Four

The Provinces Respond

June, 1793

The crisis within the National Convention reached its peak at the end of May, 1793. The heated session of May 27 ended with a late-night vote disbanding the Commission of Twelve. But the following day, the Girondin deputies attended in greater numbers, and the Convention voted to reinstate the Commission, although the Montagnards succeeded in preventing a full report of the Commission’s findings. Nonetheless, this turn of events provoked the Paris sections into renewed activity. The Cité section called on all sections to send representatives the next day, May 29, to meet at the Evêché. That assembly became the Central Revolutionary Committee, a reincarnation of the Insurrectionary Commune that had been so important in the journée of August 10, 1792.

On that same day, Robespierre addressed the Jacobin club of Paris, delivering a speech that has been generally interpreted as a call to insurrection. Mobilization continued in the sections, and on the afternoon of May 31, a peaceful crowd surrounded the Convention. Representatives of the Commune delivered the sections’ demands: the abolition of the Commission of Twelve, the proscription of twenty-four deputies, and the creation of an armée révolutionnaire. Girondin leaders countered this move by calling for an investigation of the brewing insurrection. After considerable discussion, this motion was carried. But Vergniaud, trying to secure the Girondins’ temporary advantage, failed in an effort to lead his supporters from the hall.
Returning within minutes, he interrupted Robespierre, who, in a dramatic moment, accused Vergniaud and called for his impeachment. The Montagnards now took the offensive, and the session concluded with the final suppression of the Commission of Twelve.

Two days later, on June 2, the Convention again found itself surrounded, this time by eighty thousand armed national guardsmen led by François Hanriot. The crowd once more delivered a demand for the proscription of the deputies, and on the floor of the Convention a proposal calling for the resignation of those accused met with failure. Marie Jean Hérault-Séchelles, showing great courage, led the deputies out into the crowd, attempting to break the ring that surrounded them. The guardsmen stood their ground, however, forcing the legislators to return to the chamber. There, the deputies passed a decree ordering the provisional arrest of twenty-nine of their colleagues, as well as two ministers. Most prominent among them were the well-known deputies Vergniaud, Brissot, and Buzot, along with Barbaroux, Gorsas, Guadet, and Valazé. Also placed under guard, for his role on the Commission of Twelve, was the Calvados deputy Henry-Larivière.1

The proscription of the Girondin deputies produced an immediate, but varied, reaction in the departments of France. Many departmental administrations protested this violation of the nation’s representatives, a few lauded the Montagnard victory, and the remainder maintained a generally silent neutrality. (See Table 1 for a breakdown of the protesting and nonprotesting departments.) Only a handful of departments engaged in prolonged resistance to the Montagnard Convention. That resistance centered geographically around the cities of Bordeaux, Caen, Lyon, and Marseille.

It is beyond the scope of this study to deal broadly with the federalist movement, but in order to place events in Caen and Limoges in a chronological context, Table 4 charts important developments in the several federalist centers. In both Lyon and Marseille, moderate elements in sectional assemblies had overturned radical municipal councils in April and May, 1793, and the federalist movement in those two cities grew out of their local political conflicts. Those conflicts in turn had been partially fueled by the meddling of Montagnard representatives on mission in local political affairs. In Lyon and Marseille, then, one sees in accentuated form a feature that characterized the federalist movement throughout France: a combination of local and national grievances that produced a revolt against Paris.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Caen</th>
<th>Limoges</th>
<th>Marseille</th>
<th>Bordeaux</th>
<th>Lyon</th>
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<tr>
<td>May 29</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sections revolt against Jacobin municipality.</td>
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<td>May 30</td>
<td>Commissioners leave for Paris; departmental force called for.</td>
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<td>June 3</td>
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<td>Sections close Jacobin club.</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Departmental administration supports Côte-d'Or resolution.</td>
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<td>Departmental Popular Commission created; insurrection declared.</td>
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<td>June 8</td>
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<td>June 9</td>
<td>General Assembly declares insurrection; Romme and Prieur arrested.</td>
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<td>June 11</td>
<td>Flow of foodstuffs to Paris cut off.</td>
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<td>Insurrection declared; departmental force created.</td>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Limoges Jacobin club declares support for May 31 revolution.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Order issued for formation of departmental force.</td>
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<td>June 17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Departmental administration rebukes Lyon messenger.</td>
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<td>June 27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Departmental administration rejects Bordeaux entreaty.</td>
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<td>July 1–5</td>
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<td>Departmental assembly declares insurrection.</td>
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<td>July 12</td>
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<td>Convention issues decree against Lyon federalists.</td>
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<td>July 13</td>
<td>Departmental forces routed at Pacy-sur-Eure.</td>
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<td>July 17</td>
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<td>Chalier executed.</td>
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<td>July 25</td>
<td>Calvados officials end insurrection.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>July 27</td>
<td>Departmental force routed in Avignon.</td>
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<td>July 31</td>
<td>Departmental force halts Paris march.</td>
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<td>Aug. 1</td>
<td>Limoges prepares to resist Bordeaux federalists.</td>
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<td>Aug. 2</td>
<td>&quot;Army of pacification&quot; enters Caen.</td>
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<td>Aug. 14</td>
<td>Popular Commission dissolved; departmental force disbanded.</td>
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<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>Siege of Lyon begins.</td>
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<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>General Carteaux enters Marseille.</td>
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<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>Radical Club National overturns moderate municipality.</td>
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<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>Lyon succumbs to republican forces.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National deputies enter Bordeaux.</td>
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In all four cities, local officials, principally departmental administrators, guided the organization of resistance to the National Convention, the outlines of which took shape during the first two weeks of June. Departmental forces assembled to march on Paris in all four cities. The federalist movement had disintegrated in Caen, Bordeaux, and Marseille by late July or early August, although Jacobins did not resume control of Bordeaux politics until late September. The federalist movement in Lyon gradually assumed a royalist character and only succumbed to republican forces on October 9, after a bloody two-month siege of the city.

The federalist revolt is a complicated historical event, varying both in intensity and in character from one region to the next. The revolt in Caen did not achieve the intensity or violence that it achieved in Lyon or Marseille, either in the rebellion itself or the repression that followed. In that respect, however, it was more the rule than the exception if one considers the federalist movement nationwide. As a guide to the character of the movement as a whole, federalism in Caen is particularly revealing because the rebels there, not only from Calvados but from other Norman and Breton departments, annunciated very clearly the aims of their rebellion and the grievances that had given rise to it. Study of the revolt in Caen, then, should yield considerable insight into the nature of the federalist movement. Comparison with Limoges will help to clarify why the revolt took root where it did.2

In Limoges, news of the events of May 27 through June 2 did not produce the heightened emotions and dramatic response that it would evoke in Caen. No special assemblies convened, and no urgent messages were sent to Paris. The departmental administration did express its concern over the proscription of the deputies, and it gave a sympathetic hearing to messengers from the Côte-d'Or who urged provincial protest. But letters from the deputies Gay-Vernon and Bordas, plus energetic input from the Limoges municipality, the Jacobin club, and officials in other districts, deterred the administrators from taking strong action. By the end of June, the department firmly

2. In writing this chapter, I relied primarily on archival materials, principally series L in the departmental archives of Calvados and the Haute-Vienne. For Caen, however, three published accounts were of great value in reconstructing the events of the revolt. See A. Goodwin, “The Federalist Movement in Caen during the French Revolution,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 42 (March, 1960), 313–43; Jeanne Grall, “Le Fédéralisme: Eure et Calvados,” Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, LV (1959–60), 133–53; and Vaulzier, Souvenirs. Vaulzier, a professor at the University of Caen, served as secretary of one of the Caen sections in 1793.
supported the Montagnard Convention; and by the end of July, the administration, along with the citizens of Limoges, stood ready to turn back the march of the Bordeaux force toward Paris.

The Limoges Jacobin club appears to have been the first local body to receive word of developments in Paris. This in itself is significant—the radical Jacobin club, not the more moderate departmental officials, first reported to the people of Limoges the Montagnard victory in the National Convention. Events in Paris therefore received a favorable interpretation. The journey from the capital to Limoges took longer than that from Paris to Caen—four days by coach instead of two. But as early as June 3, the Jacobin club read a letter from Xavier Audouin announcing that the people of Paris had risen and that great measures would soon be taken. The next day, Jean Baptiste Gay-Vernon, a departmental administrator, read to the club a report from his brother, the bishop. The assembly listened with great satisfaction to details of the current situation in Paris and unanimously voted its support of all measures taken by the Mountain. The members also sent a message to the bishop, thanking him for his regular bulletins, “without which the club might have been misled by the false reports that troublemakers never cease to spread.” One club member, reflecting on the recent events, concluded that they had turned entirely to the profit of liberty and equality. The meeting closed with the reading of an address from the Convention and the decrees of May 31 and June 1, which reportedly produced great joy among those present.

Up to this date, there is no evidence that the departmental administration even discussed these reports from Paris. On June 4, the Haute-Vienne council drafted an effusive address to its constituents, lauding their patriotism and sacrifices in sending volunteers to the Vendée and urging them to pull together in difficult times. The following day, the order of business changed after two messengers arrived from the Côte-d’Or bearing an urgent message. In a decree dated May 30, the Côte-d’Or proposed that the departments unite in sending an address to the Convention based on the principles of unity and indivisibility of the Republic, of the inviolability of national deputies, and of freedom of opinion. The message would state that the departments were prepared to rebel against any despotic authority that violated

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3. Fray-Fournier, *Le Club des Jacobins*, 132–33. Fray-Fournier has compiled here a summary of the minutes of the Limoges club’s meetings. The original registers have since disappeared from the departmental archives.
these principles. Commissioners from all the departments of France would deliver it to Paris, along with a fraternal message to the Parisians.

The Haute-Vienne administrators adopted the proposal after a brief discussion. The decree, it must be remembered, had been drafted in the Côte-d'Or before the proscription of the Girondin deputies. It did not propose active resistance to the National Convention; indeed, it offered no explicit course of action but rather espoused laudatory general principles and was in fact quite similar in tone to the message that the Haute-Vienne administration itself had sent to the Convention on May 30. The council named two of its members to carry the Côte-d'Or message to the Dordogne and the Corrèze and to inform those departments of its own adhesion.4

François Mathieu-Lachassagne relayed this message to the Dordogne, where officials in Périgueux gave him a warm reception. The department volunteered its support and sent its own messengers on to four other departments. The Corrèze, however, received Jean Baptiste Gay-Vernon less favorably. Officials there observed that events had changed since May 30, that the proposals of the Côte-d'Or could well produce a schism and federalism among the departments, and that the Convention was and should remain the only center of unity for France. They rejected the proposed address and sent a letter to the Convention denouncing the Côte-d'Or and the Haute-Vienne, a gesture that caused considerable embarrassment and difficulties for the Haute-Vienne in the following month.5

Little occurred in Limoges with respect to the national crisis until June 11, when two important letters arrived. The first came from four of the Haute-Vienne deputies, Faye, Lacroix, Rivaud, and Soulignac. Relatively subdued in tone, the letter congratulated the administrators for their addresses to the Convention of May 23 and 30 but made only veiled comments regarding the situation in the capital. The deputies wrote that those proscribed were demanding to hear the charges "that should have preceded and motivated their arrest." They also made a cryptic reference to the good citizens of Paris, whom they hoped would finally "tire of seeing themselves moved in a sense contrary to their own sentiments and to the public interest, and would surrender themselves to public indignation and the glory of the laws."6 This

5. A. D. Haute-Vienne, L181 (papers of the departmental council, correspondence).
was far from a call to arms, but censorship of letters leaving the capital (to which they referred in the letter) may have made the deputies reluctant to express themselves more strongly.

The Haute-Vienne administrators responded to the deputies two days later. They noted that one paragraph had been scratched out and thus rendered illegible and further complained that a more detailed letter, to which the deputies had alluded in a postscript, had never arrived in Limoges. Nonetheless, the officials assured their representatives that they remained loyal republicans and desired only an end to factions and agitators and a speedy completion of the constitution.7

The second letter to arrive on June 11 came from Gay-Vernon. He described the “moral insurrection” that had occurred in Paris as a reaction to the slander that had been heaped on that city. He predicted that the Convention would now accomplish more in fifteen days than it had in the previous eight months. “The country is all, and individuals are nothing,” he asserted, citing Lafayette and Dumouriez as former heroes who had proved to be traitors. The departmental administration as a whole, however, was not on the best of terms with Gay-Vernon, and its reply to the other four deputies suggests that it did not find completely convincing the bishop’s reassuring account. Still, the administrators drafted a suitably ambiguous answer to Gay-Vernon calling, as had he, for prosecution of all traitors who plotted against liberty and equality.8

The Limoges Jacobin club, on the other hand, appeared persuaded by Gay-Vernon’s regular bulletins. In addition to his first letter, the one received on June 4, the club received letters from the bishop on June 7 and June 13 and another note from Audouin as well. Inspired by these reports and by rumors of protest in other departments, the priest Foucaud proposed that an address be sent to affiliated clubs. He presented a draft on June 14, which the club quickly adopted. In stirring language, Foucaud lauded the patriotism Paris had displayed in its recent defense of the Revolution: “But your deputies have written that they are not free?” he asked rhetorically, answering that Louis XVI had made the same allegation and that Dumouriez, too, had questioned the Convention’s freedom. As for the deputies’ arrest, “We await in silence the terrible judgment that will soon be pronounced. If they are innocent, we will rejoice with display; but if they were guilty, dear friends,

could republicans dare to regret it?" For those who proposed a march on Paris, Foucaud suggested the Vendée as a more appropriate gathering place. The Limoges Jacobin club remained loyal to the Convention, he added, and looked to it for guidance and a new constitution. Jean Baptiste Gay-Vernon presented this address to the departmental directory, which refused to discuss it, but the departmental committee of public safety, composed of members from all three administrations, endorsed it without reserve.

