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“Rather Death than the Montagne”:

Roots of Federalist Revolts of 1793 in Revolutionary France

A Senior Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of History

In Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in History

By

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Asheville, North Carolina

November 2014

“Plutôt la mort que la Montagne  
Est le cri du fier Lyonnais!”<sup>1</sup>

This verse from a French revolutionary song called “Veillons au salut de l'empire”, was sung by supporters of the Federalist revolts in the summer of 1793. The “fier Lyonnais” were the residents of Lyon, a city that rebelled against the revolutionary government of France, called the National Convention, during that summer. “La Montagne” represented a political faction that was in control of the National Convention during the revolts. This quote characterized the major political rift that grew within the National Convention as the French Revolution marched forward in the year 1793. These conflicts centered around the ability to influence and control the National Convention by representatives of Provinces and the citizens of Paris. The most influential political party during this time period was undoubtedly the Jacobin party. The Jacobins were considered to be leftists and dominated the political sphere of the French Revolution, especially in the time leading up to and during the Reign of Terror. Other political factions included the Gironde and Montagne. The Girondins were the moderates of the convention, while the Montagne were considered extreme leftists comprised of radical Jacobins. As these two factions battled for power within the National Convention, a pivotal event, where Parisian citizens demanded the arrest of many Girondin representatives, ousted the Girondins from the convention. The events that followed have been commonly referred to as the Federalist revolts by historians.

Declarations of insurrection by several cities, including the Lyonnais, and departments throughout much of southern France characterized these revolts. The concept of “Federalism” referred to the principles of state sovereignty as opposed to a more central government. The

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Louvet, *Quelques Notices pour l'Histoire: Et le Récit de mes Perils depuis le 31 de Mai*. (Paris: Minigret, 1794), 142. Ball State University. Digital Media Repository. <http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/FrnchRev/id/608/rec/3> (accessed August 2014) [Rather death than the Montagne is the cry of the proud Lyonnais!]

term was often used by radical Jacobins to denounce counter-revolutionaries, and any other political opponents as enemies the French Republic. The roots of these revolts were often a mixture of local and national politics, as well as economic and class differences. The extent of how these causes factored into the outbreak of revolt has been a common debate for historians. The cities of Bordeaux and Marseilles seemed to be more influenced by events in the National Convention, while Lyon had more local political and economic roots for revolt. All three of these cities that participated in the Federalist revolts seemed to not be significantly influenced by Federalism as a movement.

The American Historian Richard Brace wrote about the role of National Political parties and their influence on Provincial cities during the French Revolution in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In his book, *Bordeaux and the Gironde: 1789-1794*, he analyzed the influence of the Girondins over the city of Bordeaux during the beginnings of the revolution. Brace noted how several Gironde politicians went to Bordeaux in the early years of the revolution and decisively affected local politics.<sup>2</sup> He concluded that Bordeaux's participation in the Federalist revolts of 1793 was a direct effect from its citizens' participation in national politics.

Near the bicentennial of the French Revolution, the American historian, Morris Slavin wrote about the conflicts between the Jacobin and Gironde and the subsequent revolts. His book, *The Making of an Insurrection: Parisian Sections and the Gironde*, was published in 1986 and depicted the many different factors involved in the Jacobin ousting of the Gironde from the National Convention. He viewed the conflicts in Paris and the Provinces as a class struggle between members of the Jacobins and Girondins. He acknowledged the importance of the National political parties and their influence on the Federalist revolts, but concluded that the

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Brace, *Bordeaux and the Gironde 1789-1794*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1947), 246-247.

commoners and members of the *sans-culottes* were using these political parties as a means to propagate their movement.<sup>3</sup> In their efforts to eliminate aristocracy throughout France, they manipulated the political parties to their will.

One of the most prominent American historians on the revolt in Lyon and their local history, W.D. Edmonds, viewed the revolts mainly as a product of local politics. His book, *Jacobinism and the Revolt of Lyon 1789-1793*, provides a detailed account of the revolts as they occurred in Lyon. Edmonds emphasized the importance of local anti-Jacobinism as a central cause in the Lyonnais revolt against the National Convention. While he does not ignore the influence of the Gironde on the revolt, he viewed the events in Lyon as mostly independent from it. He stressed the local problems and beliefs of the citizens as the main fuel for the Federalist revolts.<sup>4</sup> A popular theme in his writing is the anti-Jacobin sentiment in Lyon during this time period. This anti-Jacobin sentiment went beyond that of the more national Girondins. It was rooted in the working classes' disdain for the political aristocracy in Paris as well and at home. He suggests that these members of society heavily influenced and propagated the revolts.

