliged to take an oath to obey the commands of its officers.

⁸Moniteur, VIII, 118, 126; Lacroix, Actes de la Commune, III, 475, 479-80, 574, 622-23, 712; P. J. B. Buchez and P. C. Roux, Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française ou journal des assemblées nationales depuis 1789 jusqu'en 1815 (43 vols.; Paris: Paulin, Libraire, 1834), IX, 271. (Hereinafter referred to as Histoire parlementaire).

⁹Moniteur, VIII, 168.

¹⁰Ibid.; see the Cordeliers Club's arrêté on this subject in Lacroix, op.cit., III, 712.

¹¹Moniteur, VIII, 170, 186.

¹²Lacroix, op.cit., pp. 628-29, 715; the king advised the Department of Paris to deny what he claimed was the false accusation that relays had been set up to facilitate his flight to Compiègne, see the Moniteur, VIII, 201.

¹³Michon, Essai sur l'histoire du Parti feuillant: Andrien Duport: Correspondance secrète de Barnave en 1792. (Hereinafter referred to as Parti feuillant).

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 200-01.

¹⁵Duport (Andrien-Jean-François); Duport was born in Paris in 1759. A conseiller of the parlement of Paris when the Revolution broke out, he was elected by the nobility of the city of Paris to sit in the Estates General. He sat on the Left in the Constituent Assembly. Along with Joseph Barnave and Alexandre Lameth, Duport was a member of the Triumvirat. He was president of the tribunal of the Seine after the Constituent Assembly's closure, but abandoned this post after August 10, 1792. He was arrested at Melun but managed to escape. He died in Appenzel, Switzerland of a stomach ailment in August of 1798. See Dict. historique, I, 711.

¹⁶Barnave (Antoine-Joseph-Marie-Pierre); Barnave was born in 1761. As an avocat in the parlement of Grenoble, he was elected by the province of Dauphiné to the Third Estate in 1789. After Louis XVI's arrest at Varennes in June 1791, Barnave, Pétion and Latour-Maubourg accompanied the Royal Family back to Paris. On July 15, Barnave defended the king's inviolability with a great

amount of conviction and talent. After the discovery of the armoire de fer, which contained papers implicating Barnave in secret ties with the Court, he was arrested, imprisoned and then sent to Paris. He appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal and was subsequently condemned to die. He was executed on November 18, 1793. See Dict. historique, I, 105-06.

¹⁷Lameth (Alexandre-Théodore-Victor, Baron of); Alexandre was born in Paris in 1760. He fought in the American war of independence under the command of General Rochambeau. Upon his return to France, he was promoted to the rank of colonel. He was elected as a deputy by the nobility of the bailliage of Péronne to the Estates General, and was one of the first nobles to unite with the Third Estate. He sat on the Left in the Constituent Assembly. In 1792, he was given command of the Northern army during the war against Austria. He fled with Lafayette after the fall of the monarchy; and he, too, was imprisoned for three years. He moved to London in 1795 and established close ties with Fox and Gray of the Whig Party. He was forced to leave England by Pitt; he later joined his brother, Charles, in Hamburg. He became a Préfet under the Consulate, was elected as a deputy in 1820 and 1827. He died in Paris in 1829. See Dict. historique, II, 309-10.

¹⁸Michon, Parti feuillant, p. 181.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 186-87, 207-08, 217, 220.

²⁰Ibid., p. 184.

²¹Lameth (Charles-Malo-François, Count of); Charles was born in Paris in 1757. Like his younger brother, Alexandre (see note 17), he participated in the American war of independence and was wounded at Yorktown. He was also promoted to the rank of colonel after this war. He served as the Count of Artois' personal attendant. In 1789, he was elected by the nobility of the province of Artois to the Estates General. After August 10, 1792, he was arrested at Rouen, but was able to escape. With Alexandre and the Duke of Aiguillon, he opened a successful business in Hamburg. He returned to France after 18 Brumaire, replaced Alexandre as deputy in 1829 and was reelected in 1830. He supported the July Monarchy; and he died in Pontoise (Seine-et-Oise) in 1832. See Dict. historique, II, 308-09.

²²Laborde-Méréville (François-Louis-Jean-Joseph de); Laborde was guardian of the royal treasures. Born in Paris in 1761, he was elected to the Third Estate by the bailliage of Etampes on March 15, 1789. He sat on the Left in the Constituent Assembly, and stayed out of politics after the end of its session in 1791. He escaped arrest by the Revolutionary Tribunal, emigrated to London, England, where he spent the rest of his life. He died in 1802. See Dict. historique, II, 262.

²³Michon, Parti feuillant, pp. 187-88, 191. The Civil List consisted of money allocated by the legislature to the king for the maintenance of the Court. The amount equalled one and a half million sterling annually (sixty million French francs, according to the 1791 rate).

²⁴Ibid., p. 186.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 192, 223.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 198, 201, 218, 220, 224.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 184, 198, 207-08.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 200-03.

²⁹Ibid., p. 201.

³⁰Bouillé (François-Claude-Amour, Marquis of); Bouillé was maréchal de camp and lieutenant general; he took part in the king's flight from Paris. After Louis XVI's return to Paris, he sent a letter to the National Assembly in which he placed all the responsibility for the flight on his own shoulders. He was a relative of Lafayette. See Dictionnaire de la Révolution française: Institutions, Hommes & Faits, 1893, p. 87. (Hereinafter referred to as Dict. de la Révolution).

³¹Montlosier (François-Dominique Regnaud, Count of); as a member of the Right in the Constituent Assembly, Montlosier was an ardent defender of the privileges and authority of the monarchy. See Dict. historique, II, 578.

³²Gouverneur Morris was an American diplomat sent to France to reach an agreement with the French about war reparations incurred during the American war of independence. Morris had close ties with Montmorin.

³³Montmorin-Saint-Herem (Armand-Marc, Count of); Montmorin was minister of Foreign Affairs between February 1787 and November 1791. He was born in Paris in 1745 and massacred at the Abbaye in September of 1792. See Dict. historique, II, 578.

³⁴Michon, op.cit., p. 183; Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 38; Chevallier, Barnave ou les deux faces de la Révolution: 1761-1793, p. 222. (Hereinafter referred to as Barnave).

³⁵As quoted in Michon, op.cit., p. 183.

³⁶Terrier de Monciel (sometimes spelled "Montciel") (Antoine-Réné-Marie, Marquis of); Monciel was minister of the Interior between June 18, 1792 and July 21, 1792. Born in Dôle in 1757,

he died in Samsales, Switzerland in 1830. See Dict. historique, II, 777.

³⁷Brémond: probably Jean-Baptiste Brémond of Provence, author of several pamphlets, written chiefly on finance. He was a writer for Le Logographe; he became a clerk under Monciel when the latter became minister of the Interior in June 1792. See Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 41.

³⁸Beatrix Cory Davenport, ed., A Diary of the French Revolution by Gouverneur Morris: 1752-1816: Minister to France during the Terror (2 vols.; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1972), II, 172-74. (Hereinafter referred to as Diary).

³⁹Ibid., p. 181.

⁴⁰Reynaud de Montlosier, Mémoires sur les assemblées parlementaires de la Révolution, ed. by Mathurin François Adolphe de Lescure, Bibliothèque des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France pendant le 18^e siècle (2 tomes; Paris: Librairie Firmin-Didot Et Cie., 1880-81), I, 141-42, 186. (Hereinafter referred to as Mémoires sur les assemblées parlementaires).

⁴¹Ibid., p. 170.

⁴²F. C. A. Bouillé, Mémoires du Marquis de Bouillé, ed. by Berville and Barrière, Collection des mémoires relatifs à la Révolution française (Paris: Baudouin Frères, Imprimeurs-Libraires, 1821), pp. 194-95. Bouillé does not specify what this "arrangement" was. He also gives no indication about what the Constitution's shortcomings were.

⁴³Ibid., p. 191.

⁴⁴Montlosier, Mémoires sur les assemblées parlementaires, I, 170.

⁴⁵Bouillé's memoirs were published thirty years after the spring of 1791; Montlosier's memoirs appeared thirty-nine years after it.

⁴⁶F. A. Aulard, La Société des Jacobins: Recueil de documents pour l'histoire du club des Jacobins de Paris, Collection de documents relatifs à l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution française (6 tomes; Paris: Librairie Jouaust, 1889-1897. Paris: Librairie Noblet, 1889-1897; Paris: Maison Quantin, 1889-1897), II, 158. (Hereinafter referred to as Société des Jacobins).

⁴⁷As quoted in Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 5.

⁴⁸Duquesnoy (Andrien); an avocat from Nancy, he was elected to the Third Estate by the bailliage of Bar-le-Duc. With Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, he was an editor of the Ami des Patriotes

where he defended the constitutional monarchy with talent. After the Constituent Assembly's session ended, he was elected mayor of Nancy. His name was found in the armoires de fer on a list of persons paid and employed by the Court. As a result, he was arrested, but was set free after 9 Thermidor. He committed suicide in 1808. See Dict. de la Révolution, p. 211.

⁴⁹Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 39, 43.

⁵⁰Alma Soderhjelm, ed., Marie-Antoinette et Barnave: Correspondance secrète (juillet 1791-janvier 1792), p. 69. (Hereinafter referred to as Correspondance secrète).

⁵¹Baron R. M. de Klinckowstrom, ed., Le comte de Fersen et la Cour de France: Extrait des papiers du grand maréchal de Suède: comte Jean Axel de Fersen (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot Et Cie., 1887), I, Marie-Antoinette's letter of September 6, 1791 to Fersen, p. 193; see also Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution française, VII, 103.

⁵²Mercy d'Argenteau, Count of; Mercy was Austria's ambassador to France. He showed a genuine devotion to Louis XVI and to royalty. Implicated by d'Estaing's letter in a plot to remove the king to Metz and designated as the director of the Austrian Committee, Mercy left France for the Brabant. He died in London in 1794. See Dict. de la Révolution, p. 399.

⁵³Count Paul Vogt D'Hunolstein, ed., Correspondance inédite de Marie Antoinette (2d. ed.; Paris: E. Dentu, Libraire-Éditeur, 1864), p. 196.

⁵⁴Laporte, Arnauld de; born in Versailles in 1737, Laporte declared himself against the Revolution from the outset and exiled himself to Spain. Recalled to France by Louis XVI, he was appointed intendant of the Civil List (with the titles of Secretary of State and Minister of the king's household). Brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal in August 1792, he was condemned to death and executed on August 23, 1792. See Dict. de la Révolution, p. 399.

⁵⁵Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860: Recueil complet des débats législatifs et politiques des chambres françaises, ed. by J. Mavidal and E. Laurent and continued by the Institut d'histoire de la Révolution française of the Université de Paris, 1st Ser. (82 vols.; Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1868-1913), LV, Laporte's letter of May 10, 1791 to Louis XVI, p. 652. (Hereinafter referred to as Archives parlementaires).

⁵⁶D'Hunolstein, ed., Correspondance inédite de Marie Antoinette, p. 196.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Archives parlementaires, LIV, 537-38. The letter is dated April 26, 1791 and is written in the king's handwriting.

⁵⁹Michon, Parti feuillant, p. 104.

⁶⁰Antoine-François de Bertrand-Moleville, Mémoires particuliers pour servir à l'histoire de la fin du règne de Louis XVI (2 tomes; Paris: L. G. Michaud: Imprimeur Du Roi, 1816), I, 347. Moleville's reference to Alexandre Lameth appears in the souvenirs connected with the events of March 1792.

⁶¹Soderhjelm, ed., Correspondance secrète, p. 98.

⁶²Moniteur, VIII, 212-14.

⁶³Ibid., p. 214. There is a controversy about who wrote the circular. Some historians claim that Pellenc, Mirabeau's associate, wrote it. Others argue that Barnave wrote it. There is no way of reaching a definite conclusion on this issue; but the ideas expressed in the circular could not represent a better exposition of the Triumvirate's political ideals.

⁶⁴Davenport, ed., Diary, II, 166-67.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 167.

⁶⁶Archives parlementaires, LIV, 537-38.

⁶⁷Emmery (Jean-Marie-Joseph); born in 1754, Emmery was a merchant, legislator and colonel in the National Guard of Dunkerque; he had close ties with Lafayette and sat in the first legislature established by the Constitution of 1791. He died in 1825. See Dict. historique, I, 740.

⁶⁸Michon, op.cit., p. 198.

⁶⁹Ernest Lebègue, La vie et l'oeuvre d'un Constituant: Thouret: 1746-1794 (Paris: Félix Alcan, Editeur, 1910), p. 248.

⁷⁰Michon, op.cit., p. 224.

⁷¹Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 95; Chevallier, Barnave, p. 253.

⁷²Moniteur, VIII, 633.

⁷³The members of the Constitutional Committee were Thouret, Sieyès, Target, Talleyrand, Desmeuniers, Rabaut Saint-Etienne and Le Chapelier. The members of the Revision Committee were Clermont-Tonnerre, Barnave, Alexandre Lameth, Duport, Buzot, Pétion and Beaumez (also spelled "Beaumetz").

⁷⁴Michon, Parti feuillant, pp. 207-08.

⁷⁵Thouret (Jacques Guillaume); as a deputy in the Constituent Assembly representing the city of Rouen, Thouret was an active member in the Constitutional Committee. He was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, sentenced to die and beheaded in 1794. See Dict. de la Révolution, p. 823.

⁷⁶Moniteur, VIII, 411.

⁷⁷Joseph Barnave, Oeuvres de Barnave, ed. by Béranger de la Drôme (4 vols.; Paris: Challamel Et Compagnie Editeurs, 1843), I, 114, 151-52, 156-57, and II, 9.

⁷⁸Ibid., I, 154-55.

⁷⁹Marquis of Ferrières, Mémoires du Marquis de Ferrières, ed. by Berville and Barrière, Collection des mémoires relatifs à la Révolution française (3 tomes; Paris: Baudouin Frères, Imprimeurs-Libraires, 1821), II, 288-89.

⁸⁰Madame de Staël, Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française, XII, 425-26; Mignet, Histoire de la Révolution française, I, 191-92, 195, 198; Sorel, La chute de la royauté, pp. 267-69; Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 197-204; Chevallier, Barnave, p. 340.

⁸¹Aulard, Les orateurs de la Révolution: L'Assemblée Constituante, p. 391.

⁸²Régime censitaire is the name given to the government set up by the Constitutionalists. Under this regime, citizens were divided into two groups: active and passive citizens. Both groups enjoyed full civil rights, but only the active citizens were given political rights (i.e., the right to vote). To become an active citizen, it was necessary to pay the equivalent of three days of wages in direct taxes a year. If this amount was paid, the citizen could vote for members of the primary assemblies, which in turn voted for the deputies of the legislature. To be a member of the primary assemblies, local administrations or councils, ten days of wages had to be paid. A candidate for the legislature had to pay the equivalent of a marc d'argent (approximately fifty-four days of wages per year). Although the franchise was restricted, this was the most liberal regime in the world at that time.

⁸³Le Chapelier (Isaac-Réné-Gui); born in Rennes in 1754, Le Chapelier was one of the most influential deputies in the Constituent Assembly. After the Assembly's session ended, he went to England. He returned to Paris in 1794, was arrested, condemned to die and executed in April 1794. See Dict. de la Révolution, p. 410.

⁸⁴Moniteur, VIII, 351-53.

⁸⁵Lacroix, Actes de la Commune, IV, 13-16.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 348-55.

⁸⁷Moniteur, VIII, 661-62.

⁸⁸Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers pendant la crise de Varennes et le massacre du Champ de Mars, pp. 22-23. (Hereinafter referred to as Le club des Cordeliers).

⁸⁹Moniteur, VIII, see the article on the right of petition on pp. 51-52; see also pp. 231, 352-53.

⁹⁰Lacroix, op.cit., III, 712-13.

⁹¹Moniteur, VIII, 201.

⁹²Lacroix, op.cit., p. 768.

⁹³See the Municipality of Paris' Avis aux ouvriers of April 26 in the Moniteur, VIII, 242, and the article on p. 239; see also Lacroix, op.cit., III, 709, and IV, 123-24, 136-39.

⁹⁴Charles Pouthas, "La Constituante et la classe ouvrière," Annales Révolutionnaires, IV (1911), p. 178.

⁹⁵See Pastoret's speech on behalf of the Directory of the Department of Paris to the National Assembly on April 26 in the Moniteur, VIII, 231; see also the article on p. 239.

⁹⁶Robert (Pierre-François-Joseph); as a deputy from Paris, Robert sat with the Mountain in the Convention. He collaborated with the Mercure national and the Révolutions de Paris. In 1789, his pamphlet entitled Le Republicanisme adopté à la France created quite a stir in Paris. An active member of the Cordeliers Club, he was secretary in the Danton ministry. See Dict. de la Révolution, p. 724.

⁹⁷Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 31; see also Pouthas, La Constituante et la classe ouvrière, p. 177.

⁹⁸Moniteur, VIII, 353.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 661.

¹⁰⁰Lacroix, op.cit., IV, 145-46.

¹⁰¹George Rudé, The Crowd in the French Revolution, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 85.

CHAPTER III

THE INVIOABILITY CRISIS

The primary constitutionalist aim during the spring of 1791 was to create a climate of opinion that would facilitate the consolidation of the Constitution. This was by no means an easy task. To be sure, the National Assembly could take its own measures to restore public order and to strengthen law enforcement in France. The decrees of May 18 and June 14,¹ designed to increase the authority of the government within the framework of the Constitution, were passed for these very reasons. But the Constitutionalists could not hope to reestablish political stability on a permanent basis until the Court's suspected ties with the counterrevolutionary movement were cleanly severed. Louis XVI's April 23 address to the French diplomatic representatives, which clearly associated the king with the Revolution,² was thus a major victory for the moderates. Although insufficient in itself to ensure the long-term stability of the government, it nevertheless set the stage for the successful establishment of the constitutional monarchy.

