Two

Revolutionary Politics Take Shape

1789–1792

The Revolution began in Caen much as it did in Paris, with a storming of the most obvious and imposing symbol of the Old Regime. Built in the eleventh century by William the Conqueror, the Château dominated the landscape from its perch on a hillside above the city, as indicated in Map 3. On July 21, 1789, probably inspired by news from Paris, a crowd invaded the Château and armed themselves. They encountered no serious resistance.

The significance of this episode lies less in the actual event than in the contemporary response to it. Two published diaries offer a unique insight into public opinion in Caen during the Revolution. The diaries, printed side by side in one volume, are made especially interesting by the contrasting social backgrounds of their authors. One, Pierre François Laurent Esnault, was a bourgeois avocat whose father and grandfather had been procureurs at the bailliage court of Caen. Jean Jacques Victor Dufour, the other diarist, was a gardener, an homme du peuple, as the editor describes him. Esnault wrote his journal near the end of the Revolution (after 1795), and his accuracy suffers for it. Dufour wrote his diary more or less day by day, which gives it a more spontaneous, but less reflective, flavor. The objectivity of both is dubious, but they offer important and distinctly different contemporary viewpoints.¹

¹. Georges Lesage (ed.), Episodes de la Révolution à Caen racontés par un bourgeois et un homme du peuple (Caen, 1926). For this chapter in particular, I have relied extensively on these
Esnault noted in his journal that the attack on the Château had reportedly been inspired by Protestants, “men who sought to abolish the Catholic religion in order to establish their own exclusively, and to avenge the Bartholomew’s Day massacre.” The interpretation here is definitely suspect—there is no evidence that Caen Protestants persecuted the majority Catholic population at any time during the Revolution. But his comments do indicate that Protestants were active in local affairs in Caen and that Catholics viewed their political participation with some alarm. Indeed, the question of whether Protestants could be elected as delegates to the Estates General had been a matter of local discussion. Local electors appealed to Versailles for a ruling before the issue was decided. In the end, the third estate bailliage assembly chose as deputies two Caen Protestants, both of whom had ties to the commercial elite. The first was Michel Louis Lamy, a wealthy merchant; the second, Gabriel de Cussy, was a former directeur de la monnaie in Caen. The relations between Catholics and Protestants were not volatile in Caen, as they were in Nîmes and Montauban, for example. The Protestant minority did play a very important role in local affairs, however, and the disproportionate presence of Protestants among elected officials continued throughout the Revolution.

Victor Dufour had surprisingly little to say about the taking of the Château. He did note that only four days previously the duke of Harcourt, the provincial governor, had positioned six cannons, four on the bridge of Vaucelles and two in the Cours la Reine, and trained them across the river on the faubourg Vaucelles (one of the poorest quarters in Caen) in case of revolt. This observation is embellished by Esnault’s comment that after July 21, “honest and peaceful townspeople were alarmed to see arms in the hands of immoral and unprincipled people.” As further instances will show, the elite of Caen wished that politics remain an orderly business, the

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two sources for anecdotal and “public mood” material. To identify which diarist I am citing, footnotes will henceforth refer to either Lesage (Esnault) or Lesage (Dufour).

2. Lesage (Esnault), 10. The translation is mine, as it will be in all instances, unless otherwise noted.


4. Lesage (Esnault), 10, and (Dufour), 21. Esnault is clearly referring to the _menu peuple_ and those who would rouse them.
MAP 3. Caen, 1793
Colleen Baker
affair of men of substance, and particularly that it not descend to the level of public, popular contention.

The days following the storming of the Château continued to be unsettled, as the scarcity of grain provoked several disruptions at the market. A more serious outburst of violence jolted Caen less than four weeks later. On August 12, an angry crowd murdered the viscount Henri de Belzunce. A young major in the second Bourbon infantry regiment, garrisoned in Caen, Belzunce was described as handsome and spirited but arrogant and avowedly royalist. He maintained a visible presence around town and, with an aide, frequently provoked trouble at patriotic fetes. His actions, particularly his open display of arms, became so offensive that the General Committee of Caen (a temporary municipal council created in July, 1789) requested his transfer. Belzunce refused to go. On August 11, he publicly promised to reward any of his soldiers who could strip the medals of Necker and the Breton Union from the uniforms of a rival regiment. Belzunce himself led a group of his men to perform the feat, brutally striking a soldier in the process and raising the ire of the townspeople against the young noble and his regiment. Later that evening, one of his second lieutenants walked with four or five other soldiers toward the bridge of Vaucelles. The lieutenant allegedly fired on a sentinel of the bourgeois militia, who returned fire and killed him. Scattered shots rang out through the night, and by morning the mood of the populace had been raised to a fever pitch. An anonymous citizen sounded the tocsin, and a crowd invaded the garrison, towing a cannon in its wake. Members of the General Committee quickly intervened in an attempt to prevent violence, as Belzunce—who was blamed for having provoked the incident—protested his innocence and offered to appear at the town hall. With that course of action agreed upon, the National Guard led him to the Château, there to be confined for his own protection.

Meanwhile, the provincial commander, perhaps unwittingly, sent orders for the Bourbon regiment to leave Caen. Its departure alarmed and enraged the crowd, which again went to find Belzunce. They marched him to the Place Saint-Pierre, where a national guardsman struck him down as he made an effort to flee. In the bloody scene that followed, his body was chopped into bits and his head paraded about town. According to the memoirs of Frédéric Vaultier, it was this sickening slaughter that stuck in the memories

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5. Frédéric Vaultier, Souvenirs de l’insurrection Normande, dite du Fédéralisme, en 1793, avec notes et pièces justificatives par M. Georges Mancel (Caen, 1858), 299–303. Frédéric Vaultier, just seventeen years old in 1789, completed his rhetoric studies at the University of
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of the people of Caen, and not the irresponsible antics of a young fool who had antagonized the "patriots" in town. No one ever came to trial for the murder of Belzunce.

Three individuals stand out from the crowd for the noteworthy roles they played during these few days. One was Jean Michel Barbot, who owned a small tobacco shop in the parish Saint-Pierre. Although not directly implicated in the murder, he enjoyed a reputation as a popular leader, and some accused him of instigating the attack on Belzunce. Barbot ran for the vice-presidency of his section in 1790 and was later president of the Carabor club. A bully of sorts, he obtained for himself, by questionable means, the position of clerk at the Tribunal of Commerce. Despite his poor reputation in some quarters, his sway over the crowd was clear. Each day before his shop he read aloud, often to large crowds, *Le Courrier dans les D é p a r t e m e n t s*, a newspaper written by the future Girondin Antoine Joseph Gorsas. Barbot frequented town hall, it appears, and often acted as a messenger or town crier for municipal officials. He turned up at almost every important event or crisis, though he never held elected office.

The two other figures exerted a more calming influence on the populace, or at least tried to do so. One of them, Pierre Mesnil, was a wealthy Protestant merchant and a captain in the National Guard in 1789. Victor Dufour remarked upon his efforts to protect Belzunce from attack, describing Mesnil as "a very prudent and wise man." Elected to the district council in 1790, he became a departmental administrator in 1792. François Le Carpentier, a teacher of philosophy at the collège Dumont, also did what he

Caen in 1793 and probably wrote his "souvenirs" of the federalist revolt around 1840, after a career at the University of Caen. Georges Mancel, who edited and annotated Vaultier's memoirs, gives no precise date for the completion of the manuscript, saying only that Vaultier wrote the account "over thirty years after the revolt." Thus, it could have been completed as early as 1825. Vaultier died in 1843. The considerable volume of notes and documents that Mancel has appended to Vaultier's memoirs includes an account of the massacre. See also *Extrait du procès-verbal du Comité Général et National de la ville de Caen, relatif à la mort du Belzunce*, B.M. Caen.

6. Saint-Pierre lay at the heart of the main artisan quarter, in the most densely populated part of Caen.

7. A.D. Calvados, I.10125 (interrogations following the federalist revolt); A. C. Caen, D1, D2 (Délibérations du Corps municipal et du Conseil Général de la Commune, 18 février 1790-3 janvier 1792 and 4 janvier 1792-11 Germinal an II); Lesage, (Esnaul), 18. Esnaul describes Barbot as an "homme aussi laud au physique que dépravé au moral," his standard criticism of those he disliked or of whom he disapproved.

8. A. D. Calvados, I.189 (Registre des arrêtés du Conseil Général du département du Calvados, 11 août 1792-26 juillet 1793), I40 (Eglise de Caen, état civil-Protestant déclarations, 1788); Lesage (Dufour), 22.
could to prevent trouble. He did in fact avert serious bloodshed on the eve of Belzunce’s death when he defused a confrontation between the Bourbon regiment and a National Guard battalion. Respected for his fairness and moderation, Le Carpentier served as an early secretary of the Jacobin club and in 1791 was elected one of the town notables. All three of these men later actively participated in the federalist revolt.

Suspicion of and animosity toward the nobility, at their most violent in the Belzunce affair, were ever present in Caen. They received their next open expression in October, 1789. Like most other towns, Caen had assembled a bourgeois National Guard in late July, primarily for defense against the dangerous bands rumored to be roaming the countryside. By August 7, the guard had been formally organized into twenty-seven companies of one hundred men each. But alongside this new force there continued to function a company of “volunteers,” whose existence the guardsmen vocally protested. Patriots considered the volunteers superfluous at best and a threat at worst, for they were reputed to be armed and paid by the nobility. The General Committee made an effort to disband them on August 16 by prohibiting the bearing of arms except by those on National Guard duty. This measure proved largely ineffective; so on October 6, sectional assemblies voted formally to suppress the volunteers. The National Guard disarmed them without delay.