Two days later, the Jacobin club received another letter, this one from five of the Haute-Vienne deputies: Rivaud, Soulignac, Faye, Lacroix, and Lesterpt. Four of these deputies (all except Lesterpt) had already written to the departmental administration, and the letter to the Jacobins expressed many of the same sentiments as the earlier message. The deputies’ views found a hostile audience among the members of the Jacobin club. Offended by the deputies’ moderation and their alarm at the events of June 2, the Jacobins denounced them in a letter to the Convention (resulting eventually in their arrest) and expelled Faye and Soulignac from the club. If there had been any doubt about the Jacobin club’s attitude toward the May 31 revolution, that doubt was now erased. Given the enormous influence of the Limoges Jacobins, both in the local administrative councils and on the local populace, the posture of the club with regard to the new regime in Paris must be considered a critical factor in steering the Haute-Vienne away from the federalist movement.

On June 17, the Haute-Vienne administration clarified its own position under the watchful eyes of the Limoges municipality and Jacobin club. During the previous ten days, the departmental council had seemingly paid no attention to the crisis in Paris or the projects of other departments. It had devoted its meetings to the routine business of recruitment, grain supply, and fugitive émigrés. But on June 17, two commissioners arrived in town—one from Lyon and one from the Jura by way of Lyon. The council convened a special meeting, inviting district and municipal officials to attend, along with delegates from the Jacobin club. The messenger Tardi spoke first, setting the record straight on recent events in Lyon. Then Gauthier, the Jura commissioner, read a joint address from the Rhône-et-Loire and the Jura to

10. Most departments formed committees of public safety in April, 1793, assigning to them the inspection of foreign mail and the surveillance of suspicious individuals who might be agents of foreign powers.
the Haute-Vienne. It called for an assembly of suppléants to the Convention, much as the Côte-d’Or had earlier proposed, but further recommended the raising of departmental forces and the designation of centers of communication around the country to coordinate the provincial efforts. These regional centers would report to a central spot such as Bourges, where the Convention, or its suppléants, would be gathered. This plan, they insisted, did not favor schism or federalism but, in fact, supported the very opposite.

Yet the plan represented a qualitative step beyond the Côte-d’Or proposal, to which the Haute-Vienne administration had adhered just twelve days earlier. The Jura address spoke not of general principles but of concrete action in response to the proscription of the Girondin deputies. The assembly entered this address in the record, after which an unidentified member of the departmental committee of public safety rose to speak. These men, he said, had arrived in Limoges that morning and had been brought to his committee by a municipal officer who had questioned their passports. The two had initially claimed to be headed for Bordeaux on personal business, but a search of their papers had produced copies of a plan listing departments that might be induced to join the projects of Marseille, Lyon, and Bordeaux. Furthermore, their speech to the assembly made it clear that the Jura and the Rhône-et-Loire believed that the Convention was not free, despite the Convention’s statements to the contrary and the fact that a majority of the deputies continued to deliberate in Paris. This member suggested that the proposals carried by the commissioners were more likely to cause trouble and sow civil war than to repair imagined wrongs and moved that the department take steps to halt the proposals’ propagation. The Jacobin club delegates added their voices to this opinion and called for the arrest of the two commissioners.

A long discussion ensued. The opinions of other departments were introduced, including the response of the Seine-et-Oise to a similar entreaty from the Ille-et-Vilaine. The Seine-et-Oise administrators had rejected that entreaty, stressing the danger of schism within the Republic and the continued threat of internal and external enemies. After considerable discussion, a council member stepped forward to concur with the department’s confidence in the wisdom and freedom of the Convention, which would soon deliver a new constitution. He moved that in response to the two commissioners’ proposals a departmental declaration be issued recognizing the liberty of the Convention and the legitimacy of all its decrees since May 31. He further
argued that to arrest the two would be pointless, because “people everywhere know their rights and know how to maintain them.” The assembly applauded loudly and adopted the proposed course of action unanimously. The two commissioners quickly left town and apparently went on to the Gironde, for five days later, on June 22, a special courier from Bordeaux arrived in Limoges, urging essentially the same measures that the Haute-Vienne had already rejected. A special assembly convened the next morning and voted to release the courier with his passport. Messages addressed to the Creuse and the Corrèze would be returned to Bordeaux, along with a note stating that “pressing circumstances do not permit the Department of the Haute-Vienne to accede to the requests of the Gironde.” Although clearly unwilling to join the protesting departments at this point, the Haute-Vienne administration remained characteristically cautious in its actions and pronouncements.

Elsewhere in the department, reaction to the news from Paris was mixed. Pardoux Bordas, a deputy to the Convention from Saint-Yrieix, wrote to his district on June 2. He, like Gay-Vernon, sat with the Mountain; and in his letter, he spoke of the calm determination of the Parisians, of their devotion to liberty and respect for property even in the face of provocation, and of the “moral insurrection” that had taken place in the capital. A decree of accusation against conspirators within the Convention would soon be passed, he said, although Brissot and others had reportedly already fled. Bordas counseled his constituents to take up arms and continue surveillance of conspirators at home.

Officials in Saint-Yrieix did not share Bordas’ political views, and they interpreted his letter as evidence that a schism had developed within the Convention. The Saint-Yrieix Popular Society expelled Bordas from the club and on June 7 convinced the district to send a message to the departmental administration suggesting that a delegation to the Convention call for primary assemblies to elect a new Convention. The departmental administration, which at first ignored this proposal, expressed its firm disapproval on June 24 but adopted no stronger measures, since Saint-Yrieix had taken no further action. The only other district to take a position was Saint-Junien.

13. Ibid.
which on June 22 berated the administration for having adopted the Côte-
d’Or proposal without first consulting district councils.¹⁵

Deputy Gay-Vernon soon added his own reproach for the department’s error in judgment on that occasion. By June 19, word had reached Paris of the Corrèze denunciation of the Haute-Vienne’s actions. Gay-Vernon wrote to the department that he was confident of the administrators’ pure intentions but hoped that they had by now seen the error in their action. He did not share the views of the other five deputies—for him, and he hoped for the department, principles were more important than individuals. Ten days later, the bishop scolded the departmental administrators more sharply. He lamented that they had violated their duty and responsibility by sending a deputy to the Corrèze with the Côte-d’Or proposal. He bemoaned their feebleness, saying he preferred strong and decisive men to those who claimed to believe in the freedom of the Convention and then did nothing to protect it from federalist plots. He felt they should have arrested the commissioners from the Jura and Lyon (a course of action that Limoges Jacobins had urged at the time), and he exhorted the administrators to be more diligent and energetic. The bishop closed by announcing that the new constitution would soon arrive.¹⁶

Official notification of the constitution’s completion reached Limoges on July 2, and on July 4, the three administrative corps, meeting together, issued a declaration to their constituents. They recalled that for six months they had been imploring the Convention to complete the constitution. Now, at this difficult time, it was imperative that all citizens rally to the Convention and reject the federalist projects that threatened to divide the country. The administrators called on their constituents to gather in primary assemblies to consider and vote on the new constitution, delivered by their legislators after much debate and sage deliberation.¹⁷

Pierre Philippeaux, a representative on mission, formally delivered the constitution one week later, and voters throughout the department quickly approved it. But Philippeaux also brought grave reports from the Vendée and made an impassioned plea for renewed efforts to combat the rebels. The deputy asked that the Haute-Vienne send a contingent to join a gathering force in Tours. Despite their concern about the department’s depleted man-

power, the administrators unanimously voted to mount and equip a fifty-man cavalry corps. Expenses would be paid by a levy on the rich. 18

As if this new strain on the department’s resources were not enough, the administration soon received word that the National Convention had refused to allocate badly needed funds for the hospital in Limoges. Gay-Vernon wrote on July 19 that the department’s failure to punish more severely the messengers from Lyon and the Jura, as well as the Saint-Yrieix officials, had caused this adverse decision. He blamed the departmental administrators for not heeding his advice but promised to see the minister of the interior about securing the funds. The other deputies, too, pledged to do what they could.

While awaiting resolution of this matter, the department received word from Toulouse that forces from Bordeaux were marching toward Paris and would pass through Limoges. Alarmed at this news, the authorities in Limoges united with the Jacobin club on July 23 to draft an appeal to “our brothers of Bordeaux.” Announcing their recent acceptance of the new constitution, they implored the people of Bordeaux to do the same and to seek solutions to their grievances in that document rather than in actions that could only lead to civil war. 19

A special courier from the Corrèze arrived one week later with news that the Bordeaux volunteers had not turned back. The Corrèze stood ready to block their path and asked the Haute-Vienne to join it. Eager to show their devotion to the Convention and the Republic, the administrators replied that they were of like mind and would, if necessary, send forces to unite with those of the Corrèze. The arrival on August 1 of the deputy Baudot raised patriotic spirits in Limoges to an even higher pitch, and the administration ordered the Limoges National Guard and all able citizens to prepare to take to the fields with guns, pitchforks, pikes, scythes—anything that would serve as a weapon—in order to prevent the Bordeaux forces from entering the department. 20

Fortunately for the people of Limoges, the Bordeaux volunteers had gone no further than the borders of their own department before hearing that the forces from Normandy had been routed. They immediately turned back for

their homes and had, in fact, probably dispersed even before Baudot arrived in Limoges. More good news reached the town in early August. The hospital funds had been withheld because of a misunderstanding, and the minister of the interior would soon release nineteen thousand livres for the aid of Limoges orphans.21

Between early June and late July, the Haute-Vienne administration had shifted from hesitant disapprobation of the May 31 revolution in Paris to firm rejection of the federalist entreaties issued by authorities in Lyon and Bordeaux. The department had reaffirmed its patriotism and dedication to the Republic and for that reason largely escaped the repression that followed the collapse of the federalist movement.

The departmental administration had taken no active steps to join a march on Paris, but its support of the Côte-d'Or resolution constituted an implicit recognition that such a measure might be necessary. In the following weeks, three factors combined to steer the department away from the federalist revolt. First were the roles of Gay-Vernon, Bordas, and Xavier Audouin, all of whom reassured the people of Limoges that the Convention continued to deliberate in freedom and that May 31 had been a victory for liberty and equality. This by itself would not have been enough. Gay-Vernon did not enjoy universal respect among departmental administrators, and the other five Haute-Vienne deputies sent more alarming reports of the situation in Paris. The Limoges Jacobin club, however, had confidence in the bishop and exerted considerable pressure on the departmental administration, both by regular attendance at general council meetings in June and July and because a considerable number of club members served as administrators. The municipal council, too, helped curb any departmental tendencies toward federalism by strongly protesting the administration's support of the Côte-d'Or resolution. Finally, the counterrevolutionary crisis in the Vendée and the precarious economic situation that prevailed in Limoges and the Haute-Vienne as a whole made resistance to the National Convention an unattractive option.

Whereas the Haute-Vienne's reaction to the Montagnard victory was slow and hesitant, the response in Calvados was swift and resolute. Even before the Paris sections mobilized on May 31, authorities in Caen had taken de-

cise measures to protest and counter the political shift that began in the Convention on May 27. News of the May 27 dissolution of the Commission of Twelve arrived in Caen within two days.

The most likely carrier of this report was Antoine DeVic, procureur of the municipality. DeVic had been sent to Paris early in May to request an advance on the proceeds from the sale of national lands, which would relieve the penury of the *caisse des billets de confiance* in Caen. He returned to Caen in time for an evening session of the municipal general council on May 28. Traveling by coach from Paris to Caen generally required two days, but it is possible that DeVic, bearing urgent news, left Paris on horseback after the May 27 evening session and arrived in Caen late the following day.

Other possible sources of information include the several deputies who maintained regular correspondence with officials in Caen. That one of these deputies may have relayed the report is suggested by an account in the *Affiches du Calvados*. In its issue of June 2, that journal stated that news of the dangerous situation in the Convention had arrived in Caen on May 29, though it did not identify the source, which may have been a letter or even a Parisian newspaper. The journal also reported that on the same day the Jacobin club, in a well-attended session, had petitioned the departmental directory to convene section assemblies in Caen.

It was neither the departmental administration nor the municipal council that convoked section assemblies in Caen, however; it was Louis Caille, procureur-syndic of the district. Caille had been active in local affairs since early in the Revolution, particularly in the Caen Jacobin club, which he had helped found and over which he later presided. After a trip to Paris in early 1792, where he met Robespierre, he encouraged the Caen Jacobins to split with the Paris club. Caille was first elected to public office in September, 1792, when he was named procureur-syndic. Acting in that capacity, he issued two orders on May 30. The first ordered that the municipal council, given the danger to the patrie, convene the sections in extraordinary assemblies. The second directed the municipal council to call a special meeting to consider what measures to adopt.

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22. A. C. Caen, D2 (Délibérations du Corps municipal et du Conseil Général de la Commune), May 4 and May 28, 1793.
The municipal council met at ten o'clock that evening and immediately sent three delegates to the district and departmental administrations to request postponement of section assembly meetings so that bell-ringing, which might alarm the countryside and jeopardize the following day's market, could be avoided. (Despite the previous year's good harvest, grain was again in short supply in Caen.) Given the seriousness of the threat to the Convention, however, the superior authorities denied the municipal council's request. Even as the messengers returned to town hall, church bells rang out, and the assemblies began to gather. Each of the sections sent delegates to the departmental meeting hall later that night, where they joined representatives of the three administrative corps. This assembly drafted the final address sent by Calvados to the National Convention. The assembly also voted to form within the department, principally in Caen, an armed force to march to the aid of the Convention and issued an order inviting all good republicans to enroll at district chefs-lieux. It called on all the departments of France to adopt similar measures.

Two decrees of the Convention, registered by the departmental directory only one day before, may have impressed upon the assembly the gravity of the situation and convinced local authorities of the legitimacy of their actions. The first of these decrees, issued May 18, had established the Commission of Twelve, "charged with investigating all internal plots against liberty, and against the national representation." The second, dated May 24, placed under the safeguard of good citizens "la fortune publique, la Représentation nationale, et la ville de Paris." These decrees made it clear that a threat to the nation existed and that all citizens had a responsibility to resist that threat.