The moderates' cautious optimism, however, was thoroughly shattered by the Royal Family's flight from Paris on June 20, 1791, an event which opened an enormous gulf between

Louis XVI and the Revolution. On the evening of the flight, the king left a manifesto with his ministers³ which confirmed what had only been suspected earlier: that Louis XVI's oaths of loyalty to the Constitution had been insincere. This manifesto was in effect a total refutation of the circular of April 23. Whereas the king had announced in the circular that "...il comptait ... la Révolution et la Constitution parmi ses titres à la gloire," in his manifesto he denounced them for having left him with nothing more than a "...vain simulacre de la royauté."⁴ Not surprisingly, most Frenchmen looked upon the flight and the declaration of June 20 as a betrayal. A rumor spread in Paris that the flight was but the first step of a vast counterrevolutionary plot to reinstitute the hated ancien régime.⁵ Civil war, foreign invasion and anarchy seemed imminent.⁶

The National Assembly, nevertheless, responded to this crisis with great composure. From the outset, it exhibited a calm determination to defend the Constitution from enemy attack. It immediately recognized that the greatest short-term danger posed by the flight was a state of anarchy; for a disorderly and divisive France could hardly expect to defend itself effectively against what was generally assumed to be a well-organized counterrevolutionary army. The National Assembly thus dispatched representatives throughout the kingdom to preach the necessity of peace and unity in face of the counterrevolutionary menace.⁷ It alerted the frontier

towns of a possible invasion. To guarantee the army's support during this crisis, it obliged all military officers, many of whom were suspected of being sympathetic to the counterrevolutionary movement, to renew their oaths of allegiance to the government.⁸ It also authorized the creation of a 300,000 man army to be taken from volunteers in the National Guard.⁹ Finally, after ordering the drafting of a proclamation to inform the French people of the king's disappearance, the National Assembly, in an admirable display of self-assurance, returned to work on its normal agenda.¹⁰

The National Assembly's swift, energetic measures inspired confidence in the various sectors of French society. To the chagrin of at least some republican sympathizers, the Parisian populace showed that it was prepared to follow the route traced by its national representatives.¹¹ The Jacobin Club of Paris, whose influence over the swiftly expanding network of French clubs was substantial, gave its unqualified support to the government.¹² France was united in its resolution to defend the Constitution; anarchy was avoided. Meanwhile, in a further attempt to prevent an outbreak of hostilities, the National Assembly sent agents to capture the Royal Family.¹³ On June 22, the royal carriage was stopped at Varennes; the king's arrest followed shortly thereafter.

From the very beginning of the crisis, the National Assembly was reluctant to ascribe guilt to Louis XVI. Bailly

was the first to report that the king had been abducted by the enemies of the public.¹⁴ The National Assembly's proclamation to the French people, referred to above, also contained this assertion.¹⁵ When the debates concerning the fate of Louis XVI (the "inviolability" debates) began on July 13, the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes, who had joined forces on the morning of June 21 and had assumed the leadership of the National Assembly,¹⁶ finally admitted that the king had left Paris on his own volition.¹⁷ They argued, nonetheless, that only his advisors could be held accountable for the flight.¹⁸ On July 15, the National Assembly, following the recommendations of the constitutionalist-dominated committees,¹⁹ unanimously voted to uphold executive inviolability on the condition that Louis XVI accept the Constitution; his suspension was nevertheless to remain in effect until the Constitution was completed.²⁰

Louis XVI's flight severely compromised the Constitutionalists' cause. In the first place, it compelled the National Assembly to suspend the king and to secure control over the executive branch of the government,²¹ a measure which to some extent discredited the monarchy. The government, of course, remained a monarchy by law; yet there was little to distinguish it from a republic.²² In the second place, the flight considerably reduced Louis XVI's popularity. The public's apprehension about a counterrevolutionary invasion suddenly transformed itself after the Royal Family's arrest

into resentment aimed directly at the roi parjure.²³ The people of Paris appear to have favored placing the king on trial. Under the circumstances, the Constitutionalists' desire to maintain the constitutional monarchy with Louis XVI as king seemed unreasonable.

This is precisely the position adopted by historians from Michelet to Lefebvre. Because of its impracticability, they assert, the inviolability decree was unjustifiable. Louis XVI's declaration was visible proof that the principles of the monarchy and the sovereignty of the people were irreconcilable. The king's oaths to uphold the Constitution could no longer be trusted. As a consequence, there was no reason to believe that he would resign himself to his role as "constitutional" monarch.²⁴ In short, the Constitution was unworkable after June 21; the Constitutionalists' cause was for all practical purposes lost.²⁵

Behind historians' hostility towards the inviolability decree is the deterministic assumption that Louis XVI and the Revolution could no longer coexist peacefully after June 21, and that as a result the Constitution was inopérable. As a matter of fact, that is what occurred. The constitutional government, constantly obstructed by a King whose primary mission was to prove that the Constitution was unworkable, did collapse on August 10, 1792. But the question may still be raised as to whether or not the reinstatement of Louis XVI was, as historians confidently assert, an irresponsible

political decision on the part of the Constitutionalists. In other words, it may be asked if the Constitutionalists had sufficient cause to believe that they could successfully establish the constitutional monarchy with Louis XVI as king. To answer this question, the Constitutionalists' arguments in favor of inviolability, their relations with and conceptions of the Court and their domestic and foreign policies during the summer of 1791 will be examined.

During the inviolability debates, the overwhelming majority of deputies in the National Assembly favored the maintenance of the monarchy. Prominent moderate deputies like Alexandre Lameth, Dandré,²⁶ Laroche-foucauld-Liancourt,²⁷ Salles²⁸ and Goupil de Préfelne²⁹ strongly supported the king's inviolability. Constitutionalist opinion, however, is most accurately reflected in the speeches delivered between July 13 and July 15 by the spokesmen of the National Assembly's committees: Muguet de Nanthou,³⁰ Andrien Duport and Barnave.³¹ Their arguments can be divided into two major categories: the "legal" and the "circumstantial" defenses. In the "legal" defense, Nanthou, Duport and Barnave did not attempt to prove that Louis XVI was innocent of fleeing Paris and of breaking his previous oaths to uphold the Constitution. His guilt in this respect was all too apparent.³² Instead, they tried to show that any judgment of Louis XVI would constitute a serious violation of fundamental constitutional principles and that, as a consequence, the National Assembly could not place the

king on trial.

Louis XVI could not be tried, asserted the committees' spokesmen, because the principle of the separation of powers guaranteed the independence and therefore the "inviolability" of the legislative and the executive powers.³³ Countering the extreme Left's contention that the king's private actions were not safeguarded under the inviolability clause in the Constitution,³⁴ they stressed the fundamental differences between the executive and the legislative powers in a monarchical government. The deputies of the legislature were "elected" representatives who temporarily exercised the legislative power; their inviolability extended solely to matters connected with their legislative functions. The king, on the other hand, was inseparable from the monarchy. He was not an ordinary citizen but an "hereditary" power whose inviolability of necessity covered both his political and private conduct.³⁵ Whereas the removal of a deputy from the legislature would not in most cases produce a major political crisis in the government, the deposition of the king, whose hereditary rights to the throne were enshrined in the Constitution, would almost certainly lead to the destruction of the constitutional monarchy; and this would in their view give birth to a form of despotism "a hundred times" more powerful than the one that existed during the ancien régime.³⁶ From the moderates' perspective, therefore, the king's inviolability was a necessary precondition to the stability of the constitutional monarchy.

and to the maintenance of liberty.³⁷

According to the committees' spokesmen, executive inviolability did not mean that Louis XVI was free to commit crimes without fear of punishment.³⁸ If, for example, he murdered someone or illegally declared war, the National Assembly could make use of the "insanity" clause in the Constitution to bring about his dethronement.³⁹ Apart from this, however, there was only one constitutional limitation to Louis XVI's inviolability: la déchéance.⁴⁰ And the contention of Nanthou, Duport and Barnave was that this could occur only in cases specifically foreseen by the law.⁴¹ Upon examination of the constitutional decrees, it was found that only the law of March 28, 1791 referred to instances of abdication. Louis XVI's deposition would result from his failure to obey either one of two stipulations. Firstly, he was prohibited from residing more than twenty lieues⁴² from the "convened" National Assembly. Secondly, in the event that he left the country unannounced, he was obliged to return to it at the legislature's invitation.⁴³ The committees' spokesmen agreed that there was an urgent need to pass additional "abdication" laws. However, they claimed that these laws could not be applied to Louis XVI retroactively.⁴⁴ Their conclusion, therefore, was that since no existing laws had been broken during the flight and since the manifesto of June 20 did not contain a renunciation of the constitutional throne, there were no legal grounds for claiming that the king had abdicated his throne.⁴⁵

While on the one hand the committees' spokesmen stressed the "illegality" of prosecuting Louis XVI, on the other they did their utmost to minimize the importance of the oaths that were broken on June 20. In point of fact, on July 14, 1790, the king had formally sworn to employ every resource "...délégué par la loi constitutionnelle de l'Etat, à maintenir la constitution décrétée par l'assemblée nationale...."⁴⁶ Moreover, he had voluntarily pledged his wholehearted loyalty to the Constitution on February 4, 1790 and on April 19, 1791.⁴⁷ However, in the view of the committees' spokesmen, these oaths and sanctions had served only to facilitate the immediate execution of the constitutional decrees. They had not been necessary to validate them.⁴⁸ No individual, not even the king, possessed the authority to oppose the sovereign will of the nation expressed by the National Constituent Assembly.⁴⁹ Nor had the oaths and sanctions irrevocably tied Louis XVI to the Constitution. According to Nanthou and Duport, only when the king was in a position to make a thorough assessment of his role in the new government did his acceptance or rejection of the crown become definitive. In other words, Louis XVI could not "definitively" renounce the throne until after the Constitution was completed. His declaration, therefore, could not be considered as an act of voluntary abdication.⁵⁰

Extreme left-wing deputies like Pétion,⁵¹ Buzot,⁵² Vadier,⁵³ Prieur,⁵⁴ the Abbé Grégoire⁵⁵ and Robespierre launched a virulent attack against the committees' "legal"

defense of the king. Unlike the Constitutionalists, they focused most of their attention on the king's guilt.⁵⁶ Decidedly opposed to the committees' conception of executive inviolability, they argued that the king was a "traitor" whose oaths could no longer be trusted and whose crimes against liberty had to be avenged. In their view, as mouthpiece of the sovereign will, the National Assembly had the legal right to stand in judgment of Louis XVI.⁵⁷ The deputies of the extreme Left demanded, consequently, that either the national representatives already assembled or an ad hoc convention elected by the primary assemblies⁵⁸ dethrone the king.⁵⁹

The Constitutionalists apparently questioned the National Assembly's right to sit in judgment of the king not because they believed that it did not ultimately possess the authority to do so but because they were convinced that such an arbitrary usage of its "constituent" power could not be ideologically justified. One of the primary purposes of the Revolution, of course, had been to replace "arbitrary" government by the rule of law. This perhaps partially explains why the Constitutionalists asked the Assembly to make its decision regarding Louis XVI's fate according to the principles and laws set forth in the Constitution. According to constitutional principles and laws, they argued, the king could not be prosecuted.

Most deputies in the National Assembly were at least

as much concerned about the political consequences a trial might have as about strictly legal matters. In a speech delivered to the National Assembly on July 13, Alexandre Lameth stressed that in reaching a decision on Louis XVI's fate, it was important to take practical considerations into account because "...vous [i.e., the national representatives] ne pouvez séparer votre décision [on inviolability] des suites infaillibles qu'elle entraînerait."⁶⁰ The Constitutionalist placed a great deal of emphasis on the advantages and disadvantages of upholding inviolability;⁶¹ their "circumstantial" defense seems to have had a considerable impact on the Assembly.⁶²

Very little is known about what actually took place in the committees during this period. It is nonetheless clear that apart from idealistic considerations, the committee members' decision to save the king was affected by the number and the nature of the options opened to them. Under the circumstances, there were four separate courses of action that might be pursued. Firstly, a direct replacement for Louis XVI could be found. Secondly, the throne could be given to the Dauphin, with a Regent or an executive council exercising the executive power until he reached the age of majority. Thirdly, a republic could be proclaimed. Fourthly, Louis XVI could be reinstated.

The committees were unable to find any suitable candidates to replace Louis XVI either as king or as Regent.

The Count of Artois⁶³ and the Count of Provence,⁶⁴ Louis'

youngest and eldest brothers respectively, were hardly ideal replacements. The former had been and was still actively supporting the counterrevolutionary movement and the latter had secretly left France on June 21, the day of the flight. The intrigues connected with the followers of the Duke of Orléans⁶⁵ destroyed his chances of obtaining the committees' recognition.⁶⁶ Since few, if any, deputies seriously contemplated establishing a republic, only two options were left to consider. Either the Dauphin governed with the guidance of an executive council⁶⁷ or Louis XVI stayed on the throne.

The Constitutionnalists vigorously combatted the idea of substituting an executive council for the king. From their standpoint, the survival of the Constitution was closely linked to the fate of Louis XVI. The inviolability debate was more than a simple question of a man's guilt, it was, as Alexandre Lameth said, "...une question de constitution, du premier ordre."⁶⁸ It was a question which "...tient à la racine de la Constitution même."⁶⁹ To the Constitutionnalists, transferring the executive power from the king to an executive council was to establish a republic in all but the law.⁷⁰ The maintenance of the constitutional monarchy thus made the passage of the inviolability decree imperative. On July 14, Duport placed the central issue before his fellow deputies in the Assembly: "il ne s'agit ... que de choisir entre une République et une Monarchie."⁷¹

In his monograph entitled Histoire du Parti feuillant,

Georges Michon, closely following the extreme Left's arguments against inviolability, disputes the committees' assertion that the primary issue during this crisis was that of the monarchy versus the republic. In his estimation, the Constitutionalists deliberately brought the "constitutional" question into their defense in order to frighten the "bourgeois" National Assembly into reinstating Louis XVI.⁷² This, however, would seem to be pure speculation. On the other hand, there is evidence which demonstrates that the link between the executive council and the republic was not a constitutionalist fabrication. In her letter of July 1, 1791 to Bançal des Issarts,⁷³ Madame Roland,⁷⁴ an avid adherent of the democratic Republic, claimed that a transfer of power from the king to an executive council would transform France into a republic.⁷⁵ Brissot⁷⁶ also reached this conclusion in his democratic newspaper, Le Patriote français.⁷⁷

Louis Blanc and Jean Jaurès agree with the Constitutionalists that the central question during the inviolability debates was whether to establish the constitutional monarchy or the republic.⁷⁸ They also harshly criticize the deputies of the extreme Left for having refused to address themselves to this question.⁷⁹ As a matter of fact, these deputies came out very strongly in favor of the executive council; but there is no evidence that they ever publicly discussed the repercussions of such a move. This exasperated the Constitutionalists. On July 14, Larochevoucauld-Liancourt censured the deputies of the extreme

Left for attempting to deceive the National Assembly: "Que ceux qui veulent la république attaquent l'inviolabilité, cela répond à leur système, mais du moins qu'ils le reconnaissent de bonne foi."⁸⁰

The primary goal of the Constitutionalist in July 1791, as in the preceding spring, was to consolidate the constitutional monarchy. When the Triumvirate and the followers of Lafayette realized that the deposition of Louis XVI would make the installation of a lasting constitutional monarchy almost impossible, they not surprisingly chose to uphold executive inviolability. To them, it was in the national interest to establish a government in which "...le roi gouvernera avec l'assentiment et sous la surveillance raisonnable et éclairée des représentants du peuple...."⁸¹ Indeed the constitutional monarchy conformed to the moral tradition of France and enjoyed extensive popular support. France was still very monarchical after the king's flight.⁸² According to Alphonse Aulard, who examined the letters received by the National Assembly at that time, the French people by and large approved of the inviolability decree.⁸³

The National Assembly's support of the constitutional monarchy stemmed from its conviction that this was the only form of government which could ensure the liberty, stability and unity of the French Empire.⁸⁴ In their circumstantial defense, the committees' spokesmen argued that the republic, unlike the constitutional monarchy, could not be "free" and

united at the same time. A free republic, they asserted, could exist only as a federation.⁸⁵ The large population and territory of France demanded a central power that belonged to the mass, that attracted and subordinated the departments to its authority.⁸⁶ The Constitutionalist believed that the monarchy, which had existed for nearly fourteen hundred years, was the only unifying force in France. They warned that if an attempt was made to establish a united republic, "...la plus grande tyrannie"⁸⁷ would be the final result. A strong orator or general would eventually gain the support of the armed forces and would impose his despotic rule on the country.⁸⁸ Despite its theoretical desirability, contended the committees' spokesmen, the republic was impracticable.

