

should be noted, for it suggests that the political attitudes of the *sectionnaires* had changed in the months preceding Thermidor.

One final explanation of the passive attitude of much of the populace not contained in our documentary evidence should be mentioned. Marxist historians like Albert Soboul and George Rudé have interpreted Thermidor in the light of what they consider to be the basic contradiction between the bourgeois and the popular revolutionary movements. Following the researches of Mathiez, they have pointed to the fact that the economic plight of the poor in Paris worsened steadily during the spring of 1794. At the same time, the Committee of Public Safety, never sincerely in favor of economic controls, turned an increasingly deaf ear to popular cries for higher wages to offset inflation. On 5 Thermidor the commune of Paris posted the "*maximum des salaires*," a wage schedule which fixed wages at a level below that which most workers were then receiving. This impolitic move, these historians argue, completed the alienation of the popular movement from the Committee of Public Safety.

## National Convention

9 Thermidor, Year II [27 July 1794]

*Collot d'Herbois presiding:*

*Saint-Just mounts the rostrum; he starts the same kind of discourse as the one read by Robespierre yesterday; he declares that he belongs to no party, no faction; and that though this tribunal may be for him, as it has been for many others, the Tarpeian cliff, he will nonetheless speak his opinion on the causes and the reasons for the divisions that have appeared, etc.*

*He is interrupted by Tallien, who asks the floor for a point of order.*

TALLIEN: I ask the floor for a point of order. The speaker began by saying he belonged to no faction. I say the same thing. I belong only to myself, to liberty. It is for that reason that I am going to make the truth clear. No good citizen can restrain his tears at the sad fate to which the public weal has been abandoned. Everywhere there are divisions. Yesterday a member of the government was left quite isolated, and made a speech in his own name; today another has done the same thing. They are coming to attack one another, to aggravate the ills of the fatherland, to hurl it into the abyss. I demand that the veil be entirely torn away. (*Very lively applause, repeated in three successive waves.*)

BILLAUD-VARENNE: I ask the floor for a point of order. Yesterday the Jacobin Society was packed with planted agents; none of them had membership cards; and yesterday there was deployed in that Society a plan for strangling the National Convention. (*A movement of horror.*) Yesterday I saw men openly vomit out the most terrible slanders against those who have never deviated from the revolution.

On the Mountain I see one of those men who threatened the representatives of the people. There he is. . . . (*Cries from everywhere: Arrest him! Arrest him! The individual is seized and carried out of the room amidst the liveliest applause.*)

The time has come to speak the truth. . . . I am amazed to see Saint-Just at the rostrum after what has happened. He had promised the two committees to submit his speech to them before reading it and even to suppress it if it seemed dangerous to them. The assembly will ill judge events and its circumstances if it blinds itself to the fact that it is between two kinds of butchery. If it is weak it will perish. (*No, no! cry all the members, rising together and brandishing their hats. The*

*Le Moniteur universel*, XXI, 331-43 (Editions of 11 and 12 Thermidor).

*gallery responds with applause and cries of Long live the Convention! Long live the Committee of Public Safety!*)

*Le Bas asks for the floor; he is told it belongs to Billaud-Varenne; he insists, and causes trouble.*

DELMAS: I move that Le Bas be called to order.

*The motion is adopted.*

*Le Bas again insists.*

ALL THE MEMBERS: Either he obeys, or off to the scaffold with him.

BILLAUD-VARENNE: I myself ask that all men explain themselves before this assembly. One is strong when he has justice, probity, and the rights of the people on his side. You will shudder with horror when you learn what situation you are in; when you learn that the armed forces are in the hands of murderers; when you learn that the chief of the National Guard has been denounced to the Committee of Public Safety as an accomplice of Hébert and an infamous conspirator. You will shudder with horror when you learn that they who accuse the government of putting nobles and conspirators at the head of the armed forces are the very individuals who pressured us to put in the few nobles who are there; and Lavallette, the conspirator of Lille, is one proof of it. You will shudder with horror when you learn that there is a man who, when the question came up of sending representatives of the people to the *départements*, was unable to find twenty members of the Convention who were worthy of that mission on the list presented to him. (*The assembly murmurs with indignation.*) Let me say more: there have been complaints of the oppression of patriots. For sure, you will have a strange impression of this complaint when you learn that he who made it has caused the arrest of the best revolutionary committee in Paris, that of the Indivisibility *section*, even though only two of its members had been denounced. (*Renewed murmurs.*)

When Robespierre tells you that he left the Committee because he was suppressed there, he must avoid telling you everything; he does not tell you that after he had had his way in the Committee for six months, he came up against resistance at the moment when he, alone, wanted to revive the decree of 22 Prairial—that decree which in the impure hands which he had chosen could be so fatal for patriots. (*Indignant murmurs continue.*) Know, citizens, that yesterday the president of the Revolutionary Tribunal openly proposed to the Jacobins that they should drive all impure men from the Convention, which is to say all those whom they wanted as sacrifices; but the people exist, and patriots will know how to die to save liberty (Yes! Yes! *cry all the members.*—*Lively applause.*)

I repeat: we shall die with honor, all of us; for I do not believe that there can be a single representative here who would live under a tyrant. (No! No! *cries from all parts of the hall; death to the tyrants!—Prolonged applause.*) The men who talk endlessly to the Convention or to the Jacobins of Justice and of virtue are the very ones who trample them beneath their feet when they can do it; here is proof. A secretary to the Committee of Public Safety had stolen 114,000 livres. I demanded his arrest; and Robespierre, who talks incessantly of justice and of virtue, is the one person who prevented his arrest. (*Renewed movements of indignation.*)

There are, citizens, a thousand other facts I could cite; and it is us that he accuses! What! men who are isolated, who know nobody, who spend their nights and days in the Committee of Public Safety, who organize our victories, these men are supposed to be conspirators! And those who did not abandon Hébert until it was no longer possible for them to back him, they are supposed to be men of virtue! The first time I denounced Danton in the Committee Robespierre rose up like a wild man, saying he knew my intentions, saying I wanted to ruin the best patriots. All this made me see the abyss that was dug beneath our feet. There is no need to hesitate between filling it with our bodies and triumphing over traitors. We must not hesitate to fill it with our bodies, or [else?] triumph over traitors.

They meant to destroy, to mutilate the Convention; and that intention was so concrete that they had organized a spy system among the representatives of the people whom they wanted to destroy. It is infamous to talk of justice and virtue when you defy them, and when you speak out only when you have been arrested or contradicted.

*Robespierre rushes toward the rostrum.*

A GREAT MANY VOICES: Down, down with the tyrant!

TALLIEN: Just now I demanded that the veil be torn away. Now I have seen this done, completely—seen the conspirators unmasked, seen that they will soon be destroyed, and that liberty will triumph. (*Lively applause.*) Everything points to the fall of the enemy of the national representation, under its blows. We are giving proof of our republican loyalty to our infant Republic. Heretofore I have imposed silence upon myself because I knew that the man who was close to becoming the tyrant of France had made a list of proscribed persons. I wanted no recriminations; but yesterday I observed the session at the Jacobins; I trembled for the fatherland; I saw the army of the new Cromwell forming; and I armed myself with a dagger to pierce him to the heart if the National Convention should not have the courage to accuse him.

Republicans, let us accuse him with the loyalty of courage, in the presence of the French people. It is well to enlighten the citizens and those who frequent the Jacobin tribunes are no more attached to Robespierre than to any other individual, but to liberty. (*Applause.*) I am not going to make my attacks in particular anymore; I am calling the attention of the Convention to this vast conspiracy.\* I have no doubt that it will take energetic and immediate steps; that it will remain here permanently to save the people; and whatever the partisans of the man I denounce may have said, there will be no proscriptions; national justice alone will strike the villains down. (*Lively applause.*) And as it is of the utmost importance that the citizens be not misled amidst the dangers which surround the fatherland, and that the chiefs of the armed forces be unable to do harm, I ask for the arrest of Hanriot and his staff. Then we will take up the decree which was rendered on the sole authority of the man we are dealing with. We are not moderates, but we do not want innocence to be oppressed. We want the president of the Revolutionary Tribunal to treat accused men with decency and justice. (*Renewed applause.*) That is true virtue; that is true probity.

Yesterday a member of the Revolutionary Tribunal tried to incite the citizenry to insult a representative of the people who has always been in the vanguard of revolution. He was slandered at a society; and in his person the national representation was reviled. Those who fought Lafayette and all the succeeding factions will unite to save the Republic. Let the patriotic writers awake. I call upon all the old friends of liberty, all the old Jacobins, all the patriotic journalists. Let them join with us to save liberty. They will keep faith; and that guarantees me their patriotism. Eyes had been cast upon me. I should have borne my head to the scaffold with courage, because I should have said to myself: a day will come when my ashes are resurrected with the honors due a patriot persecuted by a tyrant. The man at the rostrum is a new Catiline. Those with whom he had surrounded himself were new Verreses.† No one can say that the members of the two committees are my partisans, for I do not know them, and since my mission, I have been greeted only with disgust. Robespierre tried to attack us by turns, to isolate us; and finally he would have been left without rivals one day, with those vicious and debauched men who serve him. I

\*[Translator's note: The language seems especially uneven and garbled here and in the following pages; presumably either the speakers or the stenographer, or both, are suffering from the strain and from the fast pace of events.]

†[Verres was a tyrannical Roman provincial governor, creature of Sulla, attacked by Cicero.]

move that we declare ourselves in permanent session until the blade of the law has made the revolution secure, and that we order the arrest of his creatures.

*The two proposals of Tallien are adopted amidst the liveliest applause and cries of Vive la république!*

BILLAUD-VARENNE: The men whom the Convention has just struck down do not include the one who merits its greatest indignation. He is called Boulanger, conspirator with Hébert, who was publicly sentenced, at the time of the latter's conspiracy, to the Cordeliers [prison]. This man also conspired with Dumouriez; he was the friend of Danton; and it was Dumas who injected him into the Jacobins yesterday to keep Collot d'Herbois from speaking. It was this Dumas who, after he had rallied counter-revolutionaries together, tried to picture Collot as a conspirator, so that he could not tear aside the veil; this Dumas, whose whole family are *émigrés*, who is accused of having dined with his brother on the eve of his emigration, and against whom there are at the Jacobins proofs of the most atrocious perfidy! I therefore move the arrest of Dumas, of Boulanger, and of Dufraisse.