If tension between the second and third estates dominated the revolutionary period in Caen, the religious question must be said to have been second in importance, though the two were clearly related. Félix Mourlot remarks upon the division, perhaps even hostility, between the low and high clergy on the eve of the Revolution. The latter felt that the king was tipping the balance toward the lower clergy with regard to election procedures. Either because of those procedures or by choice, the five bishops of Lower Normandy exerted little influence on the election of delegates to the Estates General. The first estate’s electoral assemblies were the most tumultuous of any of the three orders, and the clergy’s elections in the bailliage of Caen were the only ones “marked by a truly democratic character.” The clergy sent

10. Mourlot, La Fin de l’Ancien Régime, 363; Lesage (Dufour), 23–24. One can appreciate the nobles’ fear that the bourgeois guard might not adequately protect their families and property against an angry crowd. They cannot have been encouraged by the frequent admonitions to guardsmen, often publicly posted, that drinking was not allowed while on duty.
mostly parish priests to Versailles, and Mourlot remarks upon the considerable sympathy between the lower clergy of Caen and the third estate.\footnote{Mourlot, \textit{La Fin de l'Ancien Régime}, 186–91.}

With the legislation of the constitutional oath, however, the clergy closed ranks to some extent. Passed by the Constituent Assembly in July, 1790, and signed into law by Louis XVI on August 24, the civil constitution of the clergy reorganized the Church in France. The new constitution mandated the election of clergy by electoral assemblies, limited the powers of bishops, and required all clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the nation, the king, and the law, the same oath sworn by all elected officials. The Assembly hoped to receive the approval of the pope, but when Pius VI remained silent, a decree requiring immediate compliance with the law was passed and was signed by Louis on December 26, 1790. The high clergy almost universally opposed this new measure, but the low clergy was divided, with many following their bishops. By early 1791, only seven bishops had sworn the oath, and slightly more than 50 percent of the lower clergy had done so.\footnote{Jacques Godechot, \textit{Les Institutions de la France sous la Révolution et l'Empire} (Paris, 1951), 224–28.}

In Calvados, Bishop Cheylus refused to accept the oath and exhorted his priests to do likewise. Many did, but the department was not among the most refractory—50 to 70 percent of the priests eventually swore the constitutional oath.\footnote{Michel Vovelle, \textit{La Chute de la Monarchie, 1787–1792} (Paris, 1972), 230.} In Caen itself, however, only two of the thirteen parish priests conformed to the new law, and a spirited public polemic ensued regarding the legitimacy of the civil constitution. Interestingly, the two priests who swore the oath served the principal artisan and working-class parishes in Caen, Saint-Pierre and Vaucelles.\footnote{Brochures Normandes: \textit{Caen sous la Révolution}, B. M. Caen, Rés. Fn. Br. C182–225.} Only with difficulty were the eleven \textit{refractaires} replaced by constitutional priests, as several of those initially elected refused to serve. In February, 1791, the conflict spilled over into municipal politics when the mayor, Le Forestier de Vendoeuvre, resigned over the issue of the oath. On January 13, he had delivered a lengthy discourse to the municipal council attacking the civil constitution of the clergy and defending those who refused to take the oath. When it became clear that his convictions were not shared by the council or the majority of the public, he resigned.\footnote{A. C. Caen, D1. A copy of Vendoeuvre's discourse can be found in \textit{Pièces sur la normandie}, B. M. Caen, Fn. A562/1–14.}
the choice of a new mayor signaled a shift in Caen politics, as the people of Caen once again demonstrated their aversion to the nobility.

Le Forestier de Vendoeuvre, seigneur of an estate not far from Caen, had first been named mayor by Louis XVI in 1781 and had served for nearly seven years. His term had been a stormy one, though. The king had showed displeasure at the strained relations between Vendoeuvre and the intendant, and the people had protested the mayor’s excessive spending and autocratic manner. His election in February, 1790, may have been due to his willingness to stand up to the king and the intendants in defense of municipal independence. But Vendoeuvre’s inability to work with the elected notables seems to have carried over into the revolutionary period.16

His successor, Pierre Louis Bonnet de Meautry, was, to be sure, a noble and a chevalier de Saint-Louis. But if under the Old Regime there were a fair number of bourgeois living nobly, then Bonnet de Meautry, by contrast, must certainly be called a noble living poorly. His sentiments lay more with the sans-culottes than with his fellow aristocrats. Very early, he dropped de Meautry from his name; and in 1793, he would be the only Calvados deputy to the National Convention to sit with the Montagnards. Bonnet was a captain in the National Guard and in July, 1790, headed Caen’s delegation to the Festival of the Federation in Paris.17 Our bourgeois commentator, Esnault, offers a clear indication of Bonnet’s reputation among the high ranks of Caen society: “One saw with profound sadness a gentleman of exemplary conduct, of unequalled generosity and charity, replaced by a man who was reproached as being, for several years, at the head of biribi and other games forbidden by the police, the only source of support which remained to him.”18 The political shift that began with the election of Bonnet was confirmed in the November, 1791, municipal elections, which marked a final repudiation of the Old Regime elite and nobility of Caen. Municipal councils thereafter would be dominated by the commercial elite.

The election of Bonnet as mayor was soon followed by a change in the local church hierarchy. The refusal of Bishop Cheylus to swear the constitutional oath made necessary the election of a new bishop. Gervais de la Prise, curé of Saint-Pierre in Caen, was chosen by an electoral assembly and installed as bishop on March 16, 1791. Less than three weeks later, he re-

17. Mouriot, La Fin de l’Ancien Régime, cxii.
18. Lesage (Esnault), 47.
signed, citing the refusal of Cheylus to formally step aside as the reason he could not, in good conscience, assume the episcopal duties. The electoral assembly met again, more sparsely attended this time, and on April 18 elected Claude Fauchet on the third ballot. The choice was at first an unpopular one. Fauchet was not from Calvados, he had a reputation as a radical, and the former bishop published a denunciation of his election. Cheylus’ refusal to resign posed no crisis of conscience for Fauchet, though, and he arrived on May 11 for installation. His compassion and eloquent oratory rapidly won him support.19

The new bishop quickly assumed an active role in departmental affairs. As early as June, his public criticism of two administrators made him again a center of controversy. Fauchet apologized for his error in judgment, became an active participant at Jacobin club meetings in Caen, and was soon elected president of that body. In November, 1791, though still a controversial figure, Fauchet won election on the first ballot to represent Calvados in the Legislative Assembly. He continued as bishop of the department and frequently communicated with the Caen Jacobin club.

Fauchet remained an influential figure in local affairs. One of his vicars, Chaix-d’Estanges, became curé of the parish Saint-Etienne in Caen and was later a leader of the federalist revolt. Gohier de Jumilly, elected curé of the parish Saint-Jean shortly after the bishop’s arrival, also supported Fauchet and was active in the revolt. Fauchet himself was among the twenty-two deputies initially denounced by the Paris sections in April, 1793. Arrested after the assassination of Marat, he came to trial with the proscribed Girondins and was executed in October, 1793.20

On November 5, 1791, the issues of religion and the aristocracy combined to produce the most dramatic incident in Caen’s revolutionary history, “l’Affaire des 84.” On the preceding day, Bunel, former curé of Saint-Jean and a refractory priest, had held a mass in the church Saint-Jean, in accordance with the law and with the permission of the constitutional curé. A large number of nobles, resident in that parish, had attended the mass with their

19. Vautier, Souvenirs, 78–87; Lesage (Esnault), 55–57. See also Olwen Hufton, Bayeux in the Late Eighteenth Century (London, 1967), 173. Hufton writes that the failure of the Constituent Assembly to call a national church council to affirm the civil constitution and confirm the jurisdiction of new bishops led to the resignation of Gervais de la Prise.
servants. The latter had been rumored to be armed with pistols, and the
noblemen, of course, had worn their swords. The insolent tone of the ser-
vants had offended some “patriots” (as they were referred to in the munici-
pal council report), but the mass had ended without incident, and Bunel had
announced another service for the following day.

It should be noted that the elected constitutional curés were at this point
not very popular with the people of Caen. Their masses were not generally
well attended, and many people remained loyal to their old parish priests.
On October 8, 1791, the departmental administration published an order
from the minister of the interior that declared refractory priests free to cele-
brate mass as long as they did not disrupt public order. Those attending the
November 4 mass clearly saw this order as a moral victory over the radical
elements in Caen, in particular the members of the Jacobin club. This atti-
tude led to the taunts and insults that so offended the “patriots.”

The municipality, fearing trouble, asked Bunel to postpone his mass. The
curé readily agreed, but his decision was not adequately publicized, and
a number of aristocrats assembled at Saint-Jean anyway. A group of con-
cerned “patriots” appeared at the church as well. The two groups ex-
changed words, minor scuffles ensued, and several shots were fired. Two
municipal officers arrived with two companies of National Guard grenadiers
and dispersed the crowd.21 The municipal council immediately convened
with the district and departmental administrations to consider security mea-
sures. As they deliberated, word came that a group of armed nobles and ser-
vants had gathered at the Place Saint-Sauveur, located in a well-to-do neigh-
borhood near the Abbaye-aux-Hommes (where the municipal council met).
The combined administrations sent a municipal officer to order the nobles
back to their regular companies. (The municipality had called all citizens to
arms when trouble first broke out at Saint-Jean, but they should have re-
ported to their assigned National Guard stations.) For reasons that remain
unknown, the officer instead led them to the square in front of the town hall,
where they were questioned and disarmed. The search and interrogation
produced a letter that referred to a coalition of nobles, allegedly formed to
protect “persons and property.” Presented with this evidence, the munici-
pality ordered the arrest of those disarmed, as well as several others, mostly
aristocrats and wealthy bourgeois. A total of eighty-four men and women

were jailed in the Château and their crimes reported to the Legislative Assembly. The three administrations, meeting jointly, ordered all strangers in Caen to report to the town hall to turn in their arms, forbade unnecessary public assemblies, and authorized National Guard captains to search suspect houses for strangers bearing arms.

Several accounts of the affair, both contemporary and secondary, illuminate the situation in the weeks preceding November 5. One local antiquarian notes that since the beginning of the Revolution, the unsettled situation in the countryside had forced a considerable number of nobles to seek safety in Caen, where they stayed with friends or in their own town houses. Lacking any occupation, they closely followed public affairs and grew alarmed at what they perceived to be an increasing disrespect for property (particularly their own) and public order. This led to the formation of committees and proposals for reestablishment of respect for the law. The meetings of these committees were not unknown to the Jacobin club and the municipal council, but they could not be legally prohibited. It is significant that the Régiment d’Aunis, the only remaining military alternative to the bourgeois National Guard, was transferred from Caen on November 3, despite the protests of the departmental administration. This may well have increased the aristocrats’ apprehensions.