Constitutionalist opinion regarding the implementation of the republic was partially set forth in an article which appeared in Le Logographe on April 27, 1791:

On croit qu'il existe dans une forme de gouvernement appelé République une somme plus forte de liberté. Laissant de côté le peu de convenance de ce gouvernement à nos mœurs, à notre étendu, à nos idées, à notre position en Europe, oublions les incalculables horreurs par lesquelles il nous faudrait nécessairement passer pour arriver à établir ce gouvernement, il paraît toujours que ceux qui veulent de bonne foi introduire cette idée sont la dupe des mots;....⁸⁹

It was not difficult for Nanthou, Duport and Barnave to substantiate their contention that the republic could not be peacefully established in France. Everyone was aware of the danger that Louis XVI's deposition would cause a civil war to erupt.⁹⁰ The committees' spokesmen also gave warning that

if this occurred, foreign (Austrian and/or Prussian) intervention on behalf of the king would in all likelihood ensue. In their view, the powerful monarchies which surrounded France could not be expected to allow Louis XVI's dethronement to pass without incident because the destruction of the monarchy in France would threaten their own governments.⁹¹

There seems to be foundation to the Constitutionals' argument that the Constitution of 1791 could not be consolidated unless Louis XVI remained on the throne. Clearly, the National Assembly, which primarily represented the interests of the bourgeoisie, needed the king's support to establish the constitutional monarchy. But this does not mean that Louis' reinstatement was against the national interest. Unquestionably, in some respects the Constitutionals represented the interests of the French people better than their counterparts on the Right and the extreme Left. Most Frenchmen wanted a monarchical form of government even after June 21. The National Assembly's decision to preserve the monarchy thus reflected the will of the majority of Frenchmen. But the national representatives could not base their decision solely on public opinion. The political consequences of the king's deposition also had to be considered. Seen from this light, their vote in favor of executive inviolability was at the same time a vote against the despotism that they foresaw would result from the establishment of a republic. The Constitutionals were justified in fearing that Louis XVI's destitution would

result in a civil and foreign war that France was not at all prepared to face in July and August 1791. The Revolution might well have been the first victim of a war.

It appears that only a constitutional monarchy could have ensured the unity and the stability of the French Empire. This is not to suggest that the Constitutionalist sacrificed liberty for the sake of peace. Although the Constitution put the government under the control of the bourgeoisie, it did establish the most liberal regime in the world at that time. According to Marcel Reinhard, out of approximately 6.2 million adult Frenchmen, about 4.3 million (or seventy per cent) possessed the franchise. Moreover, three quarters of these "active" citizens, as they were called, were eligible to become electors and to hold offices in the municipal and departmental governments.⁹² A study of French society at that time, on the other hand, demonstrates that only the illiterate, only the very poor, were classified as "passive" citizens. Like Reinhard, Jean Jaurès argued that the National Assembly had just cause to worry that had these people been given the vote, their political incapacity would have been used by the aristocrats to serve the purposes of the counterrevolutionary movement.⁹³ As far as the qualifications needed to become a deputy of the National Assembly are concerned, between sixty and eighty thousand Frenchmen paid the obligatory marc d'argent (300 livres), an amount that was considerably lower than the 15,000 livres set for eligibility to the English House of Lords.⁹⁴

It appears that the Constitutionalist were sincere revolutionaries. They seem to have genuinely loved liberty but also to have believed that their primary responsibility as revolutionaries was to establish a government which could work. They searched for that difficult compromise that would harmonize all sectors of French society. They sought, as Barnave said, a "...rapprochement commun et paisible de tout ce qui compose la nation."⁹⁵

The Constitutionalist apparently had legitimate reasons for keeping Louis XVI on the throne. But they could not fully justify the inviolability decree unless they were reasonably certain that the king would consent to rule within constitutional bounds. After the flight, constitutionalist policy towards the Court was to all intents and purposes the same as it had been in 1789: the general assumption was that Louis XVI would sooner or later submit to the Revolution.⁹⁶ The change of circumstances resulting from the flight, however, considerably altered the nature of this policy. During the first two years of the Revolution, it had been possible for the king, profoundly ignorant of public opinion in the provinces, to believe that France (the provinces in particular) would support his attempt to dissolve the National Assembly and to restore his absolute power. It had been a common belief even among the extreme Left that the king was being misled by his advisors as to the state of France.⁹⁷ But after June 21, the Court could no longer entertain any doubts about the nation's

support of the Revolution. The Constitutionalist, in fact, took every opportunity to bring this to the king's attention. In a letter published in the Moniteur in June 1791, Château-Thierry wrote that during the Royal Family's slow journey from to Varennes to Paris, "Barnave...took care to say to the Queen that our fully equipped National Guards were not Parisians, so that she might see that all of France is in arms and that the nation is opposed to the desertion."⁹⁸

Shortly after his return to Paris, Louis XVI issued a statement to the National Assembly's commissioners, who had been sent to obtain information about the flight,⁹⁹ which proves that at least officially he had no more illusions about the state of public opinion in France: "J'ai reconnu dans mon voyage que l'opinion publique était décidée en faveur de la Constitution."¹⁰⁰

Like the extreme Left during the inviolability debates, some historians argue against reinstatement on the grounds that Louis XVI's oaths could no longer be trusted. They assert that it was naive for the Constitutionalist to believe that he would faithfully execute the Constitution (that he would not struggle against it). It appears, however, that they had every right to expect the Court to cooperate with them. Circumstances compelled the king to honor his oaths. It was politically unrealistic for him to struggle against the Revolution. If he wanted to stay on the throne, he had no choice but to accept the Constitution: either he would be

a "constitutional" king, argued the Constitution-
 alists, or he would cease to be king altogether.¹⁰¹ The Constitution-
 alists assumed, basing this on their estimation of Louis' character, that if the king accepted the Constitution, he would never again struggle against the Revolution. They were aware of his shortcomings, his vacillating character in particular; but they also respected his virtues.¹⁰² They believed that he genuinely loved the people, that he would sacrifice his personal desires for the general good. To them, he was the best prince not only in his family but in all of Europe.¹⁰³

Barnave and Alexandre Lameth had yet another reason to trust the Court. Sometime between June 30 and July 7, before the inviolability debates began, the queen, through an intermediary named Jarjayes, asked Barnave for advice on how to save the monarchy.¹⁰⁴ In her instructions to Jarjayes, which were forwarded to Barnave, she showed her willingness to come to terms with the Constitution-
 alists:

Il [i.e., Barnave] peut autant compter sur ma discrétion que sur mon caractère qui, pour le bien général, saura toujours se plier à tout ce qui sera nécessaire. On ne peut rester comme l'on est; il est certain qu'il faut faire quelque chose; mais quoi? Je l'ignore; c'est à lui [i.e., Barnave] que je m'adresse pour le savoir ... rien ne me coûtera, quant j'y verrai réellement le bien général....¹⁰⁵

Barnave and Alexandre Lameth had good cause to be optimistic about securing the future cooperation of the Court. On her own initiative, Marie-Antoinette had requested the Triumvirate's aid. Moreover, she appeared resigned to following the revolutionary path.

Barnave and Alexandre Lameth eagerly agreed to give advice to the Court.¹⁰⁶ They realized that the Constitution could not be firmly established until Louis XVI's popularity was restored ("Il faut que l'opinion et le respect public le fassent roi, comme la Constitution."),¹⁰⁷ and that this process could be accelerated if the Court willingly followed a systematic course of action reuniting it by interest with the nation. In their view, the Court's unpopularity was due less to any profound hatred of the king by the people than to the fact that Louis XVI had voluntarily identified himself with the opponents of the Revolution during the flight. The French people, in other words, despised the king only in as much as he was a counterrevolutionary. What this implied was that Louis XVI could regain public esteem if he succeeded in disassociating himself from the aristocratic counterrevolution.¹⁰⁸

In their response to the queen's request for advice, Barnave and Lameth remarked that since 1789 the king had been misled by his advisors to such an extent that his throne had almost been taken from him.¹⁰⁹ To become popular again, to earn the people's respect, the Court should effect some fundamental changes in their political and private behavior. First of all, all other advisors should be dismissed. The king's new conduct should be consistent with the universal will of the nation to have a Constitution.¹¹⁰ Secondly, the inertia of the executive power should be corrected. Not only should the Court's actions be good, they should be taken at

the proper moment. In a Revolution, they emphasized, correct timing is essential.¹¹¹ Thirdly, "...toutes les considérations personnelles doivent être renvoyée à un autre temps; les choix, les démarches, les actions personnelles doivent être soumis à cette loi."¹¹² Lastly, and most importantly, Barnave and Lameth requested that the Court follow their advice invariably.¹¹³

In order to dispel the nation's fears of war and conspiracy, the principal cause of unrest in France, anxiety originating from the activities of the émigrés and the princes outside France had to be stopped.¹¹⁴ To do this, Barnave and Lameth advised, the king should secure the return of the émigrés, of the princes and of Count Mercy-Argenteau.¹¹⁵ For her part, Marie-Antoinette should urge her brother, Leopold II, the Emperor of Austria, to declare his friendly and pacific intentions towards France. The Emperor should be convinced of the Court's sincere attachment to the Constitution; and he and the other princes of the House of Bourbon should be asked to recognize it.¹¹⁶ Finally, before the session of the Constituent Assembly ended, Louis XVI should conclude a treaty between France and Austria or Prussia.¹¹⁷

The king's executive position provided him with countless opportunities to demonstrate his devotion to the Constitution. Barnave and Lameth consequently placed a great deal of stress on Louis XVI's selection of the ministers and the members of the diplomatic corps, the Constitutional Guard and the maison civile.¹¹⁸ Since his choices would indicate his personal

intentions, it was important that the king select adherents of the Revolution. Marie-Antoinette should welcome Constitutionalists as guests at the Royal Palace. A constitutionalist governor should be appointed to supervise the education of the Dauphin.¹¹⁹ Priests who had taken the oath required by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy should be allowed to celebrate mass in the private chapels of the king and queen. Furthermore, the queen's aunts should be persuaded to accept the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.¹²⁰

Barnave and Lameth were confident that the negotiations between Louis XVI and Leopold II would end in success.¹²¹ They claimed that if their advice was carefully followed, the Court would win back its popularity in less than one year.¹²² Through his private and public actions, the king would show France and the rest of Europe that he was free to make his own decisions without compulsion or interference from the National Assembly. He would regain the nation's confidence and respect by taking steps on his own volition to spare France from the ravages of a counterrevolutionary war.¹²³ The result would be that "...aucun prince de l'Europe n'est aussi solidement assis sur son trône que le sera le roi de France, quand l'opinion fera pour lui autant que la constitution."¹²⁴ Barnave and Lameth warned, however, that if for one instant the nation could suspect that the Court had other plans or thoughts than the ones it publicly held, "l'état seroit bouleversé, le Roi perdrait sa couronne;...."¹²⁵

The correspondence between Barnave, Alexandre Lameth and Marie-Antoinette clearly demonstrates that the Triumvirate in no way attempted to take advantage of the Court. Barnave and Lameth were very frank (one might even say blunt) with the Court; but they always maintained a high degree of respect towards it. They were emphatic about the necessity of taking stringent measures to save the monarchy and to restore public order. Their letter of July 25, 1791 to Marie-Antoinette shows, however, that they gave the Court every opportunity to discontinue its relations with them. In this letter, Barnave and Lameth informed the queen that the time had come to put their advice into execution. They requested that she thoroughly reflect on this advice and decide whether or not she wanted to follow it. Their main desire was "...qu'elle ne doive rien à la contrainte ni à la surprise."¹²⁶ They explained that should she decide to break off relations with them, she would not have to fear anything resembling treason. Their dealings with her would be kept strictly confidential. But if she decided to take their advice, she was obliged to follow it invariably.¹²⁷

The letter of July 25 reveals that Barnave and Alexandre Lameth were not, as historians have long asserted, insincere in their relations with the Court; nor did they attempt to "dominate" Louis XVI in order to rule in his name. Even Marie-Antoinette, who completely detested the Constitutionals,

was compelled to acknowledge the sincerity and candor of

- Barnave and Lameth:

J'ai lieu d'être assez contente de ce côté-là, c'est-à-dire des Duport, Lameth et Barnave. J'ai dans ce moment-ci une espèce de correspondance avec les deux derniers, que personne au monde ne sait, même leurs amis. Il faut leur rendre justice: quoiqu'ils tiennent toujours à leurs opinions, je n'ai jamais vu en eux que grande franchise, de la force et une véritable envie de remettre de l'ordre et par conséquent l'autorité royale.¹²⁸

It is important to note, moreover, that apart from the contentions made by the Constitutionalists' political adversaries on the extreme Left and the Right, there is no evidence that the Triumvirate requested or ever received any money, places or other benefits from the Court during the summer of 1791.

There is evidence, however, that Barnave and Lameth had not yet received any favors from the Court in September 1791. Their letter of September 5 to Marie-Antoinette indicates that they did not intend to ask for anything in return for their advice.¹²⁹

In fact, on August 28, they had made it clear to the queen that they "...ne vouloient rien que le terme de la révolution et le bien de leur patrie...."¹³⁰

In sum, it would seem that the Constitutionalists had good reasons for supporting the inviolability decree and also for believing that they could establish a durable government with Louis XVI as king after June 20, 1791. Their decision not to prosecute the king was apparently compatible with the principles and laws enshrined in the Constitution of 1791 and in all probability spared France from the internal strife connected with civil war and foreign invasion. Perhaps the

principal consideration behind the Constitutionalists' vote in favor of inviolability, however, was their long-standing desire to consolidate the constitutional monarchy, to bring the French Revolution to a peaceful conclusion after three years of continued unrest. The Constitutionalists also seem to have had sufficient cause to place their trust in the Court's oaths after the flight. Apart from their apparently well-founded belief that Louis XVI had no reasonable alternative after July 15 but to be a constitutional king, Marie-Antoinette's plea to the Triumvirate for advice on how to save the monarchy gave the Constitutionalists every reason to be confident that they could establish the Constitution on solid foundations. Considering these factors, their decision to uphold executive inviolability seems both competent and justifiable.

CHAPTER III NOTES

¹For more details concerning these decrees, see below, pp. 63-69.

²See below, p. 59; J. M. Roberts and R. C. Cobb, eds., French Revolution Documents (2 vols.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), I, 296-97.

³On the morning of June 21, 1791, Laporte, who was intendant of the Civil List, found a manifesto left behind by the king. It indicates that the ministers had no advance knowledge either of the flight or of the manifesto. See the Moniteur, VIII, 718.

⁴Roberts and Cobb, op.cit., pp. 296-310.

⁵Chevallier, Barnave, p. 254.

⁶Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 96.

⁷Moniteur, VIII, 715-16.

⁸Ibid., pp. 723, 727. Most of the officers in the French army were nobles, and many of them were hostile to the Revolution. In fact, a large number of these "noble" officers refused to renew their oaths of loyalty to the government and emigrated. An interesting account of the detrimental effects of this emigration on the monarchy can be found in the Mémoires de Louis Philippe, Duc D'Orléans (2 tomes; n.p. : Librairie Plon, 1973-1974), I, 180-202.

⁹Moniteur, VIII, 725.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 721, 724-25, 731-32.

¹¹Madame Henriette Bançal-Des-Issarts, ed., Lettres autographes de Madame Roland adressées à Bançal-Des-Issarts, with an Introduction by Sainte-Beuve (Paris: Eugène Renduel, 1835), see the letters of June 24 and June 25, pp. 249-50, 257. (Hereinafter referred to as Lettres de Madame Roland).

¹²Aulard, Société des Jacobins, II, 532-37; Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, X, 380.

¹³Moniteur, VIII, 715.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 715, 719-20.

¹⁵Buchez and Roux, op.cit., pp. 313-18.

¹⁶The rapprochement between the two factions first manifested itself on the morning of June 21 when Barnave defended Lafayette

from Reubell's attacks (Moniteur, VIII, 716). The "coalition" was symbolized on the evening of June 21 when the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes marched arm in arm to attend a meeting at the Jacobin Club. See Aulard, Société des Jacobins, II, 532-37.

¹⁷Moniteur, VIII, 747-49; see Muguet de Nanthou's speech of July 13, 1791 on behalf of the Assembly's committees in Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, 235, 241.

¹⁸Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, 235-37, 241-42.

¹⁹During this period, the National Assembly authorized the union of the Constitutional, Revision, Military and Diplomatic Committees and the Committees of Rapports and Recherches. See Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 169.

²⁰Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, 335-36, 377.

²¹Moniteur, VIII, 717, 747-49. On June 21, the National Assembly enacted a decree which effectively gave it the exercise of the executive power. The decree of June 25 took this one step further by "provisionally" suspending the king's royal powers ("...jusqu'à ce qu'il en ait été autrement ordonné."). The deputies who supported the committees' views on inviolability by implication favored the eventual "reinstatement" of the king's suspended powers. Thus the committees' conception of executive inviolability soon became identified with the desire to "reinstate" the king's power to sanction the Assembly's laws.

²²Lefebvre, The French Revolution, I, 207; Soboul, La Révolution française, I, 260.

²³Bradby, op.cit., p. 173.

²⁴Michelet, Histoire de la Révolution française, III, 26, 34; Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution française, VII, 3; Jaurès, Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française, I, 584, 1050, 1103; Mathiez, The French Revolution, p. 130; Lefebvre, op.cit., p. 173; Michon, Parti feuillant, p. 258.

²⁵Lefebvre, op.cit., p. 152.

²⁶André de Bellevue (Antoine-Balthazar Joseph of); known as Dandré or d'André, he was a conseiller of the parlement of Aix-en-Provence. Dandré was a representative of the nobility in the Estates General and was one of the first nobles to join the Third Estate. After the Constituent Assembly's session ended, he was accused of having ties with the émigrés. In 1792, he emigrated to England. Louis XVIII named him Director of Police and intendant of the king's domains. He remained at this post till his death in 1825. See Dict. historique, I, 35.

²⁷La Rochefoucauld (François-Alexandre-Frédéric, Duke of Liancourt); Larocheffoucauld was a colonel and then a brigadier general in the French army. He emigrated to England after the fall of the monarchy in 1792. He became a Peer of France in 1815 and sat in the High Chamber after the Restoration. See Dict. historique, II, 326-27.