*The arrests are decreed. (Applause.)*

DELMAS: In light of the facts which have just been proclaimed, it is impossible not to believe that Hanriot was cunning enough to surround himself with conspirators. His adjutants and his aides-de-camp must be infinitely suspect. I move arrest.

*This proposal is decreed. (Applause.)*

*Robespierre insists on getting the floor.*

Down! Down with the tyrant! *all the members shout at him.*

SEVERAL VOICES: Barère! Barère!

ROBESPIERRE: I call for the floor.

THE SAME MEMBERS: No, down with the tyrant!

*The Convention decrees that Barère will be heard.*

BARÈRE, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety: Citizens, one of my colleagues, recently returned from the Army of the North, has reported to the Committee that an enemy officer, made prisoner in the recent action which gave us Belgium, had said: "All your successes amount to nothing; we expect in any case to arrange peace with some party, whatever it may be, with a fraction of the Convention, and to change the government soon."

Saint-Just brought us this instructive news.

Would not this moment predicted by the Austrian officer have arrived, for the party abroad and the enemies within, if you had not taken rigorous measures?

The two committees can no longer avoid this truth: the government

is under attack; its members have been heaped with slanders and injuries; its connections are broken off, public confidence has ceased; and those who are calling tyranny to account have themselves been called to account.

There is talk of the persecution of patriots; but cannot the committees complain of the same oppression? And then in a few days the citizenry gets all stirred up, and they are egged on against the government: could the English or the Austrians ask anything better?

There are efforts to produce popular movements, there are efforts to seize national power in the midst of a manufactured crisis; and it is well known that every free state in which great crises have not been foreseen is in danger of perishing with every storm.

In these same crises it is only you, citizens, who have been able to find new means of maintaining revolutionary government. The same opportunity for your civic courage has been presented to you to-day; and you have grasped it. Have no doubt of it: without the united committees, the revolutionary government and the Republic would long since have been overturned.

Cast your eyes over what has happened in the last eighteen months: without centralized government, France would have been subjugated by the kings; liberty would have been forever destroyed, and the true patriots strangled.

Who here then would wish to deprive the Republic of the resources and the institutions which have so often saved it? Oh! do not suppose that by getting rid of a few ardent and pure patriots, a few men can control public affairs: it is not by speeches that one governs; it is not by constant complaints that one builds a republic.

The committees are the shield, the asylum, the sanctuary of the central government, the unitary government, the revolutionary government; as long as they survive, it is impossible for royalism to revive, for aristocracy to breathe, for crime to rule, for the Republic not to triumph.

Attempts are made to destroy everybody who has energy or intelligence; attempts are made to annihilate everything that is republican pure and simple; and these proposals come not from the Revolutionary Tribunal, which is doing its duty, but from certain members of that tribunal, on whose patriotism you must today make judgment.

You must make judgment on several individuals who exercise important functions; only violent events make it necessary to reveal so many truths to you; for then the government has no privileged activity other than the salvation of the Republic, and that role belongs to the

people. Established forms are altered; governmental processes are suspended; the liberty of citizens is compromised; public safety is shaken; public opinion is reeling.

Unitary governments and free peoples are antitheses, and absolute opposites; great reputations and human equality cannot coexist for long; artificial unrest and real work cannot go together; we must humbly serve the fatherland for its sake, and not for our own.

While the two committees were preparing to refute, with as much wisdom as energy, the statements concerning them in the speech of Robespierre, they considered the measures which the public peace requires, in the circumstances into which personal passions have cast them. First they directed their attention to the means which the aristocracy, delighted by the present events, can employ in Paris; that aristocracy which all our efforts seem unable to expunge, and which hides in the muck when it is not in the blood; aristocracy has been bubbling up since yesterday with a vigor which can only indicate a counter-revolutionary movement.

Who then sought to raise its murderous hopes? Whom could it base its efforts on? On certain nobles located in the armed forces; on certain unpunished Hébertists; on certain military counter-revolutionaries. Yes, citizens, you have sensed where their resources lay, and you have just seized them; you have just done justice to those ambitious military men.

The committees asked themselves why there still existed a military regime in the midst of Paris, comparable to the one that existed in the days of kings; why all these permanent commanders, with staffs, and immense armed forces. The popular system of the National Guard had established rotating legion chiefs. The committees have thought it best to restore to the National Guard its democratic organization: accordingly they propose the suppression by decree of the general command, and that legion chiefs serve by turn.

The mayor of Paris and the national representative of the commune must at this moment fulfill their duty, their loyalty, and their obligations to the people; let us hope they do fulfill them. They must take upon their shoulders the responsibility for the security of the representatives of the people and for the troubles which the aristocratic parties would like to stir up, whenever they see any perversion of the will of the National Convention.

The committees have believed that in the present state of public opinion, and in the crisis in which we are, it was necessary to address a proclamation to the citizenry. In a free country it takes only a few

rays of light, and the people's reason immediately seizes upon them, defends its own true defenders, and sustains its own rights.

*This is the proposed decree:*

"The National Convention, having heard the report of the committees of Public Safety and on General Security, decrees:

"Article I. All ranks higher than that of chief of legion are abolished.

"The National Guard will resume its original organization; accordingly, each chief of legion will command in turn.

"II. The mayor of Paris, the national representative, and whoever shall be taking his turn as commander of the National Guard will see to the security of the national representation; they will take responsibility for any troubles that may arise in Paris.

"This decree will be sent forthwith to the mayor of Paris."

*The decree is adopted.*

*Then Barère, in the name of the two committees, reads the following proclamation [published in the Moniteur of 10 Thermidor]:*

"Citizens, in the midst of the most signal victories, a new danger menaces the Republic; it is all the greater as impressions are confused, and as a part of the citizenry is letting itself be led to the precipice by force of certain reputations.

"The labors of the Convention are made sterile, and the courage of the armies made null, if the citizens of France put a few men into the balance against the fatherland.

"Personal passions have usurped the place of the public weal; certain chiefs of the armed forces seemed to menace the national authority.

"The revolutionary government, object of the hatred of the enemies of France, has been attacked in our very midst; the institutions of republican strength are close to their ruin; aristocracy seems triumphant, and the royalists are ready to reappear.

"Citizens, would you lose in a day six years of revolution, of sacrifices and of courage? Would you go back under the yoke you have broken? No, unquestionably. The Convention will not cease for a moment to watch over the rights of public liberty. Therefore it invites the citizens of Paris to help with their solidarity, their wisdom, and their patriotism in the preservation of that precious body entrusted to them by the people of France. Let them especially watch military authority, ever ambitious and ever usurpatious. Liberty is nothing in a country where the military commands the civil.

"If you do not rally to the national representation, the constituted authorities will be without subordinates and the armies without direc-

tion; victories will turn into oppression, and the French people will be delivered over to the furies of internal divisions and all the vengeance of tyrants. Hear the voice of the fatherland rather than mingling your cries with those of the malevolent, of aristocrats, and of enemies of the people; and the fatherland will be saved once more."

*The National Convention decrees that this proclamation be printed forthwith and sent to all the Paris sections, to all the communes, and to the armies of the Republic.*

*[The Moniteur of 11 Thermidor resumes:]*

*Debate is resumed.*

VADIER: Up to the 22nd Prairial my eyes were not open regarding the cunning individual who has been able to assume every mask, and who, when he was unable to save his creatures, himself sent them to the guillotine. Let no one ignore how he openly defended Bazire, Chabot, and Camille Desmoulins, and how he diverted the dishonor to the account of the Committee on General Security.

On the 22nd Prairial, the tyrant (that's the name I give to him) (*lively applause*) himself issued a law instituting the Revolutionary Tribunal; he composed it in his own hand; he instructed the vigilant Couthon to bring this decree to the Convention and get it passed, without even reading it. He complains that patriots are oppressed. But on the contrary it is against him that this reproach applies, against him who had imprisoned the purest revolutionary committee in Paris; against him who, to carry out the arrests he wanted, instituted his general police.

The government committee which directs the armies has done its duty, and the victories won by the Republic are also the fruit of the suppression of internal enemies, and that suppression is the work of the Committee on General Security. Do you know why he slandered it? that was to divide the two committees, to suffocate opinion, to make sure that no patriot spoke out or rose up against tyranny. If this tyrant addresses himself particularly to me, that is because I made a report on fanaticism which has never pleased him; there you have the reason. There was under the Mother of God's \* mattress a letter addressed to Robespierre. This letter announced to him that his mission had been prophesied in Ezekiel; that the re-establishment of religion, freed of priests, was owing to him. He was done the honor of a new cult. Among the documents I later received there is a letter from a certain

\*[Catherine Théot; see above, pp. 160, 176.]

Chénon, notary of Geneva, who is at the head of the Illuminati. He proposes to Robespierre a supernatural constitution. (*Laughter.*)

Would you believe that after the decree you issued subsequent upon my report, it pleased Robespierre, with his full power and authority, to say to the public prosecutor: you shall not judge that trash.

There came back to me with the trial materials a dossier of other materials which said that this woman is an old nut who was shut up in the Saltpeter Asylum, for always having done the same thing; so this woman, who was looked upon as a nothing, was always around the ex-Duchess of Bourbon; and to prove to you how much this man tyrannized the public prosecutor, it is enough for me to tell you that the latter came to see me to tell me that he could not manage to get a trial of this affair.

BOURDON DE L'OISE: Robespierre prevented, after the 20th Frimaire, the promulgation of the decree of indictment against Lavalette; and he sacrificed six patriots of Lille.

VADIER: To hear Robespierre, he is the only defender of liberty; he is giving it up for lost, he is going to quit everything; he is a man of rare modesty (*laughter*), and he has a perpetual refrain: "I am oppressed; they won't give me the floor"; and he is the only one with anything useful to say, for his will is always done. He says: "So-and-so conspires against me, I who am the best friend of the Republic; therefore he conspires against the Republic." That is novel.