To carry their address to the Convention, the assembly chose ten of its members, representative of the administrations, sections, and popular societies that were present. Most prominent in that delegation were Pierre Jean René Lenormand, then president of the departmental administration, and Louis Caille, from the district directory. The contingent left the following

26. A. C. Caen, I34 (Adresses et députations à la Convention, janvier–mai 1793). Also included in the delegation were Antoine Nicolas Marie, from the municipal council; another Lenormand, representing the Carabots; Legagneur, probably representing the Jacobin club;
day (minus one delegate, Legagneur, who had fallen ill) and arrived in Paris on June 2. In addition to the formal statement drafted by the assembly, they took a brief address reminiscent of previous calls for unity and a new constitution. But the changed circumstances they encountered in Paris prompted them to compose a more forceful discourse, which began as follows:

Representatives,

You have just heard the Address sent to you by our Fellow-citizens at the time of the events of May 27. That which they feared has occurred, and other measures should be and will be employed. We have been the witnesses of new attacks upon liberty, by which a Faction has succeeded, through misleading armed Citizens, in proscribing thirty-four of your Colleagues and three Ministers, in placing them under arrest, and in temporarily dissolving the National Representation, which cannot exist without freedom of opinions. We would sacrifice our personal safety, even our lives, in order to complete the honorable Mission entrusted to us by our Constituents. The right that we exercise is a sacred right: Force can violate it; but it cannot prevent such attacks from becoming known in the Departments; they are already known in the Department of Calvados. From the banks of the Rhine to the Pyrenees, there is universal indignation, and its weight will crush the new Tyrants. 27

The delegation closed its address by pledging that armies from throughout the country would soon join the majority of peace-loving Parisians to deliver the Convention from oppression, thus preserving the unity of the Republic and showing to all of France the true meaning of patriotism.

Unfortunately, the delegation did not gain admission to the floor of the Convention and therefore never delivered this message. The commissioners stayed on in Paris for several days, occasionally venturing out onto the streets but passing most of their time in the company of the Calvados deputies to the Convention. They left the capital on June 6, making stops in Evreux and Lisieux on their way back to Caen.

Several interesting letters arrived in Caen while the commissioners were carrying out their mission to the capital. Gustave Doulcet de Pontécoulant, former president of the Calvados administration and now a deputy to the

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Convention, wrote the first of these. His letter, though undated, bore the heading “Samedy, à 7 heures du soir,” and its tone clearly indicates that it was written on Saturday, June 1. Addressed simply to citoyen Lenormand, president of the Popular Society, at Caen, it read:

Our dangers are by no means past, my dear fellow-citizen; the tocsin rings; the call to arms is sounded; and we are informed that Marat and the Revolutionary Committee of the Paris Commune have decided to renew the disturbances, and to continue what they call the insurrection of the people until the twenty-two, the twelve, and Isnard are indicted.

I repeat that which I told you this morning, that which I will write to you in all possible ways until you acknowledge the receipt of one of my letters, that having neither crime nor weakness to reproach me, I await death without fear; that I leave to posterity the task of defending my memory; and that I bequeath my vengeance to my constituents and to all the true republicans of France.

Your fellow-citizen and brother,
Gustave Doulcet

Doulcet’s despair and resignation are clearly registered in this letter. But more than that, he suggests that his letters were being prevented from reaching their destination, he asserts that he was guilty of neither crime nor weakness, and he implores his constituents to avenge the injustice being perpetrated on him and his colleagues.

Two days later, the nine commissioners sent to the capital wrote a note to the general assembly that had dispatched them. They announced the proscription and arrest of the deputies and described the public turmoil in Paris. They assured the Caen assembly that the majority of Parisians did not support these “scènes d’avilissement” and passed on the current rumor that a great deal of money had been distributed to incite the people against the deputies. They wrote of the general indignation of the other departments and urged even greater fortitude in the face of this grave danger to the Republic.

One of the nine, Antoine Nicolas Marie, exhibited a calmer attitude in a brief letter he sent on June 6 to Jean Le Goupil Duclos, mayor of Caen. He opened, “Do not worry on our account,” related the commissioners’ intention to address the Convention, and closed with the observation that “Paris

29. A. C. Caen, 135 (Révolution du 31 mai 1793).
is tranquil in appearance, and we count upon the friendship of our fellow citizens.” Marie expressed none of the alarm or exhortation contained in the previous letter.30

The gravity of the situation in Paris, however, was confirmed in a letter dated June 8, sent from the deputy Lomont to Pierre Jean Lévêque, who had replaced the absent Lenormand as president of the departmental administration. In the letter, Lomont lauds Lévêque’s character and warns him of the need for renewed patriotism:

Brother and friend,

Your tactfulness and exquisite honesty have earned my esteem beyond all expression; may your fellow-citizens always do you the justice that you deserve! I have not replied to your excellent letter of the seventeenth, because I was at Buges acting as the Convention’s commissioner to the paper factory there. But how times have changed since that period! We must close ranks if we are to triumph over the enemies of the country! No more small measures, or the liberty with which brave republicans should perish will be finished.

I will say no more to you; you know what is happening . . . courage, and again more courage!

Greetings and good health,

Lt

I send this to your home: the secrecy of the mails is violated with impunity, etc. . . by not including your official title in the inscription it will be less suspect (this letter) and more likely to reach you.”

Again, we see expressed the fear that the mails were being searched, with Lomont even so cautious as not to sign his full name.

In spite of the alarming news that continued to arrive from Paris, business went on much as usual in Caen during the first week of June. Both the municipal and district councils, as well as the departmental administration, concerned themselves principally with ensuring an adequate grain supply. On June 2, Bougon-Longrais, the procureur-général-syndic, scolded the comité de subsistance for its slow enactment of the maximum on barley, rye, and oats. That same day, Bougon noted the importance of maintaining correspondence with the representatives on mission to the 14th Military Division, commanded by General Félix Wimpffen and headquartered in Bayeux. Two days later, the council sent two of its members, Pierre Mesnil and Barnabé Cauvin, to warn the two representatives on mission of a possible

30. Ibid.
31. A. D. Calvados, L10276 (Lévêque correspondence).
arms shipment from England to the Manche coast and to invite them to confer with the Calvados administration. The two representatives, Charles Romme and Claude Antoine Prieur (of the Côte-d'Or), arrived in Caen on June 5 and met with all three of the local administrations. They engaged in an amicable discussion regarding issues of military defense and grain supply and left the next day for Bayeux.\footnote{32}{A. D. Calvados, L.166bis (Conseil Général du Département, procès-verbaux des séances, 2 juin 1793–31 juillet 1793).}

On June 7, the departmental directory read two decrees of the Convention into the official minutes. The first, dated May 31, announced the suppression of the Commission of Twelve. The second, dated June 1, contained an official account of the events of May 31, stressing that debate continued freely within the Convention and that only liberty had triumphed by that grand journée.\footnote{33}{A. D. Calvados, L.165; Réimpression de l'Ancien Moniteur, XVI, 540.}

Caen remained calm until Saturday, June 8, when the nine commissioners returned from Paris. At this point, the sequence of events becomes somewhat clouded. At least three versions exist of the twenty-four hours that culminated, early on June 9, in a declaration of insurrection.

The following account is the one most strongly supported by the record. The precise time at which the commissioners arrived in Caen is not known; but late in the morning or early in the afternoon, the departmental council convened a special session, inviting members of the district and municipal councils, members of the civil and judicial tribunals, and delegates from the sections of Caen. At this meeting, one of the nine commissioners, Dom Mauger, a former Benedictine monk recently appointed physics professor at the University of Caen, delivered their report.

According to the commissioners' account, they had arrived in the capital on Sunday, June 2, only to discover that the sections of Paris had already risen. They had met, as they entered the city, an unnamed Calvados administrator returning to Caen, who had told them that the Commission of Twelve and twenty-two others would soon be arrested. Reaching the heart of Paris late that night, the nine had passed 100,000 armed men with cannons trained on the Convention. On arriving at their hotel, they had learned the details of that day's events. They had been told of a man, posing as a municipal officer, who had roused the faubourg Saint-Antoine that morning, of the bravery of the deputies as they marched into the crowd, and of
Marat leading a band of paid scoundrels. The Girondin deputies had reportedly been proscribed under the threat of the men and cannons of Hanriot.

The following morning, Mauger continued, they had visited a few of the Calvados deputies, as well as Pétiot, Jean Denis Lanjuinaiis, Barbaroux, and Valazé, all of whom had described the commissioners’ mission as pointless. The deputies had cited the example of the commissioners from the Seine-Inférieure, who had been battered and spit upon in the Convention. Undaunted, the delegation had gone on June 4 to visit the deputy Vardon, where they had again encountered the majority of the Calvados representatives. The nine had decided to send six of their lot back to Caen with a report, leaving three in Paris to deliver their message. Just then, a deputy had burst in with news of an order for the arrest of those in Paris who had not supported the June 2 insurrection. Ten thousand people had already been jailed, he had claimed, and an arrest order had been issued for the commissioners from Caen. Faced with this great peril, all nine had decided to remain in Paris and to go to the Convention the next day!

This they had done, only to be told that the Committee of Public Safety now dealt with petitions such as theirs. Gustave Doulcet had tried unsuccessfully to gain them admission to the assembly. Discouraged, they had left, followed through the streets by “groupes de furieux.” The nine had departed Paris late that afternoon “under the eye of a thousand spies,” who had followed them to the edge of town.

Arriving in Évreux on June 6, they had met a man named Beaumier who had allegedly been paid 3,600 livres by Joseph Garat, the minister of the interior, to sound out the departments of Lower Normandy. Beaumier had told the nine of Garat’s plan to become dictator. After peace had been restored and the Girondins eliminated, Garat, presumably in league with Robespierre and Marat, would fix a “maximum des propriétés” at 6,000 livres annual revenue. The domination of Paris would be assured. Shocked by this tale, the delegation had turned Beaumier over to the Eure authorities. That evening, they had met with a Eure general assembly, which, they reported, had already taken insurrectionary measures. The commissioners had stopped the following day in Lisieux, where they had also met with local authorities, and had traveled directly from there to Caen on June 8.14

14. A. C. Caen, 136 (Insurrection et actes des administrations insurgées, mai–juillet 1793). A major portion of the commissioners’ report is printed in the notes to Vaultier, Souvenirs, 176–73. The true status of Beaumier is unclear. He was apparently a commissaire observateur.
Mauger’s report made a strong impression on the assembly, and Léveque, now president of the departmental administration, proposed an oath declaring eternal war against agitators, rebels, and the maratistes who divided the Convention. All those present swore the oath, “with all the energy and enthusiasm of which a free people is capable.” The minutes of the meeting and the report were ordered printed and sent to all departments and to the sections of Paris. As the meeting drew to a close, those present voted to convene section assemblies that evening. The assemblies would be visited by departmental administrators and by members of the commission to Paris. It was further agreed that future departmental meetings should include the district and municipal councils, along with the tribunal, section, and club representatives who had attended this session. This marked the first instance during the Revolution in which meetings of the Calvados administration were in any sense opened to the public.  

In this version of the events of June 8, the report of the commissioners sent to Paris plays a central role. The report could hardly have been more inflammatory—it spoke of spies and armed legions in the capital, recounted the abuses and threats suffered both by the commissioners themselves and by the Calvados deputies, and told of secret agents roaming the provinces, sent by men who hoped to rule over France as dictators. The people of Caen now had direct confirmation of the woeful tales that the Calvados deputies had told in recent letters. 

That this report embodied a degree of exaggeration is hardly surprising. Some evidence suggests, though, that not all of the commissioners to Paris viewed the situation so urgently. Nicolas Marie’s early letter to Le Goupil Duclos described the capital as calm. Another of the commissioners, Guillaume Feret, testified after the revolt that the armed soldiers he had seen in Paris were patrolling the streets peacefully. Feret had never visited the capital before, and a bad leg kept him in his hotel room during the entire stay. He later claimed that René Lenormand, Louis Caille, and Dom Mauger had made nearly all of the decisions for the group, had arranged their meet-

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35. A. D. Calvados, 1:16obis.
ings with deputies, and had taken responsibility for drafting the report. If Feret can be believed, and he admittedly was writing in his own defense, both the trip to Paris and the later report were managed by men already predisposed to insurrection; in that case, the representatives of the Caen sections made very minor contributions to both the mission and the report.

Frédéric Vautier gives an account in his Souvenirs that minimizes the importance of the commissioners’ report, suggesting instead that the section assemblies declared their insurrectionary intention on June 8 before hearing from the men sent to Paris. He seems to ignore the fact that earlier that day Mauger had read the report to the special session, which section representatives had attended, but his chronicle of the events of that evening is interesting in other respects. As secretary of the section Liberté, Vautier received an address that a prominent citizen wished to have read to the section assembly on the evening of June 8. This citizen insisted on anonymity, and only after Vautier himself had taken credit for the address did the assembly allow him to read it aloud. He did not reprint it in his memoirs but described it as written “in a most pronounced spirit of insurrection.” Those in attendance greeted the speech with acclamation, and the section declared itself in insurrection “en principe.” Liberté sent Vautier to deliver his address to the other sections in order to secure their adhesion. Only when he wrote his recollections, over thirty years later, did he identify the true author of the speech as Pierre Jacques Samuel Chatry l’aîné.