Another American historian and professor, Paul Hanson, published several articles and a book in 2003 describing the Federalist revolts across France in 1793. Hanson takes a more balanced view on the revolts and acknowledges the importance of both local politics and national influence. He wrote that historians cannot ignore the significance of either, as they both played an important role in the Federalist revolts.<sup>5</sup> Hanson is one of the historians that has published most recently on the subject and combines the viewpoints of several different historians on the

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<sup>3</sup> Morris Slavin, *the Making of an Insurrection: Parisian Sections and the Gironde*. (New York: Harvard University Press, 1986), 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> W.D. Edmonds, *Jacobinism and the Revolt of Lyon: 1789-1793*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 274.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Hanson, *Jacobin Republic Under Fire: The Federalist Revolt in the French Revolution*. (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2003), 5

subject to create an almost revisionist perspective. He also wrote about the different names for the revolts of 1793 and the reasoning behind them. While he refers to them as Federalist revolts, he also wrote that they may not have been as rooted in Federalism as the name suggests. Instead, the opposing Jacobins used the name of Federalism as a method to denounce the rebels' stance against the National Convention as counter-revolutionary.<sup>6</sup>

This historiography of the Federalist revolts has shifted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century regarding the level of influence of Parisian politics over local movements. In more recent years, historians have viewed the revolts as a culmination of these factors and stressed their mutual importance in contributing to their advent. In my research, I will analyze the extent of how these different factors affected the outcome of revolt. Certain cities seemed to be more influenced by political events in Paris, while Lyon in particular had very powerful local roots. However, none of these cities were as strongly motivated by Federalism as many historians suggested.

In order to analyze the insurrection that occurred in the southern Provinces, events involving the Gironde and Montagne in Paris must be contextualized. The Girondins were often considered to be the moderates of the National Convention, while the Montagnards were known as the revolutionary extremists. The most zealous members of the Jacobin clubs of France aligned with the Montagne, including such notable figures as Maximilian Robespierre and Jean-Paul Marat. Several events created tension between these two political factions, such as the September Massacres of 1792, where radical sections of Paris murdered over a thousand members of the prison population. These sections of Paris were districts that often had distinct autonomy in the form of municipal committees and even armed forces. Many of the participants believed the prisoners to be dangerous counter-revolutionaries that threatened their livelihood by plotting to attack their homes. Instead of eliminating violent counter-revolutionaries, they

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<sup>6</sup> Hanson, 9-11.

mostly massacred common criminals in their bloody crusade.<sup>7</sup> This event created strife between the two factions because some believed the Montagnards responsible for inciting the massacre. One such Girondin, Jean-Baptiste Louvet, publicly decried leaders of the Montagne (specifically Robespierre and Marat) for their misdeeds in a written account of his experiences in the year 1793. He wrote in reference to Robespierre that “celui-là se flattant de parvenir à la dictature, après avoir triomphé de tous ses rivaux.”<sup>8</sup> What Louvet wrote here is a claim that this faction of government was attempting to achieve a dictatorship by eliminating their rivals. Such an outcome would effectively destroy the Girondin vision of a French Republic. However, despite the accusations of crimes against France by the Girondins, the Montagnards continued to garner more influence among both the Jacobin clubs and Parisian sections.<sup>9</sup>

Tensions between the Gironde and the Montagne culminated into one event that contributed to the outbreak of the Federalist revolts. On the 31 May, 1793, the people of Paris marched on the National Convention and demanded the expulsion and arrest of many of the Girondin representatives.<sup>10</sup> This event illustrated the height of influence that the Montagnards had over the people of Paris, as they were able to mobilize its denizens to oust their political opponents in one uprising. In a formal decree from the National Convention, the Jacobins condemned the Girondins as counter-revolutionaries that threatened the safety of the Republic.<sup>11</sup> As the Girondins were expelled from the National Convention, several of them, including Louvet, fled to the Provinces for personal safety while at the same time playing a role in the impending

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<sup>7</sup> Hanson, 39-40.

<sup>8</sup> Louvet, 21. [this one attempts to create a dictatorship, after triumphing over all his rivals]

<sup>9</sup> Hanson, 62.

<sup>10</sup> Hanson, 61.