²⁸Salle (Jean-Baptiste); Salles was a deputy from the bailliage of Meurthe to the Constituent Assembly and was also a member of the Convention. He supported the motion calling for a plebiscite on the fate of Louis XVI. For this reason, his name was included on a proscription list as a "Girondin," and he was condemned to die in June 1794. See Dict. historique, II, 732.

²⁹Goupil de Préfelne (Guillaume-François-Charles); Goupil was elected to the Third Estate by the bailliage of Alençon. He was a moderate in the Constituent Assembly. After the Assembly's session ended, he became president of the civil tribunal in the Argentan district. He was arrested for "incivisme," but freed after 9 Thermidor. He was elected to the Conseil des Anciens under the Consulate and was later made a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals. He died in 1801. See Dict. historique, II, 82.

³⁰Muguet de Nanthou (François-Félix-Yacinthe); born in 1760, Nanthou was an avocat in the parlement of Besançon. He represented the bailliage of Amert (Franche-Comté) in the Constituent Assembly. He voted with the minority on the Left. See Dict. historique, II, 590.

³¹Nanthou's speech was delivered on July 13, Duport's on July 14 and Barnave's on July 15.

³²Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Nanthou's speech of July 13, pp. 236-37; Duport's speech of July 14, pp. 263-66; Barnave's speech of July 15, p. 328. A summary of the inviolability debates is made by R. K. Gooch in Parliamentary Government in France: Revolutionary Origins, 1789-1791 (New York: Russel & Russel, 1960), pp. 198-205.

³³Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Nanthou's speech, p. 235; Duport's speech, p. 264; Barnave's speech, pp. 326-27.

³⁴See the speeches of Pétion, Vadier, Robespierre, Prieur (de la Marne), Buzot and the Abbé Grégoire in the Moniteur, IX, pp. 121-36.

³⁵Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Nanthou's speech, pp. 235-36; Salles' speech of July 15, p. 323; Barnave's speech, pp. 328-29; see also Duport's speech of June 26 in Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, X, 383.

³⁶Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Duport's speech of July 14, p. 265.

³⁷Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Nanthou's speech, p. 235; Duport's speech, p. 265; Barnave's speech, p. 327.

³⁸Ibid., p. 235.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., Nanthou's speech, p. 236; Barnave's speech, p. 328.

⁴¹Ibid.; see also Duport's speech, p. 263.

⁴²A lieue or league measures about two and a half miles.

⁴³Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Nanthou's speech, p. 236.

⁴⁴Ibid.; see also Duport's speech, p. 263, and Barnave's speech, p. 328.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, VI, 361.

⁴⁷Roberts and Cobb, eds., French Revolution Documents, I, 170-71, 178, 282-88.

⁴⁸Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Nanthou's speech, p. 237; Duport's speech, p. 264.

⁴⁹Ibid., Duport's speech, p. 263.

⁵⁰Ibid., Nanthou's speech, pp. 236-37; Duport's speech, p. 264.

⁵¹Pétion of Villeneuve (Jérôme); Pétion represented the city of Chartres in the Constituent Assembly and the department of Eure-et-Loir in the Convention. With Barnave and Latour Maubourg, he accompanied the Royal Family back to Paris after the flight to Varennes. He presided over the reorganization of the Jacobin Club of Paris after the famous secession of the Assembly's deputies and the establishment of the Feuillant Club on July 16, 1791. Elected mayor of Paris in October 1791, he was suspended by Louis XVI in July 1792; but the Legislative Assembly lifted the suspension. Under the Convention, he was accused by Manuel of aspiring to a dictatorship. He voted for the king's death penalty with a reprieve. With Buzot and Barbaroux, he fled to Calvados, then to the suburbs of Bordeaux. He and Buzot were found dead in the countryside, half devoured by wolves. See Dict. historique, II, 647-48.

⁵²Buzot (François-Nicolas-Léonard); Buzot was elected deputy to the Third Estate by the bailliage of Evreux and sat with the extreme Left in the Constituent Assembly. As a member of the Convention, he voted for Louis XVI's death penalty with a reprieve.

A member of the Comité de Salut Public, he was placed on a proscription list. He was arrested but managed to escape. His escape, however, fell short; he was found dead with Pétion near Saint-Magne. See Dict. historique, I, 306-07.

⁵³Vadier (Marc-Guillaume-Albert); Vadier was a deputy from Pamiers to the Constituent Assembly and represented the department of Arriège in the Convention. In 1793, he was president of the Comité de Sûreté générale. Vadier died in Bruxelles in 1828. See Dict. historique, II, 800.

⁵⁴Prieur (Pierre-Louis); Prieur was an avocat in the parlement of Châlons-sur-Marne and a deputy to the Constituent Assembly. An enemy of the "Girondins," he voted for the execution of Louis XVI. He was arrested in March of 1795; he was able to escape and died in exile. Dict. historique, II, 671.

⁵⁵Grégoire (Baptiste-Henry, Count); curé, constitutional bishop, Grégoire represented the bailliage of Nancy in the Constituent Assembly. He was one of the first members of the clergy to join the Third Estate. He was also a deputy in the Convention. See Dict. historique, II, 97-99.

⁵⁶Moniteur, IX, 121-36.

⁵⁷See Buzot's speech of July 15 in the Moniteur, IX, 136.

⁵⁸By June 21, most of the primary assemblies of the kingdom, whose major function was to elect the deputies to the First Legislative Assembly, had already been convened. On June 24, however, the National Assembly provisionally suspended the elections. See Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, X, 347-49.

⁵⁹Moniteur, IX, Pétion's speech of July 13, pp. 120-21; Vadier's speech of July 13, p. 124; Grégoire's speech of July 15, p. 134, and Buzot's speech of July 15, p. 136.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 120.

⁶¹Marquis of Ferrières, Mémoires du Marquis de Ferrières, II, 426.

⁶²The spokesmen of the committees made no distinction between the "legal" and the "circumstantial" defenses. I have made this distinction for the purposes of clarity.

⁶³Artois (Charles-Philippe de Bourbon, Count of); the youngest brother of Louis XVI, Artois was born in Versailles in 1757. In 1789, he showed himself to be an intransigent supporter of the ancien régime and violently opposed all reforms. He emigrated after the taking of the Bastille. After the fall of Napoleon

in 1814, he returned to Paris. When his brother, Louis XVIII, died in 1824, he became King Charles X. He advocated reactionary measures; his stand on press censorship created widespread discontent and resulted in the Revolution of 1830. Forced to abdicate his throne, Artois spent the remainder of his life in exile. He died in Goritz, Austria in 1836. See Dict. historique, I, 58.

⁶⁴Provence (Louis Stanislas Xavier, Count of); born in 1755, Provence was Louis XVI's eldest brother. He accepted most of the early reforms brought by the Revolution but emigrated without warning on June 21, 1791. Upon Louis' execution, Provence became the Regent of France. After Napoleon's fall from power, he became King Louis XVIII. He died in Paris in 1824. See Dictionnaire de la Révolution et de l'Empire, 1965, pp. 207-08.

⁶⁵Orléans (Louis-Philippe-Joseph, Duke of); Orléans was known as Philippe-Egalité during the Revolution. A prince of the blood and Louis XVI's cousin, Orléans was elected to the Constituent Assembly. He sat with the Mountain in the Convention; he voted for Louis' execution without possibility of reprieve. Orléans was arrested as a hostage on the day after the vote on the king's fate was taken. In October 1793, he was accused of having aspired to the reestablishment of the monarchy. He was executed in November of 1793. His son, Louis-Philippe, became King Louis-Philippe in 1830. See Dict. historique, II, 622-23.

⁶⁶Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 113-14.

⁶⁷Among those who called for the executive council, there were disputes about how this body was to be organized and how its members were to be selected. The more radical deputies demanded that its members be elected by the primary assemblies. Others believed that the National Assembly should appoint the members of the council. There was, in addition, some controversy about the duration of the executive council.

⁶⁸Moniteur, IX, 120.

⁶⁹Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Duport's speech of July 14, p. 266.

⁷⁰Ibid.; Barnave, Oeuvres de Barnave, I, 133.

⁷¹Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Duport's speech, p. 264.

⁷²Michon, Parti feillant, p. 249.

⁷³Bançal des Issarts (Jean Henry); he was an avocat elected to the Convention by the department of Puy-de-Dôme. He voted that Louis XVI be arrested and then, after the war ended, banished from France. He struggled against the creation of the Comité

de Salut Public in 1793. He was arrested and imprisoned until the conclusion of the treaty of Basil. After his return to France, he entered the Council of Five Hundred. He died in Paris in 1826. See Dict. historique, I, 92.

⁷⁴ Roland de la Platière (Jeanne-Marie); Madame Roland was an avid supporter of the democratic Republic. She regularly received the "Girondins" in her salon and struggled against the Mountain under the Convention. She was arrested and imprisoned in June of 1793; she died on the scaffold on November 8. See Dictionnaire de la Révolution et de l'Empire, pp. 272-73.

⁷⁵ Madame Bançal-Des-Issarts, Lettres de Madame Roland, letter of July 1, 1791, p. 268.

⁷⁶ Brissot de Warville (Jean-Pierre); Brissot started his career in journalism with the Mercure. He was once locked up in the Bastille for four months for having published a pamphlet that criticized the queen. In 1788, he founded the Society of the Friends of the Blacks. He was in the United States of America when the Revolution broke out. After his return to France, he established Le Patriote français. He was a deputy in the Legislative Assembly (1791-1792) and in the Convention. He voted for Louis XVI's execution with a reprieve. He attempted to flee Paris for Switzerland in 1793 but was quickly apprehended. He was executed in October of 1793. See Dict. historique, I, 282.

⁷⁷ Aulard, Histoire politique de la Révolution française, p. 133.

⁷⁸ Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution française, VII, 39; Jaurès, Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française, I, 1050-53.

⁷⁹ Blanc, op.cit.; Jaurès, op.cit.

⁸⁰ Moniteur, IX, 123.

⁸¹ Soderhjelm, ed., Correspondance secrète, Barnave and Alexandre Lameth to Marie-Antoinette, October 10, 1791, p. 134.

⁸² Jaurès, op.cit., p. 1055; Aulard, op.cit., pp. 135, 145.

⁸³ Aulard, op.cit., p. 135.

⁸⁴ Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Barnave's speech of July 15, pp. 326-27.

⁸⁵ Ibid.; in his memoirs, Barnave wrote that "...la république française ne peut exister que par la fédération, et la fédération ne peut exister que par l'aristocratie. C'est encore un de ces points de vue sous lesquels la monarchie et l'égalité se rapprochent." See Oeuvres de Barnave, I, 52.

- ⁸⁶Barnave, Oeuvres de Barnave, pp. 43-49.
- ⁸⁷Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, Barnave's speech of July 15, p. 329.
- ⁸⁸Barnave, op.cit., pp. 47-48.
- ⁸⁹As quoted in Michon, Parti feuillant, p. 111.
- ⁹⁰Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 170.
- ⁹¹Ibid.
- ⁹²Reinhard, La chute de la royauté, pp. 178-79; see above, note 82, p. 77.
- ⁹³Ibid., p. 179; Jaurès, Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française, I, 614-15.
- ⁹⁴Reinhard, op.cit., p. 180.
- ⁹⁵Moniteur, IX, Barnave's speech of July 15, p. 143.
- ⁹⁶Bradby, op.cit., pp. 122-23.
- ⁹⁷Reinhard, op.cit., p. 21.
- ⁹⁸As quoted in Bradby, op.cit., p. 123.
- ⁹⁹These deputies were Duport, Dandré and Tronchet. See Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, X, 389.
- ¹⁰⁰Roberts and Cobb, French Revolution Documents, I, 321.
- ¹⁰¹Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, speech of Duport on July 14, pp. 263-64; Bradby, op.cit., p. 181.
- ¹⁰²Bradby, op.cit., p. 178.
- ¹⁰³The Memoirs, Correspondence and Manuscripts of Marquis de Lafayette, published by his family (3 vols.; London: Saunders and Otley, 1837), III, 94-95.
- ¹⁰⁴Soderhjelm, ed., Correspondance secrète, Marie-Antoinette's note to Barnave, p. 39.
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., Barnave and Alexandre Lameth worked together on the letters addressed to Marie-Antoinette.
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., Barnave's and Lameth's letter to Marie-Antoinette on July 25, p. 60.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., Soderhjelm, ed., Correspondance secrète, Barnave's response to Marie-Antoinette's request for advice, early July, p. 41.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., letter of September 5, p. 98.

¹¹⁰Ibid., Barnave's response to Marie-Antoinette's request for advice, p. 41.

¹¹¹Ibid., letter of September 28, p. 122.

¹¹²Ibid., letter written at the end of August, p. 77.

¹¹³Ibid., Barnave's response to Marie-Antoinette's request for advice, p. 41.

¹¹⁴Ibid., letter of July 25, p. 57.

¹¹⁵Ibid., Barnave's response to Marie-Antoinette's request for advice, pp. 42-44; see also Barnave's and Lameth's letters of July 10 and July 25, pp. 52-54.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., letter of July 25, pp. 57-58.

¹¹⁸Ibid., letter of August 28, p. 86; letters of November 10, November 15 and November 29, pp. 165, 171, 194.

¹¹⁹Ibid., letter of August 28, p. 87; letter of September 25, p. 119.

¹²⁰Ibid., letter of July 21, p. 53.

¹²¹Ibid., Barnave's response to Marie-Antoinette's request for advice, p. 43.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 41-42; letter of July 25, p. 56.

¹²³Ibid., letters of "early" July and July 10, pp. 41-48.

¹²⁴Ibid., letter of August 28, p. 85; Barnave and Lameth assured Marie-Antoinette that if their advice was invariably followed, "...le Roi éprouvera bientôt qu'il avoit été trompé, les loix reprendront leur énergie, l'autorité sa force et son éclat,...." See p. 44.

¹²⁵Ibid., letter of July 10, pp. 48-49.

¹²⁶Ibid., letter of July 25, pp. 54-55.

¹²⁷Ibid., this letter is reproduced in Appendix I.

¹²⁸ Alfred Ritter Von Arneth, ed., Marie-Antoinette, Joseph II Und Leopold II (Leipzig: K. F. Kottler, 1866. Paris: Ed. Jung-Treuttel, 1866; Wien: Wilhelm Braumuller, 1866), Marie-Antoinette's letter of July 31, 1791 to Mercy-Argenteau, p. 193.

¹²⁹ Soderhjelm, ed., Correspondance secrète, letter of September 5, p. 98; this letter is briefly discussed above, pp. 57-58.

¹³⁰ Ibid., letter of August 28, p. 81.

CHAPTER IV

MONARCHY OR REPUBLIC?

The Royal Family's flight to Varennes met with the strong disapproval of most Parisians. A majority of the people of Paris in fact reacted to this event by demanding that Louis XVI be dethroned, tried and punished for treason. Like the democratic deputies in the National Assembly, they believed that by fleeing Paris and writing the anti-constitutional manifesto of June 20, the king had abdicated the throne. Between June 21 and July 17, this viewpoint found partial expression in the petitions drawn up by the leaders of the Cordeliers Club and the numerous fraternal and popular clubs and societies of Paris.¹ The powerful Society of the Friends of the Constitution, known as the Jacobin Club, also endorsed this point of view.² Moreover, the Cordeliers Club, the Fraternal Society of Two Sexes and the Friends of Truth, but not the Jacobin Club, used the opportunity presented by the Royal Family's evasion to petition not only for Louis XVI's deposition but also for the establishment of a democratic Republic. On at least seven occasions during the post-flight period, these clubs and their sister societies made both direct and indirect demands for a republic,³ demands which from the Constituent Assembly's standpoint were no less "anti-constitutional" than

those made in the manifesto of June 20.

Stressing that the preservation of Louis XVI's crown was a prerequisite for the consolidation of the Constitution and thus for the success of the Revolution of 1789, the Constituent Assembly, despite strong popular opposition in Paris, upheld executive inviolability on July 15. However, both during and after the passage of the inviolability decree, the conflict between the supporters and opponents of the king's reinstatement continued unabated. This disagreement finally brought about a schism in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution on the morning of July 16, when over three hundred of the National Assembly's deputies voted to transfer the society's meetings from the church of the Jacobins to the convent of the Feuillants. The division occurred after the reading of a petition, drawn up by members of the Jacobin Club, which contained demands for Louis XVI's deposition and for his replacement "by constitutional means."⁴ From that moment, two Societies of the Friends of the Constitution coexisted in Paris: the Jacobin Club and the Feuillant Club.

A similar disagreement led to a violent confrontation between the municipal authorities and the petitioners at the Champ de Mars on July 17. On that day, at the invitation of the Cordeliers Club and the fraternal societies, a large number of men, women and children gathered round the altar of the country to sign a petition announcing the nullification of the inviolability decree and asking the National Assembly

to convene a new constituent body for the purpose of trying Louis XVI and organizing a new executive power. Earlier in the day, two men who had been discovered hiding under the altar were seized by a mob and brutally murdered, an act which undoubtedly heightened the already considerable tension of the constituted authorities. Contending that the petitioners had illegally assembled to sign a petition whose object was to overthrow the government and to destroy the Constitution, the General Council of the Municipality of Paris proclaimed martial law and dispatched troops of the National Guard of Paris to the Champ de Mars to disperse the petitioners.⁵ Encountering hostile resistance to their entry to the Champ de Mars, the National Guard opened fire on the crowd, killing approximately fifty people.⁶ This event soon came to be known as the "massacre" of the Champ de Mars.