It is possible that Vautier is indulging his memory to gain his own small bit of revolutionary glory. But despite the absence of strong corroborating evidence (which, given the nature of the episode, one would hardly expect), this account sounds plausible, and we cannot dismiss it out of hand. Chatry did, in fact, live on the Place de la Liberté and would have been a member of Vautier’s section. It has already been pointed out that he had played an active role in municipal politics since 1789, first as a member of the Caen General Committee and then as a municipal officer and notable. He belonged to a wealthy, commercial, Protestant Caen family. In 1793, he held public office as a notable and as president of the Tribunal of Commerce. Although clearly influential in local affairs, Chatry preferred not to exercise a promi-

36. A. D. Calvados, L10136 (documents pertaining to federalism). This information is contained in a letter dated March 10, 1794, sent by Feret to the representatives on mission Bouret and Frémanger.

nent leadership role. In 1791, he declined election as mayor because he felt it would be imprudent for a Protestant to hold that position at a time when religious opinions were a political issue. Drafting an inflammatory speech and then giving it to Vaultier to deliver would have been consistent with his sense of discretion, with his concern for political affairs, and also with his later, active participation in the revolt.38

In addition to this circumstantial evidence, Vaultier's story is partially supported by Jean Baptiste Leclerc, a departmental administrator in 1793. Interrogated in August, after the revolt had failed, he acknowledged that he had accompanied several of the commissioners who had been sent to Paris as they reported to section assemblies on the night of June 8. Leclerc noted that people in the sections were already calling for revolt and that the section Liberté, in fact, had declared itself in insurrection before the commissioners arrived. This confirms Vaultier's recollection of the sequence of events, though not the role of Chatry.39

A final possible amendment to the official record of the events of June 8 accords a position of prominence to the Carabot club. One of the commissioners to Paris, Lenormand (not René, but a second Lenormand), had been sent explicitly as a representative of that club, and the delegation may have included other Carabots as well. Georges Mancel, in his notes to Vaultier, claims that on their return from Paris two of the commissioners reported immediately to their fellow Carabots. Taking the initiative, the club sent twelve of its members to the assembled authorities with a petition, proposing that all Calvados deputies to the Convention be recalled; that local authorities recognize no measure issued by the Convention, or by the "so-called Executive Council," after May 27; that a court be created to judge maratistes and other "factieux"; that the Calvados authorities create a cavalry force of two hundred men for public security; and finally, that all couriers sent by the Convention be arrested and their packets seized, inspected, and burned. The fact that a general assembly adopted several of these measures early on the morning of June 9 supports the veracity of this account.40

The meeting of June 9 was of singular importance for two reasons. First, on that morning, the people of Caen confirmed their intention to pursue an

38. A. D. Calvados, L10074 (Elections et actifs, 1790–92); A. C. Caen, D1, D2, and K34 (Mairie, 1790–an II).
insurrection against the Montagnard Convention. Second, more than any subsequent event or action, the oath sworn on June 9 and the assembly’s decision to arrest and imprison the deputies Romme and Prieur would provide damning evidence against the Calvados federalists after their revolt collapsed.

A variety of documents enables us to reconstruct the events of that day and identify the leading figures in the drama. From the official procès-verbal of the June 9 meeting, we learn that representatives from all of the local administrations, courts, and clubs attended the session. However, many who might have come stayed away. Only thirteen of thirty-seven departmental administrators were present, though this was not unusual. Early in the year, as many as thirty administrators had attended council meetings with some regularity; but in recent weeks, attendance had never reached even 50 percent. Caen district officials showed slightly greater diligence—seven of the thirteen council members were present at the meeting. Surprisingly, the Caen municipal council had proportionally the fewest representatives in attendance. Of the forty-four current council members, only ten were present. Although eight of the fourteen officers came, both the mayor and the procureur were absent.

Pierre Jean Lévêque presided over the assembly, which began with a discussion of proposals made by the sections and the popular societies. Those present unanimously declared themselves in a state of insurrection and resistance to oppression until that time when the Convention should recover its liberty. Two messengers from the neighboring department of the Orne reported that the administration of that department was preparing an armed force and called on Calvados to do likewise. This proposal was referred to a committee. Then, in its most decisive action, the assembly named Lenormand (not René, but the second Lenormand) and a few of his fellow Carabots to go to Bayeux to arrest the two deputies Romme and Prieur. They were to bring the two back to Caen, where they would be held in the Château as hostages against the safety of the deputies arrested in Paris. An additional messenger traveled to the neighboring department of the Manche to request its support for the Calvados position.

Acting on the recommendations of the Carabots, those assembled ordered the postal service to redirect to the Calvados administration all letters addressed to the representatives on mission. All local payeurs généraux were instructed to disburse no funds whatsoever without an order from the de-
partmental or district directory. The assembly also ordered that all munitions and military convoys intended for the coast be held in Caen (so that the populace would not be disquieted!). General Wimpffen, commanding the 14th Military Division, was invited to Caen to confer with officials. The session closed with the appointment of a provisional insurrectional committee, composed of one representative from each local corps: René Lenormand, from the departmental administration; Louis Caille, from the Caen district council; Samuel Chatry l'aîné, a municipal notable; Pierre Michel Picquot, the public prosecutor for the Criminal Tribunal; Pierre Costy, a judge on the district tribunal; François Anne Pierre Tabouret, from the section Liberté; François Le Carpentier, a municipal notable representing the Jacobin club; Jean Michel Barbot, from the Carabor club; and Charles L'honoré, a judge on the Caen Tribunal of Commerce.41

There is much, however, that the official record omits or distorts. For one thing, it exaggerates the single-mindedness of those present. The procès-verbal records the unanimous declaration of a state of insurrection, followed by the signatures of all those present, as well as the names of a number of other officials who signed at a later date. But some of those present opposed this declaration—in particular, Robert Tirel, an homme de loi and district director. Tirel questioned the advisability of insurrection and especially objected to the proposal to arrest Romme and Prieur. However, the assembly shouted him down and passed a clause that labeled as suspect and traitorous anyone who refused to support and sign the declaration of revolt. The heated emotions, fueled by the report from Paris, clearly made public opposition to the insurrection a dangerous proposition.

A number of individuals claimed in their interrogations, perhaps for reasons of self-preservation, to have been intimidated into signing the June 9 minutes. One of these was Gilles Fleury, a saddle maker and town notable. He, too, claimed to have opposed the arrest of the two deputies. He had been shouted down along with Tirel and had signed the procès-verbal out of fear for his safety, he said. At a meeting eight or nine days after June 9, the deputy procureur had observed that the menacing clause rendered the deliberation of June 9 legally null. Those present had voted to strike it from the record, and the offending words had been scratched from the original minutes. Fleury claimed in his interrogation to have argued that since some had

signed under coercion, the questions and orders should be reopened for dis-
cussion. This motion had been quickly dismissed, but two days later Fleury 
had discreetly scratched out his signature in the presence of the secretary.42

The official record also leaves unexplained the curious absence of the 
Caen mayor from the June 9 meeting. Again, it is the later interrogation 
transcripts that provide information. Le Goupil Duclos claimed that work 
had detained him at the town hall on June 8 and that he therefore had not 
been able to attend the section assemblies or hear the report from Paris. He 
had gone to the Abbaye-aux-Hommes, where the departmental council met, 
at nine o’clock that evening, stayed until midnight, and returned home when 
informed that a general meeting would not be held until the following morn-
ing. The next day, he had been astounded to learn that the meeting had con-
voked at 4 A.M.! It appears that the mayor of Caen, who remained aloof 
from the revolt throughout June and July, was not absent by choice on the 
morning of June 9 and that this critical meeting took place at a most unusual 
hour. Indeed, the time may have been largely responsible for the generally 
low attendance at the meeting.43

The assembly met again that evening to prepare further for resistance 
against Paris. The session had scarcely opened, however, when Henry-
Larivière and Gorsas, two of the proscribed deputies, arrived in the hall. 
Each addressed the assembly, and those present were “seized by horror” at 
their description of events in Paris. The assembly ordered that the bulletin of 
the Convention no longer be printed and further voted to disregard all orders 
issued by the Convention after May 27 and to suspend all correspondence 
with the Executive Council. It invited the other five districts of Calvados to 
send representatives to Caen and voted to form five committees, each to be 
composed of five members.44 One committee was assigned to draft an appeal 
to the citizens of Calvados to volunteer for a departmental force to march to

42. A. D. Calvados, L 101 25 and L 189. The incident involving Tirel was attested to, under 
interrogation, by Leclerc, Fleury, the departmental administrator Cauvin, and Le Goupil 
Duclos, the mayor of Caen. The original minutes of the meeting do show the controversial 
clause, barely legible, to have been crossed out. The signature of Fleury is also faintly visible.

43. A. D. Calvados, L 101 25 (interrogation of Le Goupil Duclos). Mancel, in his notes to 
Vaultier’s memoirs, reports the time of the meeting to have been 2 A.M., hardly a more hospit-
able hour. If this was indeed the correct time, it would seem even more likely that Le Goupil 
was deliberately misled when told at midnight that the assembly would take place the next 
morning.

44. The five committees were comité de résistance à l’oppression, comité de militaire, com-
ité des finances, comité des subsistances, comité de rédaction et de correspondance.
Paris. In addition, the delegates voted to name sixteen commissioners to travel in pairs to the sixteen surrounding departments to invite them to join Calvados in selecting a town from which a central committee could direct their efforts.45

Late in the meeting, two messengers from Evreux arrived to inform Calvados officials that the Eure was organizing in protest. These men announced that they had passed through Lisieux, where officials and citizens were prepared to enroll in a departmental force. Inspired by this news, René Lenormand, Adrien Thiboult, Louis Caille, and Antoine Nicolas Marie immediately stepped forward as the first volunteers for the Calvados battalion.46 The session closed with an order that each district council open registers for the enrollment of volunteers.

New developments followed in quick succession during those hectic days. Before going on, we would do well to briefly assess what had occurred thus far. In the span of two days, the department of Calvados, principally the chef-lieu of Caen, had shifted from a state of concern and alert to one of open insurrection. Emotions had run high following the report of the commissioners returned from Paris and had been heightened by the words of Gorsas and Larivière. Fateful steps had been taken in the decisions to form a departmental force and to arrest the deputies Romme and Prieur. A general assembly (composed largely of departmental administrators but including representatives from the district, the municipality, and the sections and clubs of Caen) had been formed to coordinate resistance efforts. But one must question, particularly in light of later events, the extent of popular support for these actions, even at this early, exhilarating stage of the revolt.

Virtually all of the men named to the provisional insurrectional committee had extensive experience in local administration. Administrators with clear ties to individuals in Paris had played the most active roles to this point. René Lenormand, president of the department from January through May, came from the same area as Doulcet de Pontécoulant and maintained

45. The departments to be visited were the Eure, Seine-Inférieure, Somme, Orne, Sarthe, Indre-et-Loire, Mayenne, Maine-et-Loire, Eure-et-Loir, Loir-et-Cher, Manche, Ille-et-Vilaine, Côtes-du-Nord, Morbihan, Finistère, and Loire-Inférieure. The commissioners were not named until the following day.

46. Lenormand was a departmental administrator. Adrien Thiboult was also a departmental administrator, representing Lisieux, who thus might have been expected to step forward. Caille, of course, was procureur-syndic, and Antoine Nicolas Marie was a Caen notable. Lenormand, Caille, and Marie were three of the nine commissioners who had just returned from Paris.
contact with the deputy; Lévêque, the newly elected departmental president, regularly corresponded with the deputy Lomont; Caille, a district administrator, had traveled to Paris in January, 1792, to seek information regarding the split between Feuillants and Jacobins and since that time had reportedly maintained regular communication with several of the Girondin leaders, especially Barbaroux; Chatry l'ainé, who perhaps played a key role with the volatile speech delivered by Vaultier to the Caen sections, was a notable and had previously served for two years as a municipal officer; and Marie, sent to Paris as a commissioner and one of the first to volunteer for the departmental force, sat in 1793 as a Caen notable.

The one exception to this pattern is the second Lenormand, a member of the delegation to Paris and later of the group sent to Bayeux to arrest the two deputies, who can only be identified as having been president of the Carabots. This group constituted a potential source of popular input to the general assembly, but it is difficult to estimate the size of the Carabot membership. Vaultier says that it grew after May 31, but he also suggests that the new members (he mentions General Wimpfen by name) already held positions of authority and may have joined in order to exercise a more direct influence over the club. As for the sections, another possible source of popular input, no record of their regular sessions during this period exists; therefore, we do not know the attendance at the meetings of June 8, nor do we know if they continued to meet throughout the revolt. It should be noted, however, that the church bells, the regular means of summoning citizens to these assemblies, were not rung on the evening of June 8 for fear that ringing them would alarm the countryside. In addition, these meetings were held late at night, an inconvenient time for many, as was the early morning hour of the important general assembly on June 9. Finally, both Esnault and Dufour, the diarists, noted a general lack of public enthusiasm among the people of Caen during this period for the protest being marshalled against Paris and the Montagnards.

On June 10, Lenormand and the Carabots returned to Caen with their prisoners, Romme and Prieur. The two deputies appeared before the general assembly, where Lévêque assured them of the Calvados citizens’ respect for their persons and office, while declaring the assembly’s determination to

47. Vaultier, Souvenirs, 97.
48. Lesage (Esnault), 108, and (Dufour), 120.
hold them as hostages for the arrested representatives in Paris. Delegates from Bayeux accompanied the Carabots and reported their city’s adherence to the state of insurrection. Six more departmental officials and one district administrator stepped forward to enroll in the departmental force, and the assembly ordered the Caen National Guard to gather that evening so that its members could volunteer for the force as well.

A more important meeting of the general assembly took place that afternoon, with General Wimpffen in attendance. The general swore his devotion to the insurrection and requested that military supplies intended for the coast be allowed to continue to their destination. The assembly willingly granted the request. Although Louis Caille questioned the dependability of Wimpffen and the advisability of his appointment as commander of the rebel forces, the matter was quickly passed over. Wimpffen’s royalist sympathies and later recalcitrance in leading the march on Paris supported, in retrospect, Caille’s reservation.

The assembly then ordered the reconvening in Bayeux of the administrative council of the 14th Military Division, composed of five commissioners from neighboring departments. The council was to commence making plans for raising an army to march to Paris. This order is noteworthy, for it was the first action by Calvados officials that could be interpreted as a direct reaction to a recent order from the capital.