<sup>11</sup> Convention nationale, “Décret de la Convention nationale, du 1 juin 1793) Ball State University Digital Media Repository (accessed August 25).

departmental revolts.<sup>12</sup>

A major factor in understanding causes the Federalist revolts is the effect of Girondin supporters and politicians in their campaigns across the Provinces. Louvet and his fellow contemporaries of the Gironde escaped to different areas in the Provinces when the Montagnards seized power in the National Convention. Many of them sought refuge in cities that were sympathetic to the Gironde, as well as having predispositions to rebelling against Paris. One of the escaped Girondins, Petion, wrote in his memoirs that the forced arrest of the Girondins at the National Convention was an “acte d'humanité” because now he and his compatriots had an opportunity to demonstrate the injustice of the Jacobins in Paris.<sup>13</sup> His memoirs detail many of his experiences and ideas regarding revolutionary France in the months following the events of May 31, 1793. He also wrote of his venture to the city of Caen in Northern France where he attempted to incite a revolt against the Convention. He recalled being welcomed by the municipalities and addressing the city to stop the anarchist government in Paris that unjustly proscribed his peers.<sup>14</sup> Petion displayed the high level of involvement that Parisian Girondins had regarding the advent of the revolts in certain cities. Scorned by their expulsion from their posts at the National Convention, these representatives sought to reclaim the government in Paris from their political opponents and what they considered to be anarchy.

Petion and his fellow Girondins managed to incite a minor rebellion in Caen that resulted in a small military skirmish against the Army of the Convention as the rebels attempted to march on Paris. The volunteer soldiers from Caen numbered around 2,000 and they quickly retreated when confronted by their opposition. In an address from the army's commander-in-chief, Felix

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<sup>12</sup> Louvet, 34.

<sup>13</sup> Pétion, J., François Buzot, Charles Jean Marie Barbaroux, and Charles-Aimé Dauban. *Mémoires inédits de Pétion et mémoires de Buzot & de Barbaroux* (Paris: H. Plon, 1866), 117-118 [act of humanity]

<sup>14</sup> Petion, 146-147.

Wimpfen, declared to be “marching towards Paris for the good of Paris and for the safety of the Republic.”<sup>15</sup> This declaration suggested further that the instigators of this revolt specifically aimed to safeguard what they believed to be the Republic. The aims of the rebels were outlined here as a defense of Republic and not a crusade for Federalism. Despite their efforts, however, the National Convention quickly reclaimed the city and the Girondins fled again.<sup>16</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Louvet also wrote a detailed account of his flight from the capital, which illuminated much reasoning behind Girondin goals during the revolts. Louvet explained many of his own beliefs regarding the politics of the revolution, as well as contextualized events that occurred before and during the revolts. He described the political structure of France as being divided between four distinct groups: the Feuillans (Monarchists), the Cordeliers (radical Jacobins), pure Jacobins, and the Cours (the courts).<sup>17</sup> The most significant groups to this research are what Louvet referred to as the Cordeliers and purist Jacobins. He wrote that the end goal of the radical Jacobins was to create a dictatorship with Robespierre at the head, while the pure Jacobins worked towards a Republic.<sup>18</sup> These two factions represented the same feud between the Girondins and Montagnards. However, it is important, to note that Louvet himself was aligned with the Gironde and was often an outspoken opponent of Robespierre. He even mentions in his memoir that he sought only to speak out against Robespierre and his efforts.<sup>19</sup> Louvet's depiction of the political divides in France illuminated the extent of Federalism in the revolts. He noted how the pure Jacobins wanted only to save the Republic that was threatened by Robespierre and his allies. This is a common theme that many of the people in Bordeaux and

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<sup>15</sup> Felix Wimpfen, “Wimpfen Threatens to March Towards Paris,” in E.L. Higgins *The French Revolution: As Told by Contemporaries*. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1975), 298.

<sup>16</sup> Hanson, 25-26.

<sup>17</sup> Louvet, 21-23.

<sup>18</sup> Louvet. 22.

<sup>19</sup> Louvet, 25.



Marseilles shared.