He had still another way of frustrating patriots. He set spies on several deputies. To me he attached a certain Taschereau, who devoted rare attention and good nature to me. He followed me everywhere, even when I was asked out to dinner and he was not invited. This Taschereau knew all the speeches of Robespierre by heart and recited them to me incessantly. After I found out that the relatives of prisoners were hanging around him, I forbade him my house; to get revenge for that he denounced a man who wanted to do me a favor. That is how these good patriots operate. (*Laughter.*)

TALLIEN: I ask the floor to get the discussion back to the real point.

ROBESPIERRE: I'll know how to get it back there. (*Murmurs.*)

*The Convention grants the floor to Tallien.*

TALLIEN: Citizens, it is not to any particular facts that I wish to direct the Convention's attention in this moment. The facts which have been stated are doubtless important, but there is no member of this assembly who could not make comparable allegations, who could not complain of some tyrannical act.

It is to the speech made yesterday in the Convention, and repeated at the Jacobins, that I call all your attention. That is where I meet the

tyrant; that is where I find all the conspiracy; it is in that speech that, with the aid of truth, justice, and the Convention, I hope to find the weapons to defeat him, to defeat this man whose virtue and patriotism have been so vaunted, but who, at the memorable time of the 10th of August, did not emerge until three days after the Revolution; this man who when he was supposed to be the defender of the oppressed in the Committee of Public Safety, who was supposed to be at his post, abandoned it forty days [*quatre décades*] ago; and at what time was that? when the Army of the North was causing all his colleagues serious anxiety. He abandoned it to come and slander the committees, and all [*tous (sic)=vous?*] saved the fatherland. (*Lively applause.*) Of course, if I wanted to trace the particular acts of oppression which have taken place, I should point out that it was during the time when Robespierre was in charge of the general police that they were committed, and that the patriots of the revolutionary committee of the Indivisibility section were arrested.

*Robespierre interrupts with cries. (There are violent murmurs.)*

LOUCHET: I move the decree of arrest against Robespierre.

LOSEAU: It is an established fact that Robespierre has dominated; I move the decree of arrest for that single reason.

LOUCHET: My motion is seconded; vote on the arrest.

ROBESPIERRE THE YOUNGER: I am as guilty as my brother is; I share his virtues. I ask the decree of accusation against myself as well.

*Robespierre abuses the president and the members of the assembly in the most insulting terms.*

CHARLES DUVAL: Mr. President, is one man to be master of the Convention?

LOSEAU: Vote on the arrest of the two brothers!

BILLAUD-VARENNE: I have some positive facts which Robespierre will not dare deny. I shall first cite the reproach he addressed to the Committee for wishing to disarm the citizenry.

ROBESPIERRE: I said there were some villains. . . . (*Murmurs.*)

BILLAUD-VARENNE: I said he reproached the Committee for wishing to disarm the citizenry. Well, it was he alone that issued that order. He accused the government of having had all the monuments to the Supreme Being removed; well, know that it was by Couthon. . . .

COUTHON: Yes, I co-operated there. (*Renewed murmurs.*)

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Vote on the arrest!

*It is unanimously decreed.*

*All the members rise and make the hall resound with cries of Vive la liberté! Vive la république!*

LOUCHET: What we meant by the vote was the arrest of the two Robespierres, Saint-Just, and Couthon.

LE BAS: I do not want to share the blame for that decree; I demand to be arrested too.

ÉLIE LACOSTE: I move the arrest of Robespierre the younger; he is one of the ones who sounded the tocsin against the committees at the Jacobins. He finished his speech with these memorable words: "They say the committees are not corrupt; but if their agents are, then they are too."

*The arrest of Robespierre the younger is decreed. (Lively applause.)*

FRÉRON: Citizen colleagues, on this day the fatherland and liberty shall emerge from their ruins.

ROBESPIERRE: Yes, for the brigands are winning out.

FRÉRON: They meant to form a triumvirate which recalls the bloody proscriptions of Sulla; they meant to raise themselves on the ruins of the Republic, and the men who tried it are Robespierre, Couthon, and Saint-Just.

SEVERAL VOICES: And Le Bas.

FRÉRON: Couthon is a tiger thirsting for the blood of the national representation. He has dared, as a royal pastime, to talk in the Jacobins of five or six heads at the Convention (Yes! Yes! *cries from everywhere.*) That was only the beginning; and he wanted to make of our corpses so many steps toward the throne.

COUTHON: I wanted to get to the throne, yes!

FRÉRON: I move the decree of arrest also against Saint-Just, Le Bas, and Couthon.

ÉLIE LACOSTE: I support that proposal. It was I who first told the Committee of Public Safety that Couthon, Saint-Just, and Robespierre were forming a triumvirate. Saint-Just turned pale and became ill. When he returned from the Army of the North, after he had told us about the position and condition of the army, he reported to us that a Swiss officer made prisoner had told him that we could take no account of our successes, that the enemy was informed as to our resources, and that they expected a schism in the government, to aid which they would treat for peace with any faction whatever. It is they, the villains, who wanted to produce the schism. For some time we had been tranquil; intrigues were frustrated; those who had formed them had perished under the blade of the law, and the armies had made victory the order of the day, when these perfidious men sought to strangle liberty. I urge the decree of arrest against Couthon, Saint-Just, and Le Bas.

*This proposal is decreed amidst the liveliest applause.*

*Colombel puts through the following decree:*

"The National Convention, after hearing the report of its Committee on Public Aid on the petition of Citizen Larcole, captain in the light cavalry regiment of the Montagne, decrees:

"Article I. There will be paid from the national treasury a sum of five hundred livres for the purpose of the relief of Citizen Larcade.

"II. The present decree will be inserted only in the Bulletin of Correspondence."

*(Continuation of the session to be printed tomorrow.)*

[*The Moniteur of 11 Thermidor appends the following report:*] N.B. During the permanent session of the night of the 9th to the 10th, the Convention was informed that a seditious crowd had invaded the Committee on General Security, surrounded it by force, and wrested away from it the conspirators who had been placed under arrest; that from there they were taken to the town hall, where the General Council had raised the standard of rebellion, so as to free them of the authority of the national representation, notifying the *sections* of Paris that they were to communicate only with them, to arm, and to march against the Convention, and arresting the commandant and officers named by it. The Convention placed outside the law all those who resisted or opposed the execution of its decree, and chose twelve from among its members to go and carry out among the National Guard of Paris the functions which the representatives of the people exercise among the armies. "Go," it said to them, "and let the sun not rise before the rebels and conspirators are turned over to the hands of the national justice."

At three in the morning, the twelve representatives came to announce that the town hall was in their power, together with the traitors it contained; and that they had seized a seal, quite recently engraved, bearing a fleur-de-lis.

The administration of the Paris *département* came to present the following address: "It is at the moment of the new day that dawns for the welfare and the liberty of the French people that the Paris *département* hastens to congratulate you on the wise and vigorous measures by which you have once more saved the fatherland and frustrated the plots of traitors who, using the bait of liberty, were readying us for chains.

These murderers, thirsting for the blood of their fellow citizens, hoped to mislead the people; they were aided in their horrible plot by

perfidious magistrates; but how they deceived themselves! the Paris *sections*, faithful to the Republic, were wise enough to hear the voices of their representatives.

"Your immortal decrees will transmit to posterity both our dangers and your courage. May our submission to the laws, and our indefatigable zeal in carrying out our duties, forever prove to our fellow citizens our firm resolve to co-operate with you in the annihilation of all conspiracies, and to die at our post. The Paris *département* asks the Convention for the orders it may see fit to give in the present circumstances."

During the night the *sections* appeared in succession at the bar, and assured the Convention that it would always find them rallied around it, and ready to shed their blood to defend it. Thus the rebellion of a usurping municipality served only to provide new proof of the atrociousness of the plots concocted by the faction whose instrument it was.

Vivier, president of a seditious meeting held at the Jacobins; Tachereau, confidant of Robespierre, and several other emissaries, guards, and confederates of this new Cromwell, were put outside the law.

Le Bas killed himself; the two Robespierres and Couthon tried by the same means to escape the vengeance of the people; but they were only wounded, and were unable to escape the more terrible and more infamous punishment reserved for traitors.

On the evening of the 10th, their heads fell on the scaffold, amidst the acclamations of an immense crowd and cries, repeated a thousand times, of *Vive la république! Vive la Convention!* A memorable example for anyone who may hereafter dare attempt to usurp the national sovereignty! Glorious day! which has seen the instantaneous disappearance of the hopes of the despot coalition! They counted on coming to terms with a dictator! The French people will be their own dictator; and from them [the French people] they can hope for no peace, no truce. What a sublime spectacle was the energetic humanity of the National Convention! how the firm posture of the people of Paris and the spontaneous rallying of all citizens around the Convention must dismay agitators! This revolution, by giving a new countenance to the national representation, will be the death sentence to all those who would strive to divide and degrade it.

In vain would the slanderers of the people seek to profit from these events by accusing the people of fickleness. The people are always right in their judgments. They want liberty, and have no love for those who forbid it. The less they idolize individuals, the more steady will be

their love for the fatherland. The more precarious individual reputations are, the more public liberty will be affirmed. Anyone who has made himself powerful enough to seek to rise above the law must find his Brutus in his fellow citizens. The excessive influence of a single man is the most dangerous scourge of a republic.

[Continuation of the permanent session of 9 Thermidor, printed in the *Moniteur* issue of 12 Thermidor. Collot d'Herbois still presiding.]

COLLOT D'HERBOIS: There is one measure which I believe essential: that is to decree that Saint-Just must deposit on the bench the speech he was to make to help bring about the counter-revolution.

*This proposal is adopted.*

COLLOT D'HERBOIS: Citizens, it is true to say that you have saved the fatherland. The suffocating fatherland, its heart lacerated and torn, has not spoken to you in vain. Your enemies said that another insurrection of 31 May was in order.

ROBESPIERRE THE ELDER: He lied. . . .