The schism of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution and the massacre of the Champ de Mars are symbolic of the split that took place between the constitutional monarchists and the democrats and republicans over the question of the king's fate. Georges Michon and Albert Mathiez, who are extremely critical of the inviolability decree, contend that the Constitutionalist were responsible for the schism and the massacre. Michon claims that the division of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution was the result of a planned maneuver by the Triumvirate to demolish the power base and the prestige of the democrats.⁷ He attributes the

success of this maneuver to the Triumvirate's false accusation that the Jacobins had opposed the National Assembly's inviolability decree, an infraction of the Jacobin Club's regulations.⁸ He nevertheless asserts that Barnave, Duport and Alexandre Lameth did not plan to open another society, a decision which the secessionists, on Reubell's proposal, made on their own. In his view, the Triumvirate hastened to join the Feuillant Club because it realized the importance of winning the support of the affiliated societies. With this support, it would be able to exert a strong influence on public opinion in France. Michon concludes that the Triumvirate and the other leaders of the Constitutionalists wanted to use their influence over the affiliated societies as a means of preparing Frenchmen for a conservative revision of the Constitution.⁹

Like Michon, Mathiez is extremely critical of the Constitutionalists' conduct during this period. In fact, he places most of the responsibility for the petitioners' "inexcusable" deaths on the constitutionalist-dominated National Assembly, which, he claims, induced the municipal government to proclaim martial law "illegally" and "needlessly" on July 17.¹⁰ Mathiez stresses that there is no trustworthy evidence to support the municipal government's contention that the democratic leaders who drew up the petition of July 17 had planned to raise the people in revolt against the National Assembly; in his view, they were merely attempting to organize

a "peaceful" demonstration to intimidate the government into revoking the inviolability decree.¹¹ Mathiez asserts that the petitioners acted in complete accordance with the constitutional laws enacted by the National Assembly and thus concludes that the bloody repression was not legally justifiable.¹²

Historians generally single out the schism in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution and the massacre of the Champ de Mars as the foreseeable consequences of the Constitutionalists' determination to impose the unpopular and impolitic inviolability decree upon the French people. The implication is that in order to defend their foolhardy decision to reinstate the "traitor" king, the Constitutionalists were compelled to adopt underhanded measures to weaken the power of their strongest opponents: the democrats and republicans. Of course, there is also the stigma which has traditionally been attached to the Constitutionalists' refusal to allow the Revolution to reach its "natural" conclusion in the establishment of a democratic Republic. Nevertheless, the historical controversy surrounding the Constitutionalists' specific roles in the schism and the massacre requires a reassessment of the facts.¹³ The purpose of this chapter is to ascertain the causes of the schism in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution and to determine whether or not the constitutionalist-dominated Assembly's acts prior to the Champ de Mars massacre can be said to have been defensible. Although these events occurred within a one-day period and

stemmed from conflicts between the supporters and opponents of the inviolability of Louis XVI, they will be examined separately in this study.

The Triumvirate and the Schism of the Jacobin Club

Georges Michon's argument that the Triumvirate caused the split that took place in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution appears to be based on unreliable evidence. Although in his detailed study of the origins of the Feuillant Club Michon does not disclose his sources of information,¹⁴ the fact that his and the Jacobin Club's interpretations are almost indistinguishable, together with the absence of corroborative evidence from non-jacobin sources, strongly suggests that he depended to a large extent, if not entirely, on the Jacobins' accounts of the secession. His assertion that Pétion's speech of July 17 at the Jacobin Club indicated "...les véritables causes de la scission" seems to substantiate this view, for Pétion's speech represented the Jacobin Club's official version of the split.¹⁵ In all likelihood, the Jacobins were incapable of making an impartial assessment of their adversaries' actions and motives, especially when consideration is given to the fact that the Constitutionals' and the other deputies' secession was a direct attack on their past conduct. Without supportive evidence to substantiate the Jacobins' assertions, which is not provided, Michon's interpretation is open to doubt.

Michon fails to specify that his contention concerning the Triumvirate's supposed maneuver to divide the Jacobin Club cannot, at least with the evidence now available, be conclusively proved or disproved. Certainly the democrats both inside and outside the National Assembly were never in a position to prove that Alexandre Lameth, Duport and Barnave possessed a preconcerted plan to destroy the Jacobin Club. In all probability, only the Triumvirate and those closely associated with them (the Fayettistes) could have furnished the irrefutable evidence needed to confirm Michon's interpretation of the schism. But this evidence apparently does not exist. Of the men who had direct access to this information, only Barnave left a description of the Triumvirate's conduct in connection with the split; and his portrayal is quite different from the one put forward by Michon and the Jacobins:

Ce mouvement [i.e., the schism] fut absolument spontané; s'il fut imprimé par quelqu'un, ce fut par ceux qui auraient été témoins des faits qui donnaient lieu à cette résolution, et je n'étais pas de ce nombre; je n'eus, non plus qu'aucun de mes amis [allusion to the Lameths and to Duport], part à la convocation et à l'indication du lieu de la réunion; je m'y trouvais avec trois ou quatre cents autres.¹⁶

Admitting that he attended the meeting held at the Palais Royal on July 16, where the secession was apparently decided, Barnave nevertheless contended that the split "...was the almost unanimous opinion before I had spoken as well as after."¹⁷ Furthermore, he asserted that he and his associates advised against the establishment of another club.¹⁸

If the Jacobin Club's and Barnave's versions of the

schism are not subject to being proved or disproved definitively, Barnave's memoirs do at least suggest a way in which his account of the split can be tested with a reasonable degree of accuracy. In the observations quoted above, Barnave alluded to the factors that gave rise to the deputies' decision to break with the Jacobin Society, factors which were in fact set forth in the Feuillant Club's declarations to the jacobin affiliated societies after July 16. A critical study of the allegations made against the Jacobins in these declarations has for some unaccountable reason never been conducted by modern historians. Yet an analysis of these charges suggests that the schism would have occurred without the intervention of the Triumvirate.

In their Address to the affiliated societies and their Declaration to the Jacobin Club,¹⁹ the Feuillants asserted that the schism stemmed from repeated violations of the Jacobin Society's rules by certain club-members. They claimed that these men suppressed freedom of opinion in the Society, openly combatted constitutional principles and even acted in direct opposition to the National Assembly's decrees.²⁰ Their aim in transferring the meetings of the Friends of the Constitution to the convent of the Feuillants, they explained, was to run the club as its founders had originally intended, according to the Règlement de la Société des amis de la constitution.²¹ The Règlement, which was drawn up by Barnave and adopted by the club in February 1790, contains the objectives

and rules of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution.²² According to the Feuillants, the purpose of the Society was to prepare the national representatives for their work in the National Assembly, to serve as a center of constitutional opinions, to discuss but not to deliberate on questions before the Assembly and to provide France with an example of absolute freedom of opinion on "projected" laws but the most profound respect for and submission to the decrees of the National Assembly.²³

An examination of the debates that took place in the Jacobin Club between June 23, the day on which discussions with respect to Louis XVI's future commenced, and July 16 itself reveals that those who either supported or just wished to explain the committees' recommendations on executive inviolability found it almost impossible to have their opinions heard. According to the Babillard, when Anthoine, who was in fact a firm opponent of inviolability, asked the Jacobins to allow committee-members to present their views to them, he was chased from the tribune.²⁴ Charles Lameth asked for a motion of order on June 29 to respond to Anthoine's condemnation of the coalition of "nobles" and "military" leaders who supported inviolability; but he was prevented from speaking until Biauzat finally pointed out that freedom of opinion was guaranteed in the Jacobin Club.²⁵ On July 15, Vasselin was greeted with violent "murmures" when he tried to praise the Assembly's decision to uphold the king's inviolability.²⁶

Violations of freedom of opinion in the club were in fact so frequent that Pétion was forced to admit in his speech at the Jacobin Club on July 17 that "...souvent dans cette Assemblée la liberté des opinions a été contrariée. Depuis quelques temps, les membres de l'Assemblée nationale se sont plaints de n'avoir pas eu la liberté de proposer leurs opinions, pas même de donner connaissance de faits essentiels à connaître."²⁷ Thus Pétion, who played an important role in reorganizing the Jacobin Society after the split, agreed with the Feuillants that the deputies of the National Assembly had been prevented from voicing their opinions in the club.

The Feuillants' allegation that constitutional principles were being challenged increasingly openly in the club during this period also seems to be correct. On June 22, Robert, a renowned advocate of the republic, announced to the club that along with two other Jacobins he had presented an address to some fraternal societies demanding a repudiation of the monarchy. Upon hearing this, cries of disapproval immediately rang out; Boutidoux reminded Robert that all Jacobins were friends of the Constitution and that "...la monarchie est dans la constitution."²⁸ Ten days later, a similar explosion shook the Society after Billaud Varenne asked whether a monarchy or a republic was best suited for France. After Bouche, the president of the Society at the time, called Billaud to order, Royer requested that Billaud's

name be stricken from the club's list.²⁹ He declared that "les Sociétés de la constitution s'attachent à montrer le plus grand respect pour les décrets de l'Assemblée nationale. Elle a décrété la monarchie."³⁰ On July 6, one of the club's secretaries began reading a letter from Perpignan in which the belief was expressed that France should have a republican form of government and that "...un roi est inutile."³¹ The entire assembly arose in protest upon hearing this, a "thousand" members simultaneously shouting their disapproval. By virtue of his strong voice, one member was able to make himself heard in a speech that presaged the schism:

Permettez-moi, Monsieur, de représenter au secrétaire qui a lu la lettre de Perpignan, ... qu'il eût mieux fait de nous lire le passage suivant de nos règlements: 'La fidélité à la constitution, le dévouement à la défendre, le respect et la soumission aux pouvoirs qu'elle aura établis, sont les premières lois imposées à ceux qui voudront être admis dans la Société.' Nous sommes engagés par serment à maintenir la constitution. Parler contre les décrets constitutionnels, lire les écrits qui leur sont opposés ou le souffrir, est un parjure: il faut renoncer à la Société et sortir de son sein.³²

The speaker's recitation of the Society's rules was exact. The frequent violation of the club's rules was starting to generate discontent among some of the Jacobins.

The most serious charge advanced by the Feuillants was that the Jacobins deliberately acted in opposition to the inviolability decree "...alors que les amis de la constitution devaient au contraire prêcher toujours l'obéissance aux autorités légitimes et jamais la révolte."³³ The Jacobins vigorously disputed this accusation, claiming that it was

fabricated by the Triumvirate in order to facilitate the execution of its maneuver to divide the Society of the Friends of the Constitution.³⁴ They emphasized that the petition of July 15-16 could not be described as a protest against the Assembly's decision to immunize the king from trial because the inviolability decree was not passed until July 16. As a matter of fact, all but one of the nine articles that finally comprised the inviolability decree were rendered on July 15. Yet the Jacobins argued that since these articles did not explicitly acquit Louis XVI, the question of the king's fate was still completely open for discussion; a petition calling for the deposition of Louis XVI could therefore still be drawn up.³⁵

The Jacobins' assertion that the National Assembly did not expressly uphold executive inviolability on July 15 is consistent with the facts. In their projet de décret, which was adopted on that day, the committees ruled that evidence existed involving "...Bouillé, ses complices et adhérents;..." in a "...projet de renverser la constitution;...."³⁶ They also contended that in order to execute his plan to overthrow the government, Bouillé lured "...le roi et sa famille dans une ville de son commandement...."³⁷ Responsibility for the flight was in this way shifted from the king to Bouillé and his coconspirators. On July 15, Salles' proposed abdication laws were also incorporated into the inviolability decree. According to these laws, if the king violated his oath of

allegiance to the Constitution or supported in any way a military attack against France, he would automatically abdicate his throne and would be liable for any crime committed subsequent to his abdication.³⁸ Thus the eight articles passed on July 15 did not explicitly uphold inviolability. In point of fact, however, the National Assembly never directly exempted Louis XVI from trial.³⁹ The article passed on July 16 fixed the duration of the decree of June 25, which had provisionally suspended the king's royal powers.⁴⁰ As such it did serve as the only direct, written indication of Louis' status.

Admittedly, the National Assembly increased the chances of creating a misunderstanding by not proclaiming in the form of a decree that inviolability precluded the king from being prosecuted. But it had no practical alternatives under the circumstances; and its decision on this matter itself appears to have been dictated by the inviolability principle. The inviolability principle, whether openly or tacitly accepted, is inherent in monarchical regimes. Its major purpose is to ensure the stability of the government by preserving the dignity and authority of the throne. This is achieved (and this appears to be the central function of the inviolability principle) not only by prohibiting the prosecution of the monarch but also by eliminating the evidence that would implicate the king in any criminal wrongdoing. It was probably obvious to the Assembly that a decree specifically upholding inviolability

would have been interpreted as an avowal that Louis XVI was a criminal and a traitor; clearly this would have caused considerable harm to the monarchy and therefore to the Constitution of 1791. For this reason, the Assembly was obliged to throw a "veil" over the king's guilt.

The Assembly's indirect exoneration of Louis XVI, of course, invited controversy concerning the exact date on which the decision to uphold inviolability was reached (July 15 or July 16?). It would seem, nevertheless, that the Jacobins' petition of July 15-16 could not "legally" be defined as a protest against the inviolability decree until the National Assembly specifically indicated what Louis' status was; and this was not done until the evening of July 16. It appears that the Jacobins did not intend to place themselves in direct opposition to a decree rendered by the National Assembly. In fact, as soon as they learned that the article of July 16 had been passed, they withdrew their support from the petition.⁴¹

This does not mean, however, that the Feuillants invented their allegation in order to justify the schism. The evidence strongly suggests that the National Assembly added the article of July 16 to the inviolability decree after it realized that some Parisians still harbored doubts about the king's fate. In other words, from its standpoint, the inviolability decree had been passed on July 15. It must be stressed that the Constitutionalists and the royalists were not alone in contending that inviolability had been accepted on that day. Deputies

from the extreme Left like Anthoine and Vadier also reached this conclusion.⁴² Although they later denied this, Pétion, Robespierre, Prieur and the Abbé Grégoire made this assertion as well. On July 15, they informed a deputation from the Champ de Mars that its petition⁴³ asking the Assembly not to decide on the king's fate was "useless" because the inviolability decree had just been passed.⁴⁴ Even the republican and democratic societies understood the significance of the articles adopted on July 15. On that evening, the Friends of Truth issued the following statement: "...elle [i.e., the Friends of Truth and the other societies in attendance] proteste, ... contre le décret de l'Assemblée nationale par lequel, s'établissant incompétemment en tribunal, elle a décidé que le roi ne serait pas mis en cause."⁴⁵ When it is considered that Biauzat and Reubell, who were deputies in the National Assembly, explained the meaning of the articles of July 15 to the Jacobin Club before the petition of July 15-16 was drawn up, it is not difficult to understand why the National Assembly, the future Feuillants in particular, were convinced that the Jacobins' confusion about these articles was insincere.⁴⁶

If the Feuillants were not entirely accurate in claiming that the Jacobins had protested against the inviolability decree, they apparently possessed good reasons for believing that the Jacobins had challenged the sovereignty of the National Constituent Assembly. In their petition, the Jacobins

did not request but authoritatively demanded in the name of the sovereign people that the National Assembly recognize the abdication of Louis XVI. Moreover, they boldly proclaimed that "...ils ne reconnaîtront jamais Louis XVI pour leur Roi à moins que la majorité de la nation n'émette un vœu contraire à cette pétition."⁴⁷ The meaning of this petition could not be more clear. On the evening of July 15, the Friends of Truth, who had recommended to the Jacobins that the petition of July 15-16 be drawn up, stated that "...l'objet[of the petition] est de déclarer hautement que Louis XVI ne pourra remonter sur le trône, même par un décret de l'Assemblée nationale, si elle n'a pas recueilli le vœu des communes des 83 départements de l'empire."⁴⁸ By recognizing only the departments' power to decide on Louis XVI's fate, the Jacobins who supported this petition not only violated their oath to obey the Règlement, which in itself was sufficient cause for the deputies to secede from the club, they also committed a non-violent act of rebellion against the government. The petition implicitly but clearly challenged the Assembly's authority to keep the king on the throne; and such an encroachment on its sovereign power was seditious.

After the Champ de Mars massacre, the Jacobins did their utmost to play down their involvement in drawing up the petition of July 15-16. They claimed that they had been forced to accept the petition in order to pacify the unruly crowd (from the Palais Royal) which had invaded the club's

premises on the evening of July 15.⁴⁹ They also contended that they withdrew their support from it as soon as the first opportunity presented itself. The Jacobin Club was indeed invaded by a turbulent crowd on July 15. However, the research of Albert Mathiez, François Braesch and Marcel Reinhard clearly shows that the Jacobins voluntarily supported the petition.⁵⁰ The evidence demonstrates that the Jacobins who refused to join the deputies in abandoning the club on the morning of July 16 immediately voted to give their "individual" support to the petition.⁵¹ According to Braesch, after learning that the National Assembly had passed the article of July 16 (fixing Louis' fate), the Jacobins hesitated before finally renouncing the petition.⁵² Furthermore, they waited until noon on July 17 to inform the Cordeliers Club and the fraternal societies of this decision.⁵³

The schism in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution appears to have been sparked by the Jacobins' decision to draw up the petition of July 15-16. Although it was perfectly acceptable to oppose the committees' views on executive inviolability, a challenge to the government's authority could not be tolerated. This perhaps best explains why such fervent opponents of the committees' conception of inviolability as the Abbé Grégoire, Prieur, Anthoine, La Revellière-Lépaux, Barère de Viauzac, Vadier, the Duke of Noailles, Chambon and Salicetti joined the Feuillant Club.⁵⁴ That this spirit of loyalty to the government existed is evident in Vadier's short

comment in the Assembly on July 15. Vadier, who was a violent critic of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, declared that he had expressed "...une opinion contraire à l'avis des comités avec toute la liberté qui doit appartenir à un représentant de la nation. Cependant, je déclare que, ... j'exposerai ma vie pour défendre les décrets."⁵⁵ On the same day, Anthoine made a similar comment to one of his colleagues in the National Assembly. He told Boussion that although he opposed the inviolability decree in principle, "...je serois des premiers à le soutenir...."⁵⁶

In sum, there does not appear to be any firm evidence connecting the Triumvirate or any of the other constitutionalist chieftains in a preconcerted plot to divide the Society of the Friends of the Constitution. Michon's postulate about the Triumvirate's maneuver therefore remains at best unproven. On the other hand, the evidence reviewed above strongly suggests that the Jacobins' consistent disrespect for the club's regulations during this period produced a scission in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution that was made permanent by their decision to support a petition which the Assembly's deputies viewed as seditious. This would seem to lend credibility to Barnave's assertion that the schism was a "spontaneous" (as opposed to a "planned") event.