Our two contemporary chroniclers, Esnault and Dufour, offer distinctly different impressions of the episode. Esnault writes that the aristocrats and wealthy bourgeois (les honnêtes gens, as he calls them) feared the increasing influence of the Caen Jacobin club and held secret meetings to plan strategy and propose suitable candidates for the upcoming municipal elections. He acknowledges the lack of circumspection of “les royalistes” and the brash words of young nobles from out of town but insists that the gathering at the

22. The confiscated letter began, “Le désir de protéger les personnes et les propriétés, et la nécessité de réclamer l’exécution des loix à chaque instant violées, ont provoqué la réunion des honnêtes gens.” It went on, in sixteen articles, to describe the formation of committees to coordinate efforts to preserve order. The letter identified by name two prominent nobles and spoke of secret meetings in private homes. The municipality also claimed to have found other letters. My account of these two days relies primarily on Consultation délibérée à Paris pour les 8 et 9 citoyens détenus dans la Tour de Caen, depuis le 5 novembre 1791, a thirty-nine-page report prepared for the Legislative Assembly by three of its members, Desceze, Vulpian, and De la Malle. B. M. Caen, Rés. Fn. Br. D1 56–209.

23. A. C. Caen, D1.

Place Saint-Sauveur was due to confusion and an honest desire to restore order. Dufour describes this same group of upright citizens as a "compagnie noire" that wished to make a counterrevolution. He says that 150 to 200 men assembled on the Place Saint-Sauveur and that several people had earlier been wounded near Saint-Jean. Another observer wrote two days later that "the scene yesterday of which Mlle ______ spoke to you was crushing for the aristocratic party, which has grown insolent over the past month."

Whatever the truth may have been, and it remains elusive, the Legislative Assembly agreed with Esnault. After three of its members had made a report citing the municipality's call to arms and the lack of sufficient evidence of conspiracy, the Assembly ordered the release of all but two of those arrested. The decision was not a popular one in Caen. The Jacobin club and the National Guard opposed it, and Louis Caille, a lawyer and president of the club, proposed that the municipal and district administrations petition the Legislative Assembly to retract the decree. The municipality and district rejected Caille's suggestion, and on February 3 at 2:00 A.M., the municipal officers, with the aid of a small guard, released the prisoners from the Château. No trouble marred the release, though a small group of "enragés" were rumored to have waited all night in ambush, fortunately at the wrong entrance!

Three significant observations can be made about this episode. First, it was perceived by the people of Caen at the time as a "noble conspiracy." Not all of those arrested were nobles—some were bourgeois rentiers—but the most prominent among them were of the nobility. The confrontation thus heightened the tension between the second and third estates of Caen. Second, no elected officials, either former or present, were implicated in the affair. The controversy did not create any lasting political divisions, nor did it embroil the local political arena. If anything—and this is the third point—it strengthened the bonds of the local political elite in the face of a challenge.

27. Consultation délibérée à Paris. The prisoners were ordered released on the basis of what today would be termed a technicality. The three deputies found that the arrests had been motivated by the discovery of the anonymous letter. Since the National Assembly had declared letters and personal correspondence inviolable, the letter should never have been seized; and there existed no other strong evidence against the accused.
28. A. C. Caen, D2; Lesage (Esnault), 81.
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from the old aristocracy and interference from the Legislative Assembly in Paris. The municipal council had seen a threat to public order and had acted resolutely to eliminate that threat. The evidence against the accused seemed clear, yet the Legislative Assembly overturned the accusation and ordered the release of the suspects. Here we see an early, albeit minor, confrontation between local and national authority. This issue would assume greater importance by 1793.

Another crisis developed even before the resolution of the Affair of 84, and it eventually led to a second brutal murder. As before, bourgeois animosity toward the nobility triggered the chain of events. At issue in this instance was the composition of the departmental Criminal Tribunal. The tribunals were created by the law of February 7, 1791, but because the law required interpretation and clarification, final enactment did not come until nearly one year later.29

The new court encountered opposition in many parts of the country. In Caen, its installation was scheduled for January 23, 1792, but the National Guard’s refusal to participate forced the municipality to postpone the ceremony. The guard acted in support of the Caen Jacobin club, which had vehemently protested the jury list proposed by Georges Bayeux, the Calvados procureur-général-syndic.

In a January 26 report to the minister of the interior, the departmental directory described the disruptive events of the previous few days. On January 24, the day after the aborted installation, a delegation from the Jacobin club, led by Chaix-d’Estanges and Louis Caille, invaded the directory’s chambers; the unruly group claimed that aristocrats outnumbered patriots on the jury list and particularly denounced the inclusion of two university professors who had signed a letter protesting the constitutional oath. In the words of the directory report:

A voice was then raised and stated, “we will not permit on the Criminal Tribunal a Boucher Deslongpars and a Deshameaux, who in the electoral assembly declared

30. A.N., F’ 3661’ Calvados; A.C. Caen, 1275 (Société des Amis de la Constitution, 1790–93); B. M. Caen, Rés. Fn. A1900/1. Unfortunately, the registers of the Jacobin club for the period before September, 1793, no longer exist. One assumes that they were destroyed by frightened club members as the failure of the federalist revolt became apparent. The information available regarding the club comes from contemporary accounts, some printed declarations of the Jacobin club (which often listed the current president and secretaries), and administrative reports and letters.
themselves enemies of the bishop of Calvados"; and on the observation of the presi-
dent that M. le Boucher Deslongpars had been named commissioner to the Tribunal
by the executive power, M. Destanges stated that neither the King, nor decrees, nor
administrative bodies would oblige them to recognize persons who did not have their
confidence, and that the members of the Directory themselves, who currently en-
joyed their confidence, would be frankly informed and not tolerated if they came to
lose that confidence.31

A series of letters from the department president, Doulcet de Pontécoulant,
to the minister of the interior, Cahier de Gerville, elaborates on the evolu-
tion of the affair and its final resolution. Doulcet acknowledged that the jury
list, the root of the problem, was "véritablement fort mauvais" and merited
change, but he noted the directory's reluctance to cede to popular demand
by changing it. He commented that Bayeux, by his support of the monarchy
and his aristocratic sympathies, had lost the confidence of citizens through-
out the department and stood little chance of regaining it. In a second letter,
dated February 2, Doulcet sounded much more optimistic:

We are constantly gaining ground on the factious elements. We have pursued them
into a corner. Yesterday at the club, we won a complete advantage over them. The
success was almost entirely due to Bougon-Longrais, our secretary-general, who on
several occasions has had the honor to meet you in Paris. Caille was defeated, and
to such a degree that his brother in arms D'estanges felt compelled to abandon him and
even mount his carcass to complete his defeat.

At the end of the meeting I was elected President of the Club. I learned of it this
morning from a large number of good citizens of this town who had long since
ceased going there. They pressed me, they demanded that I accept; myself, I de-
manded that they attend meetings regularly, and I volunteered. There is the battle
decidedly engaged and suffering a necessary fight to the death. Either we restore the
authority of the law in Caen, and respect for it in the Club, or we abandon all, busi-
ness and the country.32

Here we see a prime example of the legalism and the insistence on orderly
debate in the political arena that were the most prominent characteristics of
the Calvados administration throughout this period. Despite the merits of
the Jacobin club protest, it had been lodged in an unruly and unsanctioned
manner, and to accede to the protestors' demands would, in the minds of the
administrators, have clearly established a disastrous precedent.

31. A.N., F10II Calvados 1 (personnel and tribunaux).
32. A.N., F7 366 Calvados. Chaix-d'Estanges' name is spelled in at least three different
ways in the documents. He was reportedly born Chaix-de-St.-Ange, and changed his name to
Destange or d'Estanges at the time of the Revolution (Vaultier, Souvenirs, 288).
Doulcet wrote again to the minister one day later and reported that he had just presided over a peaceful Jacobin club meeting attended by more than two thousand people. In subsequent letters, he suggested to the minister that an example be made of Chaix and Caille, but soon he moderated his opinion, noting that the two men continued to exercise "a prodigious influence over the people of the faubourgs" and that the authorities should proceed with a prosecution only if they could be assured of success. To accuse the two leaders of _lèse-nation_ before the Legislative Assembly, and then see them acquitted (as Doulcet thought probable), would only make them popular heroes. He observed that Fauchet, then a deputy to the Assembly, had himself written to the Jacobin club urging it to join with the municipal council in demanding an annulment of the entire jury list. With respect to any prosecution, Doulcet thought the municipal council to be hesitant because of the powerful influence of the club and considered the departmental directory unwilling to risk its current good standing with the populace. Several municipal officials did resign in the wake of the controversy, citing violation of the law and the inability of the council to deliberate free of the club's overriding influence, but their colleagues exhorted them to retract their resignations. In the end, only one followed through on his action.\(^33\)

No prosecution resulted from this affair, and Doulcet's victory over his "factious" opponents appears to have been short-lived. Less than two months later, Caille again sat as president of the Jacobin club, and in November, 1792, he was elected _procureur-syndic_ of the district (an ironic position for one who had been accused of flouting the law and public authority!). Chaix-d'Estangès continued to hold forth from the pulpit of Saint-Etiennne. The departmental directory did dismiss the two professors from the jury list but made no further concessions, and on February 11, the Criminal Tribunal was finally installed.\(^34\)

Despite the apparent victory of Louis Caille and the Jacobin club, this episode marked an important shift in Caen political life. Since late 1790, the Jacobin club had acted as an independent agent in Calvados politics—at tempting to influence local elections, supporting Claude Fauchet, urging prosecution in the Affair of 84. What Doulcet and other administrators objected to in February, 1792, was the extralegal manner in which the club

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33. A.N., F7 3661a Calvados, and F16b II Calvados 1; A. D. Calvados, L10052 (documents pertaining to the installation of the Criminal Tribunal).