*(The assembly explodes with the liveliest indignation.)*

CLAUSEL: I move that the bailiffs carry out the decree of arrest.

THE PRESIDENT: I have already given the order; and when the bailiffs presented themselves, [the accused] refused to obey.

*(To the bar! To the bar! cries from all parts of the hall.)*

LOSEAU: I remind the Convention that when it places a number of its members under arrest it makes them go to the bar. I move that there be no special privilege for these, and that they descend.

SEVERAL VOICES: Yes, yes, to the bar!

*The Convention decrees this proposal.*

*The individuals whose arrest was decreed descend to the bar. (Repeated applause.)*

COLLOT D'HERBOIS: The fatherland smiles at your energy; its enemies said a 31st of May insurrection was needed. No, it was not an insurrection that was called for, because ten thousand counter-revolutionaries were ready to seize upon the first movement to strangle liberty. They were already glowing, the partisans of counter-revolution, but it will be a dark day for them. *(Applause.)* It was not an insurrection after their fashion that was called for; it was an insurrection against tyranny; and you have made it. *(Lively applause.)* It too will have its place in history, this insurrection which has saved the fatherland. *(Renewed applause.)* Look, citizens, upon the fugitive hordes of your enemies; see their armies scatter in consternation into the distance; their final resource was civil war in the heart of the Convention, to force



us to accept a tyrant. But all the French will perish before they compromise with tyranny. Never, no, never will the French people have a tyrant. (No! No! *cries from all parts of the hall.—Members of the assembly and spectators rise simultaneously crying: Vive la république!*)

They had to try to dissolve the national representation, break up the government, bring on civil war. Good; an instrument had to be made ready, under cover. Do you know what the instrument was? It was the speech of Robespierre. (*Applause.*)

(*A secretary notifies the members of the Committee on General Security that they are needed at their ordinary place of meeting.—They cross the hall to the sound of repeated applause.*)

COLLOT D'HERBOIS: Citizens, those of you who heard this speech, I ask you: was anything better calculated to rupture the threads of confidence, more cunningly designed to dissolve the National Convention? In short, was there any more inflammatory way of igniting civil war?

That was by no means enough; they still had to corrupt the public mind, undermine morale, confuse opinion. All right, that was done; for in a celebrated Society, which has so far resisted aristocracy, which was misled for a moment but which will doubtless soon recover its luster and its energy; in this Society which always manifested its profound veneration for the national representation, which always recognized the beneficence of its decrees, where brother always reached out to brother—I spoke there yesterday about the inquietudes of the fatherland: I was silenced by hostile murmurs.

I spoke of the sweet fountains of amity; I was answered only with threats. I said I had escaped both barrels from Ladmiral [*sic*]; and they smiled ironically. (*Movement of indignation.*) Clearly I was not with Jacobins there (*applause*); but I am today (*renewed applause*). When the true Jacobins, who were absent yesterday, reappear there; when they see the great work you have completed, what great criminals you have punished, those good citizens who did not dare take their places there will return; they were disheartened yesterday; they foresaw the dangers which threatened the fatherland; their souls, the souls of these athletes of liberty, were palpitating; their hearts were oppressed; but now there is no more oppression. (*Lively applause.—Yes, yes; there is no more oppression!*) Yet [the conspirators] still feared the return of those faithful athletes even for today; they feared that energetic sentiment which necessarily would arouse the friends of the fatherland in every corner of Paris; yes, they feared it, they the traitors whom you have struck down; that is why the speech of Saint-Just had to be made today; the motion which Couthon made yesterday at the

Jacobins was bound to make a stir; Couthon had demanded a new vote of purge in the Society; he did not disguise the intent that those members of the two committees whom that conspirator dared call traitor must be excluded. That is why Saint-Just came, contrary to his promise to the two committees, to read the speech you have interrupted. It is well in that connection to make a few details known: Saint-Just was at the Committee; I arrived there from underneath knife points, for a number of those who escorted me along the passage managed to repeat in my ears several times, "In a couple of days you won't talk so much; you'll be past that;" somebody said to Dubarran, "His cackle will have to be cut;" these propositions were made by ordinary hirelings, by Robespierre's bodyguards.

Anyway, I arrived at the Committee; I turned to Saint-Just; I energetically conveyed what had happened; he saw how upset I was; he was like stone. He coolly presented the Committee with that report, in which he did not hide the fact that several members were accused, yet without daring propose decrees of accusation against them, for he held that much back. Do you know what that report was based upon? On all that came in from Robespierre's spies. There was something remarkable in my case. He claimed that I had made such and such a proposal in a café; and everybody knows that I never set foot in a café; another reported that I had told Fouché to prepare a decree of accusation against Robespierre; that Fouché had said to somebody that if Robespierre would agree to change his conduct toward him, he would uncover the whole intrigue; but I have not seen Fouché for two months, while public opinion has been in abeyance on his count. We told Saint-Just that these facts must be told to the Convention, if they were true, but beforehand they had to be examined, so as not to cause trouble. We decided with him that we would send someone to look for Fouché, so that it could be cleared up in his presence.

We let Saint-Just go at five in the morning; he was to return at eleven. He did not keep his word. The two committees were assembled. Fouché was summoned; Rühl questioned him; he said he had not seen me for two months, and that he felt I had treated him severely. There are a good many other infamies in that report. That is why I have asked that it be deposited upon the bench. This second volume of the speech of Robespierre was to have been read this evening at the Jacobins, and we do not know what would have happened at the festival tomorrow. That might have been, perhaps, a day of mourning; it will be, on the contrary, a day of triumph. (*Applause.*)

Your committees will make you a detailed report on this con-

piracy, and it will not be difficult to convince you that there was in the making here something favorable to the overthrown despots. It will not be difficult to prove that they were joined together in conspiracy.

Notice, citizens, that those who come and call upon the law are those who violate it readily. Notice that the brother of Robespierre, in contempt of the decree which directed him to join the army in Italy, has remained here despite the arrangements for that campaign.

Saint-Just was twice summoned from the Army of the North by Robespierre, to prepare a document of accusation against the courageous men who opposed the despotism of these new tyrants.

I tell you, these were the veritable proscriptions of a new Sulla; for it was not a question here of friends or enemies of the people; it was a question of proscribing those unwilling to obey this or that individual. I am going to cite a fact which will prove that Robespierre, who for some time has talked only of Marat, has always detested this friend of the people. At the funeral ceremonies of Marat, Robespierre talked at length from the rostrum that had been set up in front of the Luxembourg, and the name of Marat did not once come from his mouth. Can the people believe that anyone loves Marat who declares humorously that he does not want to be compared to him? No; in vain these hypocrites talked incessantly of Marat, of Chalier; they loved neither Marat nor Chalier: Chalier, whose conduct I observed, whose virtues I cherished, admired, and respected! The people know it well; it is in the virtues of private life that one recognizes public virtues. (*Applause.*)

FAYAU: I ask the floor so as to give information. A *section* commissioner asked the director of a shop for guns to arm the young people of that *section* tomorrow at the festival. The guns were refused. (*Applause.*)

*The session is suspended.*

9 Thermidor, Seven P.M.

BOURDON DE L'OISE: Citizens, this morning the Convention took security measures necessitated by the circumstances; all good citizens applauded. Nevertheless, a rumor is spreading this evening to which I call your full attention. It is claimed that the Paris commune is in league with the Jacobins to bring off an insurrection. (*Movements of indignation.*) Such a fusion would doubtless be dangerous with any other than the people of Paris: with them it can cause you no uneasi-

ness. I remind the Convention that in a similar circumstance it fraternized with the people, and calmed the excitement of the people with its presence. Not that I think this action is necessary; yet it is useful to be sure of the truth; I move therefore that the commune be summoned to the bar to make you an account of the facts.

*This proposition is sustained.*

MERLIN DE THIONVILLE: Because I spoke neither for nor against in this morning's discussion, I have not been suspect during the day. I am going to tell you (*slight murmurs*) I am going to give you an account of a fact. If there was any good citizen who could still doubt the existence of the conspiracy being concocted, or the imminent danger which liberty and the national representation were running, this fact will easily convince them.

I was leaving my house to go to my post when Hanriot, at the head of forty wild men, came in view. To see me, pounce upon me, put a pistol to my breast, and cover my head with their sabers—all that was a matter of a moment.

I was unarmed; I could not defend myself; I bared my breast to them, saying *Fire!* They seized me, then took me to the guardhouse at the Palace of Equality. There, recovering my character as representative of the people, I harangued the armed citizens who were present. True to principles, and imbued with respect for the national representation, they set me free on the spot. (*Lively applause.*)

I announce to the Convention that these citizens were from the Mountain\* *section*. A memorandum has been prepared on my arrest and my liberation; it has been filed with the Committee on General Security. Still Hanriot continued his wild march, bringing trouble and terror to all the different quarters of Paris where the truth regarding this day's events had not yet penetrated. Five policemen bravely resolved to arrest this villain and carry out your decree. They set out, pounced on Hanriot and his satellites, pistol to breast, and made the villains prisoner. (*Applause.—All the citizens cry: Vive la république!*) That, citizens, is the fact I had to communicate to you; now that I have given you an account of it, I am going to suggest an amendment to the proposal of Bourdon (de l'Oise). He moved that the Paris commune be summoned to the bar; I move that the *département* be summoned too, and come to receive the orders of the Convention.

*These two proposals are decreed.*

LEGENDE: What does it matter to the Convention, what does it matter to the Republic if a General Council of the commune does de-

\*[Butte des Moulins]

clare itself in insurrection? Be careful not to confuse the people of Paris with a council nominated perhaps by the conspirators. Every time a decree comes from you, count on the people, count on the Montagnards; for the Mountain exists wherever the desire for the Republic does. (*Applause.*) It is not easy to bring an enlightened people to insurrection; today you have given them a great lesson; from today forward liberty is consolidated. (*Lively applause.*) The people, drawing upon the instinct it had at the beginning of the revolution to rebel now against tyrants, will attach itself to you alone; but it will never again adore a personality.