Since early in 1793, the Calvados administration had expressed its concern to the minister of war, the minister of the interior, and the Convention regarding the need for stronger defenses along the Channel coast to repulse a possible attack from England. Some local officials, no doubt, recalled the frequent British attacks, and the consequent disruption of commerce, during the Seven Years War (1756–1763). The declaration of war against Britain on February 1, 1793, increased the current danger, and one week later the departmental council wrote to the minister of war to request that Wimpffen be assigned to command the troops of the 14th Division, also known as the Army of the Coasts of Cherbourg. The minister acknowledged the request

49. Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers de la Basse-Normandie, June 13, 1793, A.D. Calvados.
50. A.D. Calvados, L180. The departmental officials were Jean Charles Hippolyte Bougon-Longrais; Pierre Mesnil, a Caen merchant; Jean Jacques Petit, a merchant from Falaise; Jean Baptiste Leclerc, a juge de paix from Cambremer; Nicolas Lenoble l’ainé; and Germain Dubosq, president of the Criminal Tribunal, originally from Vire. The district official was René François Lahaye, a property owner and former mayor of the small town of Audrieu.
but took no immediate action. The administration apparently then sought the intervention of Fauchet, who wrote to Calvados on February 24 that the Executive Council had decided to transfer Wimpffen to the 14th Division. Delays followed, however, and the Calvados authorities remained dissatisfied with the defense of their coast. On April 7, the departmental council sent Bougon-Longrais to Paris to press more forcefully their demands for a stronger defense before the Executive Council and the Convention. Whether as a result of this mission or not, the manpower of the 14th Division increased in April, and in mid-April, the Convention issued an order for the creation of an administrative council attached to the 14th Division. This council, to be headquartered in Bayeux, was to be composed of one representative each from Calvados, the Manche, the Orne, the Eure, and the Seine-Inférieure. The Calvados administration named André Bresson as its representative, and he left Caen to assume his position on April 18. Finally, on May 15, the minister of the interior, Garat, confirmed the appointment of Wimpffen as commander of the 14th Division.

It must have come as a rude surprise to the Calvados authorities, then, when Romme and Prieur arrived on mission from the Convention in late May and, as one of their first actions, ordered the dissolution of the administrative council in Bayeux. Deputies on mission were to assume its former role, and the representatives of the five departments would now become a committee of correspondence with no deliberative powers. After struggling for half a year to secure an adequate defense, local officials now saw full control of the Cherbourg army returned to the central government, which had seemingly ignored for so long the threat to their coast. The Convention’s decision at this time was probably motivated by a distrust of General Wimpffen, whose royalist sympathies were well known. Wimpffen expressed his disapproval of this action to the representatives on mission; but on May 27, the administrative council held what it believed to be its final session. On June 10, however, with Romme and Prieur safely in custody, the Calvados general assembly restored the council to its former powers.

The following day, the general assembly adopted another measure directed against the capital. It ordered the suspension of all transport to Paris of “denrées de première nécessité,” principally foodstuffs. The municipality

51. A. D. Calvados, L10550 (documents pertaining to Wimpffen).
52. A. D. Calvados, L165.
53. A. D. Calvados, L10550.
54. A. D. Calvados, L10551 (documents pertaining to Wimpffen and federalism).
enacted this order immediately, and goods destined for Paris were stopped in Caen to be stored in the former house of the Carmelites. Two considerations inspired this action. The first was long-standing resentment of the capital’s voracious appetite for both food and tax revenues. One finds expressions of this resentment throughout provincial France, not only in Caen. The second was the current shortage of grain in the Caen market, a problem since early spring. In the minds of many people in Caen, the shortage could be attributed to the export of grain to Paris (though it was more likely due to the reluctance of local farmers to send grain to the market, despite an abundant harvest).

On June 21, the mayor of Paris, Jean Nicolas Pache, sent a letter to the Caen district council protesting the boycott on goods to the capital. Pache wrote eloquently of the threat of anarchy that this might pose, of the aid it would give to Cobourg and Brunswick, and of the sacrifices already made by Parisians for the liberty of the nation. He implored the people of Caen to send a prompt disavowal of this barbarous project. Three days later, the general assembly replied, noting its affront at Pache’s decision to send his appeal only to the district council—an obvious attempt to sow division among the local authorities. The assembly’s letter spelled out the usual grievances against factionalism in Paris and the violation of the National Convention and reiterated the determination of Calvados citizens to resist oppression and dictatorship. But it also bitterly denounced the parasitism of Paris:

Do you wish continually to mislead us with trivial phrases, when they are contradicted by the facts? As if it were not sufficiently notorious that, under the plausible pretext of supplying the city of Paris, you have wickedly exceeded the bounds of prudence with the criminal intention of reducing a generous and magnanimous people to famine....

Does the administration of the Department of Calvados not have reason to wonder at the reproach directed against it by the municipality of Paris, when, from all parts of France, objections ring out over the enormous sums that the Commune has swallowed up through the squandering of monsters who have embezzled from the public Treasury.

The Calvados assembly further accused the Paris municipality of paying the instigators of the recent disruptions and charged that the Parisian battalions

55. A. D. Calvados, L.189; A. C. Caen, D.2. See also A. D. Calvados, L.192.3. In mid-April, the Calvados comité de sûreté général had investigated an allegedly illicit shipment of foodstuffs to Paris. Members of the committee observed that while such a shipment could not possibly benefit the well-provisioned capital, it had appreciably harmed Caen.
sent to combat the Vendean rebels had in fact gone to aid the revolt and spread chaos. The assembly had no intention of moderating its position, and the boycott remained in effect until early July.¹⁶

Fortunately for Paris, the efforts of Calvados to blockade the capital did not receive universal support. The northwestern departments in Lower Normandy and Brittany joined in the boycott, but grain continued to travel up the Seine from Le Havre and Rouen. Still, by early July, the bakers of Paris were in serious straits; and on July 14, Pache wrote a confidential letter to Robert Lindet and Jean Michel DuRoy, representatives on mission who had been sent by the Convention to pacify the Norman departments. He begged them to make their first priority the reopening of trade routes, so that grain from that region could again reach the capital. Pache stressed the gravity of the situation by reminding the two representatives that famine in Paris might bring the downfall of the Republic. Indeed, the boycott on grain appears to have been a far more potent weapon than the small armed force that the Calvados rebels eventually sent toward Paris.¹⁷

During the second week of June, officials in Caen proceeded to consolidate their organization and to seek wider support for the insurrection. On June 11, the same day the grain boycott began, the general assembly made appointments to the five committees created on June 9. Twenty-one of the twenty-five appointees already held official positions at the departmental, district, or municipal level; thus, the appointments preserved the predominant role played by elected officials in leading and organizing the revolt. These committees, under the supervision of the general assembly, would guide the local revolt for the remainder of June.

To generate support for the resistance effort, the assembly prepared an address to the citizens of Calvados. It began by denouncing as a fabrication the recent proclamation of the National Convention that reported the freedom of that body and the tranquility of Paris. It recounted the terrifying scene that the Calvados commissioners had encountered in the capital and called all citizens to arms so that Calvados might join the other departments in defeating this assault on the nation’s sovereignty. Despite this bellicose appeal and the supposed gravity of the threat to the nation, the general assembly promised that not a drop of blood would be shed, since the majority of

⁵⁶. A. D. Calvados, L10134 (addresses and proclamations during the federalist revolt).
oppressed Parisians would welcome their liberators with open arms. The reputation of the brave Norman warriors was already intimidating the new tyrants in Paris.\textsuperscript{58}

The general assembly also sent letters and messengers to surrounding departments. The first of these went to Rouen, for the importance of securing the support of the Seine-Inférieure was clear. With grain supplies running short, Caen would be turning to Le Havre for emergency shipments. Rouen, located on the Seine, could easily block supplies traveling up the river to Paris and would be a vital component of any blockade effort. Moreover, long-standing ties, both commercial and juridical, joined the capitals of Upper and Lower Normandy. Thus, as early as June 9, the members of the general assembly sent a letter to Rouen explaining to the departmental council their alarm at the violation of the Convention, their determination to resist oppression, and their declaration of insurrection. They expressed hope that the Seine-Inférieure would support their actions and requested the shipment to Caen of any available grain. Finally, they informed the Seine-Inférieure that they had ordered the arrest of Romme and Prieur, referring to the deputies as “Proconsuls Nationaux.”\textsuperscript{59}

Despite their own misgivings regarding the recent turn of events in Paris, the administrators of the Seine-Inférieure were not prepared to follow the drastic steps marked out by their counterparts in Calvados. In a return letter dated June 18, written after the officials in Rouen had conferred with a messenger sent by the Calvados general assembly, the Seine-Inférieure administration maintained that officials in Caen had exceeded their legal powers in ordering the arrest of Romme and Prieur and in freezing public funds. As administrators, they could register their disapproval through letters of protest, but the constitution would not justify the arrest of national representatives or the rejection of the authority of the Convention. In sum, the Seine-Inférieure administrators viewed the Calvados actions as a more serious threat to order than the violations they sought to remedy.\textsuperscript{60} The attitude of the Seine-Inférieure administration illustrates the dilemma facing provincial moderates. Although they deplored events in Paris, their own commitment to constitutional legality prevented them from taking decisive action,

\textsuperscript{58} A. D. Calvados, L.189. A signed copy of the address, dated June 10, 1793, can also be found in dossier L.10134.

\textsuperscript{59} A. D. Calvados, L.10134.

\textsuperscript{60} The main portion of this letter is reprinted in Mancel’s notes to Vautier, Souvenirs, 192–93.
lest they be guilty of precisely the transgression of which they accused the Montagnards.

The general assembly enjoyed greater success in securing the support of other departments. The Eure and the Orne, of course, had already sent messengers to Caen declaring their intentions. On June 12, sixteen commissioners left Caen to visit other neighboring departments and inform them of Calvados' actions. Most of those chosen were minor figures, representatives from the Caen sections and clubs, but the assembly named several familiar officials to visit key departments. Louis Caille and Chaix-d'Estanges left for the Manche, which had expressed some apprehension over the arrest of Romme and Prieur, and for the Ille-et-Vilaine, where delegates from other Breton departments were known to be already gathering in Rennes. Bougon-Longrais departed for the Seine-Inférieure and the Somme, while Lenormand, the Carabot president, and Caille le jeune journeyed to the departments of Finistère and the Côtes-du-Nord. On that same day, Charles François Duhamel-Levaillly, a departmental administrator from Bayeux, informed the assembly that urgent business required his presence in Bordeaux, and he was delegated to carry news of the insurrection to the Indre-et-Loire, the Indre, the Haute-Vienne, the Dordogne, and the Gironde.

In Caen, the general assembly began preparations for the formation of a departmental force. On June 14, it ordered a contingent of four hundred infantrymen with two cannons, one caisson, and a half company of cannoniers sent to Evreux to be put at the disposition of that department. Soldiers were to be drawn from Caen, Lisieux, and Falaise. Two days later, with the Caen contingent still incomplete, the military committee ordered the Lisieux and Falaise troops to leave as a vanguard, to be followed on June 19 by a full company of two hundred from Caen. The departmental officials Lenormand and Mesnil accompanied the vanguard as civil commissioners. Officials instructed the chef de légion in Caen to fill the ranks of that company from the National Guard. Even this did not suffice to complete the company, however; and on June 19, the general assembly ordered the sounding of a call to arms after that day's parade, to attract more recruits. Those who signed up were to prepare to leave on Friday, June 21.

The Carabots appeared in the June 19 parade, fully armed and prepared

61. A. D. Calvados, L.189. The diligence with which Duhamel performed his mission is open to question. I found no record whatsoever of his stopping in the Haute-Vienne.
THE PROVINCES RESPOND

Ibid.

Ibid.

A. D. Calvados, L10276 (Lévêque correspondence).
indivisibility of the Republic, to wage war against tyrants and anarchists, to not lay down arms until the National Convention is free and France avenged for the attacks committed against the sovereignty of the people.”

During this same period, the third week in June, the officials who had gathered in Caen took steps to more actively involve the rest of the department in the revolt. On June 18, the general assembly convoked all cantonal primary assemblies for the following Monday, June 24. These assemblies were to swear the oath of loyalty cited above and to elect one delegate apiece to join the assembly in Caen. This order produced mixed results. The district council of Falaise refused to call primary assemblies until a second, more sternly worded, order was sent to the district officials. Scattered reports filtered in of individual cantons’ refusing to proceed as ordered. But many assemblies did meet, and on June 25 and 26, some thirty-seven cantonal delegates appeared before the assembly for ratification. The enthusiasm of these new delegates, however, appears to have been short-lived. No record of attendance exists for the general assembly, but it voted on July 3 that those members wishing to be absent must present their reasons to the comité de salut public. The assembly also ordered district councils to invite cantons to choose substitute delegates to confer with primary delegates, so that one of the two would always be present. Furthermore, some cantons had still not elected any delegates. On July 9, the assembly instructed district officials to forward the names of individuals who were obstructing the convocation of primary assemblies. Primary assemblies never convened in Caen, since section assemblies had already sent delegates to the general assembly.65

The general assembly also took steps to increase the size of the departmental force. As reports came in of the creation of volunteer forces in other departments—ranging from the Gironde and the Bouches-du-Rhône to Finistère, Morbihan, and the Ille-et-Vilaine in Brittany—it became clear that Calvados would have to bolster the 400-man vanguard that had left for Evreux on June 22. Thus, on June 27, officials called for more volunteers to march to Paris. The assembly proposed to raise a force of more than 1,000 men, with Caen furnishing 405 volunteers and the other major towns providing the remaining 600 in proportion to their population. Companies were to be formed immediately and made ready to leave for Evreux by July 4. Although people of the countryside would not be asked to join, because of

64. A. D. Calvados, L189 (minutes of June 23, 1793).
the upcoming harvest, they could do so if they wished. All volunteers would be paid forty *sous* per day. Once in Evreux, volunteers could terminate their service with one month’s notification. The force, whose only objective was to “cooperate with our brothers, the good citizens of Paris, in restoring the freedom of the National Convention,” could not be required or ordered to perform any other service. Although the general assembly ostensibly issued this order, only departmental officials signed it.  