34. A. D. Calvados, L386 (Transcriptions des procès-verbaux des délibérations du conseil général du district de Caen, 15 juillet 1790—15 janvier 1793); A. C. Caen, D1.
acted, riling the populace in support of its demand. Doulcet sympathized with the club’s objection to the jury list but would not tolerate the popular tumult that accompanied it. In the following weeks, Doulcet appears to have succeeded in bringing the Jacobin club under control. Although Caille returned as president, the club did not henceforth exercise the independent influence that it had had to that point. The local administrations now dominated political affairs. By 1793, the Jacobin club would be playing only a secondary role in Caen politics.

For Georges Bayeux, however, the trouble had just begun. Intimidated by the public outcry directed against him, Bayeux excused himself from departmental meetings and retreated with his family to their country home. On February 13, the departmental directory informed Bayeux that calm had been restored and that nothing should prevent his return to duty. Several weeks passed before he heeded that call, and his relationship with his colleagues clearly deteriorated. He soon accused several members of the directory of misallocation of funds, and they in turn redirected the accusation against Bayeux. On May 1, 1792, five Calvados deputies to the Legislative Assembly wrote to the minister of the interior requesting that at the first opportunity he rid their department “of one of the most perfidious enemies of the republic,” namely Bayeux. They charged that he had led the departmental administration to take illegal actions and was contributing to a disruption of public order. The Legislative Assembly opened an investigation, but with no immediate result. Bayeux’s sympathy with the monarchy was well known, and it is probably no coincidence that only two days after the monarchy fell, he was arrested and charged with communicating with émigrés, as well as complicity with the ministers Armand Marc Montmorin and Claude Antoine Valdec de Lessart, themselves suspect after August 10.

Bayeux was imprisoned in the Château, and his wife traveled to Paris to plead his case to members of the Assembly. Their investigation of his papers produced no conclusive evidence, and on the night of September 5, she returned to Caen with an order from the Comité de surveillance et de sûreté général for his release. The procureur of Caen refused to act alone, though, and an old friend and municipal official, Jean Lasseret, offered no help. The mayor, Auvray de Coursanne, insisted on consulting the municipal council. The council took no action that night, while the news of Bayeux’s ordered

35. A.N., F’ 3661 Calvados.
release spread throughout town. The following day, Auvray went to the Château to release the prisoner, accompanied by several officials. Instead, the citizens on guard arrested and imprisoned them. Not until late in the afternoon did the National Guard secure the freedom of Bayeux and the others. Realizing his still-precarious situation, Bayeux headed toward the Abbaye-aux-Hommes, meeting place of the departmental and municipal councils, accompanied by a National Guard escort. Just short of their goal, on the Place Saint-Sauveur (the same spot that had spawned the Affair of 84), they encountered an unruly crowd. Members of the administration, clearly concerned for Bayeux's safety, soon arrived on the scene but could not prevent the shot and blows that killed Bayeux. The National Guard stood helplessly by as his head was cut off and paraded around town, the same fate that had befallen the unfortunate Belzunce.  

Madame Bayeux demanded the arrest and prosecution of her husband's murderers, but to no avail. A number of rumors circulated during the weeks following the tragedy. One of these suggested premeditation on the part of the National Guard, charging that the guardsmen had intentionally led Bayeux through the Place Saint-Sauveur with the knowledge that a crowd awaited him there and that he would be attacked. The area could have been avoided by means of an equally direct route from the Château to the Abbaye. The guard was also criticized for its failure to protect Bayeux after the situation had clearly become dangerous.  

A second rumor accused Jean Charles Hippolyte Bougon-Longrais, the young secretary-general of the department, of conspiring in the murder of Bayeux. Bougon was an active and respected figure in public affairs from the very start of the Revolution. He sat on the first comité révolutionnaire in Caen; and in late 1789, when he was only twenty-four years old, he was one of two emissaries sent by the municipality to the Constituent Assembly to solicit the establishment of a cour supérieure in Caen. An avocat by profession, Bougon was elected procureur of the commune in February, 1790, but could not accept the post because of his youth. One year later, he became secretary-general of the departmental administration. Named accusateur public by an electoral assembly in April, 1791, he was again disqualified.
because of his age. Respect for Bougon’s abilities was often grudging, as more than a few people resented his ambition and egotism. One contemporary observer, noting the popular suspicion of Bougon after the murder of Bayeux, commented on the young man’s character: “M. Bougon-Longrais, a young lawyer, born in Caen, was a self-conceited, proud, vain, and presumptuous fellow, all based on very superficial talents, but which he believed to be at least equal to those, infinitely more substantial, of his benefactor [he suggests that Bayeux had obtained the post of secretary-general for Bougon], against whom he was animated by the basest jealousy and the blackest ingratitude.” A more charitable biographer dismisses the suspicions as unfounded, claiming they were probably inspired by Bougon’s known friendship with Fauchet, who had long been a detractor of Bayeux. Whatever Bougon’s motives or involvement, no serious investigation was mounted against him. Indeed, he succeeded Bayeux as procureur-général-syndic and went on to play an influential role in departmental politics.

In the controversy surrounding the Criminal Tribunal, as well as during the Affair of 84 in November, 1791, the Caen Jacobin club played an important role. Officially called Les Amis de la Constitution, the society was formed in late 1790 and immediately contributed several pamphlets to the debate over the constitutional oath of the clergy. Early presidents of the club included Jean Baptiste Lomont, deputy to the Legislative Assembly and Convention; Bonnet de Meautry, also a deputy to those assemblies; and Pierre Jean Lévêque, president of the departmental council in 1793. But undoubtedly the most influential leader of the Caen Jacobins was Bishop Claude Fauchet, despite the fact that he did not arrive in the department until May, 1791. Under his leadership, the activism of the club increased. The coalition of nobles that surfaced in November had allegedly been formed to prevent the manipulation of municipal elections by the increasingly active Jacobin club. Barely two months earlier, six members of the departmental directory had appealed to the Constituent Assembly and the minister of the interior for permission to shift their meetings to the nearby town of Bayeux, citing the intimidating presence of the club in Caen and warning that “ar-

39. A. D. Calvados, L10058 (correspondence to departmental administration); A. C. Caen, K35 (Procureur de la Commune, 1790–an III).
bitrariness, insubordination, and despotism, as much popular as military, threaten to subvert everything.” The minister responded by letter on August 26, acknowledging their “alarming position” but stating that he could not authorize the transfer of their meetings to another town.42

It was during this period that the split between the Jacobins and the Feuillants occurred in Paris. The regional paper printed in Caen, Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers de la Basse-Normandie, announced the split in its issue of July 24, 1791. As a sidelight, the editor included the following tidbit: “It is rumored in Paris, that M. Robespierre is crazy: this opinion appears to be generally held; people are only divided as to the date of this unfortunate event: several persons place it rather early.” One month later, the paper reported that the Jacobins were prevailing in their struggle with the Feuillants, with more departmental societies affiliating with the former than with the latter.43 The Caen club broke communication with the Paris Jacobins, favoring the Feuillants, but shortly reestablished ties with the Jacobins. Esnault suggests, probably exaggerating, that Fauchet changed his mind on the matter and that this was the deciding factor.44

The club’s decision to continue its affiliation with the Jacobins undoubtedly contributed to the increasing opposition to the club among “les honnêtes gens” of Caen. The Affiches, clearly catering to the aristocracy and wealthy bourgeois in its editorial policy, joined in the attack on the Caen Jacobins. A series of articles in October asked the rhetorical question, What is a club? Responding that it was a group of men assembling to discuss and deliberate on affairs of state in order to influence public opinion, the editor concluded that all clubs were therefore useless and dangerous. “Do we not already have a National Assembly? Do we require several?” The clubs may have begun with good intentions, but vanity now reigned among them. They misled rather than enlightened.45

The problem came to a head in February, 1792, when the club opposed the newly constituted Criminal Tribunal. We have seen in the correspondence of Doulcet his concern for the threat to public order and lawful government and the temporary departure of Louis Caille from the club. Doulcet’s elec-

42. A.N., F7 3661, Calvados (Letters of August 21 and August 26, 1791).
43. Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers de la Basse-Normandie, July 24 and August 21, 1791, A.D. Calvados.
44. Lesage (Esnault), 65.
45. Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers de la Basse-Normandie, October 9, 13, and 16, 1791, A.D. Calvados.
tion as president raised hopes of a moderating trend, but no significant shift in club attitudes occurred at this time. If anything, the club's ties to the Paris Jacobins grew stronger. Robespierre apparently made some public defense of the Caen Jacobins, and the club sent the following appreciative address to him on March 7, 1792:

GREETINGS TO THE INCORRUPTIBLE ROBESPIERRE

The Society of Caen knows that the father of patriotism was at his post when it was necessary to defend his children of Calvados, hounded by stylets of calumny; she knows it . . . and comes silently to add a palm to his civic crown.

Robespierre, this name that makes glory, this name that brings fear into the hearts of tyrants, will be the watchword that will rally us to fight them.

We do not pretend to render that name more celebrated in making this address: the undertaking was beyond our powers; it is only the precious token of our gratitude and the particular tribute of public esteem.  

By the end of the year, however, the Caen Jacobins had reversed their position and broken with the parent club. In the wake of Bayeux's murder and the September massacres in Paris, the Caen club repudiated the excesses of the Paris Jacobins. Louis Caille was very likely instrumental in this switch. Sent by the club to Paris in January, 1792, Caille had argued with Robespierre and developed a dislike for the Paris leader. He is known to have been friendly with the Girondin deputies, particularly the Marseille delegation, led by Charles Jean Marie Barbaroux.