When an individual does his duty it will say to him: "I was in the audience, I saw you on the stage, you did well, I applauded; but I shall see what you do tomorrow." (*Lively applause.*) The people will remember that it was once said: "No constitution without Pétion, Pétion or death; no patriotism without Robespierre;" today it will say: "No patriotism without principles." (*Applause.*) I move that the president say to each petitioner who comes to congratulate the Mountain that the whole Convention is but one Mountain; the Convention includes as many Montagnards as there are men of good will; and the proof that the Convention is composed of men of good will is that the decree of arrest against traitors was voted unanimously. (*Renewed applause.*)

POULTIER: A municipal officer met me and tried to arrest me; I myself seized him and brought him to the Committee on General Security. (*Applause.*)

ROVÈRE: There is in the commune one of the agents of Robespierre; it is this Payan. . . .

SEVERAL VOICES: He has been arrested. (*Applause.*)

ROVÈRE: Observe the villainy of Robespierre; this Payan has been elected by the Drôme *département* to federate with the Midi.

BRIVAL: Citizens, the president of the pretended Jacobins, at the demand and after the arrest of the counter-revolutionaries who had slipped into that Society, invited me to make a report on the Convention session. When I reached the rostrum I spoke in these terms:

"Intriguers, counter-revolutionaries, clad in the mantle of patriotism, sought to murder liberty; the Convention decreed that they would be put under arrest; these representatives are Robespierre, Saint-Just, Couthon, Le Bas, Robespierre the younger."

"What was your opinion?" the president asked me. I replied: "He who always voted with the Mountain, in the Legislative Assembly and in the Assembly of the Convention, voted for the arrest; he did

more; he is one of the ones who instigated it, and in his capacity as secretary he worked to expedite and validate the decrees." At these words I was buried under boos, and I was ejected from the pretended Society; they took away my card. I went out saying to them, "I was not made to associate with members who drive out those who seek to save liberty."

I have just learned that the pretended Society has recalled its decree, and that it has named an emissary to give me back my card. I shall not take it until after the regeneration of the Society.

GOUPILLEAU THE ELDER: I was at the Committee on General Security; when I was going out, what a surprise I got; I saw the antechamber filling with citizens bearing the tricolor ribbon; I asked them what they were doing there; one of them asked me in turn who I was: "A representative of the people," I replied. He said that he did not believe a word of it. I showed him my card. "All right," he said, "I despise you." This individual is the one who is presiding over the Revolutionary Tribunal in the absence of Dumas.

SEVERAL VOICES: That is Louvet.

GOUPILLEAU: Then I move the arrest of Louvet. I also move the arrest of Fleuriot-Lescot, mayor of Paris, he is another villain who must necessarily be in the conspiracy. (*Applause.*)

FRÉRON: I am told that Payan and Fleuriot are not under arrest. I move that the decree of arrest be carried out against them immediately.

BILLAUD-VARENNE: The graver the circumstances become, the more the committees felt it their duty to act energetically. Payan was arrested four hours ago. The mayor is still not under arrest; but within a few minutes the General Council of the commune, which has raised the standard of revolt, will be surrounded. (*Lively applause.*) The more public opinion was misled, the more the Convention and the friends of the fatherland must felicitate themselves on the counter-revolutionary movement which is unfolding at this time; this movement, organized for three months in the heart of the government, and intended to destroy it, is precisely what has saved the fatherland. (*Applause.*)

I ask you, citizens: if any other representative had been struck down by the decree of arrest, would the satellites of the villain Robespierre have run to save him? Certainly not. (*Applause.*) There are only two manners of existence: either on one's knees like a slave, or upright like a man. (*Applause.*) Nevertheless, citizens, would you believe that despite the decrees of the Convention, men wrapped in the mantle of the law have been put under arrest? Would you believe that despite the

will of the people a man you have struck down with arrest, Sijas, that infernal conspirator, is at this moment at the Jacobins to provoke the people: but the people is calm, and desires liberty. (*Lively applause.*)

There is one fact of which I must not leave you in ignorance. A company of artillerymen, misled by the villain Hanriot, has tried to direct its cannon against the Convention. . . . (*Movement of indignation.*) The armed forces opposed it. (*Lively applause.*) One must know how to take vigorous steps; one must know how to die at his post. (Yes! Yes, cry all the members, we all know how!) The united committees want to place before you a report of measures designed to save liberty. They are immediate; for that impudent rebel, that cunning conspirator who for six months has hidden behind the mask of virtue so as to strangle republicans is now at the commune. You shall hear the report of the two committees.

*Collot takes the rostrum.*

THE PRESIDENT: Citizens, here is the moment to die at our posts; villains, armed men have surrounded the Committee on General Security and seized it.

(*The citizens who occupy one part of the hall and the galleries all cry: Let's go! They go out. Applause.*)

*The département of Paris presents itself at the bar.*

SPOKESMAN OF THE DÉPARTEMENT: We have written to the commune to ascertain what measures it has taken to assure public tranquillity. We are awaiting its report before taking a stand.

*The Convention sends the département to the committees on Public Safety and on General Security, to receive their orders.*

THURIOT: Could anyone doubt that there was a conspiracy, after what has happened? This morning, before nine o'clock, the muster was sounded, orders were given, and the armed forces raised against the Convention. What then was the plan, if not one of crime? If crime triumphs, do you believe that in twenty-four hours one virtuous man can exist within the walls of Paris? No, virtuous men must either stab themselves or bring the villains to the scaffold, these brigands who, had they succeeded, would have had hanging from their windows everyone who retained a degree of public reputation, and who would have finished by devouring the entrails of the mothers of families.

AIMÉ GOUPILLEAU: I announce to the Convention that Hanriot has just escaped and is being borne away in triumph. (*The Assembly shudders with horror.*)

ÉLIE LACOSTE: Several conspirators have just been set free. Robes-

pierre, who contrary to the desire of the Committee on General Security had been taken to the Luxembourg, was refused by the police administration at that building, who had him taken to the commune. The municipal officers embraced him, treated him as a brother, and told him they would protect him. The municipal officers are in rebellion against the decrees of the Convention. I move that they be placed outside the law.

*This proposal is decreed amidst applause.*

*A citizen announces at the bar that he has come from the Antoine suburb, which he found aroused and ready to fight for the Convention. (Applause.)*

*A member announces that Hanriot is at the square of the Palais National, and that he is issuing orders there.*

THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY: Outside the law! Outside the law!

*The Convention places Hanriot outside the law.*

AMAR: I am back from the square; I saw Hanriot there trying to mislead all the citizenry, and especially the artillerymen. I cried out: "Artillerymen, will you dishonor your fatherland, which has always owed you so much?" The artillerymen immediately came over to my side. An aide of Hanriot threatened me with his sword; the artillerymen protected me against him. (*Applause.*) Explain to the people, and we shall brave every danger.

VOULLAND: Citizens, we need a chief of the National Guard; but that chief must be one of your men, and that means he must be chosen from among you. The two committees propose to you Citizen Barras, who will have the courage to accept.

The assembly, amidst applause, names Citizen Barras to direct the armed forces. At his motion the Convention attaches to him six members, which it invests with the powers given to the representatives of the people with the armies. These six members are Ferrand, Fréron, Rovère, Delmas, Bolleti, Léonard Bourdon, and Bourdon de l'Oise.

BARÈRE, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety: Citizens, there has then broken out this terrible conspiracy, hatched beneath the cloak of patriotism, and by usurpers of public opinion; it had numerous ramifications, which have emerged this evening with frightful rapidity; for the events of just a part of this day must open the eyes of the most skeptical citizens. All the preparations for this counter-revolution were made, and all the positions taken; and among those who co-operated there can be none but accomplices. While you were issuing salutary decrees, Hanriot loosed in the streets of Paris the

rumor that Robespierre had just been assassinated. The most inflammatory news was spread about you. Ammunition was issued to the police to use against the representatives of the people; and the loyal soldiers have just deposited with the Committee this ammunition distributed by the crime.

During this time the administration of police, following an order from the mayor, from the national agent of the Paris commune, and from one of his deputies, issued an order to set free Citizens Lavalette and Boulanger, officers of the Parisian armed forces, and also Villate, member of the Revolutionary Tribunal. Thus the administration of police, the mayor, and the national agent have constituted themselves as superiors of the Committee on General Security, which had had Villate arrested, and brazenly usurped the national authority confided in the Convention.

At the same time Hanriot had taken to the [Prison de la] Force a policeman bearing a decree from the Convention, until such time as the *magistrates* of the people should have ordained otherwise.

Inasmuch as Hanriot created magistrates he insulted your authority, and arrested the sergeant-at-arms of the Convention; he had the call to arms drummed in one *section*, the general alarm in the other, and the tocsin sounded in all the *sections* surrounding the commune. The mayor of Paris sent out orders for all the gates to be closed. We ask you for a decree which again prohibits the closing of the gates and designates those disobeying this order as enemies of the people.

Boulanger took refuge in the Paris encampment; Hanriot went up and down the streets on horseback crying: "They are assassinating the patriots; to arms against the Convention!" and he stirred up the people, who never respond to these insolent provocations when they are calm.

Payan declaimed against the national representation at the commune, and the commune declared itself in open insurrection against the Convention.

The revolutionary committee of the Temple informs us that the Paris commune has closed the gates and summoned an immediate meeting of the *sections* to consider the dangers threatening the fatherland.

At the municipality, the order is not to let in anyone sent by the Convention. Nevertheless the bailiff was admitted. A municipal officer said in response to the decree which summoned the municipality to the bar: "O yes, we are coming, but with the people!" To this response he added a gesture which the people would not have avowed, for the people honors itself in honoring its representatives.

Here you see conspiracy at its most atrocious, military conspiracy, conspiracy plotted more broadly, skillfully, and coolly than were ever those of the Pisistratuses or the Catilines.

One group of the *sections* has already pronounced for the representatives of the people; another group is moving toward support of the law. If some few are misled or the victims of communal intrigues, do not believe that the delusion can last.