Again, as with the formation of the vanguard, this appeal for popular support of the patriotic insurrection against the new tyrants in Paris did not receive an enthusiastic response. On July 2, because of resistance to recruitment, the assembly ordered all able-bodied men under the age of fifty who did not have young children to join the force, adding that those who refused would be fined and imprisoned in accordance with the law of April 19, 1793. This order was posted in Caen on July 4, over the objection of the mayor, Le Goupil Duclos. But according to Victor Dufour, most people still refused to enroll.

To overcome this apathy, officials scheduled a public parade and review in Caen for Sunday, July 7. Music, speeches, and a parade of the National Guard regaled a sizable crowd. After the festivities, General Wimpffen, accompanied by members of the insurrectionary assembly, passed before the ranks and called forward those who had volunteered to march to Paris. Seventeen brave Normans stepped forward—a very disappointing response.

One day later, whether because of objections to the illegality of requiring citizens to enroll in the force or because of apprehensions that reluctant “volunteers” would damage troop morale, General Wimpffen, with the approval of the assembly, rescinded the order constraining all able-bodied citizens to join the force. All those whose health or business might impede their wholehearted participation in the campaign could retire, as could those who simply regretted having joined. Battalion leaders were instructed to dismiss those men whom they considered unfit.

Even if the majority of Calvados citizens refused to believe that the recent


67. Lesage (Dufour), 120; see A. C. Caen, L142 (L’Armée Libéatrice, mai—juillet 1793) for a copy of the decree.

68. Vautier, *Souvenirs*, 23-24. Charlotte Corday, a native of Caen, is reported to have been in attendance on this occasion, and it has been suggested that it was this pathetic response to the federalists’ call to arms that convinced her to go to Paris and do her own part in combating the anarchists.

69. A. D. Calvados, L160ter (minutes of July 8, 1793).
events in Paris posed a threat to their life and liberty, the members of the
general assembly remained convinced of the rectitude of their actions. Early
in June, letters demanding a protest of the proscriptions had arrived from
many departments, giving the impression of nationwide support for a march
to the capital. Most of these departments, of course, took no further action,
but this would not be apparent to authorities in Caen until much later.

A more important factor in encouraging the insurrectionary attitude of the
general assembly was the almost continuous stream of proscribed deputies
into Caen in the weeks after June 8. Every two or three days, a new Girondin
face appeared in town. By mid-July, at least eighteen deputies had reached
Caen, and most remained there until the end of the month. The first to ar-
rive were Henry-Larivière and Gorsas, who attended the evening session on
June 9. Three days later, François Buzot, Jean Baptiste Salles, and Denis
Toussaint Lesage arrived, followed on June 15 by Barbaroux, Bergoeing,
J. P. Duval, and J. C. G. Lahaye. Gabriel de Cussy, who may have encour-
aged his colleagues to choose Caen as a refuge, reached Caen on June 18
and announced the imminent arrival of several more. The rest were some-
what tardy, but Guadet and Louvet appeared on June 26, Pétion on June 28,
Lanjuinais on June 30, and Kervélegan on July 2. E. Mollevaut, former
president of the Commission of Twelve, arrived on July 4, and Gaspard
Severin Duchâtel straggled in six days later.70

Vaultier discounts the influence of these deputies on the atmosphere in
Caen, insisting that they kept to themselves and did not attempt to incite the
population. Certainly, the miserable turnout on July 7 for the volunteer
force indicates that their presence was not profoundly felt. But most other
evidence suggests that the deputies were fairly active during their stay, even
if their efforts did not produce an outpouring of support. J.-B. Renée noted
in his recollections of the Revolution that “the arrival of these represen-
tatives, the eloquence of most of them, and principally that of Buzot, the
famous lawyer from Evreux, and of Barbaroux, the young and brilliant

70. A. D. Calvados, Lett. Vautier lists four other deputies (Boutidoux, Giroust, Valady,
and Meillan) but excludes Duval, Lahaye, and Lanjuinais. Boutidoux did reach Caen but was a
former constituant, not a conventionnel. Mancel, in his notes to Vautier’s memoirs, disputes
the presence of Giroust, Valady, and Meillan. Vautier, however, claims to have become person-
ally acquainted with Valady, and it would seem reasonable to accept his word in at least this
case. The official proces-verbal records the arrival of Guadet on June 26 “with several of his
colleagues,” and it is possible that the four deputies mentioned by Vautier arrived in this
group. Louvet is mentioned by name later in the June 26 minutes. See Vautier, Souvenirs, 18,
63, 208–209.
Marseille orator, redoubled the ardor of the fédérés.”

Nearly all of the fugitive deputies did address the general assembly, and several appeared in that forum on more than one occasion.

The reasons that the deputies chose Caen as their refuge are probably several. Vaultier suggests that de Cussy urged this option upon his colleagues, and that is certainly possible. It is also clear that after the arrival of the Caen commissioners in Paris on June 2, the Girondin deputies believed that considerable support for their cause existed in Caen. Over the past eight months, the Calvados authorities had been extremely vocal in their calls for an end to factionalism and for respect for the Convention. The reaffirmation of these sentiments by the June delegation made Caen a more promising haven than, say, Rouen. Caen was reasonably close to Paris—an easy two-day journey—and near the sea, should more drastic flight become necessary (though it is clear that very few of the deputies seriously considered this option). The deputies sought, more than their own personal safety, a base from which they could continue their fight against the Montagnards and the centralist tendencies fostered in Paris. Twice in the past six months—first in March and again in June—the Parisian presses of Gorsas and other moderate journalists had been attacked and ransacked. The proscribed deputies and their supporters needed a hospitable location from which they could publicize their opinions and appeal for help.

This they found in Caen. The town warmly welcomed the deputies, and the authorities put at their disposal the Hôtel de l’Intendance for the duration of their stay. On June 28, the general assembly even voted that each conventionnel in Caen be paid from the departmental treasury his usual monthly indemnity. Messages from Pétion and Barbaroux to their constituencies were printed and distributed at departmental expense. Buzot arrived in Caen with his own compte-rendu of the events of May 27–31, and other deputies brought official papers from the Commission of Twelve. The deputies entrusted these papers to the general assembly for verification and publication. When Gorsas and Guadet delivered particularly stirring speeches to the assembly on June 26, these were ordered printed and circulated. Buzot’s appeal for an armed force to be sent to Évreux, delivered to the general assembly on June 21, offers another example of the active efforts of the deputies to encourage resistance to the Montagnard Convention. The mayor, Le

72. Vaultier, Souvenirs, 17.
Goupil Duclos, whose support of the revolt was at most lukewarm, insisted in his later interrogation that he had never aided or consulted the proscribed deputies, that he in fact had hated to see them in Caen and had been convinced that they were misleading good citizens with their speeches and writings.\(^73\)

Further support and encouragement for the Calvados insurrection came from representatives of the Breton departments who were gathering in Rennes. One of the early decisions of the general assembly in Caen had been to consult with other departments regarding the choice of a central town from which their efforts of resistance to oppression could be directed. The assembly named commissioners to visit these departments, and Antoine DeVic and Maurice Renouf la Coudraye, a Caen juge de paix, left on June 12 for Morbihan and the Loire-Inferieure. They passed through Rennes on their route toward Nantes, and DeVic wrote back to Caen on June 19 of the decision made by authorities there to form the Central Committee of Resistance to Oppression.\(^74\) A special courier from Rennes delivered DeVic’s letter to Caen, bearing an additional announcement that this committee would convene in Caen. Two commissioners from each of the five departments—Finistère, Morbihan, Côtes-du-Nord, Loire-Inferieure, and Ille-et-Vilaine—would shortly depart for Calvados. The general assembly ordered copies of both of these letters sent to the Orne, the Eure, the Manche, and the Seine-Inferieure, hoping that this news might encourage the latter two to lend their support to the insurrection.\(^75\)

The Central Committee began to assemble in Caen during the last week of June. The first to arrive, on June 23, were two delegates from the Mayenne, a department that had not even sent representatives to Rennes. Two commissioners from the Maine-et-Loire arrived on June 26, joined the next day by commissioners from the Côtes-du-Nord. Delegates from the other four departments that had been represented in Rennes arrived in short order. No official record of the Central Committee’s meetings exists, but the minutes of the Calvados general assembly indicate that the first session took place on June 28.\(^76\) In addition to the departments already mentioned, the Orne and

\(^73\) A. D. Calvados, L.189 and L.10125 (interrogation of Le Goupil Duclos).
\(^74\) A. D. Calvados, L.10134 (addresses and proclamations during the federalist revolt).
\(^75\) A. D. Calvados, L.189. The Central Committee, after it convened in Caen, continued to woo the Seine-Inferieure, but authorities in Rouen persisted in their conviction that it was beyond their authority to declare the department in revolt. The Manche wavered throughout June and July but never became actively involved in the revolt.
\(^76\) A. C. Caen, L.43 (Mission Lindet, Oudot, DuRoy, et Bonnet).
the Eure sent delegates. The Calvados general assembly named Louis Caille and Samuel Chatry l’ainé as its representatives to the committee, thereby bringing to ten the number of departments joining that assembly. Of these, however, only seven truly supported the insurrection. Administrators in the Orne soon withdrew their commitment to the movement, while the Loire-Inférieure and the Maine-et-Loire were absorbed in the battle against the Vendéan rebels.

The convocation of the Central Committee altered somewhat the situation in Caen. That body now took responsibility for propaganda efforts, drafting letters to other departments, proclamations to the nation, and messages to the citizens of Paris. It also undertook to coordinate the forces gathering to march to the capital. Very soon after the committee had first met, word arrived from officials who had remained in Rennes that the Ille-et-Vilaine volunteers would soon arrive in Caen, that the Morbihan troops would leave the next day, and that a battalion from Finistère would depart on July 3. A contingent from the Mayenne was also reportedly in transit. This news certainly inspired greater optimism than did the size of the Calvados force at that time.

Without complete documentation from the Central Committee meetings, it is impossible to say much regarding the committee’s internal organization; but the majority of letters and statements that it issued bore the signatures of L. J. Roujoux (a departmental administrator from the Finistère), as president, and Louis Caille, acting as secretary. The most important of the declarations issued by the committee was a twenty-seven-point program outlining the grievances of the federalist rebels and their proposals for the reorganization of political life in Paris. This program was debated in Rennes from June 19 to 23, but it was not officially printed until after the committee had convened in Caen, and it seems certain that it received the approval of departmental representatives there who had not been present in Rennes. Its importance lies in the fact that it represents the views of a region, not just one department, and that it reveals something of the fears and resentments that inspired the federalist revolt.

The declaration was divided into four sections. The first, which addressed the role of Paris in national politics, included the following notable pro-

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78. A. D. Calvados, 1.10134 (letter dated June 30, 1793).
proposals: that a constitutional decree establish a departmental guard for the national assembly; that the proscribed deputies be returned to their functions; that the comités révolutionnaires in Paris be abolished; that the sections of Paris no longer be permitted to meet en permanence; that the Revolutionary Tribunal be suppressed; that the Commission of Twelve be reinstated; that the assassins of September 2 be prosecuted; and that the Jacobin and Cordelieri clubs of Paris be abolished. These proposals would have done away with organizations and measures that became the order of the day during the Year II.

The second section concerned the powers and responsibilities of the National Convention. It suggested that the Convention itself be limited to the role of a legislative assembly; that the Committee of Public Safety be deprived of its dictatorial powers; that the deputies sent on mission to the armies and the departments be recalled to their posts in Paris; and that the Executive Council be given sufficient authority to run the government.

Turning to issues of finance and the treasury, section three demanded that a commission formed of capable men be charged with examining the accounts of former ministers and the Commune of Paris, researching the source of the huge fortunes that had blossomed since August 10, 1792, and restoring order to national finances; that no more funds be advanced to the municipality of Paris from public funds and that Paris be required to pay its back debts; and that there be no more assignats created and that a means be found to diminish the number in circulation.

A final section addressed the need for a constitution and for a renewed commitment to national unity. It called for a constitution to be issued within two months after the Convention had regained its liberty; for the laws that had not been freely enacted to be submitted for debate once again; and for primary assemblies to be convened to elect new legislators if the divisions and animosities within the Convention could not be overcome. A post-scripted article demanded the prompt reorganization of the Paris National Guard, with care taken to appoint officers who had not been leaders on May 31.79 (Appendix I gives a complete list of the Central Committee’s demands.)

This petition is noteworthy for several reasons. Much of what it expresses—the suspicion of the municipality of Paris, the demand that the in-

The integrity of the Convention be respected, and the wish that a constitution be quickly prepared—is reminiscent of previous statements from Calvados. The demands for suppression of the revolutionary committees, the section assemblies, and the two most radical Paris clubs show a strong preference for "representative" democracy, a political vision that had already triumphed in Caen a year and a half earlier. But there are new elements here as well, such as the call for abolition of the Jacobin club, the demand that the powers of the Committee of Public Safety be limited, and the insistence that representatives on mission be recalled. Most interesting of all is section three, which proposes an investigation of recently created private fortunes, an end to the use of national funds for Parisian expenses, and a reduction in the circulation of assignats. These are economic issues, not explicitly political issues, and they give an indication of the social background of the federalist rebels. They did not belong to the popular classes, the laboring poor, the sans-culottes—no demand is made for more stringent enforcement of the maximum. These were wealthy landowners and merchants, exasperated with the inflation and the worthless assignats. They were suspicious of fortunes that had been made during the Revolution, and they were tired of paying taxes for the support of Paris radicals.