Even more important, however, was the influence of the Calvados deputies to the Convention. We have here a clear example of the channels of communication between Caen and the capital regarding issues of local, as well as national, importance. Late in 1792, the Caen Jacobin club wrote to the Calvados delegation soliciting advice as to whether it should end its affiliation. In a letter written by Lomont and signed by the other deputies (with the exception of Bonnet), the delegation firmly recommended that the club break with the Paris Jacobins. By January, 1793, it had done precisely that. In doing so, the Caen Jacobins not only severed their ties with the parent

46. Vaultier, Souvenirs, 122.
47. "Le Fédéralisme dans le Calvados," Annales du Centre Régional de Recherche et du Documentation Pédagogiques de Caen, Service Éducatif Nouvelle Série, Dossier 3 (Caen, 1977), A. D. Calvados. This is an edited collection of twenty documents, including biographical information on several federalist leaders, compiled by M. O. and J. Macé, J. Grall, A. Parmentier, and E. Gautier-Desvaux.
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crub but demonstrated their esteem for the Calvados conventionnels, most of whom supported the Girondins.48

Even as it broke with the Paris Jacobins, however, the Caen Jacobin club was clearly in decline. Few members attended meetings. Those who did reportedly spent the time singing patriotic songs, for lack of more serious business.49 The decline of the Caen Jacobin club can be attributed in part to the growth of another club, the Carabots. The precise origin of this group is not certain, but it apparently had its roots in the people’s militia that formed in the summer of 1789. Primarily artisans and small shopkeepers who had armed themselves in the raid on the Château, the members of this militia were exuberant in their newfound role but found themselves relegated to the lower ranks after the official organization of the National Guard. In order to preserve something of their élan and rapport, they formed a group and called themselves the Carabots, a derogatory derivation of caporaux (corporals). The Carabots made the jump from obscure fraternity to documented club on February 10, 1793, when fifty of them assembled on the Place de la Liberté, formerly the Place Royale. It is interesting that they chose this square, fronted by the homes of wealthy négociants, rather than the Place Saint-Sauveur or the Place Saint-Pierre. Two days later, they assembled again, with a banner, arm bands, and a procès-verbal of their previous meeting. They vowed to accept only recognized republicans in their society and swore “to maintain the Republic—one, indivisible, and popular—liberty, and equality; to observe the laws that had these principles as their foundation; and to exterminate all those who wanted another government.” They proclaimed their motto to be, “Execution of the law, or death.”

48. I found neither the letter from the club nor the deputies’ reply in any of the archives I consulted. They are mentioned, however, in a February 12, 1793, letter from Bonnet de Meautry to an unidentified friend in Caen. He noted his refusal to sign the letter authored by Lomont and said that he had written his own letter to the Jacobin club on January 1, 1793, in which he recommended that they not break relations with the Paris club. He received no reply. He remarked, in closing, that he had heard the Caen club was languishing and from this presumed that his friend no longer attended. Bonnet’s letter can be found in A. C. Caen, 1275, and is reprinted in Vautier, Souvenirs, 122—23.

49. Lesage (Essnault), 102.

It is difficult to say much about the Carabot club, because it left little trace of its existence. Aside from the proclamation issued on the date of its foundation and a proposal that it presented to the departmental administration during the federalist revolt, no documents relating to the club have survived in the archives. No membership list exists. But the date of the club's official foundation (in early 1793, when “anarchism” and “factionalism” in Paris and the Convention were being widely denounced by departmental administrations and popular societies) and the stress on respect for the law in both the motto and the oath suggest that the Carabots were moderates who did not support Jacobin radicalism. They maintained an active and public presence, though, and apparently made respectable citizens somewhat uneasy by bearing arms. Both Esnault and Vaultier report that the Carabots soon eclipsed the Jacobins in popularity and influence.

Nowhere in the documents, however, do the Carabots ever appear in an adversarial relationship with the local administrations. Indeed, several departmental administrators were reportedly members of the club, which often acted as an unofficial arm of the administration. On March 3, 1793, when a group of young men disrupted army recruitment, the Carabots sounded the alarm and assisted officials in restoring order. Occasionally, club members were overzealous in their actions—on April 20, the municipal council sent several men to head off a group of 150 armed Carabots on their way to Argences in search of grain. But officials often turned to them for manpower to assist with recruitment, grain requisitions, and transport. On March 12, a Carabot accompanied Louis Caille to Evrecy on official business, and on May 19, the departmental administration assigned the Carabots to inspect foreign mail. Departmental and municipal officials even called on Carabots to carry out occasional domiciliary searches in the spring of 1793. In April, Bougon-Longrais, on mission to Paris, closed a letter to two colleagues by embracing in spirit “you and all the faithful carabots.”

This limited evidence suggests that the Carabot club acted as a client group of the departmental administration and probably of the Caen merchant elite. Certainly, many of the artisans and shopkeepers who made up the club's membership depended on the wholesale merchants for their live-

51. Lesage (Esnault), 102; Vaultier, Souvenirs, 136.
52. Lesage (Esnault), 103; A. D. Calvados, L.10024 (loose minutes of departmental administration meetings, 1793), L.10151 (papers pertaining to Bougon), and L.10529 (Bougon's letter to departmental administration, April 12, 1793).
lihood and did business with them on a regular basis. Their choice of the Place de la Liberte as a meeting place suggests a clientage relationship, as does the fact that one of the Carabot leaders, Jean Michel Barbot, was chief clerk at the Tribunal of Commerce. The Carabot club definitely enjoyed a more collaborative relationship with the departmental administration than did the Jacobin club, which the Carabots now replaced as the most active Caen popular society. It is also significant, particularly given the evidence suggesting a clientage relationship between the club and the Caen commercial elite, that the ascension of the Carabots came just months after the merchant community had achieved its greatest representation on the Caen municipal council.

In Limoges, there was no Chateau to be stormed, and the Revolution there began much more quietly than it did in Caen. On July 26, 1789, the tricolored cocarde made its first appearance in a demonstration directed against the nobility, and several days later the Great Fear brushed Limoges, but nothing of truly dramatic proportions occurred. Shortage of grain had forced municipal control of bread prices since 1788, and in August, 1789, a patriotic committee formed to aid in the provision of the city. For the next year, the search for grain remained the predominant issue facing local authorities.53

No significant disruption upset the customary pattern of Limoges life until the night of September 7, 1790, when a fire blazed through the quartier Manigne in the heart of the city. The fire raged out of control until early morning, destroying 160 houses and leaving 800 families homeless. The National Guard and the Royal-Navarre regiment valiantly fought the fire and prevented loss of life, but the town hall lacked the financial resources to help those whose property had been destroyed. The entire department lay exhausted after two years of dearth, forcing the administration to ignore legal restrictions and tap the caisse des domaines for emergency funds. Departmental and municipal officials appealed to the king and the Constituent As-

53. Two books provide good general accounts of the early years of the Revolution in Limoges. They are Jouhaud, La Révolution Française en Limousin, and Verynaud, Histoire de Limoges. See Lynn A. Hunt, Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France (Stanford, 1978), 136, for a map detailing the formation of municipal committees in the major towns in France in 1789. In Caen, the committee replaced the old council and remained in power until new elections in February, 1790. In Limoges, the committee functioned alongside the Old Regime municipality until that date.
The Limoges Jacobin club wrote to the Paris Jacobins and other provincial clubs about the terrible misfortune. The clubs responded generously; assisted by a benefit performance of the Théâtre Français, they raised over eight thousand livres to assist the fire victims, still only a pittance in the face of enormous destruction. With other private donations and the help of neighbors and relatives, the people of Limoges managed to overcome this tragedy, but economic hardship would burden them for several years to come.

Only three months after the fire, political controversy erupted in Limoges. It centered around the founding of a new club, Les Amis de la Paix, organized to balance the influence of the previously established Société des Amis de la Constitution, the Limoges Jacobins. It appears that the results of the municipal elections in November, 1790, inspired the formation of the Amis de la Paix. Eight out of twelve of the municipal officers elected were members of the Jacobin club, and moderates alleged that the Jacobins had achieved these results by limiting the number of electors. The number of voters was indeed much lower than in the previous election, though the impact of that decline is unclear.

The founders of the new club proclaimed in a pamphlet their intention to arouse civic responsibility in order to increase voter turnout. The social attitudes, and perhaps an indication of the social status, of the Amis are revealed in the pamphlet's reference to "the crowd scarcely capable of examining the truth," which had allegedly been swayed by the Jacobin club propaganda. In a similar observation, this time with respect to the nearby rural inhabitants, the pamphlet described "those people of the country-


55. Léon Jouhaud, in La Révolution Francaise en Limousin, claims that all but one of the municipal officers were Jacobins, but four names do not appear on either of the membership lists I have found, so I am reluctant to accept his statement. It is difficult to assess the importance of the low voter turnout. A comparable drop in numbers occurred in Caen between the February and November, 1790, elections, so perhaps the trend was general. Roland Marx has noted a similar decline in voter participation for Alsace. In Strasbourg (Bas-Rhin), the turnout declined from 61 percent in January, 1790, to 27 percent in November, 1791 (he has no figures for November, 1790). In Colmar (Haut-Rhin), 81 percent of the electorate voted in January, 1790; 37 percent in November, 1790; and only 14 percent in November, 1791. See Roland Marx, Recherches sur la vie politique de l'Alsace pré révolutionnaire et révolutionnaire (Strasbourg, 1966), 56–62. In Limoges, voter turnout remained low in 1791, when the moderates made a recovery; so low turnout in 1790 can hardly explain the election results for that year.
side . . . simple and credulous, who know not how to distinguish the truth from the coarsest seduction.”

The Amis de la Paix first met on December 11, 1790. There was initial widespread skepticism regarding the intent of the new club, but publication of its prospectus quieted those doubts somewhat. In this document, the Amis professed their desire for open discussion, obedience to the law, and respect for the new constitution. In an obvious challenge to the exclusivity of the Jacobin club and the Société Patriotique et Littéraire, a club composed of individuals too young to join the Jacobins, the Amis made membership fees low and declared their meetings open to the public. The other two clubs soon followed suit, and all seemed resigned to a period of intense, but peaceful, competition for members.

The Société Patriotique was the first to abandon the status quo of uneasy coexistence. In a December 29, 1790, meeting, the Société Patriotique charged the Amis with the instigation of public quarrels, in cafes and on street corners, between its own members and members of the other two clubs. Those present voted to avoid public confrontation but to bring all grievances to the attention of the society.57 The Jacobin club, too, intensified its campaign against the Amis de la Paix. As early as December 13, the Jacobins had granted the right to all national guardsmen to attend meetings in full uniform, a clear attempt to recruit new members. Pierre Dumas, club member and captain in the guard, soon led his company to join the Jacobin club en masse.