While waiting, declare outside the law all those who give orders to move the armed forces against the National Convention, or to ignore its decrees. It is necessary also to place outside the law individuals who, struck by decrees of arrest or of accusation, do not defer to the law, or who flee it. Courage must accompany public virtue, and virtue must characterize the representatives of the people: with courage and the people, you shall conquer.

The object of the efforts of the committees is that the citizens of Paris may recollect the republic to which they belong, that they may not go and swear allegiance to a commune disloyal to its duty, and accomplice to the most horrible of conspiracies. Certain ones of those whom the Convention has struck down have got away, and found asylum in the bosom of that commune; how have they dared thus to dirty the home of the citizens of Paris; and could they count on long impunity, if they believed themselves among Frenchmen, among republicans? The eyes of the fatherland are on Paris, and the National Convention will know how to tell the good citizens from the bad.

The *sections* are assembling; it is to them that we must address ourselves.

*Barère proposes a decree which is adopted in this form:*

"The National Convention, having heard the report of its committees of Public Safety and General Security, prohibits the closing of the gates, and any convocation of the *sections* without authorization from the committees of Public Safety and General Security.

"It places outside the law all public functionaries who give orders designed to move the armed forces against the National Convention, or to prevent the execution of decrees it has made.

"It also places outside the law individuals who, struck by decrees of arrest or accusation, do not defer to the law, or who flee it."

*Barère presents the following proclamation:*

"The National Convention to the French people."

[Here reappears the proclamation given earlier in the debate, pages 196-7 above.]

*Citizen Devèze, municipal official, who was absent from the General Council of the commune, disavows everything done there, and declares he knew nothing about it.*

*Some artillerymen, led by representatives of the people, march into the hall to the sound of applause.*

*A member of the civil committee of the Unity section, admitted to the bar, announces that that section recognizes no authority save that of the Convention, and that it has received from the municipality the order to assemble and to send it, every two hours, emissaries to communicate with it.*

*An officer of the company of disabled soldiers, on guard outside the Convention, comes to ask for its orders to march against the traitors. (Applause)*

VOULLAND: Hanriot is not the only one who has escaped the decree of arrest; Robespierre and all the others have escaped it too; I move that they be placed outside the law.

*This proposal is decreed amidst the liveliest applause.*

ÉLIE LACOSTE: The Sablons encampment is commanded by a creature of Dumouriez, Beurnonville, and Custine: by Bertèche. This villain was in Calvados, whence he came to Wimpfen.

BILLAUD-VARENNE: I announce to the Convention that Bertèche was arrested about four hours ago. Apart from his counter-revolutionary conduct in Belgium, he had given the Committee grounds for suspicion. Two weeks ago Le Bas came and demanded his dismissal; and when he saw that the Committee was inclined to agree to it, he opposed it and praised him.

I call the attention of the assembly to another matter. There is no doubt that the parade planned for tomorrow was a measure designed to surround the Convention and the committees, under the pretext of having the young people from the camp march before the Convention. It was requested that they carry arms, and bring along fifteen cannon. I have no wish to cast a shadow on the patriotism of the young people, nor on the virtue of the people; but I believe there must be no parade tomorrow. What we have to concern ourselves with is the destruction of villains. We will go to the Pantheon with more enthusiasm when we have purged the ground. *(Lively applause.)*

*The Convention decrees the postponement of the festival.*

TALLIEN: The villains we have struck down took many steps to pervert public opinion in that camp. One of them, I hear, has just taken refuge there. I move that two representatives be designated to go there.

*The Convention decrees that Brival and Bentabole will be adjuncts to Pessard, people's representative at the camp.*

*A deputation from the revolutionary committee of the Mutius Scœvola [Luxembourg] section appears to communicate a decree of the commune council, asking constituted authorities to come take their oaths to them. The deputation announces that the tocsin is being sounded at the commune. (Movement of indignation.)*

*All the sections of Paris come successively to the bar to swear to the Convention that they recognize no authority but that of the Convention, that they will rally to it alone, that they will build it a rampart of their bodies; they congratulate it on its energy, which once more is preserving liberty.*

*The Convention gives them testimony of its satisfaction, and the president announces to each of them the decree which places the conspirators outside the law.*

*Barras enters the hall. The liveliest applause is heard. He takes the floor.*

BARRAS: I have just traversed a major part of Paris; everywhere the people are primed with liberty; everywhere one hears cries of *vive la république! vive la Convention nationale!* The artillerymen of the Fontaine de Grenelle section accompanied us everywhere. *(Lively applause.)* The military dispositions have just been made; the Convention is surrounded by all the republicans of Paris. I have just had arrested a policeman who was sent by the commune to Bertèche. I am going to deposit with the two committees the letter that was taken from him.

FERRAND: I have been visiting the posts on the perimeter; everywhere I have found only true republicans; all have sworn to die in the defense of the Convention. *(Yes, we'll all die! cry the citizens in the galleries.)*

I have had arrested a policeman who came from Hanriot to order the armed force which surrounded the Palais National to retire. *(Applause.)*

FRÉRON: The Convention can count on the patriotism of the citizens of Paris. The criminal Hanriot and the Catiline, Robespierre had concerted their efforts so well that they had named the traitor Le Bas to inspect the Sablons camp; but that is all undone, and the Convention was perhaps never so sublime as in that moment when, stripped of force to oppose the conspirators, it imitated the senators of Rome who awaited the enemy on their chairs of office.

We sent to the town hall square five brave artillerymen to explain

things to their comrades. As soon as the latter knew that Hanriot was outside the law, they said they only needed our orders to turn their cannon against the town hall.

Moments are precious; we must act; Barras has just returned to the Committee of Public Safety, to get in concert with them. The rest of us, we must march against the rebels. (*Lively applause.*) In the name of the Convention we shall call upon those perhaps misled men who may be in the town hall to deliver the traitors over to us; and if they refuse we shall reduce the building to powder. (Yes! Yes! *cries from all parts of the hall.—Lively applause.*)

*Tallien takes the rostrum.*

I must not forget to tell you that we have found at the Pont-Neuf [bridge] a body of fifteen hundred men who are guarding that important position with cannon. (*Applause.*)

THE PRESIDENT: I urge my colleagues to depart at once, that the sun may not rise before the heads of the conspirators have fallen. (*Applause.*)

RÜHL: I move that a force be sent which is sufficient to hold the imprisoned conspirators.

ÉLIE LACOSTE: The two committees have sent troops to the prisons, the Temple, and the treasury.

*The chief of the constabulary of the tribunals, whose liberty has just been restored by the Committee on General Security after he had been robbed of it by Hanriot, takes this opportunity to assure the Convention of the loyalty of his corps.*

*The constabulary of the Convention send word that if they do not present themselves at the bar it is because they are more valuable at their posts, and that even though they lost half their number in the Vendée they would lose it all here in the defense of liberty and the Convention. (Applause.)*

*The president announces that he is holding in his hands the original of the convocation of the Paris sections, by the commune, as well as the appointment of a general which it made despite the decree issued this morning.*

*The Marat [Théâtre-Français] section comes to announce that it has had arrested commune agitators which had come and made it insidious propositions. (Applause.)*

DUBOIS-CRANCÉ: I must give homage to the wisdom of Marat; at the time of the judgment of the tyrant Capet, he said to me, speaking of Robespierre: "See that rat over there?" "Rat? Why?" "Yes," he an-

swered, "that man is a greater danger to liberty than the whole despot coalition."

BRIVAL: We have come from the camp; all the students cried out with one voice, when they heard about the conspiracy you have foiled: "Perish the traitors! *vive la liberté!*" We had immense trouble restraining their ardor; they all wanted to come to the Convention to make a rampart for it of their bodies. (*Applause.*)

BENTABOLE: There was near the camp an arsenal of five hundred three-mile guns; and because we were afraid they were not safe we put them under the care of the young students, who swore they would not be got away from them but at the cost of their lives. (*Applause.*)

BILLAUD-VARENNE: The Convention cannot but applaud the energy of the people of Paris; they are hurrying to arms; but also at this very moment the conspirators are galvanizing people's minds to act against the Convention; counter-revolution is being organized at the commune, and already several cannon have been prepared for the march against the Convention; it is time to finish this struggle between liberty and tyranny, between the Convention and those who would strangle it; and I move that it order the representatives which it has named to take all steps necessary for the seizure of the conspirators, so that their heads will fall within one hour. (*Applause.*)

*A citizen announces that he has come from the town hall; that as he went through the square he saw that all the artillerymen were not for the commune but for the Convention.*

BILLAUD-VARENNE: I have no doubt that the artillerymen, once things have been made clear to them, will turn their cannon against the commune; but we must not lose precious time talking. When you are sitting on a volcano you must do something. Robespierre has just said that within two hours he would march on the Convention; it is up to us to get ahead of him. We'll sleep as soon as the traitors have been destroyed. (*Applause.*)

*The president asks the members of the two committees to meet together in a room nearby, the deputies to remain at their posts, and the citizens to fly to arms. All the citizens who are in a part of the hall and in the galleries go out; only women are left.*

LEGENDE: Hanriot's section, the Sans-Culottes [Jardin-des-Plantes] section, which he tried to mislead, is here en masse, armed in your defense. (*Armed citizens, conducting an individual whom they have arrested, are brought to the bar.*) But my soul, citizens, is torn. At the moment of the arrest of the municipal official whom you see at the bar,

I ran at him to stab him; I had the misfortune to wound a patriot. (*Legendre despairs; people cry to him that the patriot is only slightly wounded in the hand.*) I should never be consoled for his loss. The Sans-Culottes section has told me that Hanriot had strewn the place with money.

*A member of the revolutionary committee of the Mountain [Butte des Moulins] section congratulates himself at the bar for having saved a representative of the people from the hands of Hanriot, and announces that he is bringing in a municipal official. He announces at the same time that the town hall is taken, and that Robespierre the elder is being brought in a litter.*

*Charlier takes the rostrum.*

THE PRESIDENT: The dastard Robespierre is here. You don't want him to come in? (*Cries from all sides: No! No!*)

THURIOT: To bring into the bosom of the Convention a man covered with every crime would deprive this glorious day of all the splendor it deserves. The body of a tyrant can carry only disease; the place marked for him and his accomplices is the Square [*place*] of the Revolution. The two committees must take the necessary measures to see that the blade of the law strikes them down without delay.