The participation of Bordeaux in the Federalist revolts was rooted in their belief that the integrity of a French Republic needed to be safeguarded. The city of Bordeaux was home to many Girondins that had a definitive backlash against the arrests of May 31, 1793. Many of their representatives were arrested, and the city immediately responded with public addresses that condemned the actions of those in Paris. One notable address was written by a group of local officials through the local Jacobin club. The address opens with a statement declaring that the Girondins were the true representatives of the French Republic.<sup>20</sup> This statement illustrated the citizens of Bordeaux's involvement with the Federalist Revolts. The people of Bordeaux supported their representatives in the National Convention and considered their expulsion a direct threat to the Republic. In the same document, the authors describe the National Convention as being controlled by “cette horde d’etrangers”.<sup>21</sup> Many other initial addresses from Bordeaux to the convention detailed how the city was preparing forces to march on Paris to save their representatives.<sup>22</sup> The people of Bordeaux seemed to rise up in revolt in direct retaliation against events that occurred in Paris. Local causes for revolt seemed to only be in regard to how much they valued their elected representatives and the fate of the Republic. They mostly valued the sanctity of their representatives and the integrity of the Republic. The city of Bordeaux was threatened by the power of the Parisian sections that seemed to be able to control the National Convention with their own goals in mind. The people of Bordeaux did not wish to allow such non-republican discourse to occur. They declared that “La Convention nationale n'est pas

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<sup>20</sup> Perrens et al, “La Societe Republicaine de Bordeaux, a la Convention Nationale,” (Bordeaux: Imprime de Gorsas, 1793), 1. Ball State University. Digital Media Repository. <http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/FrnchRev/id/505/rec/64> (accessed September 12 2014)

<sup>21</sup> Perrens et al, 3. [this horde of strangers]

<sup>22</sup> Hanson, 22.

libre...” because of the power the sections had in controlling the convention.<sup>23</sup>

Bordeaux’s participation in the revolt had ties to the other rebelling regions, and the National Convention took action to neutralize the emerging rebellion. The local officials in Bordeaux quickly declared their city in a state of revolt against the convention following the arrest of their Girondin representatives. The National Convention condemned the people of Bordeaux as traitors of the law in a decree from August, 1793. The convention stated that the deputies were authorized to use whatever force necessary to enforce the law.<sup>24</sup> This decree demonstrated the threat that the Bordeaux posed to the convention with their threats of marching on the capital. Bordeaux’s department, Gironde, was the home of the Girondins and the department professed itself to also be in a state of insurrection. The rest of the department claimed to be in alliance with the people of Bordeaux against the tyranny of the National Convention.<sup>25</sup>

Even before the Federalist revolts, the city of Marseilles was characterized by antagonism to Paris during the French Revolution. This city was in part responsible for the August 10 Revolution in 1792, when volunteer troops from Marseilles, known as “fédérés”, marched on Paris to arrest the royal family. As a result, the citizens of Marseilles would be prepared to militarize quickly. Upon learning of the Girondin ousting at the National Convention, the people of Marseilles quickly called their fellow Frenchmen to arms.<sup>26</sup> A pamphlet published by Marseilles’ department, Bouches-du-Rhône, in early 1793 describes a call to arms and detailed conscription protocol for the people of the department. They also indicated in this conscription

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<sup>23</sup> Perrens et al, 3. [The National Convention is not free]

<sup>24</sup> Convention nationale, “Décret de la Convention nationale, du 6 Août 1793.”

<sup>25</sup> Raynard, *Les Citoyens Opprimés de Tonneins-La-Montagne*, 1793. Ball State University. Digital Media Repository. <http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/FrnchRev/id/574/rec/1> (accessed August 25 2014).

<sup>26</sup> Hanson, 29.

that “il est essentiel que cette force armée ne soit composées que de vrais Patriotes Républicains”.<sup>27</sup> In the language of this document, it is important to note that they aimed to only conscript what they referred to as true Republicans. Similarly to Bordeaux, they also seemed to be in defense of the Republic instead of Federalism. The department seemed to value citizens that were faithful to the concept of a French Republic, not Federalists that advocated a decentralized French government. This also illustrated the fast action of Marseilles regarding the revolts. They were one of the first to reach out to other communities in a call to arms against the convention. Although they were unable to finish a march to Paris, as the Army of the Alps controlled by the convention quickly drove them back to Marseilles.<sup>28</sup>

Many detractors in the Montagne referred to the rebels of Marseilles as Federalists. Not unlike Bordeaux, the people of Marseilles expressed dissent over the amount of control the sections of Paris exerted over the National Convention. Marseilles sought to restore the security of the Republic from the Parisian sections that managed to expel their representatives against the will of the rest of France. In another address from the department Bouches-du-Rhône, it declared that the sections of Paris were in error by controlling the National Convention against the wishes of the rest of the Provinces. In another document from Marseilles’ department, they claimed to be “marching in arms, but only against the tyranny of the factions of Paris.”<sup>29</sup> This referenced the events of 31 May, 1793 when Girondins deputies were arrested on the demands of the Parisian sections. The people of Marseilles were offended that the Parisian sections believed

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<sup>27</sup> Descene, “Arrete de l'Administration du department des Bouches du Rhône” (Marseilles: Imprimerie de Rochebrun et Mazet, 1793). Ball State University. Digital Media Repository. <http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/FrnchRev/id/572/rec/8> (accessed September 11 2014) [it is essential that this army is solely composed of true Patriotic Republicans]

<sup>28</sup> Hanson, 30.