Both the municipal and departmental administrations at first refused to consider the squabbles between the Amis and the other two clubs. As Jacobin club membership grew, however, the issue came again before the departmental administration, introduced by the procureur-général-syndic, Pierre Dumas, who was also, of course, a Jacobin club leader. In an undated December letter addressed to the municipal council, the Jacobins expressed their concern over reports of a nationwide conspiracy and rumored Amis de la Paix involvement. They noted that clubs with similar names had caused trouble in Nîmes, Nancy, Brest, and Lyon.58 On December 28, Dumas remarked on the coincidence of recent public disruptions in Limoges with the

56. Exposition de la conduite et des principes de la Société des Amis de la Paix (January, 1791), A. D. Haute-Vienne, I.812; hereafter referred to as Exposition.

57. A. D. Haute-Vienne, 1.811 (Société Patriotique et Littéraire, procès-verbaux).

formation of the Amis. He moved that the club be instructed to dissolve and its members to join the Jacobin club in order to avert serious trouble, and the motion was easily passed by the departmental directory, the district directory, and the municipal council.

The Amis protested this decision. They charged first that the local councils were biased, claiming that of the thirty-nine members of the departmental directory, the district directory, and the municipal council, at least twenty-three belonged to the Jacobin club. They also defended their club’s attention to legal requirements and noted that the Jacobin club had been founded six months before the Constituent Assembly legalized political associations. They vowed to continue their respect for authority by complying with the dissolution order. However, instead of dissolving their club, the Amis proposed an affiliation with the Limoges Jacobins in order to retain an element of autonomy. The Jacobin club rejected the proposal, refusing to affiliate with any group not already recognized by the Paris Jacobins. The Amis stood fast and defended their right to assemble by noting the continued existence of the Société Patriotique et Littéraire. Faced with an apparently unresolvable conflict, the municipal council ordered the suspension of the Amis de la Paix on December 30, 1790. Not wishing to serve as a pretext for the continued resistance of the Amis, on January 1 the Société Patriotique sent delegates to the Jacobin club to request a union of the two popular societies. Unification took place two days later. The Amis de la Paix was dissolved, and its suspension soon became official.

There are obvious parallels between this episode and the Affair of 84 in Caen. The members of the Amis de la Paix, like the Caen coalition, were seen as “enemies of the constitution and troublemakers seeking to return France to the Old Regime.” Unlike the Caen coalition, however, the Amis were not predominantly nobles. There were nobles among the members, to be sure, but the officers of the club included Ardant-Dupicq, a négociant and municipal officer; Lambertie, a lawyer; Pétiniaud de Juriol, a noble négociant; and Fournier le jeune, a lawyer. Many of the Amis were wealthy nobles.

59. I do not know how they arrived at these numbers. Counting ten departmental directors, including the president and procureur-général-syndic, six district directors, including the president and procureur-syndic, and thirteen municipal officials, including the mayor and procureur, I total twenty-nine, fifteen of whom were members of the Jacobin club. This is still a majority, but not quite as overwhelming as twenty-three of thirty-nine.

60. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L811 and L812 (documents pertaining to the Amis de la Paix).

61. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L812 (Jacobin club address).
bourgeois, including Louis Naurissart, directeur de la monnaie and future mayor, four négociants, two marchands, and two clerks. At least eight of the Amis were municipal notables in the 1790–1791 term. 62

The lack of full membership rolls for the Amis de la Paix makes a detailed social comparison with the Jacobin club impossible. But in general, it is fair to contrast the haut-bourgeois character of the Amis with the moyen-bourgeois character of the Jacobins, who also admitted a considerable number of petit-bourgeois artisans and workers into their ranks. It seems probable that the moyenne-bourgeoisie dominated the Jacobin club until at least the year II, though there is some disagreement on this question. Alfred Fray-Fournier has argued that the intellectual superiority of the bourgeoisie allowed it to maintain control of the club throughout its existence. Another local historian, however, insists that in 1792, “the bourgeois element was overwhelmed by an influx of workers and artisans.”63

It may well be that the better-educated bourgeois were able to dominate the Jacobin club with eloquent oratory, but a membership list prepared in the year III shows that artisans and workers constituted the single largest occupational group in the club almost from the date of its foundation. Adopting Léon Jouhaud’s dividing line and comparing members who joined the club in 1790 and 1791 with those who joined from 1792 through 1794 yields several interesting observations. First, of the 419 members listed, 72 percent joined in 1790 and 1791. In that group of 303 individuals, artisans and workers accounted for 37 percent, professionals for 21 percent, and merchants for 18 percent. The remaining 24 percent was distributed roughly among lawyers, landowners, military men, and others (students and bourgeois sans état). In the period 1792 through 1794, the percentage of artisans and workers did increase to 44 percent, while the percentage of professionals and commercial men declined to 17 percent and 11 percent respectively; but none of these changes are drastic. Moreover, only 116 men joined the club during this later period. Thus, if workers and artisans can be said to have overwhelmed their bourgeois colleagues in the club, they had done so as early as 1791. It seems more likely that Fray-Fournier’s assessment is cor-

62. Exposition; Délibérations de la Municipalité de Limoges (November, 1790), B. M. Limoges. No membership list for the Amis de la Paix exists. However, a petition to the king prepared in April, 1791, bears the names of 208 citizens of Limoges, most of whom were likely members of the club, which reportedly numbered 300 members before its dissolution.

63. Fray-Fournier, Le Club des Jacobins, x; Jouhaud, La Révolution Française en Limousin, 55.
rect, but clearly the Limoges Jacobins could not ignore the viewpoint of the town’s petty bourgeoisie and workers, or at least did not choose to do so.\textsuperscript{64}

The abolition of the Amis de la Paix did not bring an end to the opposition between its adherents and the Limoges Jacobins. A number of events combined to maintain a tense situation in Limoges through May, 1791. The new legislation regarding the organization of the Church provided one source of friction. The antipathy between the supporters of the new and old regimes was exacerbated by the controversy surrounding the civil oath of the clergy. As in the case of Caen and Calvados, Limoges registered a lower rate of acceptance of the oath than did the Haute-Vienne as a whole. Sixty-five percent of the parish priests in the department swore the oath, while in Limoges only five of twenty-three priests, or 22 percent, did so.\textsuperscript{65}

The most ardent defender of the oath was a professor of theology and former Dominican priest named Jean Foucaud. One of the founders of the Jacobin club and very active in its affairs, Foucaud delivered an address on January 13, 1791, in which he established a theological foundation for the civil constitution.\textsuperscript{66} He later published a tract based on this speech, which four professors of the Limoges collège, all of them ecclesiastics, publicly attacked. They charged Foucaud with a fraudulent interpretation of Church doctrine. This produced something of a public scandal, which was aggravated on February 25 when the four professors, who had refused to swear the oath, disrupted the installation of their replacements. The municipal council responded with an order forbidding any unauthorized public assembly of more than three people, temporarily restoring quiet to the town.\textsuperscript{67}

That peace remained a fragile one, though, made tenuous by the emergence early in the year of a new armed force, a company of dragoons. Technically an adjunct to the National Guard, the company was formed by the most active members of the Amis de la Paix. The requirement that each man in this mounted cavalry unit provide his own equipment effectively re-

\textsuperscript{64}. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L813 (Société Populaire, an III membership list). The list does not include the unknown number of individuals who were expelled before the year III and may therefore exaggerate slightly the artisan/worker predominance. Each entry on this roll includes the member’s name, age, place of birth, occupation (before and during the Revolution), residence, and date of admission to the club.

\textsuperscript{65}. I am indebted to Professor Timothy Tackett for these figures. They are based on the research of Paul d'Hollander, working in France on a \textit{thèse de troisième cycle}.


\textsuperscript{67}. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L812 (response of the municipal officers to the petition to the king of the former Amis de la Paix).
restricted membership to the wealthier segment of the population. Two of the wealthiest men in town, the future mayor Louis Naurissart and the aristocratic president of the departmental administration, Jean Baptiste Pétiniaud de Beaupeyrat, donated some of the equipment. The officers of the Royal-Navarre regiment generously offered to train the dragoons, whose frequent banquets were often flavored by royalist songs. Enrollment in the elite company reached nearly four hundred.68

Barely ten days after the municipal council had banned public assembly, an incident occurred that would lead to the abolition of this new armed corps. On March 8, a small group gathered on a Limoges street corner and burned a copy of the Amis de la Paix prospectus. An outraged notable (in all likelihood, a former Amis) reported this to the municipal council as a violation of the February 25 decree against public crowds and demanded that action be taken against those responsible, including the president and secretaries of the Jacobin club, who he claimed had incited the incident. The council, sparsely attended, did issue a decree of accusation, but without the necessary formal indictment from the municipal procureur. This forced a reconvening of the full council, which was evenly divided between adherents of the Jacobins and of the former Amis. The vote on the issue deadlocked eleven to eleven, with Jean Baptiste Nieaud, the mayor, inclined to cast the deciding vote in favor of the Jacobin club, which he had helped to found. Before he could do so, however, the eleven moderates (three officers and eight notables) walked out of the meeting and refused to attend future sessions. All eleven were former members of the Amis de la Paix.

As this crisis developed within the municipal council, agitation began once again on the streets of Limoges, melding political and religious issues. Supporters of the traditional clergy circulated a petition calling for the reinstallation of the refractory curé of the parish Saint-Michel, as well as the four collège professors. Their efforts produced a number of public disputes, and four petition gatherers were finally charged with undermining respect for the law. The municipal council deplored this divisive situation, which it attributed to the continued provocations of the former Amis, the efforts of refractory priests and the collège professors, and the formation of the controversial dragoons. An assembly of National Guards, meeting on March 29, supported the position of the municipal council but laid responsibility for

68. Jouhaud, La Révolution Française en Limousin, 79–81; Léon Jouhaud, Les Gardes nationaux à Limoges, avant la Convention (Limoges, 1940), 43–47.
the current troubles explicitly on the existence of the company of dragoons. The guardsmen blamed the dragoons for a number of recent duels, legally prohibited, and two public brawls during the previous weeks. The municipal council, itself under public attack, appealed for help to the district administration, which in turn appealed to the departmental directory. The directory responded by ordering the convocation of sectional assemblies so that active citizens might calmly discuss their differences, an action that municipal officials feared would exacerbate, not resolve, the current difficulties. Nonetheless, sectional assemblies were scheduled for April 4.