The Assembly and the Champ de Mars Massacre

Mathiez considers the massacre that transpired on July 17 as a consequence of the National Assembly's determination to enforce the unjust and unpopular inviolability decree. Although he admits that the decision to proclaim martial law was made by the municipal government of Paris, he nonetheless places most of the responsibility for the petitioners' deaths on the constitutionalist-dominated National Assembly. Prior to the repression, he argues, it put inordinate pressure on the municipal government to repress disturbers of the peace and inflamed public opinion (especially the National Guard) against the democrats and republicans. The Constitutionals, it is implied, intentionally contributed to building a spirit of confrontation by frequently denouncing the Parisian political societies and clubs. In addition, the Assembly's orders of July 16 and July 17 that the municipal and departmental governments do everything in their power to restore public order in Paris were, in Mathiez's view, major causes of the massacre of the Champ de Mars. Leaving aside the considerations upon which the municipal government based its decision to disperse the petitioners on July 17, considerations which, it must be stressed, are the subject of unending historical debate, it would seem that Mathiez's interpretation raises important questions which apparently have not yet been resolved. Admittedly, this interpretation is not susceptible to being proved or disproved

with any certainty. But its plausibility appears to rest on whether or not it can be shown that in their speeches during this period, the deputies in the National Assembly, the Constitutionalists in particular, made consistently false or inordinately exaggerated statements about the democrats and republicans.

In the speeches they delivered between July 13 and July 17, the Constitutionalists repeatedly expressed their deep concern over the seemingly uninterrupted state of unrest which they claimed was incited by the leaders of the Parisian political societies. On July 13, Dandré censured the clubs' leaders for profitting from the instability occasioned by the king's unsuccessful flight to carry into execution their plans to topple the government. Furthermore, he declared that "...la Constitution n'a pas d'ennemis plus dangereux que ceux qui veulent exciter les troubles...."⁵⁷ On the same day, Alexandre Lameth also denounced those whose unconcealed object was to influence the outcome of the National Assembly's deliberations on the inviolability of the king.⁵⁸ Goupil de Préfelne and Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély delivered similar, if somewhat more declamatory, speeches on July 15 and July 16.⁵⁹ Judging from the reiterated applause that invariably accompanied these speeches, it is safe to conclude that the overwhelming majority of the Assembly's deputies shared the Constitutionalists' views.⁶⁰

However alarmist the Constitutionalists' speeches seem

to be, an examination of the evidence suggests that their fears about the agitation of the democratic clubs were not without foundation. Like most Parisians, the Constitution-
alists were aware of the fact that these clubs were calling for the deposition of the king and the replacement of the constitutional monarchy by a democratic Republic. Moreover, it was no secret that they were challenging the Constituent Assembly's authority to rule on Louis XVI's inviolability,⁶¹ a question that was obviously of considerable constitutional significance. But these petitions were not, it seems, the primary source of the Constitution-
alists' anxiety. What especially disturbed them was the democrats' apparent willingness to accomplish their goals through the use of force.

The democratic clubs in fact started to issue threats to the National Assembly in mid-July, after they learned of the constitutionalist-dominated committees' intention to support Louis XVI's inviolability. According to Marcel Reinhard, on July 8, the Parisian popular societies announced their decision to rid themselves of the king and the National Assembly.⁶² On the same day, moreover, a proposal was adopted in the Société des Arts to force the government to dethrone Louis XVI by surrounding the manège.⁶³ On July 9, the Cordeliers Club posted a petition throughout Paris which indirectly threatened the National Assembly with an insurrection if Louis XVI was allowed to remain on the throne.⁶⁴ In its Adresse of July 11, which according to the ideas of

the period was, as Mathiez himself writes, "...un acte de quasi rebellion,"⁶⁵ the Cordeliers Club invited the French people to dissolve the National Assembly, to elect a Convention and to establish a democratic Republic. The authors of this address asserted that the deputies of the National Constituent Assembly "...ne vous [i.e., the French people] conviennent plus, et ... la prolongation abusive et arbitraire du terme de leur mission vous avertissent de retirer vos pouvoirs et de les transmettre en des mains plus pures."⁶⁶ Two days later, on July 13, the Fraternal Society of Two Sexes issued an Adresse au peuple français which made a similar, though less threatening, appeal to the nation. After denouncing the "corrupt" committees which (in their greed for rewards from the Civil List) supported inviolability and completely ignored the French people's universal desire for the king to be punished, the writers of this long address advised the nation to take back "...l'exercice du pouvoir souverain,..." and to prohibit the Assembly from judging the king until the results of a national referendum on his fate were known.⁶⁷ On the same day, the Halles Club voted to send some of its members to the Champ de Mars on July 14. Their instructions were to unite the people attending the meeting at the Champ de Mars and then to surround the manège.⁶⁸

The democratic journalists were even less restrained than their counterparts in the clubs. Editors of such papers as the Révolutions de Paris, the Patriote français, the

Orateur du peuple, the Ami du peuple and the Journal universel time and again invited the Parisians to revolt against the constituted authorities.⁶⁹ The tone of these papers may be illustrated by one excerpt from an article published between July 9 and July 16 by the Révolutions de Paris:

Citoyens de toutes les villes, de tous les points de la République, éveillez-vous ... Formez-vous en assemblées primaires, ordonnez à vos corps électoraux de se réunir; faites procéder à la nomination de nouveaux représentants; envoyez-les sans délai prendre leur place, ordonnez, commandez à ceux-ci [i.e., the deputies of the National Assembly] de se retirer, faites-leur très expresse défense de rien décider sur le fait de l'évasion du 21 juin; donnez à vos députés des pouvoirs spéciaux de juger, et vous aurez justice. On n'a que de trop justes sujets de craindre que le sénat actuel ne veuille éterniser sa domination; s'il résiste, il est des cas où l'insurrection est le plus saint des devoirs.⁷⁰ (Chaumette's italics.)

In this atmosphere, it is, to say the least, not surprising that the Constitutionnalists should have condemned the actions of the democrats.

As might be expected, the National Assembly was concerned about the extralegal agitation of the Parisian societies and clubs. Contrary to the decree of May 18, 1791, these clubs continued to publish and post "collective" petitions;⁷¹ and the "requests" and "demands" made in the petitions drawn up during this period apparently substantiated the assertions advanced by Dandré and Alexandre Lameth on July 13. However, it was not until the clubs' threats were accompanied by violent demonstrations that the Constitutionnalists asked for stringent measures to be taken to restore public order.

On the morning of July 15, it appears that a proposal

to exterminate the officers of the National Guard of Paris received the overwhelming support of the people assembled at the Champ de Mars.⁷² Later that day, a large number of people led by Le Franc, a member of the Cordeliers Club, and Richard⁷³ tried to storm the Rue Dauphine entrance of the manège. In actuality, this was a repetition of what had taken place on the previous day. On July 15, Bailly made numerous unsuccessful attempts to persuade the people surrounding the manège to leave the area. After several incendiary motions and several attacks on the national guardsmen protecting the National Assembly, Bailly was finally compelled to order the dispersal of the crowd. The guardsmen succeeded in protecting the independence of the Assembly's deliberations; but they had to make several arrests.⁷⁴ Later that evening, a meeting of the Parisian popular and fraternal societies at the Palais Royal, which had been organized eight days earlier by the Friends of Truth, resulted in the adoption of a resolution never to recognize the inviolability decree passed by the National Assembly.⁷⁵ After this meeting, between four and eight thousand of the Palais Royal spectators took part in violent demonstrations as they marched through the streets of Paris and forced the closure of the theatres that crossed their path.⁷⁶ According to Braesch, the authorities had substantial reasons for fearing the consequences of such meetings.⁷⁷

It was in the aftermath of the events of July 15, when the threats of the democrats and republicans in the clubs and

the press coincided with violent demonstrations, some of which were known to be led by members of the Cordeliers Club, that Dandré, in a speech before the National Assembly on July 16, requested that steps be taken to put an end to the lawlessness that plagued the capital. "L'Assemblée montrera en ce moment le même courage contre les ennemis de la révolution en sens contraire," he declared, "qu'elle a montré contre les valets du despotisme."⁷⁸ Even though only some of the illustrative evidence has been cited here, it is evident that Dandré's anxieties were well-founded. Thus on the evening of July 16, Charles Lameth, who was president of the Assembly at the time, instructed the officers of the municipal and departmental governments of Paris, the public prosecutors and the ministers that the National Constituent Assembly did not want them to tolerate any unrest connected with criminal resistance to the law. As a consequence, he ordered them to employ "...tous les moyens que la constitution vous a remis de les [i.e., the disorders] réprimer, pour en connaître et faire punir les auteurs, pour mettre la tranquillité des citoyens à l'abri de toute atteinte."⁷⁹

The passage of the inviolability decree did not temper the democrats' determination to secure the deposition of the king. Although the Jacobin Club did reluctantly withdraw its support from the petition of July 15-16 after learning that Louis XVI's suspension had been lifted, the Cordeliers Club and the fraternal societies refused to abandon their crusade

for the establishment of a democratic République. On the evening of July 16, one of the presiding officers at the Cordeliers Club announced that a petition not to recognize the inviolability decree was going to be signed at the Champ de Mars on the following day.⁸⁰ Upon hearing this, a member warned that Bailly was authorized to deploy the red flag (to proclaim martial law) and that Lafayette was ready to shoot them at the first opportunity. An unidentified member subsequently moved that the Cordeliers show up at the Champ de Mars with arms to repel Lafayette's attack. According to the testimony of three men who attended this meeting, the unidentified man's proposal was enthusiastically applauded by the club.⁸¹ Elsewhere, the president of the Indigent Club instructed his colleagues to collect rocks and sand and to use these weapons against the National Guard.⁸² In addition, La Poype advised his fellow club members at the Fraternal Society of Two Sexes to go to the Champ de Mars equipped with hidden arms.⁸³ It is therefore evident that some of the major democratic clubs planned to resist the municipal government's "expected" proclamation of martial law by force of arms; and these plans were clearly seditious. It is not known whether the municipal authorities were informed of all these motions; but they did know about the proposal that was adopted at the Cordeliers Club on the evening of July 16.⁸⁴

The National Assembly's letter to the municipal government on July 17 ordering rigorous steps to be taken to

maintain or restore public tranquillity thus seems fully understandable. The decision to send this letter was reached after the Assembly learned of the two murders that had occurred earlier that day at the Gros Caillou, near the Champ de Mars. Admittedly, the news of these crimes had been reported in a deliberately exaggerated manner by one of the deputies, whose identity cannot, unfortunately, be ascertained. This deputy had asserted that two "good" citizens had been slain for urging the people assembled at the Champ de Mars to obey the law.⁸⁵ For his part, Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély also claimed that he had heard this rumor; he argued that whether or not the unidentified deputy's account of the facts was exact, it was imperative that those who had committed these crimes be arrested and punished. It is often alleged that at this point, in a fit of reaction, Regnaud demanded that the red flag be deployed. As a matter of fact, the indignation of the Assembly had been aroused by the news of the murders; but Regnaud did not ask for martial law to be proclaimed. What he said was that "...si le désordre continue, je demanderai la proclamation de la loi martiale."⁸⁶ He then requested that the Assembly's president, Treilhard, find out the facts surrounding the murders so that the necessary steps could be taken.⁸⁷ Considering the pitch of emotion in the National Assembly at that time, Regnaud's motion was both reasonable and moderate. Treilhard consequently informed the mayor of the rumored killings at the Gros Caillou and requested that the Assembly

be furnished with a complete report of the facts regarding this incident. He also ordered that "...les mesures les plus sûres et les plus vigoureuses..." be taken "...pour arrêter ces désordres et en connaître les auteurs."⁸⁸

The Constitutionalist's speeches during this period admittedly reveal a high degree of hostility on their part towards the leaders of the democratic movement. This is not surprising when consideration is given to the fact that from their standpoint the agitation of the democratic clubs posed a serious threat to the constitutional monarchy. There is evidence, nevertheless, which suggests that the Constitutionalist's also became embittered to a certain extent by personal considerations. During this period, the democrats repeatedly insinuated that the Constitutionalist's defended the inviolability of Louis XVI because they were ambitious, thirsty for power and greedy. One democratic newspaper, the Courrier de Gorsas, described them as the "...amis de la liste civile."⁸⁹ In Annales patriotiques, Carra referred to the Constitutionalist's as "...les rois de la quatrième race."⁹⁰ These insinuations did on occasion evoke a response from the Constitutionalist's. On July 14, Duport ridiculed those who, in order to destroy the credibility of the Constitutionalist's, "...ont osé supposer des motifs personnels aux défenseurs de l'autorité royale."⁹¹ In his speech before the Assembly on the next day, Goupil de Préfelne censured those who, in their "criminal" f

pamphlets and speeches, claimed that "...certains députés ont de bonnes raisons pour demander un gouvernement où il y a une liste civile."⁹² The Assembly exploded in applause when Goupil challenged these men to provide the national representatives with good reasons for breaking the "...serment que nous avons fait d'achever la Constitution et de la maintenir."⁹³

It would seem that apart from political considerations, the Constitutionals' hostile speeches stemmed mainly from certain journalists' attempts to persuade the people of Paris to assassinate governmental authorities. Marat and Fréron, the editors of the Ami du peuple and the Orateur du peuple respectively, were the most violent of these journalists. On June 22, Marat exhorted his readers to slay the ministers, Bailly, Lafayette and the traitors in the National Assembly. He also urged them to seize "...ce moment pour détruire l'organisation de votre garde nationale."⁹⁴ On the same day, Fréron derided the Parisians for not having killed Bailly and Lafayette; and he, too, encouraged them to exterminate their enemies.⁹⁵ Marat launched another of his countless attacks on the Constitutionals on July 8: "Quant aux députés du peuple qui ont vendu au despote les droits de la nation, aux Sieyès, aux Chapelier, aux Duport, aux Target, aux Thouret, etc., empalez-les tout vivants, et qu'ils soient exposés sur les créneaux du Sénat pendant trois jours aux regards du peuple."⁹⁶ On the morning of July 17, Marat called on Scévola to stab Lafayette.⁹⁷ Mutius Scévola was apparently a secret society of thirty persons

which, shortly after the king's evasion, sent a threatening letter to the president of the National Assembly. In this letter, the Scévola society demanded that Louis XVI stand trial and that Bailly and Lafayette be arrested. In addition, it warned the president to read its letter to the Assembly "...s'il ne voulait pas être compté lui-même au nombre des tyrans et grossir leur liste d'une victime de plus."⁹⁸ After the Champ de Mars massacre, a copy of this letter was found in Fréron's possession; it was also discovered that another copy had been sent to the Cordeliers Club.⁹⁹ Considering the violence of the attacks launched by journalists like Marat and Fréron, the Constitutionals' hostility towards the democratic press seems completely understandable.

Apparently the only piece of evidence involving a deputy of the National Assembly in a deliberate attempt to inflame opinion against the democrats concerns an event which occurred outside the confines of the manège. In an article published in Le postillon par Calais on July 16, Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély inserted a petition which he claimed had been drawn up by one of the democratic clubs but which either he or one of his associates actually fabricated. In this article, Regnaud made the fraudulent assertion that this petition had been severely criticized in the manège by the president of the National Assembly.¹⁰⁰ Regnaud's obvious aim in inventing this story was to turn his readers against the democrats. However, his conduct in connection with this deceitful article cannot

alone be used as proof that the Assembly's deputies promoted a spirit of confrontation during this period. Certainly they cannot be held collectively responsible for Regnaud's behavior. Furthermore, there does not appear to be any evidence that Regnaud had any ties either with the Triumvirate or with the members of the Constitutional Committee, the men whose conduct in 1791 has been studied in this thesis.

In conclusion, it would seem that the National Assembly's measures to restore public order in Paris prior to the Champ de Mars massacre were defensible. The national deputies understandably denounced the illegal and sometimes seditious agitation of the Parisian political societies during this period; and there is apparently no firm evidence that they made these denunciations for the purpose of promoting a repression of their political opponents. Indeed the evidence suggests that they delayed the adoption of rigorous measures to keep the peace until the passage of the inviolability decree and until the violent demonstrations of the democrats started to threaten the security of the government. There appear to be good reasons, therefore, to question the view that the Constitutionalists possessed machiavellian designs to destroy the democratic movement during this period. A closer examination of the evidence suggests that the conduct of the Constitutionalists can best be understood as a spontaneous reaction to the seditious activities of the Jacobins and the democratic clubs in accordance with their desire to preserve the constitutional monarchy.