<sup>29</sup> Bouches-du-Rhône, “Declaration de l’Assemblée electorale du Departement des Bouches-du-Rhône a tous les Francois,” July 13, 1793 in Paul Hanson, *Jacobin Republic Under Fire*, 30.

they better represented the citizens of the Provinces. Again, the city of Marseilles rebelled against the convention in backlash to events on May 31, 1793, demonstrating a distinct influence from national politics.

The city of Lyon was undeniably a center of counter-revolution during the Federalist revolts as its denizens rose up in open rebellion against the National Convention and the local Jacobin-controlled municipal government. Representatives of Lyon that spoke out in favor of their rebellion often cited a defense of liberty as their reasoning for insurrection. In an open address to the National Convention from the Provisional Municipality of Lyon, written by local representative Ronchet, many of the city's purported reasons for insurrection were outlined. Ronchet decried the Revolutionary government for corrupt representatives, massacres of citizens, unjust taxation, and most notably, repeated attacks on liberty.<sup>30</sup> The author's referencing of local distress illustrates some of the amalgamation of causes that contributed to the rebellion. He described "a monstrous association of immoral, unprincipled, and shameless men [that] coolly calculate the renewal...of the bloody and abominable scenes..." of the earlier September Massacres in Paris.<sup>31</sup> He portrayed a picture of Lyon where vicious Jacobin leaders attempted to blatantly kill citizens en masse. Ronchet's list of complaints that the people of Lyon had with their local government demonstrated the significance of the various municipal problems that the citizens disapproved. Ronchet created a scene in Lyon where the Jacobin controlled government was directly harming the Lyonnais. The Lyonnais proceeded to open a revolt to protect themselves. This document suggests that some of the people of Lyon believed their city's local officials were abusing the local citizens political and human rights.

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<sup>30</sup> Ronchet. "Adress de la municipalité provisoire à la convention nationale" (Lyons: Aimé Vatar-Delaroche, 1793). in Mason, Laura and Rizzo, Tracey. *The French Revolution : A Document Collection* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 215.

<sup>31</sup> Ronchet, 215.

As many of the citizens of Lyon seemed dissatisfied with the local Revolutionary municipality before the revolt, Ronchet indicated a stance of independence from the National Convention as the solution. He claimed that the Jacobin controlled government's use of forced conscription, excessive arrests, and "bloody tribunals" made them enemies of liberty and equality. Ronchet also wrote in defense of Lyon against several slanderous claims from Paris, including rumors that Lyon collaborated with both royalists and foreigners. Specifically he wrote that Lyon's enemies claimed that "Lyons is the beginning of a new Vendee,,... it has proclaimed Louis XVII the king, it rouses forces against the Convention, it has ignored decrees and authority, it has chopped down the liberty tree, and it has demanded the reestablishment of the Old Regime."<sup>32</sup> This was an example of how the Montagne decried its enemies as counter-revolutionaries, regardless of actual Royalist or Federalist ties. According to Ronchet, Lyon was condemned as a royalist revolt, even though the city believed in a Republic. This article serves as both an open statement of rebellion from the local municipality of Lyon and a vehement defense for the actions of the city. He condemned the royalists and the crown as both enemies of the Republic, and as enemies of Lyon.<sup>33</sup>

Ronchet clearly believed Lyon's revolt to be distinct from any influence of those loyal to the former regime. He also defended his city from those claiming that Lyon received foreign aid from Spain and accepted émigrés, exiled French royalists, into the city to help fuel the rebellion. Ronchet wrote that the people of Lyon had no choice but to revolt for their own safety from the abuses of the government. He also referenced the tumult in the cities of Marseilles and Bordeaux, stating a bond of fraternity over their mutual opposition to the National Convention. However, he denied that Lyon had any direct involvement with them. He reiterated how Lyon

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<sup>32</sup> Ronchet, 216.