This last grievance, in particular, is consistent with previous Calvados protests and with the general resentment of the undue influence of the capital. In another declaration of its objectives, the Central Committee made clear that it intended to punish the usurpers in Paris. It accused them of nepotism and corruption; of bungling the war effort; of supporting Pache, who was monopolizing grain supplies at the expense of the departments; of insulting public justice in the trial of Marat; and of supporting the power of Paris. 80

Yet for the citizens of Paris, the officials gathered in Caen expressed nothing but compassion. In one of its final proclamations, addressed to all Frenchmen, the Central Committee stressed the peaceful intentions of the troops headed toward the capital but issued a subtle warning:

The departmental force that is progressing toward Paris does not go in search of Enemies in order to fight them; it goes to fraternize with the Parisians, it goes to make an impression on the Factious elements by its firm and tranquil countenance; it goes to strengthen the tottering statue of Liberty. Citizens, who will see pass within your walls, into your Hamlets, these friendly Armies, fraternize with them: do not

allow bloodthirsty Monsters to settle amongst you, with the aim of stopping those Armies in their march: do not allow mobs to form at the dismal sound of the tocsin; mingled in amongst our Enemies, we will not be able to distinguish you.  

The arrival of the Central Committee in Caen brought a reorganization of the Calvados general assembly. Up to this point, the assembly had been a rather ad hoc organization dominated by departmental and district officials, but now it became a more formal body, incorporating the cantonal delegates who arrived at the end of June. On July 1, to permit departmental administrators to return to their normal duties, the assembly elected new officers and appointed new committees. Chaix-d'Estanges, the former vicar of Fauchet and now curé of the parish Saint-Etienne, was elected president. As vice-president the assembly chose Charles Debaudre, a priest from Bayeux who may also have been a supporter of Fauchet. Dom Mauger, one of the nine commissioners to Paris, became procureur-syndic until that position was abolished as superfluous. Nicolas Marie Quetil de la Poterie, a clerk for the department and president of the section Union in Caen, was elected secretary; Mariette, another priest from Bayeux, was chosen as his assistant. It is curious that at least three of these five officers, and possibly Dom Mauger, were clergymen who had been in some fashion affiliated with the deputy Claude Fauchet.

The newly constituted general assembly issued the order threatening jail terms for those who refused to join the departmental force. On July 1, it decreed that departmental administrators who failed to appear at their posts within three days would be declared traitors to the cause, denied their salaries, and replaced. The assembly further attempted to consolidate its power and generate popular support for its cause by calling for the confiscation of

81. A.D. Calvados, L10135 (documents pertaining to federalism). This declaration was issued on July 5, as the departmental forces were preparing to leave Caen for Évreux.

82. Debaudre arrived as a delegate to the General Assembly on June 25. He is identified as a priest by Hufton, Bayeux in the Late Eighteenth Century, 197.

83. This is interesting in light of Olwen Hufton's claim that Fauchet, during his brief time in Calvados, attempted to carve out his own local power base. This is clearly supported in the religious sphere by Fauchet's ordainment of several hundred allegedly ill-prepared priests in Calvados. But while the bishop was certainly active in political affairs, there is little evidence of a conscious effort to plase his supporters in political office. Hufton describes Chaix as Fauchet's mouthpiece in the Caen Jacobin club, which is entirely possible, and Fauchet was apparently on good terms with Louis Caille and Bougon-Longrais. This hardly constitutes a power base, however, and I would not describe Fauchet as the dominant figure in Calvados politics. Caille and Bougon, themselves, were at least as ambitious as the bishop. See Hufton, Bayeux in the Late Eighteenth Century, 180–95.

84. A.D. Calvados, L160ter.
newspapers opposed to the principles of the insurrection and by issuing its own journal, the *Bulletin des Autorités Constituées*. Nine issues of the *Bulletin* appeared between June 25 and July 17, with 1,500 copies of each issue printed in Caen and distributed throughout the department. The journal summarized the proceedings of the general assembly, recorded news from Paris, and printed addresses from other towns and departments. Its first issue reported that sixty-nine departments supported the protest movement. The journal gave the most optimistic account possible of resistance to Paris in an attempt to encourage support within the department and counter the Montagnard propaganda emanating from the capital.  

After July 1, departmental officials played a much smaller role in the general assembly, perhaps worried by the recent decrees of dubious legality but perhaps also chastened by the Seine-Inférieure’s suggestion that they had exceeded their authority by declaring the department in a state of insurrection. Each new committee included one departmental official, but the administrators could now argue with some justification (and they did precisely this after the revolt had collapsed) that the general assembly reflected the wishes of the people through the delegates they had chosen in primary assemblies. It is important to remember, however, that primary assemblies never convened in Caen, at least not until after the revolt. 

The departmental directory now began to meet more frequently in order to deal with affairs that had gone largely unattended since the first of June. But the administration was understaffed, since many clerks had apparently been persuaded by the arguments of elected officials and had left for Evreux with the departmental force. The leaders of the council were also absent. Lenormand, Lévêque, Mesnil, each of them a director, and Bougon-Longrais, the *procureur-général-syndic*, had left for Evreux with the departmental forces, along with the administrator Thiboul.

Mindful of the need for leadership in Caen, the general assembly ordered Lévêque and Bougon to return to their administrative duties on June 27, “considering that much business remains stagnant at a time when it is essential not to add to the number of malcontents.” The general assembly sent another appeal to Lévêque on July 1, insisting that “the sections, the dragoons of Calvados, the carabots, the popular societies, all of your constitu-

85. A. C. Caen, 137 (*Bulletin des autorités constituées*, vols. 2–9, juin–juillet 1793). The missing copy can be found in B. M. Caen, Rés. Fin. B402. All nine issues were collected, edited, and published by Charles Renard in 1875. The issues are numbered but not generally dated, and the precise date of publication is therefore difficult to ascertain.
ents are clamoring for your presence.” The next day, Benard, secretary of
the department, sent Lévêque a list of the new general assembly officers and
pleaded, “Come to our aid, the sections are mutinying. We are in need of
prudence and foresight. Even to the degree that one possesses the one and
the other, it remains to be feared that we will not be able to preserve the
peace.”

Lévêque and Bougon, however, considered their efforts more urgently
needed in Evreux, where they and their colleagues were struggling to main-
tain the wavering support of the Eure administration. They refused to return
to Caen, and some people in Caen endorsed that decision. Chatry l’aîné
wrote to Lévêque on July 6 that although the commissionners’ talents
would be of greater use in Caen, to return at that difficult time would serve
as a pretext for “les malveillants” to prevent other citizens from marching to
Paris. These types had done all they could in recent days to do precisely that,
but happily without much success, wrote Chatry.

That the “malcontents” and “troublemakers” ultimately prevailed is
amply evidenced by the seventeen volunteers who stepped forward for the
public inspection on July 7. This miserable demonstration, however, was
not reported to the commissionners in Evreux. On the contrary, Charles
Cailly, a member of the general assembly correspondence committee, wrote
to the civil commissionners in Evreux on July 8 that the previous day’s re-
cruitment effort had been a complete success: “Yesterday’s maneuvers of the
Caen national guard have produced the most favorable effect. There is a
constant procession of citizens coming forward to join. There is reason
to hope that the battalion will be more than full.” Cailly went on to report,
erroneously, that Rouen now supported the insurrection, a development
that would have alleviated the pressing grain situation. Authorities had al-
ready been forced to release military supplies in order to feed the population
of Caen. Cailly also noted that Louis Caille had departed for Evreux, with
Dom Mauger replacing him on the Central Committee of Resistance to
Oppression.

The arrival in Evreux of contingents from other departments soon rein-
forced for the Calvados commissionners the optimism engendered by Cailly’s
misleading letter. On July 3, a battalion from the Ille-et-Vilaine reached
Caen and proceeded to Evreux. The Morbihan contingent arrived in Caen

86. A. D. Calvados, L10276.
87. Ibid.
on July 8, followed the next day by a company of 200 from the Mayenne. Reinforcing these troops were two regiments of cavalry from the army of the 14th Division—the dragoons of the Manche and the chasseurs of La Brette—fortuitously under the command of Wimpffen. All of these had congregated in or near Evreux by July 10. Vaultier estimated their total number at 1,900—400 cavalry, 900 Breton troops, and 600 volunteers from the Eure and Calvados.88

The arrival of these troops in Evreux presented problems along with promise. They had to be housed and fed, and the populace of the town showed signs of growing restive and disenchanted with the movement. This attitude worried the Eure administrators, whose resolve may have been maintained only by the enthusiasm of the Calvados commissioners. Jean Capdeville, one of Garat’s agents in the departments, wrote in a report that Bougon-Longrais presided over the administrative assembly in Evreux. Capdeville, sent with copies of the new constitution, addressed the assembly and tried to explain that the Convention was working diligently and had drafted a constitution that would unite the country. But Bougon and Lenormand dominated the proceedings and persuaded the officials to arrest Capdeville and send him to Caen. Two Eure administrators spoke to the agent later, expressing their regret at the actions of the assembly, which they claimed to be under the sway of the Calvados commissioners.89

Lack of military leadership was another grievous problem for the insurrectionary force. On July 10, urgent letters went from both Lévêque and the military committee in Evreux to General Wimpffen, who remained in Caen. Lévêque wrote that there existed neither harmony nor a plan of defense in Evreux: “Send to us, therefore, in the name of God, the one and the other; or provisionally authorize someone, with sufficient military talents, who could direct the military operations. Moreover, your presence is indispensable in order to organize the public forces that are here.” The committee’s letter emphatically seconded Lévêque’s plea: “We have men, but without a leader. Much courage, but nothing to direct it. If you delay any longer to

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88. A. D. Calvados, I, 189; Vaultier, Souvenirs, 19, 61. Many estimates made at the time were wildly inaccurate, ranging from a low of five hundred to a high of five thousand. Vaultier’s figure is supported by both the deputy Louvet and the representative on mission Lindet. Volunteers from the Finistere, numbering several hundred, did not reach Caen until July 13 and never went on to Evreux.

send someone who can conduct in a prudent and active manner the military operations, the goal will be missed.”

Wimpffen responded immediately by sending General Joseph Puisaye to command the troops in Evreux. Puisaye arrived on July 10 and within two days had prepared to mobilize his forces. Given the crumbling of what little popular support had once existed in Caen, plus the disorganization and confusion rampant in Evreux, it is hardly surprising that the march of the federalist forces toward Paris would culminate quickly in a total fiasco.

On arriving in Evreux, Puisaye consulted with the Calvados commissioners, and they agreed on the need to secure Vernon, strategically located on the route to Paris. Reports had come in that the Convention was sending Parisian battalions to repel the departmental forces, and Vernon would be a vital link in the defense against such a charge. Word had also been received that Bonnet de Meautry, the lone Calvados deputy who sat with the Mountain, had been sent on mission to undermine the revolt. On July 7, Lenormand forwarded news to Caen of six other “maratistes,” allegedly posing as haberdashers and peddlers, on their way to Normandy under orders of the Executive Council. He provided more detailed descriptions for two of these imposters. The first, Dufour, aged between thirty and thirty-five, stood five feet three inches tall, had black hair and a long nose, and was pockmarked and toothless. The other, named Le Cinque, was big and around thirty years of age. Lenormand urged renewed vigilance so that these troublemakers might be apprehended.

Puisaye, assisted by Lieutenant Colonel LeRoy of the Calvados 6th Battalion, decided to gather his forces in Pacy-sur-Eure on July 12, electing to lay over one night before moving on to Vernon the following day. Colonel Alexandre Puisaye (no relation to the general) headed one of the contingents, along with Lévêque. LeRoy, of course, commanded his battalion, and Bougon and Caille led the largest segment of the departmental forces.

90. A.D. Calvados, L10136 (documents pertaining to federalism). There is some irony in the phrasing of the committee’s plea. In April, after Wimpffen’s assignment to Calvados had been unofficially confirmed but before steps had been taken for the actual creation of the Cherbourg army, the department complained to the Convention that it now had a general, but no men for him to lead.

91. A.D. Calvados, L10125 (documents pertaining to federalism). This carton contains two letters, among other documents, the first of which, dated July 5, was anonymous and unaddressed. The second letter, sent by Lenormand to Caen, paraphrased the information contained in the first, except that Lenormand embellished the descriptions somewhat. Dufour, in addition to being pockmarked and toothless, became skinny, ugly, and dirty. And Lenormand had somehow learned that Le Cinque was not only big but also married and jealous!
troops began their march at 11:00 A.M. on July 13 and within a short distance encountered the Parisian lines. According to Puisaye's report, he sent out a herald and trumpet to deliver a message, and the Parisians opened fire. Vaultier, who had volunteered for the Caen contingent, recorded a different version of the first encounter. In his account, the troops lay bivouacked in a field near the château of Brécourt when a round of fire whistled through the trees over their heads. Only the apples suffered.

Which version one chooses to accept is of little consequence. Puisaye's bestows more honor on himself and his troops; Vaultier's adds a touch of comedy. They agree, however, on the events that followed. A few more cannon shots rang out before both sides turned on their heels and beat a hasty retreat, the Calvados volunteers once again in the vanguard! Puisaye claimed that he tried to rally his troops to retake Pacy-sur-Eure but that only the 6th Battalion responded, hardly enough for a counterattack. The troops retreated to Evreux, but Puisaye despaired of holding even that position. Wishing to avoid bloodshed and pillage, he ordered a retreat to Lisieux. Only on reaching Lisieux, on July 17, did Puisaye learn that the Mayenne battalion and the Ille-et-Vilaine troops had been willing to stand and fight. The Breton soldiers, in fact, expressed considerable disgust at the lack of discipline among the Norman volunteers. Yet one can understand the reaction of the volunteers, who had repeatedly been told that they were on their way to the capital to "fraternize" with the Parisians. Apparently only the generals and the Calvados civil commissioners realized that some kind of battle was likely to occur. And when the battle came, one participant recalled, Bougon-Longrais in particular, along with Puisaye, favored a full retreat.  