CHAPTER IV NOTES

¹A commentary of these petitions can be found in François Braesch's "Les pétitions du Champ de Mars (15, 16, 17 juillet 1791)," Revue historique, Vol. 142 (1923), pp. 192-209, and Vol. 143 (1923), pp. 1-39 (Hereinafter referred to as Les pétitions du Champ de Mars); see also Albert Mathiez's Le club des Cordeliers, pp. 44-150, and his "Le massacre et le procès du Champ de Mars: 17 juillet-13 septembre 1791" in Annales révolutionnaires, III (1924), pp. 2-58. (Hereinafter referred to as Le massacre et le procès).

²For an informative account of the attitude taken by the Jacobin Club, see Aulard's Société des Jacobins, II, meeting of June 26, pp. 546-54; June 27, pp. 564-65; June 30, pp. 563-67; July 8, pp. 598, 606; July 10, pp. 608-26.

³See the Serment tyrannicide du club des Cordeliers (June 21); the Adresse du club des Cordeliers à l'Assemblée nationale (June 22); Affiche: Trente millions à gagner: Avis aux Français (July 1); Demande d'ouvriers auprès de l'assemblée de la section du Théâtre-Français (July 7); Adresse à l'Assemblée nationale de la société fraternelle des Halles (July 13) in Lacroix, Actes de la Commune, V, 113-14, 373-78, 385; see also the petition of July 17 in Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, XI, 114-15.

⁴Braesch identifies the men who drew up this petition from Anthoine's list (Anthoine presided over the meeting of July 15, during which the decision to write the petition was made): Brissot, Lanthenas, Danton, Sergent, Ducancel and Laclos. See Les pétitions du Champ de Mars, Vol. 142, p. 201, and Vol. 143, pp. 1-2; the petition of July 16 is reproduced in Lacroix, op.cit., V, 394; lists of those who joined the Feuillant Club on July 16 and July 18 are printed in Augustin Challamel's Les clubs contre-révolutionnaires: cercles, sociétés, salons, réunions, cafés, restaurants et librairies, Collection de documents relatifs à l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution française (Paris: L. Cerf, 1895. Paris: Charles Noblet, 1895; Paris: Maison Quantin, 1895), pp. 286-93. (Hereinafter referred to as Les clubs contre-révolutionnaires).

⁵Lacroix, op.cit., V, 406; the petition of July 17 is reproduced on pp. 431-32.

⁶Most historians accept this figure. However, this is merely speculation. The "official" report indicates eleven or twelve dead, ten or twelve wounded. A municipal officer, Filleul, counted thirteen bodies transported to the Hospital of the Gros Caillou. A fayettist pamphlet dated July 18 listed ten dead, twenty wounded. Marat came up with the implausible figure of 400 dead thrown into the Seine (July 20). At Bailly's trial, P. Nicolas Chrétien, a witness of the massacre, listed nineteen dead. Chaumette's Révolutions de Paris contended

that there were fifty deaths. See Mathiez, Le massacre et le procès, p. 15.

⁷Michon, Parti feuillant, p. 271.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, pp. 191-92.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 108, 126-27.

¹²Ibid., p. 134.

¹³Historians' opinions on the Champ de Mars massacre are presented in Chapter 1, pp. 3-29.

¹⁴Michon uses footnotes in this chapter, but not to support his assertions regarding the origins of the Feuillant Club. See Parti feuillant, Chapter 12, pp. 271-85.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 274; Pétion's speech is reproduced in Aulard's Société des Jacobins, III, 26-28.

¹⁶Barnave, Oeuvres de Barnave, I, 137-42.

¹⁷As quoted in Bradby, The Life of Barnave, II, 194.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹The Adresse (July 17) is printed in Challamel's Les clubs contre-révolutionnaires, pp. 323-25; the Declaration is summarized by Michon (with no indication of the date) in Parti feuillant, p. 274.

²⁰Challamel, op.cit., p. 324. In this study, the term "Feuillants" refers to all those who joined the Feuillant Club, and this includes the Constitutionalists and deputies from the extreme Left. The term "Jacobins" identifies those members of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution who stayed with the Jacobin Club after the split and supported the petition of July 15-16.

²¹Ibid.

²²Aulard, Société des Jacobins, I, xxviii-xxxiii.

²³Challamel, op.cit., p. 324.

²⁴Aulard, op.cit., II, 588-89.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 566-68.

²⁶Aulard, Société des Jacobins, III, 15.

²⁷Ibid., p. 27.

²⁸Ibid., II, meeting of June 22, 1791, p. 541.

²⁹Ibid., meeting of July 1, p. 574.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., meeting of July 6, p. 587.

³²Ibid., pp. 587-88.

³³As quoted in Michon, Parti feuillant, p. 274.

³⁴For the Jacobins' version of the schism, see the Adresse de la Société des amis de la constitution séante aux Jacobins de Paris aux Sociétés affiliées (July 18) in Aulard, op.cit., III, 30-32.

³⁵Ibid., meeting of July 15, pp. 16-17.

³⁶Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, 331-32.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Braesch, Les pétitions du Champ de Mars, Vol. 142, pp. 195, 200.

⁴⁰Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, 377.

⁴¹Braesch, op.cit., Vol. 143, pp. 12-13.

⁴²Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 341; Moniteur, IX, 146; Braesch, op.cit., pp. 11-12.

⁴³This is the petition of July 15, drawn up by Massoulard. See Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, XI, 80-82; see also Braesch's comments, op.cit., Vol. 142, pp. 195-96.

⁴⁴Mathiez, op.cit., pp. 120, 283.

⁴⁵Lacroix, Actes de la Commune, V, 391. This is a quotation which Lacroix reproduced from the Bouche de Fer's article of July 18 on the Assemblée fédérative des amis de la vérité.

⁴⁶Aulard, Société des Jacobins, III, 15-18.

⁴⁷Lacroix, op.cit., V, 394.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 391.

- ⁴⁹Braesch, Les pétitions du Champ de Mars, Vol. 142, pp. 200-01.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 200-01, and Vol. 143, pp. 1, 6-7; Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 121; Reinhard, La chute de la royauté, p. 144.
- ⁵¹Braesch, op.cit., Vol. 143, pp. 1-2.
- ⁵²Ibid., pp. 12-13.
- ⁵³Reinhard, op.cit., p. 147.
- ⁵⁴Challamel, Les clubs contre-révolutionnaires, pp. 286-93.
- ⁵⁵Moniteur, IX, 146.
- ⁵⁶Mathiez, op.cit., p. 341.
- ⁵⁷Moniteur, IX, 120.
- ⁵⁸Ibid.
- ⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 133-34, 146.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 120, 133-34, 145-47.
- ⁶¹See the petitions of June 24, July 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 in Lacroix, op.cit., V, 373-74, 378-86, 394, 431. The petition of July 15 is briefly discussed in Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, XI, 80-82.
- ⁶²Reinhard, op.cit., p. 141.
- ⁶³Ibid., the manège was a building that was originally used for the exercise of the horses in Louis XV's riding school; in 1789 it became the meeting place of the National Constituent Assembly.
- ⁶⁴Lacroix, op.cit., p. 380.
- ⁶⁵Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 108.
- ⁶⁶Lacroix, op.cit., pp. 381-82.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 383-84.
- ⁶⁸Mathiez, op.cit., p. 108. At the Fraternal Society of Two Sexes, a proposal for an insurrection against the government was rejected on July 14.
- ⁶⁹Reinhard, op.cit., p. 141.
- ⁷⁰As quoted in Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 109.

⁷¹Braesch, Les pétitions du Champ de Mars, Vol. 143, p. 118.

⁷²Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, p. 246.

⁷³Richard was arrested for murdering the men who were discovered under the Altar of the country on July 17. See Mathiez, op.cit., pp. 366, 371.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 365.

⁷⁵Lacroix, Actes de la Commune, V, 391.

⁷⁶Mathiez, op.cit., pp. 117-20.

⁷⁷Braesch, op.cit., Vol. 142, pp. 142, 196.

⁷⁸Moniteur, IX, 145-46.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 147.

⁸⁰This is undoubtedly a reference to the petition of July 15-16.

⁸¹Mathiez, op.cit., see the testimonies of Etienne-Jean Lamy, Antoine Bonneau and Jean-George Du Gardin, pp. 240-43.

⁸²Ibid., see the testimonies of Nicolas Schouler and Léonard Schryers, pp. 344-45.

⁸³Ibid., see the testimony of Alexis Causel, pp. 343-44.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 240-43.

⁸⁵Moniteur, IX, 152.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Lacroix, op.cit., p. 413.

⁸⁹As quoted in Challamel, Les clubs contre-révolutionnaires, p. 335.

⁹⁰As quoted in Challamel, op.cit., p. 341.

⁹¹Archives parlementaires, XXVIII, 266.

⁹²Moniteur, IX, 134.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴As quoted in Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, X, 287-88.

⁹⁵As quoted in Lacroix, Actes de la Commune, V, 71.

⁹⁶Lebègue, La vie et l'oeuvre d'un Constituant: Thouret: 1746-1794, p. 268.

⁹⁷Mathiez, Le massacre et le procès, p. 3.

⁹⁸Buchez and Roux, Histoire parlementaire, X, 418.

⁹⁹Mathiez, Le club des Cordeliers, see Bernard's Conclusions, p. 362.

¹⁰⁰The author of this fabricated petition demanded that Louis XVI be brought to trial and denounced the supporters of executive inviolability as traitors. Speaking on behalf of the nation, he demanded that the king's fate be decided by the people in a national referendum and threatened to overthrow the government if the demands set forth in the petition were not met. The demands and threats made in this fabricated petition were believable because the democratic clubs had already made them in their own petitions. See Lacroix, op.cit., 397-98.

CONCLUSION

The evidence reviewed in the preceding chapters suggests very strongly that on the whole historians have been excessively hostile to the Constitutionals in so far as their conduct between April and July 1791 is concerned. This in turn would indicate that a revision of the major generalizations connected with the subject is in order. From our examination of the events of the spring and summer of 1791, it would seem that the conduct of the Constitutionals can best be understood as a sincere and consistent effort on their part to establish the constitutional monarchy and thereby to bring the Revolution of 1789 to a peaceful conclusion. On the other hand, there is apparently no need to postulate ulterior motives of self-interest or counterrevolutionary intent in their endeavor to consolidate the new regime.

The Constitutionals do not appear to have reversed or altered their constitutional policies during the spring of 1791. There is no firm evidence that the Triumvirate ever entered into an alliance either with the Court or with Lafayette; and in so far as its unsuccessful negotiations with them are concerned, they seem to have been undertaken in the hope that an agreement with the Fayettistes and with Louis XVI, whose cooperation was a major precondition for the success of the

new government, would facilitate the consolidation of the Constitution of 1791. That the Triumvirate should attempt to reach these agreements at a time when the Constitution was rapidly nearing completion is not in the least surprising. Certainly no trustworthy evidence has been produced that would substantiate the view that the Triumvirate and the Fayettistes, either in a treaty with the Court or in agreement among themselves, contemplated sacrificing the principles and laws they had fought so hard to establish. Their support of the legislation of May 18 and June 14 can be seen as a necessary attempt to restore lawful government in accordance with the principles set forth in the Constitution.

Louis XVI's flight and his subsequent arrest in the town of Varennes produced the first major crisis of the French Revolution in late June 1791. It was during this period that the Constitutionalist made the most difficult and by far the most important political decision of their political careers. On July 15, after three days of debate, they resolved to keep Louis XVI on the throne. As we have seen (Chapter 1), historians generally describe the inviolability decree as impractical and cite it as a clear example of the political incompetence of the moderates. It would seem, nonetheless, that the Constitutionalist had good reasons to support the inviolability decree and to be optimistic that they could establish a lasting constitutional monarchy with Louis XVI as king. Their constitutional principles and laws precluded them from

dethroning and prosecuting the king. Their defense of his inviolability, however, seems to have stemmed mainly from their desire to maintain the constitutional monarchy, which in their estimation was the only form of government that could ensure both the liberty and stability of the French Empire. In resolving to save Louis XVI, the Constitutionals in effect elected to bring the Revolution to a halt; and herein lies the significance of their decision. It seems premature to condemn them for failing to proclaim the democratic Republic, a regime which in their view would ultimately lead to a return of despotic government in France and which only a small fraction of the French population desired. At any rate, the inviolability decree in all likelihood spared France from the strife connected with civil war and foreign invasion, a situation that it was not prepared to face at that time.

The Constitutionals seem to have had sufficient cause to believe that the king would remain loyal to his oaths after the flight. The manifesto of June 20 had admittedly revealed Louis XVI's profound dissatisfaction with the Constitution. From the Constitutionals' standpoint, however, the flight had demonstrated to the king that his only reasonable course of action was to submit to the Revolution, to unite with the French nation (and break away from the aristocratic order) in support of the Constitution. The Constitutionals were apparently convinced that his hostility to the new regime would disappear once the Revolution had been brought to an end and

he realized the extent of the authority that had been left to him by the Constitution. The Court's voluntary request for advice from the Triumvirate and its apparent willingness to follow that advice understandably instilled confidence in Barnave, Duport and Alexandre Lameth that the Constitution could be firmly consolidated. The Constitutionalists undoubtedly understood the risk they took in keeping Louis XVI on the throne. However, from their point of view, upholding executive inviolability was much less risky than establishing the democratic Republic.

The Constitutionalists apparently did not possess any machiavellian designs either to weaken or to destroy the democratic movement after the passage of the inviolability decree. There is no firm evidence in support of the long-standing assertion that the Triumvirate plotted to divide the Jacobin Club on July 16. The evidence seems to show conclusively that the Jacobins' violation of the club's rules produced a schism in the Society of the Friends of the Constitution that was made permanent by their decision to support the petition of July 15-16, which the Assembly's deputies, including prominent members of the extreme Left, viewed as seditious. Similarly, there is apparently no solid evidence that the national deputies intentionally promoted a repression of their political adversaries during this period. The measures they adopted on July 16 and July 17 seem to have been both necessary and moderate. The evidence reviewed in Chapter 4 suggests that the conduct

of the Constitutionals on July 16 and July 17 can best be understood as a spontaneous reaction to the illegal and increasingly threatening agitation of the democrats in accordance with their desire to preserve the constitutional monarchy.

The last duty performed by the National Constituent Assembly before its session ended was the revision of the Constitution. After Thouret read the "revised" Constitutional Act to the Assembly on August 5, it was evident that the Constitutionals had effected some changes in the decrees related to the status of the king and of the Royal Family. On August 10, on behalf of the Constitutional and Revision Committees, Thouret proposed the modification of a decree which he himself had sponsored a few months earlier. He requested that the king no longer be designated as the first "fonctionnaire" of the country and that, like the legislature, he be given the title of "representative of the nation."¹ It was not difficult for the Constitutionals to convince the Assembly that this title was a more accurate reflection of the king's actual duties. The king was a representative, they argued, because in negotiating treaties with foreign powers and vetoing legislation, he in effect made important decisions on behalf of the nation. For his part, Barnave warned that if only the legislature represented the people, it would sooner or later become a constituent body because it alone would be entrusted with the nation's powers.² The National Assembly agreed; and the committees' proposal was

adopted on the same day. The Constitutionnalists succeeded in securing enough support for a decree that provided all successors to the crown with the title of "French Prince"; but they failed in their bid to persuade the Assembly to restore the king's power to grant pardons.³

The most important changes recommended by the Constitutionnalists, and the ones which received the most lengthy and passionate discussion, concerned the relations between the executive and the legislative branches of the government. Not without surprise, the Constitutionnalists asked for the repeal of the Four years law, and they proposed that ministers be allowed to sit and to express their views freely in the legislature. On August 14, the Constitutionnalists outlined what they considered as the major drawback of the Four years law. Under this law, they claimed, "...les pouvoirs sont tellement divisés que le parti du pouvoir exécutif et le parti de la législature fassent deux pouvoirs dans l'Etat;...."⁴ They warned that this increased the danger of dividing the nation between the partisans of the Court and those of the legislature. The eventual outcome of such a situation would be that the stronger of the two powers would assume despotic control over the government.⁵ The success of the Constitution could not be ensured, they argued, unless there was some degree of harmony between the executive and the legislative powers, unless the king's authority was identified with the will of a majority of Frenchmen. They asserted that this could be

achieved by allowing the king to select legislative deputies as his ministers. This would not be destructive of liberty because the king would of necessity select his ministers from the dominant party in the legislature, thus leaving a vigilant opposition party to scrutinize the activities of the ministers. The Constitutionalists warned that the Constitution would be overturned unless the Four years law was revoked. The National Assembly, however, persisted in its support of a rigid definition of the separation of powers; consequently, it rejected the Constitutionalists' proposal.⁷ It did support a modified version of the motion allowing ministers to address the legislature.⁸

The revision proposals reviewed above do not indicate a major shift in the Constitutionalists' views on the monarchy; but they do suggest a desire to increase the prestige and authority of the king. While it is true that their proposals to restore Louis XVI's right to grant pardons and to designate the king as a representative of the nation were at variance with their previous positions on these matters, they were relatively minor in importance. The Constitutionalists apparently wanted to make the Constitution more acceptable to the king. Their position on the Four years law demonstrated their desire to revoke an important constitutional decree that had met with the Assembly's complete approval. However, this did not represent a change in the Constitutionalists' outlook: they had opposed the Four years law since April 7, 1791. In any event,

Barnave's secret letter of July 31, 1791 to the Count of Artois, in which the latter was urged to submit to the Revolution or forfeit his claim to the throne, clearly shows that the Constitutionnalists held firmly during this period to their belief in the fundamental revolutionary principle of the sovereignty of the people: "M. le comte d'Artois reconnaitra lui-même," he wrote, "qu'une société qui se donne des lois, a le droit d'exiger que son chef les fasse exécuter; que, de près et de loin, les pouvoirs des rois viennent des nations, et que vouloir régner autrement que par la volonté des peuples légalement exprimée, serait un acte absurde, si ce n'était pas un projet impossible."⁹

If there were no significant changes in the Constitutionnalists' views on the monarchy during this period, there were alterations in their attitude towards democratic government. In the proposals they introduced on August 11, the Constitutionnalists moved to abolish the much-hated marc d'argent qualification for eligibility to the legislature. However, they also requested that qualifications for electors, administrators and local officials be raised from the payment of ten to forty days of wages in direct taxes a year (the eligibility set for the right to vote, the payment of three days of wages, was not altered).¹⁰ The intensification of electoral qualifications indicates a major turnabout on the part of the Constitutionnalists. The net effect of their proposals, which the Assembly subsequently adopted on August 12, was to shift control of the

local and departmental governments in France from the poorer classes to the more conservative, propertied middle classes. Clearly the Constitutionalists' proposals were reactionary. Their attempts to complete the Constitution coincided with the rise of the democratic movement, a movement which grew in popularity and strength after Louis XVI's flight. In all probability the illegal and sometimes seditious agitation of the Parisian political societies, which culminated in the massacre of the Champ de Mars, induced the Constitutionalists to make their reactionary electoral proposals. In any event, this appears to have been the extent of their counterrevolutionary conduct during this period.