*The Convention decrees this proposal. (Applause.)*

ESNARD, *commandant of the armed forces, at the bar*: As soon as I had in my hands the decree naming me provisional commander of the National Guard, I went to the mayor, who read my credentials. Payan also got notice of it, and had me put under arrest with my adjutant. Half an hour ago, as soon as I heard the representative of the people, at the town hall, cry out *vive la Convention! vive la liberté!* I summoned the jailer to open up the door for me; he refused; I beat it down with a stick and hurled myself into the arms of the representative of the people. (*Applause.*)

*There are requests for the president to give the fraternal embrace to Esnard.*

*Esnard mounts to the rostrum and receives the accolade amidst the liveliest applause.*

*Léonard Bourdon enters the hall amidst applause. He is accompanied by a policeman, and asks permission for the latter to mount to the rostrum with him.*

*This request is granted.*

LÉONARD BOURDON: This brave policeman whom you see did not leave me; he killed two of the conspirators. (*Lively applause.*) When

I left here I looked for forces in the Lombards, Arcis, and Gravilliers sections, to lay siege to the town hall; we moved into the square in several columns. At our approach the misled citizens opened their eyes, and the dastards fled. We found Robespierre the elder armed with a knife, which this brave policeman snatched from him. He also struck Couthon, who was also armed with a knife; Saint-Just and Le Bas have been taken, and Dumas and fifteen or twenty others are shut in a well-guarded room in the town hall.

We have given three citizens tasks: one to bring the prisoners here, another to watch at the treasury, and a third to make a search to uncover other conspirators who may be hidden there. It seems likely that Hanriot has escaped, for some citizens told me they saw him flee; but as they did not know about your decree they did not fall upon him. In short, citizens, liberty triumphs and the conspirators will soon appear before you at the bar. (*No! No! cries from all sides.*)

Here is a notebook and papers seized on Robespierre. Here too is a letter found on Couthon, signed Robespierre and Saint-Just; it is framed in these terms:

"Couthon, the patriots are all proscribed, the whole people had risen, it would be treason not to come to the town hall, where we are."

I ask that the president give the fraternal accolade to this brave policeman.

*The president does so amidst applause.*

THE PRESIDENT: I must tell the Convention what this brave policeman has just said to me; "I have no love for blood; still I should have liked to shed that of the Prussians and the Austrians; but I do not regret not being in the army, for today I have shed the blood of traitors." This citizen is called Charles-André Médal.

*The Convention decrees that honorable mention shall be made of the civic devotion of this citizen, and instructs the Committee of Public Safety to give him a promotion.*

LEGENBRE: When I left this rostrum I spoke to ten determined citizens whom I took with me; my intention was to go blow out the brains of the man who presided at the Jacobins yesterday and today. With my pistol loaded in both barrels I entered the hall; but bad luck had it that the villain had mixed with the crowd, and I stopped myself out of fear of hitting the innocent; he is named Vivier. I said to the women in the galleries: "You have been misled; go; the Convention punishes crime and not error." I locked the doors of the Jacobins; here are the keys. (*Applause.*) As it is the Convention en masse which has



saved the fatherland, tomorrow the National Convention en masse will be Jacobin. (*Renewed and lively applause.*) It will be virtue that goes to open the doors of that Society.

THRION: I move that measures be taken against the villain Vivier. This man, devoted to Robespierre, who has presided at the Jacobins this night, was in rebellion against the Convention; for he presided in support of people who were in rebellion.

*The Convention places Vivier outside the law. (Lively applause.)*

*The session is adjourned at six o'clock in the morning.*

#### Revolutionary Committee, Section des Arcis

20 Thermidor, Year II [7 August 1794]

##### Deposition:

The said Daucour, police officer, residing at no. [ ], quai de Gèvre, was arrested during the night of the 9th to the 10th Thermidor in the General Assembly [of the section] and, according to his statement, there preaching revolt against the Convention, seeking to draw the General Assembly into the party of the commune, showing the ropes and straps that had been used to bind Hanriot at the Committee on General Security and boasting of having himself released Hanriot, and stipulates and affirms all these facts, stating that he was astonished that only the Section des Arcis was in rebellion against the commune while the other forty-seven were on its side as well as the neighboring communes.

P.C.C. Auguis (Secretary)

This document has been published in *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, XXXVII (1965), 90-91.

#### Vigilance Committee, Ninth Arrondissement

8 Vendémiaire, Year III [29 September, 1794]

##### Interrogation of Citizen Bouillette:

Having appeared, citizen Jean Bouillette, sheathmaker, residing at no. 20, rue Jean de l'Épine, twenty-five years of age sergeant-major of the 14th cy of the armed Arcis *section* states to us that, being on the quai de Gèvres on the night of the 9th to the 10th Thermidor, at one

*Ibid.*, 91-2.

in the morning, the superintendent of police named Freine of the Section des Arcis, proclaiming, being mounted on a pillar near the Pont de la Raison, formerly Notre-Dame, the Convention's decree that outlawed the municipal government as well as Robespierre, who was given more prominence than the others in the same decree, which appeared instantly to create a great sensation among those who heard it; that then a citizen in the crowd, claiming to be a representative of the people, who in fact was invested with power and had his representative's identity card which he showed to all those around him, climbed onto the same pillar and embraced Freine, the aforesaid superintendent of police, and beginning to speak, harangued the people saying that Robespierre was a scoundrel as well as the officers of the commune, and having pointed out that the aforesaid and the others were outlawed by decree of the Convention which had just been read by citizen Freine, invited the armed force which was around to hear the aforesaid proclamation, to support it in order to upset the liberticide plans of the commune officials and the other scoundrels, and carry out the decree of the Convention.

To which the major part of the citizens replied that they should go to the commune in a body, which took place at once, but that arriving at the entrance to the [Place de la] Grève, at the end of Quai Pelletier, a gunner about five feet, four inches tall, seeing a crowd moving in the direction of the commune, called for a drumroll and blocked the passage of the deputy as well as the accompanying citizens.

The aforesaid gunner occupying the parapet approached us with drawn saber and learning from the shouts of some citizen (observing that at the sound of the drumroll the great crowd melted) that this was a representative of the people, told his gunner comrades as well as those who were accompanying the deputy that the aforesaid deputy had to be arrested and brought to the commune, seeing that he was a false deputy and that he demanded a king; that at the same moment, seeing the same gunner was about to use force, citizens Bouillette and Girardin, who had not for a moment ceased to hold the aforesaid deputy by his arms, opposed him with all their strength.

The said Bouillette and Girardin, not wishing that a national representative be injured and seeing the aforesaid deputy was running the imminent risk of a saber blow which the said Bouillette and Girardin warded off above the head of the aforesaid deputy and which the pernicious gunner intended to land, the aforesaid Bouillette and Girardin, without letting go of the aforesaid deputy, went to the respective Section des Arcis and to the Vigilance Committee of that *section*.

Upon which, the representative of the people having said that his name was Peniaire and having shown his representative's identity card, the Comité des Arcs ordered citizens Bouillette and Girardin (at their own request) to remain with the representative and immediately take him back to the National Convention, which was done at once, and after this important mission which was the fondest desire of citizens Bouillette and Girardin, they returned to the aforesaid *comité* to report the safe delivery of aforesaid deputy to the National Convention and took up their weapons and returned to their post.

### Paris Commune

9 Thermidor, Year II [27 July 1794]

#### Executive Committee

Courage, patriots of the Section des Piques, liberty triumphs! Already those whose steadfastness rendered them formidable to traitors are at liberty; Everywhere the people are showing themselves worthy of their reputation.

The meeting place is at the commune where the brave Hanriot will carry out the orders of the Executive Committee which has been established to save the country.

[signed] Louvet, Payan, Legrand, Lerebours, Ro

This letter to Robespierre's own *section* has been reproduced several times. The bottom of the page has several brownish stains, the largest of which measures about an inch across. See note, pp. 225-6.

### Memoirs of Joseph Barras

. . . A decree of indictment is pronounced against both Robespierres, Le Bas, Saint-Just, and Couthon. Thereupon great becomes the noise; the accused men protest, while cries of "To the bar!" are repeated a thousand times over. The president commands the ushers to bring the accused to the bar of the house; the ushers hesitate. The armed force is called upon; it also hesitates. Robespierre and his adherents are dragged to gaol.

The terror inspired by Robespierre is such that at the two prisons to which he is brought, the Luxembourg and the Conciergerie, the gaolers

*Memoirs of Barras*, I, 236-48. The notes following are by G. Duruy, editor of the French edition.

refuse to open the doors to admit him; he insists on being received, and like Socrates bows to the law; such behaviour on his part was undoubtedly most wise, and threatened to place the National Convention in a very embarrassing position. How, indeed, could it place on his trial a man against whom it could bring no other charge than that of having uttered from the tribune words it listened to approvingly, subsequently converting them into decrees.

Fortunately, Robespierre is shortly to find himself disobeying the Convention, nay, in insurrection against it. He is led in triumph to the commune. . . .

. . . Hanriot was body and soul devoted to Robespierre. On hearing of the catastrophe which had happened to his master, the bravo rushed to the commune to his rescue, caused every honour to be shown to him, and declared that the whole of the population belonged to Robespierre, and that he considered it his first duty to take the orders of the august persecuted one. The commune, without even Robespierre preferring the request, but by an act of anticipatory obligingness, and that devotion of which the Terror was the principle, ordered General Hanriot, who had under him some 15,000 men, to surround the Convention, keep it in private confinement, and prevent all debate.

Hanriot, armed with this order, marched on the Assembly and took possession of the room wherein were held the sittings of the Committee of General Security.

Its members, as well as those of the Committee of Public Safety, who should have remained at their posts and taken such measures as the circumstances demanded, fled to the Convention. Hanriot thence wended his way to the courtyard of the Tuileries, seized the cannon of honour, and trained them on the Convention, which, in so desperate an emergency, recovered its energy.