The July 17 issue of the Bulletin des Autorités Constituées described the Vernon fiasco as "one of those accidents so common at the beginning of a campaign." Although leaders of the force had thought it prudent to retreat to Lisieux, they would undoubtedly soon be back in Evreux. Such was not to be the case. General Wimpffen met the retreating force in Lisieux and immediately conferred with the Calvados civil commissioners. On July 18, he sent a letter to the general assembly in Caen conveying the commissioners' sentiments that a policy of conciliation and negotiation should now

93. A. C. Caen, 137 (Bulletin des autorités constituées, no. 9).
be pursued. The Breton battalions’ clearly stated intention to return to their departments may have assisted the commissioners in reaching that conclusion. Wimpffen, for his part, felt that the Central Committee of Resistance to Oppression should make the final decision, but he reaffirmed his commitment to defend the region with all the means at his disposal.  

Wimpffen’s ambivalence throughout the revolt was undeniably an important reason for its ultimate failure. The general had been enthusiastic at the start—when called to Paris by the minister of war on June 23, he had replied that he would come to the capital only at the head of sixty thousand Normans. But his actions as commander of the federalist forces did not match his rhetoric. Vaultier blamed Wimpffen’s procrastination for the poor turnout of volunteers at the July 7 ceremony, and it is hard to understand why the general did not go himself to Evreux to take charge of the troops. Perhaps he recognized the hopelessness of their cause. After the force had retreated to Lisieux, Wimpffen still made little effort to salvage the situation. Instead, he proposed to the fugitive deputies that they negotiate with England and perhaps seek refuge there. Louvet and several other deputies had felt all along that Wimpffen’s sympathies lay with the royalists, probably an accurate appraisal.

In Caen, a reassessment of the situation now took place. Two undated procès-verbaux suggest that support for the revolt within the Jacobin club had dissipated by this date. As early as mid-June, the Jacobin club, at that time presided over by the district administrator Henri Michel Saillenfest, had warned the departmental administration of the danger that the Parisians might misconstrue the intentions of the “fédérés” marching to Paris. The club suggested that a circular be prepared to make clear that the Norman volunteers wished only to fraternize with their Parisian brothers, a gesture that the general assembly did indeed make shortly thereafter.

By July, open dissension had erupted within the club regarding the role of the departmental force. Four sheets of handwritten minutes are all we have to reveal the attitudes of club members during this period, but they are illuminating. These notes record the proceedings of two Jacobin club meetings during the first week of July. At the first meeting, a member raised the
complaint that in recent days, decisions had been taken that ran counter to
the views of a majority of the members. The minutes do not identify those
decisions; but in response to the complaint, the club voted to nullify the ac-
tions of the previous day and henceforth to hold at least three public meet-
ings per week. The minutes give the impression that those public meetings
would reevaluate club positions taken in recent weeks.

The next day, a noisy club meeting resumed this discussion, with Louis
Caille and Chaix-d'Estanges now in attendance. Chaix accused Charles
Pierre Marie Aubin, the current club secretary, of having urged people to
boycott the march on Paris. Aubin defended himself, arguing that an armed
march on Paris would be the equivalent of fratricide. But Chaix and Caille
carried the day. The meeting deteriorated into recriminations against Marat
and the Mountain, but not before an oath of loyalty to the revolt had been
sworn, with those refusing the oath to be expelled from the club."

The Jacobin club made no public declaration when the revolt began to
disintegrate later in July (at least, no record of one exists), but it is clear that
two factions had developed within the club: one group opposed to the
march on Paris, led by Aubin, François Outin, Jacques Caroger, and Louis
Guillaume Harfort, all of whom would be named local officials after the re-
volt collapsed, and another group, dominant in June and early July, led by
Louis Caille and Chaix-d'Estanges.

On July 19, volunteers arrived in Caen from the town of Vire, joining the
Finistère battalion that had arrived earlier in the week. But this was not
even enough to counter the serious misgivings that now began to plague even
the two insurrectionary assemblies. On July 20, the Central Committee pro-
posed that primary assemblies be called to consider the new constitution.
Perhaps the committee members hoped that the people would reject it, but
only weeks before, the committee had forbidden even the publication of this
document. The Calvados general assembly hesitated to call primary assem-
blies and decided instead to consult the Caen sections as to whether the sec-
tions should discuss the constitution or reject it out of hand. Delegates from
the general assembly addressed the sections on the following day, in each
case taking great pains to emphasize that the assembly had always acted on
the express wishes of the people. One cannot avoid the impression that the
administrators were belatedly trying to remove responsibility from their

97. A. C. Caen, 1275 (Société Populaire).
own shoulders. Indeed, the general assembly requested copies of the sections' procès-verbaux in order to show that it had only acted on behalf of its constituency.

The sections of Caen no longer unanimously supported the insurrection, as they had on June 8. Three of the five sections quickly voted an end to their state of insurrection and demanded distribution of the constitution. The section Civisme went so far as to recall its delegates to the general assembly. The two sections that decided to maintain their resistance were the section Union, dominated by the eloquent Chaix-d'Estanges, now president of the general assembly; and the section Liberté, the wealthiest section in Caen, which housed within its limits the majority of Caen's merchants and haute-bourgeoisie. Benard's letter to Lévêque had suggested that support for the insurrection was seriously breaking down as early as the first week of July, but these votes marked the first overt opposition to the march on Paris among the sections of Caen.98

On the days on which the sections deliberated, July 20 and 21, the procureur and the mayor of Caen, DeVic and Le Goupil Duclos, urged the municipal council to consider the new constitution. Both delivered impassioned speeches defending the pure intentions of those who had at first supported revolt but arguing that the time had come for unity and that the new constitution would provide a rallying point for all Frenchmen.99

Despite these voices of moderation and conciliation, no consensus could be reached in the general assembly. It tabled Le Goupil's proposal that a mediator be sent to Paris, as well as a motion for the release of Romme and Prieur, who had been held in isolation in the Château since June 13. The general assembly's resolve to maintain its insurrectionary stance may have been weakened, however, by the increasingly precarious grain supply in the Caen market. On July 23, armed soldiers removed from the meeting hall an unruly crowd demanding grain, and the assembly prudently closed the market for that day. The people of Caen, so long passive in the face of exhortations to revolt, were now growing restive.

By this time, volunteers from the departmental force were returning to town, bringing stories of a Parisian army intent on pillaging Caen and guillotining 1,400 people (the precise figure no doubt lent some veracity to this tale). On July 24, Wimpffen appeared before the assembly to discuss the

98. A. C. Caen, L45 (Rétractations de l'insurrection, juillet 1793).
99. A. C. Caen, D2.
situation. After hearing the general, several members proposed that the city be declared in a state of siege, with Wimpffen in charge of preparing a reasonable defense. The motion passed, and tents for the troops began to go up on the plain of Ivry, straddling the road to Paris.

Happily, this new hysteria proved short-lived. On that same day, the Central Committee issued orders to the Breton battalions for an immediate departure to Rennes, where the committee would reconvene. In addition, local authorities in Caen one by one retracted their support of the insurrection. The minister of the interior, Garat, had just sent a decree promising clemency to those administrators who retracted their declarations of insurrection within three days. The first to do so were the Caen district officials, claiming that they did not seek to profit by the amnesty but hoped to avert the disastrous consequences of a siege. The municipal councillors soon followed suit, putting their signatures to a statement almost identical to the mayor’s speech of July 21.

The next day, July 25, the general assembly summoned both the municipal and district councils. Finding itself isolated and exposed by virtue of those councils’ retractions, the assembly denounced them for their cowardly and traitorous acts. Council members defended themselves in various ways. Le Goupil Duclos ignominiously suggested that the municipality had retracted because of “the insidious pressure and influence of the district,” which had not even consulted Louis Caille! Two district administrators offered only feeble excuses, but the assembly could do little to punish them. Both Caille and Chaix-d’Estanges gave accounts of their conduct and received the approbation of those present, after which the assembly moved that the sections of Caen be convoked to freely decide on a course of action.

There is no record of the sections’ deliberations, but on July 26, both the general assembly and the united administrative and judicial corps of Calvados issued formal retractions of their insurrectionary declarations. Both statements stressed that the resistance to Paris and the Convention had been the mandate of the people, that the people’s concern had been for the liberty and unity of the nation, but that since the new constitution promised a sound basis for a free and republican government, the time had come for an end to dissension. Only twenty signatures appear on the general assembly’s retraction, evidence that many of the nearly fifty delegates who had arrived in late June had long since returned to their homes. Fifty-five judges and ad-

ministrators signed a separate retraction. The Caen district officials signed only their own statement.101

With this, the federalist revolt in Calvados came to an end. The Central Committee of Resistance to Oppression and the Breton battalions left for Rennes. The fugitive Girondin deputies, disguised as volunteers, accompanied them. On July 29, Romme and Prieur emerged from the Château, Romme having completed during his detention the revolutionary calendar, perhaps the most lasting product of the revolt. Several of the compromised local officials went into hiding in the Calvados countryside. For most of the people of Caen, however, nothing remained but to wait for the representatives on mission and their “army of pacification.”

The lack of popular support for a protest directed against Paris and the Montagnard Convention doomed the revolt in Calvados to failure from the beginning. That reality plagued the federalist movement not only in Caen but in Bordeaux and Marseille as well. Departmental administrators instigated the revolt in Calvados and remained its staunchest partisans throughout June and July. A departmental official, René Lenormand, led the mission to Paris in early June. Departmental officials dominated the general assembly during the crucial weeks in which the revolt developed. And when the focus of the revolt shifted to Evreux, Calvados departmental administrators took full responsibility for the coordination of the volunteer forces and the preparation of a march on Paris.

In many ways, the revolt in Calvados was an exercise in deception and self-delusion. Samuel Chatry helped to instigate resistance with a speech that he insisted be delivered anonymously. Section assemblies convened late at night on June 8, and the crucial general meeting of June 9 began at 4:00 A.M., a most inhospitable hour. Those who favored the declaration of insurrection and the arrest of Romme and Prieur shouted down the reasoned objections of Tirel and Fleury, threatening them with arrest as traitors. Others who would later oppose the revolt, such as Antoine DeVic and Mayor Le Goupil Duclos, were absent from that meeting. Leaders of the revolt led volunteers for the departmental force to believe that they marched to Paris only to fraternize with the Parisians, a replay of the 1790 festival in which fédérés from the provinces gathered in the capital to celebrate the fall of the Bastille. The

first shots fired on July 13 disabused the volunteers of that naive notion, and the revolt promptly crumbled.

The failure of the revolt, then, can largely be explained by its lack of popular support. A secondary factor was its complete disorganization. The ostensible leader of the march on Paris, General Wimpffen—a reluctant commander at best—would probably have been more comfortable in a plot to restore the monarchy than in a movement to defend a moderate republic. Lenormand, Lévêque, and Bougon-Longrais possessed little military acumen and were ill prepared to cope with the problems of supply, morale, and discipline that beset the rebel troops. It is notable, though, that local leaders, and not the fugitive Girondin deputies, took responsibility for leading the march to Paris. This underscores the regional grievances that constituted such a large part of the motivation for this insurrection.

But why, if popular support was weak, did resistance in Caen progress as far as it did? This question can best be answered by a brief comparison of the situation in Limoges with that in Caen. The Haute-Vienne administrators, too, showed an inclination in early June to join with other departments in protesting the proscription of the Girondin deputies. The factors that turned them away from revolt simply did not exist in Caen. The Montagnards had no influential advocate in Caen comparable to Bishop Gay-Vernon in Limoges. The bishop, and Xavier Audouin as well, bombarded Limoges with letters assuring the people that Paris remained calm and that May 31 had been a victory for liberty and equality. Bonnet de Meautry, the Calvados deputy who sat with the Montagnards, did not enjoy a broad base of support in his home town and, moreover, did not correspond diligently with his constituents. Instead, it was Lomont, Doulcet, and de Cussy, supporters of the Girondins, who kept the people of Caen informed of developments in Paris and exhorted them to rise in protest.

As already noted, the letters of Gay-Vernon alone would not have turned the Haute-Vienne away from the federalist movement. The strength of the Limoges Jacobin club, along with the activism of the municipal council, guaranteed that the bishop’s reports would not fall on deaf ears. The Jacobin club in Caen had long since broken ties with the Paris Jacobins and no longer represented a potent force in Caen politics. In any case, the club followed the leadership of Louis Caille, who, by virtue of his eloquence and his ties to the deputies Fauchet and Barbaroux, prevailed in July over dissident voices within the club. Those who spoke against the march to Paris—Aubin,
Outin, and Caroger—could boast of no ties to national figures, nor did they hold official positions. As for the other popular group in Caen, the Carabot club, we know little about its membership. At no time in 1793, however, did the club appear in an adversarial relationship to local authorities, and it supported the revolt from start to finish. Evidence suggests that the Caen municipal and district councils did not enthusiastically support the revolt, but both appeared intimidated by departmental officials (as well as by Caille and Chaix-d’Estanges), even when it became clear that the revolt had failed. In sum, no organized group, either official or popular, opposed the decisions of the Calvados departmental administration.

The Vendée revolt, which may have deterred Haute-Vienne administrators from joining in resistance to Paris, could be more easily ignored by officials in Calvados. To Calvados, the Vendéan rebels did not pose an immediate threat. They did threaten the Haute-Vienne, whose source of grain stood jeopardized as the rebels moved south toward Poitiers. The Haute-Vienne sent roughly two thousand soldiers to battle the counterrevolution in the west, whereas the sole Calvados battalion sent to the Vendée returned in June, disgusted by the lack of discipline displayed by the Parisian “brigands” and prepared to join the volunteers in Evreux.

Finally, the demands of the Central Committee of Resistance to Oppression make it clear that more was at stake in June, 1793, than the proscription of the Girondin deputies. The Haute-Vienne stood dependent on the central government for grain supplies and hospital funds. Calvados and the Breton departments, by contrast, had blockaded Paris, attempting to deprive the capital of grain. They denounced the domination of Paris in national affairs and complained about inequitable taxes and inflationary assignats. By joining the federalist revolt, Calvados asserted its regional independence and protested the excesses of centralized government.