The attempt has been made in this thesis to arrive at a more critical understanding of the history of the Constitutionalists. It would seem that the major conclusion to be drawn from our study is that there is a need for a revised assessment of the significance of the Constitutionalists in the French Revolution. It appears that with respect to the Constitutionalists' conduct in 1791, the conclusions of historians who adhere to the social and economic interpretation of the Revolution are for the most part unsatisfactory. It might be suggested as an argument worthy of consideration that their neglect of the Constitutionalists (and of the period 1789-1791) led them to misinterpret the Revolution. The findings of François Furet and Denis Richet, which first appeared in La Révolution in 1965, seem to substantiate this view.¹¹ Furet and Richet rejected

the long-standing definition of the Revolution as the struggle for the establishment of a democratic Republic.¹² To the contrary, they asserted that the advent of this form of government in 1792 represented a 'deviation' from the course of the Revolution which was made possible by a combination of extraordinary circumstances; it was an 'accident' which temporarily blocked the successful completion of the "liberal" revolution of the eighteenth century.¹³

Furet's and Richet's conception of the Revolution has a significant impact on the way in which the Constitutionalists are perceived. Historians of the orthodox social and economic school of thought generally regarded the opening phase of the Revolution as of only secondary importance and consequently dedicated most of their research to the events surrounding the rise of the First French Republic. By concluding that the Revolution was "liberal" in character, however, Furet and Richet in effect drew attention to the important years of 1789-1791. And what this implies is that the Constitutionalists, the men who endeavored to consolidate a regime based on liberal ideals, played a primary, not a secondary, role in the Revolution.

The theory of a liberal revolution of 1789-1791, put forward by Furet and Richet, is supported by the evidence reviewed in this thesis. During this period, the major goal of the Constitutionalists was the substitution of an individualistic society for one based on "corporate" privileges. The moderates wanted to establish a written constitution which would

guarantee individual liberties and abolish arbitrary distinctions. They wanted the highest positions in society to be filled by men of ability and merit, men who had all too often been subjected to the arbitrariness of the ancien régime. It is our view, and that of Furet and Richet, that in underestimating the role of liberalism in 1791, previous historians have compensated by overemphasizing social considerations in their explanations of the Constitutionalists' policies.¹⁴ For example, they interpreted the Loi Chapelier as first and foremost a piece of "class" legislation designed to oppress the working classes. Yet our research indicates that this law was enacted in order to prevent the return of "corporate" privileges and that it won the support of some radical democratic journalists. The democrats in the Constituent Assembly and the democratic press did not protest against the Loi Chapelier. Marat denounced it, but only for political reasons. In conclusion, it would seem that the Constitutionalists' desire to establish a representative, constitutional government was based primarily on ideological and political, not social, considerations.

CONCLUSION NOTES

¹Archives parlementaires, XXIX, Thouret's speech of August 10, p. 239.

²Ibid., see also Barnave's speech of August 10, p. 331.

³Gooch provides an informative review of the constitutional revisions in Parliamentary Government in France: Revolutionary Origins, 1789-1791, pp. 206-31.

⁴Moniteur, IX, Duport's speech of August 13, pp. 390-91; see also Thouret's speech on the same day, pp. 389-90.

⁵Ibid., pp. 390-91.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Gooch, op.cit., p. 215.

⁸Moniteur, IX, 407-11.

⁹Ad. Bacourt, ed., Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de la Marck pendant les années 1789, 1790 et 1791 (2 vols.; Bruxelles: Auguste Pagny, Libraire-Editeur, 1851), II, 287.

¹⁰Archives parlementaires, XXIX, 356-87, passim., meetings of August 11 and August 12. The electoral qualifications originally adopted in 1789 are discussed in note 82, p. 77 and on p. 95.

¹¹Furet and Richet, La Révolution, Vol. I: Des Etats généraux au 9 Thermidor.

¹²Ibid., pp. 171, 208, 231.

¹³Ibid., pp. 91, 137-39, 171-76, 178, 200, 208, 231.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 166, 180, 184, 200, 211, 222.

APPENDIX I

Barnave's and Alexandre Lameth's letter of July 25, 1791 to Marie-Antoinette provides a rare glimpse of the Triumvirate's relationship with the Court after the flight and of its views on the monarchy and the Constitution. It also contains a summary of the major points of its advice to the queen.

No. 4

A LA REINE

25 juillet

Le moment est arrivé où la Reine doit agir; ceux à qui elle témoigne de la confiance, sont les premiers à l'inviter, avant de faire une démarche, à s'interroger elle-même et à s'assurer que, dans la conduite qu'elle va adopter, elle ne rétrogradera, elle ne variera jamais. Elle est faite pour sentir qu'il vaudrait encore mieux ne prendre aucun parti que d'agir momentanément dans le sens qui lui seroit indiqué, pour perdre ensuite, par une conduite contraire, le fruit de ce qu'elle auroit fait et l'estime de ceux qui l'auroient conseillée. Les conseils qu'ils lui donnent sont bons; le succès en est certain, loin qu'ils puissent jamais l'engager à manquer à son caractère et à la dignité de son rang; le soin de les maintenir sera toujours une partie essentielle de la conduite qui lui sera indiquée; mais il faut avant tout être résolue à la suivre constamment.

Ce langage n'est point celui de la méfiance; c'est parce qu'on est décidé à croire à la résolution que la Reine adoptera, que l'on veut qu'elle ne doive rien à la contrainte ni à la surprise. Il est nécessaire de dire encore que ceux qui lui parlent en ce moment seront toujours adversaires généreux comme invariables amis; que si, après avoir réfléchi sur leurs conseils, la Reine se décide à les rejeter, elle n'auroit jamais à en craindre rien qui ressemble à la trahison. Pour parler ouvertement, le sentiment qui les conduit est, avant tout, l'intérêt d'une révolution dans laquelle ils ont placé leur existence et leur gloire; mais aucun motif sur la terre ne les engageroit à manquer à la confiance que l'on met en eux. Si les intérêts qui leur sont confiés étoient incompatibles avec ceux de la Reine, ils s'éloigneroient d'elle, ils ne chercheroient pas à la tromper. Ainsi, dans tous les cas, elle pourroit compter sur leur inflexible droiture; mais le courage dans le malheur a encore d'autres droits à réclamer; ce seroit être trop austères, ce seroit vouloir parer sa vertu de ce qui ne lui appartient pas que de dissimuler qu'il y a un vif intérêt, qu'il y a une douce et pure jouissance à le consoler et à le servir.

Voici maintenant les idées sur lesquelles la Reine doit méditer.

La Reine a mal jugé la révolution; elle a failli trouver sa perte dans un événement qui devoit lui être personnellement avantageux; mais il est inutile de revenir sur le passé; il faut examiner où nous en sommes et chercher le parti qu'on peut tirer de l'avenir.

La Reine seroit bien trompée, si elle pensoit que son existence personnelle est perdue en France pour toujours. Ceux qui savent juger l'opinion sans prestige et sans timidité, lui diront qu'elle est l'objet d'un ressentiment profond, mais qu'il reste toujours de grands moyens de ramener les esprits, lorsqu'on a conservé la réputation du caractère et du courage.

La Reine a excité contre elle de profonds ressentiments, mais elle a souffert, et les François sont tout près de l'intérêt pour peu qu'ils croient s'être vengés.

La Reine a surtout un avantage, c'est qu'elle a fait peu de chose pour donner le change au public sur ses véritables opinions: on l'a toujours regardée comme ennemie; elle a fait pour ainsi dire guerre ouverte, et c'est pour cela qu'on reviendrait à elle avec plus de confiance, si, par une conduite prononcée, par des choses utiles qui ne pussent pas être diversement interprétées, elle faisoit connoître clairement qu'elle a pris son parti, qu'après avoir longtemps combattu le nouvel ordre des choses, elle a fini par être éclairée, par en reconnoître l'inévitable loi et par chercher à s'y faire une place et à y acquérir de la considération.

Dans les temps de trouble, tout sert à exciter les haines et les méfiances; dans les temps de calme, tout ramène aux passions les plus douces. Le peuple françois sera bientôt fatigué de haïr; il cherchera, il désirera avec avidité de se livrer à des sentiments selon son coeur; ce sera auprès de lui un grand bienfait que de lui donner lieu à les épancher.

Qui plus que la Reine a dans son personnel ce qu'il faut pour s'emparer de ces dispositions; n'a-t-elle jamais connue cette brillante popularité? Si l'opinion a changée, au moins elle n'a jamais été à l'indifférence, et lorsque le coeur ne s'est point refroidi, il est toujours possible de le remmener: il suffit, en ce moment, d'envisager sa position d'un coup d'oeil hardi et ferme. Nous allons nous en occuper.

L'Assemblée nationale vient encore, par ses derniers décrets, de raffermir la constitution; jamais l'opinion publique n'a été plus unie, plus déterminée qu'elle ne l'est en ce moment.

L'Assemblée nationale a mis à couvert les frontières par les grandes mesures dont elle vient d'arrêter le complément et bien longtemps avant qu'une attaque vraiment redoutable pût être tentée, nous serons en état de la repousser.

Mais au milieu de nos préparatifs de guerre, nous n'en désirons pas moins la paix. Premièrement, parce que nous savons que la tranquillité intérieure ne peut être parfaitement affermie que par la cessation des inquiétudes sur l'extérieur. -Secondement, parce que nous ne pouvons nous dissimuler que la dépense qu'entraînent nos précautions défensives deviendront avec le temps extrêmement onéreuses.

Toutes les puériles inquiétudes qui nous obligent à ce grand appareil de guerre, cesseront dès qu'une des grandes puissances de l'Europe, en reconnoissant notre constitution, aura ôté tout espoir à nos émigrants et aura fait disparaître ces incertitudes sur nos rapports extérieurs.

Cette puissance quelconque se présentera et un traité se passera entre elle et nous; nous n'en pouvons douter, puisqu'il y a, dans le moment où nous sommes, un intérêt puissant et réciproque; cette puissance sera la Prusse ou l'empereur.

L'un et l'autre, la Reine le sait, ont un grand intérêt à notre alliance; l'un et l'autre jugeront bientôt, quand les affaires de France depuis le 21 juin leur seront parfaitement connues, que notre révolution est achevée, que l'autorité publique va se rétablir, que nous allons reprendre place dans les intérêts politiques, et que le moment est arrivé de s'occuper à acquérir ou à conserver notre amitié.

L'empereur est actuellement notre allié, et la Reine ne peut ignorer que de puissantes considérations politiques tendent à donner au système prussien un grand nombre de partisans. Nous n'examinerons point cette question; nous croyons, dans le moment actuel, que le système autrichien vaut mieux, parce qu'il offre un moyen puissant de rendre au Roi la confiance et la considération qu'il doit avoir; mais si l'on veut adopter ce parti, il faut s'y résoudre sans retard, lui donner l'avantage du moment et s'en assurer le mérite et la reconnaissance.

C'est à la Reine qu'appartient le rôle important dans cette négociation; placée entre la France et son frère, elle peut être utile à l'un et à l'autre, et là est le premier et le plus puissant moyen de rétablir son crédit et son existence. Elle a à faire valoir, auprès de son frère, l'attachement qu'il a pour elle et un intérêt politique évident et majeur. Elle a, dans l'attachement que Mr de Mercy lui a voué, un moyen puissant à faire agir; il faut qu'elle emploie l'un et l'autre.

Ainsi, dès à présent, écrire à l'empereur, soit pour le détourner de toute idée, quelque invraisemblable qu'elle puisse être, de se lier en ce moment à des projets hostiles contre la France, -soit pour se préparer à reconnaître la constitution, immédiatement après qu'elle aura été acceptée par le Roi, afin que l'Assemblée puisse, avant de se séparer, confirmer le traité d'alliance; presser, en outre, le retour de Mr de Mercy, pour concerter avec lui les moyens de conduire cette grande négociation à son terme. Voilà de quoi il faut s'occuper, sans perdre un moment.

On donnera à la Reine un homme habile et sûr, pour exécuter sa commission auprès de son frère; on lui indiquera quelques idées pour la lettre qu'elle doit lui adresser, si elle consent. Tout sera prêt et l'homme sera parti, avant que cette semaine soit terminée.

Quant à Mr de Mercy, comme il ne s'agit que de le décider à venir, il suffit que la Reine lui écrive qu'elle désire sa présence ici, qu'elle a acquis de grandes lumières par les derniers événements, qu'il est nécessaire qu'il arrive.

La Reine doit marquer aux personnes qui sont envoyées auprès des émigrés un désir vif et sincère que leurs missions réussissent.

Elle examinera si une lettre d'elle à la Reine de Naples peut être utile pour diriger cette cour dans les intérêts de la France; elle examinera si elle a encore quelques moyens à faire agir et nous les communiquera.

La Reine n'est pas garante du succès de ses démarches, mais on a droit d'attendre d'elle qu'elle n'adoptera point un parti foiblement et qu'elle emploiera franchement et avec chaleur tous les moyens qu'elle peut avoir pour le faire réussir. Le succès définitif de nos affaires générales est sûr, quelque route qui nous y conduise; mais il faut que la Reine y ait contribué autant qu'il sera possible; ceux qui la conseillent le veulent pour son intérêt; ils le veulent pour le plaisir qu'ils trouveront à lui devoir de la reconnaissance et à pouvoir placer en elle une confiance que rien n'altère. Pour être quelque chose après une révolution, il faut y avoir mis sa part; la Reine a encore un moment et n'a plus qu'un moment.

Marie-Antoinette va redevenir reine de France. Car il importe peu à son existence que les ministres fassent des lois contrariées par des parlements, ou que la loi, faite par l'Assemblée nationale, soit sanctionnée par le Roi à qui le veto donne un droit bien supérieur à celui qu'il a jamais réellement et personnellement exercé. Le Roi représente la nation auprès des puissances étrangères; tout se fait dans le Royaume et s'exécute en son nom; le nombre des places auxquelles il nomme, dans la diplomatie, la guerre, la marine, la justice, la finance, est encore extrêmement considérable; sa liste civile est très supérieure à la dépense d'aucun autre roi de l'Europe. Que faut-il de plus pour être Roi? Il faut que la loi s'exécute et que les désordres cessent; nous y marchons à grands pas; il faut que l'opinion et le respect public le fasse roi, comme la constitution.

La Reine ne verra point, comme autrefois, tout plier sous sa volonté souveraine et absolue, mais elle pourra encore se voir environnée de l'empressement d'une société nombreuse et des hommages d'un peuple immense. Elle pourra avoir dans les affaires une très grande influence, si la nation la croit dans ses intérêts et si ceux qui, par leur caractère, auront toujours une place marquée dans la confiance publique, peuvent ouvertement lui communiquer la leur. Dans moins d'un an, la France et Paris auront changé de face; l'aisance, l'industrie, les arts, les plaisirs auront succédé à ces désordres, à ce mal être momentané qui accompagne nécessairement une révolution; une nation faite pour jouir se dédomagera avec ardeur du temps qu'elle aura perdu. L'imagination, animée par les grands événements, multipliera les chefs d'oeuvre des arts mais l'esprit de la révolution animera ces arts et ces plaisirs; partout on verra les emblèmes; les éloges, la poésie, l'empressement public seront pour ceux qui l'auront servie, qui l'auront adoptée, qui auront su à temps y prendre leur place.

Où doit être la place de la Reine de France? Où elle doit être pour son bonheur et même pour le crédit et pour l'éclat de la Royauté.

Voilà les éléments sur lesquels il faut réfléchir, voilà où est la vérité, voilà les calculs que l'avenir ne cessera de justifier, et non des projets d'aventure où on se laisse entraîner par des hommes qui, n'ayant pas jugé la révolution, sont incapables de juger les effets de ce qu'ils entreprennent, où l'on dégrade son existence, où le succès n'aurait conduit qu'à se trouver à la merci de quelques

perssonnes, à mendier leur services, à essayer leurs humiliants caprices... .1 Mais ce moment n'est pas celui des reproches; on n'a pas même le droit d'en adresser, puisque jamais on n'avait eu l'occasion de faire entendre ces vérités qui pouvoient n'être pas connues. C'est aujourd'hui que commence la confiance; c'est aujourd'hui que commenceront les torts.

La Reine recevra demain quelques idées sur la lettre qu'elle doit écrire à l'empereur; la personne qui pourra s'en charger sera prête dans trois jours. On attend un billet d'elle.

Note 1: the periods exist in the original letter.

(Soderhjelm, ed., Correspondance secrète, pp. 54-61.)

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