Dissatisfied with all the resolutions of which I was a witness, I at first refused the request preferred by the committees that I should take command of the troops in Paris. "You have generals enough," I had said; "let them mount their horses; do so yourselves, for the purpose of defending the country you have compromised." And, abandoning there and then these men, only a short while ago so insolent and cruel in the prosperity of their power, but now cowards in the hour of peril, I had returned to my place in the Convention, where its members, seated on their curule chairs, awaited an almost certain death. I was at once surrounded and questioned as to the measures taken by the committees, for it was known that I had been summoned by them. My reply was: "They are dead even before a blow has been struck." This

was at the very moment that their members were entering the hall of the Convention. After giving expression to their fears for the safety of the national representation, they proposed my appointment as general-in-chief of the Army of the Interior, and to the command of the Paris troops, which I had just declined. The National Convention, rising to its feet as one body, pronounced the decree, which was rendered unanimously.

There were at my disposal only the poorest resources for putting down the rebellion; they held possession of our guns and blocked up every exit from the Tuileries. This was not the time for discussion; it was necessary to act; but in order to act there was required, for want of the means taken from us, a double confidence on the part of that portion of the citizens and deputies determined not to bow to Robespierre's supremacy. The Convention, once more rising to its feet *en masse*, gave me proof of the most generous confidence. All my colleagues, some shaking me by the hand, others embracing me, told me that they reckoned on this fresh proof of my devotion to the country. . . .

Hanriot, arrested temporarily by Merlin de Thionville, had been restored to liberty by the maddened and drunken soldiers led by Coffinhal, whereupon the Convention at once decreed the outlawry of the rebellious general. I left the Assembly, bearing the decree. "I am going to my post; remain at yours!" Such was the whole of my speech. Hanriot was outside with his gunners. I called out to them in a loud voice, "Away with you, you wretches! Hanriot is an outlaw!" The very few soldiers and citizens who were accompanying me exclaimed in their turn, "Obey Barras! He is general-in-chief." On hearing this, the insurgents and their vile commander were seized with fright, and fled helter-skelter to the Commune.

The cowardice of Hanriot and Lavalette, and the disappearance of their soldiery, gave rise to some uproar, followed by a numerous desertion on the part of his troops, which had remained stationed in the Place de Grève at the orders of the Commune, whose diminishing ardour seemed to be inclining to some little moderation.

I took in this state of affairs at a glance, and grasping all its details in an instant, I thought I saw I had sufficient time to make an appeal to the good citizens and prevent the meeting in the Carrousel of the troops then in Paris and those outside the gates at Meudon and at Saint-Germain. I gave orders to beat to arms and to fire the alarm gun.

As I had presumed from the hesitating and timorous character of Robespierre, he had not adopted any particular course on reaching the

commune. The rhetor, no longer able to speechify, was passing his time discussing the minutæ of an address to be drawn up. Couthon having proposed to issue an address to the troops, Robespierre asked, "In whose name?" "Why, in the name of the Convention," replied Couthon. "Is it not wherever we are? The rest are but a handful of factious men whom the armed force will scatter and make short work of." "My opinion," Robespierre went on to say, "is that we should write in the name of the people." In this way Robespierre refused to advance on the Convention and dissolve it. This hesitation, communicating itself to all about him, served to spread a state of fright by which I was to profit, and which I had reckoned upon. My agents went through the streets proclaiming loudly that large forces had rallied to me. I had about 4000 men under me. I was desirous of avoiding a fight, and dreaded being obliged to cannonade the Hôtel-de-Ville. The committees, on finding the scene of the battle transferred from the Tuileries to the Place de Grève, recovered from their fright, and, as a consequence, at once resumed their insolent tone and taste for cruelty. They would have had me sweep everything with fire and sword, and exterminate all the insurgents with one discharge of grape-shot. I was fortunate enough to be able to prove to them that it was possible to avoid both carnage and the use of flames. The positions I had taken could at all events protect the retreat of the National Convention to the heights of Meudon.

The display of the measures I had taken created so great an impression that I was not called upon to proceed to extremities. Fear was gaining the conspirators. The defection of their early accomplices soon became known to and shared by the outside Jacobins, as if by some electric current. From time to time I sent reassuring reports to the Convention, keeping, at the head of my little army, the road open by way of the quays to the Place de Grève, the rumbling of my artillery putting to flight the remnants of the insurrection. I wended my way to the Hôtel-de-Ville, which Merlin de Thionville had already entered. Robespierre had shattered his jaw\* with one of the two pistols carried by Le

\* The Thermidorians were interested in casting dishonour on the memory of their victim. The suicide story, showing as it does Robespierre in the light of a great criminal punishing himself in order to escape just chastisement for his misdeeds, is consequently the one they have seen fit to adopt. In spite of the assertions made by Barras in his memoirs, and of those of Courtois in his report of the 8th Thermidor, Year III., I am inclined to believe that by no means did Robespierre seek to kill himself, but that he was treacherously wounded at the very moment when, after prolonged wavering—the cause of his ruin—he had at last made up his mind to respond to the outlawry pronounced against him by an appeal to arms against his enemies in the Convention and in the committees. As I write these lines, there lies before me the original draft of this appeal to arms.

Bas, who had blown his brains out with the other. Couthon was hiding under a table, and Robespierre in a little room, by the door of which Le Bas lay. Saint-Just was ministering to Robespierre. Hanriot was crouching in a watercloset. I could not endure this melancholy spectacle, so I left, and had Robespierre carried into the *salon* of the Committee of Public Safety, where he was laid on a table. Medical men commissioned to examine and dress his wounds drew up a report confirming that Robespierre's condition was the result of an attempt to commit suicide, and the direction taken by the charge was that of a man who had shot himself. One of the surgeons having placed on the table the teeth which had fallen from Robespierre's mouth during his examination of it, one of the gunners on duty pounced on them, and addressing Robespierre, exclaimed, "You scoundrel, I will keep them as a monument of execration." In a report submitted to me on the circumstances connected with Robespierre's agony, I read that he had repeatedly asked for a pen in order to write, as he could no longer articulate, and that this request, again and again made in the hearing of the members of the Committee, had been by them denied. I have heard this fact, to which I declare not having been a witness, repeated, for I would not have refused a pen to this man in his agony; and, in view of his not being able to speak, he might therewith have given us information which the others might have had interest in suppressing. Was the refusal of the members of the Committee merely an expression of the hatred which might have been inspired by the man who had sought to have them all killed but a short while ago, and who had almost succeeded in carrying out his design, or, as it has also been stated, did they dread some divulgation? The sequel of events and an examination of

... I doubt whether there exists to-day in the world a document of more tragic aspect than this sheet of paper bearing the imprint of the Commune. The hurried, violent, convulsive handwriting is the expression of the feverish mental agitation of Robespierre's friends in this supreme contingency. The letters run, the words rush in their headlong course; it is indeed a cry, one of distress or of battle. Side by side with the nervous signatures of Lerebours, Legrand, Louvet, and Payan, the first two letters of Robespierre's name stand out in relief, calm in the midst of all the tumult, signs as cold and methodical as the inflexible will of the man who was deliberately tracing them when the shot was fired. The unfinished word, the name severed with a clean stroke, decapitated, and having as a paraph a wide splash of blood, irresistibly calls up the crimson vision of a head falling from its trunk under the knife of the guillotine. But not only do these two sinister letters flash lightning-wise before our eyes a vision of the drama, they also explain its *dénouement*. The truncated signature seems to prove the surprise, the sudden and thunder-like attempt on life, the bullet despatched by another hand than the one which was tracing those bold characters, so abruptly interrupted—in a word, murder, not suicide. [This interpretation, however moving, is wrong. The document in question was dispatched before Robespierre's recapture.]

his papers have not proved that Robespierre and his accomplices had anything to reveal they would not have said, and which was not already known. A week later, this table, round which the members of the Committee were deliberating, was still dyed with the blood of Robespierre. What carelessness and ferocious attention on the part of those dear colleagues of his!\* All arrested were taken to prison; I was on the point of having Couthon transferred to an hospital, but the circumstances did not permit even the most sincere humanity to display any such particular attentions. What attentions could claim individuals on whom death had already laid its hand, and who were about to be delivered over to it?

On the 10th Thermidor, the Revolutionary Tribunal sentenced Robespierre and his accomplices to death, or rather fixed the date of their execution, for, as they were outlawed by the decree of the Convention, there was nothing left to do but establish their identity and hand them over to the executioner. . . .

### Revolutionary Tribunal

10 Thermidor [28 July]

Maximilien Robespierre, aged 35 years, born at Arras, ex-deputy of the National Convention; G. Couthon, aged 38 years, born at Orsay, ex-deputy of the National Convention; L. J. B. T. Lavalette, aged 40 years, born in Paris, ex-noble, ex-commandant of a battalion of the section of the Gardes Françaises, ex-brigadier-general in the Army of the North; F. Hanriot, aged 33 years, born at Nanterre, ex-exciseman, ex-commander-general of the armed force of Paris; L. C. F. Dumas, aged 37 years, born at Lucy (Haute-Saône), lawyer at Lons-le-Saunier, ex-president of the Revolutionary Tribunal in Paris; A. Saint-Just, aged 26 years, born at Liser (Nièvre), ex-deputy of the Convention; C. F. Payan, aged 27 years, born at Paul-les-Fontaines, ex-juryman of the Revolutionary Tribunal, ex-national agent of the Commune of Paris; N. J. Vivier, aged 50 years, born in Paris, ex-judge of the criminal

\* Robespierre was placed in a room which was not the one wherein the Committee held its sittings. None of its members can have even seen him. They had gone to take a rest immediately after Robespierre's arrest at the Hôtel-de-Ville. The Committee did not sit again till eight o'clock on the forenoon of the 10th, some three hours after Robespierre had been transported to the prison of La Conciergerie.—Note in the handwriting of M. Prieur de la Côte-d'Or. *Le Moniteur universel*, XXI, 559-60 (Edition of 6 Fructidor, Year II [23 August 1794]).