On the eve of those assemblies, armed groups gathered on Limoges street corners. Small bands of uniformed dragoons moved about town taunting their Jacobin opponents as tensions once again reached a dangerous level. The mayor responded to the immediate threat by ordering the National Guard to disband the armed groups, and in this manner, calm was restored. But with regard to the larger problem of political polarization, the municipal council, still meeting without its moderate members, remained tentative and unsure. Once again, it appealed to a higher authority, this time directly to the departmental administration, requesting postponement of the sectional assemblies and suspension of the dragoons. The departmental council approved the former request and ruled that the municipality itself had the authority to order the latter action. On April 6, the municipality issued that order, instructing the dragoons to rejoin their regular National Guard units. Few of them returned to the National Guard, but the company of dragoons was effectively dismantled.69

In a later report, the municipal council charged that the former members of the Amis de la Paix, deprived of their armed company, now turned to the Royal-Navarre regiment for support. Most of the soldiers in this regiment were German, barely conversant in French and not well loved by the populace, despite their valiant efforts at the time of the Limoges fire. With the demise of the dragoons, the Royal-Navarre increased its nightly patrols. It was not long before an incident occurred; but only insults, and no blows, were exchanged. Still, the Royal-Navarre commander, Montigny, ordered his men henceforth to patrol with charged guns, prepared to meet force with force. The municipal council considered this an entirely unwarranted response and warned Montigny that he would be held responsible for any

trouble. Montigny refused to retract his order and doubled the patrols. On April 19, six municipal officers, plus the mayor, signed an order referring the entire affair to the National Assembly and requesting the transfer of the Royal-Navarre regiment. Seven notables objected that the full council had not been consulted, but the officers ruled that this was not required for a simple police matter. Several former Amis appealed to a rump session of the departmental directory, meeting without three of its members and the procureur-général-syndic, and secured a request to the minister of war for postponement of any transfer. However, the full directory, with its Jacobin members in attendance, soon reversed this decision. Both factions now decided to take their case to the highest authority. The former Amis and their supporters drafted yet another petition to the Constituent Assembly, which was countered by a petition written by Jacobin club members.

The petition of the former Amis claimed that the National Guard was to blame for the recent troubles, that the April 19 municipal order had been illegally drafted, and that the municipal council had lost the confidence of the populace. More than two hundred people signed this petition. The Jacobin club countered that the Amis de la Paix supporters were a collection of former nobles and wealthy individuals who sought to protect their own interests by undermining the Revolution, that the dragoons and the Royal-Navarre regiment had served those interests, and that the municipal council had acted responsibly and constitutionally throughout the affair. More than four hundred residents of Limoges signed the Jacobins' petition. The name of Léonard Gay-Vernon, recently elected bishop, headed the list of signatures, which also included the names of a number of municipal and district officials. The minister of war did order the transfer of the Royal-Navarre regiment, but not before a May 16 brawl had left several national guardsmen seriously injured. 70

The departure of the Royal-Navarre regiment brought an end to the armed confrontations on the streets of Limoges, but it did not resolve the opposition between moderates and radicals in local politics. Indeed, Amis de la Paix supporters regained control of the municipal council in the elections of late 1791. This contrasts sharply with the situation in Caen, where there was no prolonged struggle for control of municipal politics. The challenge

70. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L812 and L/K 103 (Pamphlet relatif au conflit opposant la municipalité de Limoges au régiment de dragons, 1791). See also Jouhaud, Les Gardes nationaux, 45–47.
to the “patriot party” came largely from the nobility, and as nobles emigrated or withdrew from public life (as most did), the issue became moot. Local elections in Caen were relatively uncontentious, and the local political elite was remarkably unified. In Limoges, on the other hand, the conflict between the Amis de la Paix and the Jacobins had fractured local unity and created an intensely politicized atmosphere by the end of 1791. The transfer of the Royal-Navarre may have defused the potential for violence, but in essence it removed from the scene only pawns in the political conflict. The former Amis continued to be active in local affairs, and the erstwhile dragoons remained available, though unorganized. The confrontation between radicals and moderates never produced the sort of violent and deadly clash that Nimes had witnessed in 1790, but the tension lay always just below the surface. Most importantly, as in Nimes, Marseille, and Lyon, this political rivalry brought artisans and workers firmly into the political arena, as the bourgeois leaders of the Jacobins and of the Amis sought support among the sans-culottes. In Caen, by contrast, the popular classes remained on the fringes of local politics.

The election of a constitutional bishop in February, 1791, contributed to the tense situation in Limoges. The bishop’s palace was located there, and we have already seen evidence of the public controversy in the city over the civil oath of the clergy. The choice of Léonard Gay-Vernon as the new bishop introduced to public prominence a fervent Jacobin who would exercise a strong influence on local affairs throughout the Revolution. Gay-Vernon, born into a Saint-Léonard family “de petite noblesse,” had most recently served as curé in Compreignac, a town of about two thousand people roughly fifteen miles north of Limoges, where he had been elected mayor in 1790. His election as bishop came on the third ballot, and then only by a slim margin over the Abbé Gouttes, a delegate to the Constituent Assembly. The former bishop, Duplessis d’Argentre, denounced the election of Gay-Vernon and called on all priests to reject his leadership.71

Gay-Vernon was affiliated with the Limoges Jacobin club almost from its creation and became president not long after his election as bishop. His brother, Jean Baptiste, was also a priest and a member of the club. The new bishop named his brother an episcopal vicar, and in 1792, the latter was elected to the departmental administration. When Gay-Vernon left for Paris in late 1791 as a delegate to the Legislative Assembly, he remained in con-

stant contact with his brother and the Jacobin club. One departmental administrator attributed to the bishop “the greater number of the troubles that afflicted the Limousin. . . . He became the motive force behind all the intrigues and follies of the club.”72 The influence of Gay-Vernon on attitudes in Limoges cannot be denied. In April, 1794, he estimated at 380 the number of letters he had already sent to the Limoges Jacobins. We will see that his letters were not ignored.73

The civil constitution of the clergy remained a divisive issue in Limoges through the summer of 1791. On August 6, the departmental directory, with Pétiniaud de Beaupeyrat as president, provisionally suspended a law of June 1 that called for the creation of four parishes in Limoges. The directory complained that the proposed parish lines, drawn up by the district (allegedly under pressure from Bishop Gay-Vernon), were haphazard and irrational. A crowd gathered in front of the departmental meeting hall to protest the decision. Pétiniaud felt morally compelled to resign rather than revoke the suspension, leaving that action to the remainder of the departmental directory. In the minds of Limoges moderates, Pétiniaud’s resignation represented the hounding from office of a man of substance and integrity, a leading figure of the traditional elite who linked, by virtue of his title and commercial activities, the second and third estates. For Pétiniaud’s detractors, his resignation marked another victory for Limoges Jacobins.74

Despite the apparent victory of the Jacobin club over the Amis de la Paix and the radicalization of the municipality, the Limoges moderates rallied their forces to make a comeback in the fall of 1791. In early November, Louis Naurissart, directeur de la monnaie, was elected mayor; and the newly elected municipal council was dominated by wealthy négociants, including Pétiniaud de Beaupeyrat as a notable. It is difficult to pinpoint the reason for this turnaround, but the Limoges sans-culottes had a simple explanation. A letter written by members of the 2nd Battalion of Haute-Vienne volunteers, sent from their camp in Villers-Cotterets to the Jacobin club in Limoges, clearly expresses their suspicion of vote buying:

Permit us to offer you our felicitations on the good fortune that our town will enjoy under the paternal government of Naurissart, Marc Dubois and other excellent citizens, whom an infernal cabal has kept from official position up to this

74. A.N., F’ 3697 (report of the departmental directory to the minister of the interior, August, 1791).
time. . . . We are sure that aristocrats, swindlers, refractory priests, speculators, nuns, and prostitutes have sung a *Te Deum*, as thanksgiving, for so happy an event. . . . As for those indignant patriots, perhaps they made a long face, but what does it matter?! They have dominated too long! Moreover, most of them have no money and cannot buy the votes of active citizens. All irony aside, brothers and friends . . . we view the counter-revolution as accomplished in our town. But please caution our rich municipal officials and their promoters that they respect our families, or else we will come and give them a lesson that will long be spoken of; and we will not take twenty days to make the trip to Limoges, as we did to come to this place.25

One sees that the Limoges patriots at least had a sense of humor, but the situation for them was a serious one. In a response to the 2nd Battalion, the Jacobin club admitted that its meetings were now sparsely attended and that émigrés were boldly returning to their homes. Revolutionary fervor seemed to have waned.

Louis Naurissart had been mayor of Limoges before, from December, 1780, until August, 1784. He had been a third-estate delegate to the Estates General, where his efforts on the finance committee had eventually procured 300,000 *livres* in aid for the Limoges fire victims. In March, 1791, he had resigned as deputy after a public furor in Limoges over his allegedly poor attitude and his conservatism. His *hôtel* in Limoges was one of the most stylish in town, and in 1788, he completed construction of a luxurious rural château. “He loved to play the grand seigneur, protecting the arts, the artists, and the comedians. He truly had the temperament of an aristocrat, enjoying, moreover, the fortune necessary to maintain a role conforming to the tastes of the *haute-bourgeoisie.*”76 His rudeness and inability to manage crowds proved serious liabilities during his second tenure as mayor.

A challenge to the Naurissart mayoralty came in February, 1792, barely three months after the elections. The trouble was occasioned by the return to Limoges of two commissioners, Ganny and Bégougné, sent by the municipality to take delivery of grain purchased the previous fall in Vatan and Châteauroux. The two, members of the Jacobin club, had nearly been killed in Châteauroux during a riot aimed at preventing the removal of the grain. They returned empty-handed, despite the fact that the grain had allegedly

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76. Ernest Vincent, “Souvenirs de la Révolution: Les tribulations d’un ancien maire de Limoges,” *Le Populaire du Centre* (October, 1958). Vincent wrote a series of historical articles for this newspaper, which have been clipped and filed in the library of the departmental archives.
been paid for by the previous commissioners, Mallet and Garraud. Denunciations of the municipal council abounded. Citizens of Limoges demanded a public accounting of the mission, which Ganny and Bégouigne were willing to give but which the municipal council apparently opposed. The departmental administration initially ordered that the report be given behind closed doors, fearing for the safety of those who might be implicated. Jacobin supporters decried this precaution as an effort to protect Mallet and Garraud.

Two days later, on February 26, the mayor and several municipal officials reported to the departmental directory that a crowd planned to escort Ganny and Bégouigne to town hall the next day on “a chariot of triumph.” They feared a riot. The directory issued orders to National Guard commanders to select twelve men from each company for the protection of the departmental and district directories and the municipal council. They also ordered two gendarmerie brigades to form mounted patrols for crowd control. It soon became clear, however, that the National Guard was divided over the issue and itself posed a threat to public order. The departmental and district directories met the next afternoon in emergency session and read a petition from Ganny and Bégouigne describing their dilemma: if they reported in public, they would violate an order; and if they did not, they would be accused of duplicity, and their lives would be in danger. As the administrators discussed the situation, a group of armed national guardsmen invaded the meeting hall, and a spirited crowd gathered in the courtyard. The administrators refused to continue in the presence of armed men but finally agreed to a semipublic hearing the following day.

Naurissart did not attend that hearing, announcing by letter that the current threat to his safety prevented him from attending. Bégouigne reported on the two commissioners’ recent mission, recounting the dangers they had encountered. He mentioned three letters that he and Ganny had sent to the Limoges municipality. All three had gone unanswered, greatly discrediting them in the eyes of the Châteauroux officials. A report from Garraud and Mallet was read as well, increasing the tumult in the hall. Bégouigne responded bitterly to that report, denouncing its authors and the mayor. At this point the National Guard brought laurel crowns to Ganny and Bégouigne, which they graciously accepted. They called on the crowd to respect property and the law and suggested that Mallet and Garraud be given until April 1 to either deliver the grain or return the money. The crowd
seemed satisfied at this and moved off to pay visits to the homes of Maller, Garraud, and Naurissart, where they contented themselves with obtaining drink and a small amount of grain.77

On February 29, a letter arrived from the Indre administration, stating that the situation had been resolved, that calm had returned to Châteauroux, and that the grain would eventually be delivered. It is difficult to assign responsibility for this colossal mix-up, but Naurissart must be criticized for his failure to respond to the commissioners' three letters, barring the unlikely possibility that he received none of them. The mayor apparently failed to respond to another letter as well, this one from a farmer in a nearby village, who claimed he had written to Naurissart offering to supply Limoges with all the grain it needed. He was very surprised at receiving no response, since he had previously supplied the town and had shown he could be trusted.78 The best that can be said of the mayor is that he failed to diligently carry out his responsibilities in this instance. Perhaps he was hoping to favor friends in the merchant community with contracts for the procurement of grain. Clearly, there were those in Limoges who suspected such manipulation at the time, but there is no hard evidence to demonstrate collusion.

Naurissart informed the town council on February 29 that the threat to his personal safety would prevent him from attending meetings in the foreseeable future. He promised to remain in regular communication, so as not to abandon completely his duties, and to keep the council informed of his address in Paris.79 His letters soon ceased, however, and by August, the departmental administration had dismissed Naurissart for failure to perform the functions of his office.

This episode marks the return of the Jacobin club to a preeminent position in Limoges politics. Its demands for a public accounting had prevailed in February. In August, following the toppling of the monarchy in Paris, the Limoges sections refused to adjourn after electing a new mayor until a complete renewal of the municipal council had been carried out. Voters chose a new council, with eleven of the thirteen officers Jacobin club members, and

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77. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L197. This dossier contains a departmental procès-verbal recounting the events of February 24–29, 1792.
78. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L850 (March 12, 1792, statement of M. Lafleur, farmer in Marcheval).
regular elections in December installed a municipality that even more clearly expressed Jacobin views.\textsuperscript{80}

An understanding of the events and personalities of the early years of the Revolution is essential to a full appreciation of the developments of 1793. During those two or three years, revolutionary politics took shape in the towns and cities of provincial France. This period marked a transition from the politics of the Old Regime, restricted in terms of both access and authority, to the more open and responsible politics of the new regime. It was a period of flux, because the new regime remained in a process of definition. Traditional elites either faded from the scene or were thrust from it, to be replaced by new elites. In both Caen and Limoges, those new elites took it upon themselves to define and control the local political arena. As we have seen, members of the elite in Caen proved much more successful in that effort than their counterparts in Limoges.

In neither city, however, was the struggle for political power a particularly bloody one. From 1789 to 1792, both Caen and Limoges experienced a controlled popular fervor and tumult that only rarely erupted into violence. In Caen, the murder of Belzunce and the later killing of Bayeux were looked upon with shock and dismay by the generally law-abiding populace. Even among the sans-culottes, as far as we can tell, neither act was trumpeted as a noble blow for patriotism, though the bulk of the populace clearly perceived both men as enemies of the Revolution. The Affair of 84, rife with the potential for bloodshed, was controlled by the municipal authorities. Even later, during the Terror, those accused would suffer no more than imprisonment.

In Limoges, the 1790 fire and the more serious grain shortage may have subdued the crowd and helped prevent popular violence. Or perhaps his own prudence allowed Naurissart to escape the fate of Bayeux and Belzunce. Certainly the situation during that episode was as delicate as any that Caen experienced.

Religious divisions produced by the civil constitution of the clergy increased the political tension in both departments. Difficulties were greatest in the two chefs-lieux, where the controversy brought the resignations of Le Forestier de Vendoeuvre and Pétiniaud de Beaupeyrat. The election of con-

\textsuperscript{80} A. D. Haute-Vienne, L182 (August 8, 1792, letter from Limoges citizens to departmental administration), and L441 (documents pertaining to municipal elections and personnel).
stitutional bishops in each case delivered to office dynamic individuals who went on to play important roles in local politics. Both Gay-Vernon and Faucher maintained an active interest in, and influence on, local affairs after their departure to Paris; and it is significant that in 1793, one supported the Montagnards while the other allied himself with the Girondins.

These two men provide examples of the ties that developed between Paris and the two towns in the years before 1793. Other deputies, as well, actively corresponded with their friends and former colleagues back home. These personal links were very important, and official and institutional ties were also influential. The departmental administrations were, of course, in frequent contact with the various ministers in Paris. The Jacobin clubs exchanged letters with the mother club in Paris and with affiliated clubs in other towns, thereby creating a national network capable of mobilizing political action. The break between the Caen and Paris Jacobins was thus a crucial development, eliminating an important outside input into local political attitudes. Newspapers provided a final important source of information from Paris. Neither the regional paper in Caen nor that in Limoges offered more than brief reports from the capital and other major cities. But we have seen that in Caen, Le Courrier dans les Départements was regularly read to public gatherings. Bougon-Longrais had first ordered the Gorsas paper for the municipal council on his mission to Paris in early 1790. The Jacobin club in Limoges also received the Gorsas journal but canceled its subscription in December, 1792, dissatisfied with the moderate tone that Gorsas had adopted.81

Other differences between Caen and Limoges were of a more fundamental importance. In Calvados, a strong nobility remained active in local politics in 1789 and 1790, and when in 1791 the nobles saw their position seriously threatened, they mounted an effort to restore it, unsuccessful though it was. In nearly every serious confrontation in Caen between 1789 and 1792, it was an aristocratic action, or a perceived threat from the aristocracy, that was the instigating factor. For the people of Caen, the Revolution very clearly pitted the third estate against the vested interests of the aristocracy.

In the Limousin, on the other hand, the aristocracy was not a dominant force in 1789. Although some nobles occupied positions of power, most disappeared from local administration in the 1790–1791 term. Anti-

81. A. C. Caen, 11; Fray-Fournier, Le Club des Jacobins, 95.
aristocratic sentiments were sometimes displayed, but these were secondary to the conflict between *haut-bourgeois* and *moyen-bourgeois* elements. According to Fray-Fournier, the dynamic aspect of the Revolution in Limoges was "l'idée bourgeoise contre l'idée démocratique."82 This analysis seems appropriate. In a forecast of nineteenth-century politics, we see in Limoges the *haute-bourgeoisie* seeking a restricted electorate and limited popular participation, while the *moyenne-bourgeoisie* sought a broad-based, broadly participative democracy. By 1793, the latter would triumph. The Caen bourgeoisie, more cohesive than the Limoges elite, proved more successful in limiting the political activity of the popular classes, first by bringing to heel the Caen Jacobins and then by supporting the Carabots, a much more moderate and quiescent group.

In Limoges, the central social conflict occurred within the political arena, disrupting and dividing the municipal administration of 1791–1792. The bitter struggle between the Amis de la Paix and the Jacobin club embroiled the municipal council. The Jacobins not only prevailed as the dominant club in Limoges but gained control of the municipal council in 1792. In Caen, the fundamental conflict pitted wealthy bourgeois merchants against the nobility, a group in the process of being excluded from political participation. This conflict erupted most often on the edges of organized politics, with little real impact on them, and allowed the *haute-bourgeoisie* to remain virtually unchallenged in political office until after the federalist revolt.

The nature of the political arena was thus radically different in these two towns when the federalist revolt erupted in 1793. In Caen, the commercial elite dominated the municipal council and, along with the departmental administration, controlled local politics. In Limoges, the commercial elite had been forced from office by an active and powerful Jacobin club, which at least to some extent represented the interests of workers and artisans. The club and its supporters would assert themselves again in 1793 to steer Limoges away from the federalist camp; but in Caen, Jacobin forces had long since been neutralized.