<sup>33</sup> Ronchet, 216-217.

had no other options but to rise up against the Convention for the protection of their own rights and liberty.<sup>34</sup> Throughout this document, Ronchet mentioned many different ideologies by which political enemies of Lyon referred to their revolt. According to his address, the opponents of Lyon decried the city as being counter-revolutionary on several different levels. Ronchet did not mention Federalism in his address by name, so any relationship to Federalism was indirect. Ronchet's declaration of a stance against the convention expressed Federalism in the sense of local sovereignty. However, he emphasized their revolt as a defense of their own liberty and safety from a corrupt government.

Aside from political ideology, some sources suggested an economic and class struggle influence on Lyon's revolt. The city of Lyon was known for being the "second city" of France. As he was passing through Lyon in 1794, a Frenchman called Adrien Lezay, referred to the city as the capital of commerce and home of artisans.<sup>35</sup> It was an industrial center in France throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with one of its most popular commodities being textiles.<sup>36</sup> An industrial working class, particularly silk weavers, comprised a large class in Lyon. The local Jacobins appealed to them initially because of the Jacobin party's sympathy towards the poor.<sup>37</sup> The Jacobins of Lyon represented the economic leftists in the French Revolution. They advocated radical social change and redistribution of wealth in some extreme cases. Jacobins supported the decrees of the National Convention that dictated the sharing of resources, especially food, among Frenchmen. Thus, they garnered the support of the working class of Lyon which helped their elections into office in the early months of 1793.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ronchet, 217-18.

<sup>35</sup> Adrien Lezay, *Les Ruines, ou Voyages en France*. (Paris: Migneret, 1794), 12.

<sup>36</sup> Edmonds, 61.

<sup>37</sup> David Longfellow. "Silk Weavers and the Social Struggle in Lyon during the French Revolution, 1789-1794," *French Historical Studies* 12 (Spring 1981), 1-40.

<sup>38</sup> Edmonds, 62.

Anti-Jacobinism combined with class friction seemed to be a major cause in Lyon's revolt against the convention. Jacobin opposition originated in the wealthy social classes of Lyon, who opposed the radical shifts in social hierarchy and economic policies. While the working class leaned towards Jacobin alignments, they became engulfed in the mindset that the workers created the upper classes' success. An account by Paul-Emelian Beraud, a witness to the siege of Lyon by the army of the National Convention, described a speech by a Joseph Challier which encompasses this attitude. Challier was a local Jacobin leader in Lyon acknowledged as a hero figure to the Lyonnais working class according to Beraud. In his speech, Challier urged the people of Lyon to "think...of the slavery to which you are plunged by being the servants and workmen of others;... take what belongs to you, and what you should have enjoyed long ago."<sup>39</sup> The concept of the working class, or "sans-cullottes", taking what they worked for was a theme of the Jacobins during the French Revolution. The obvious counter to this was the established aristocracy of Lyon. Their interests were not to have their wealth commandeered by the sans-cullottes of Lyon. In an account of Lyon's revolt by Durand de Maillane, a representative of Bouche-du-Rhône, claimed that the city itself was opposed to revolution early on because of the threat it posed to commerce. He also mentioned the city's "aversion to a government that menaced the luxury which was the source of their riches."<sup>40</sup> Durand presented a point of view that Lyon's counter-revolutionary background was very significantly influenced by a wealthy class that was desperate to maintain its control. This document illustrated the motives behind the upper-class of Lyon's promotion of anti-Jacobinism. The class struggles of Lyon seemed to fuel

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<sup>39</sup> Paul-Emelian Beraud *The Siege of Lyons: The Second City in Point of Population in France*, (Stockbridge: Andrews, 1795), 12.

<sup>40</sup> Durand de Maillane, *Histoire de la Convention nationale*. (Paris: 1825), 139-141 in E.L. Higgins, *The French Revolution: As told By Contemporaries*. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1975.), 297.

the anti-Jacobin sentiment in the city, which led to the eventual revolt in 1793. It also served as another local factor from which Lyon's particular revolt derived.

The National Convention's efforts to dissolve the Federalist revolts demonstrated the existing friction between the convention and provinces both prior to and during the rebellion. After declaring Lyon to be in a state of rebellion, the convention sought to condemn the city and stabilize the situation in any way possible. The National Convention communicated with the rest of France through pamphlets and decrees that were printed and distributed among the departments. Several of these decrees described tactics to stop the revolts and illuminated the machinations of the National Convention. In a decree published in May of 1793, the convention outlined the system for conscription during times of revolt. They stated that during rebellion, citizens of the Republic must report to the Minister of War and serve in the army once a year for their department.<sup>41</sup> This decree demonstrated the actions that the convention planned in case of revolt by the unruly Provinces. The convention created an organized structure to conscript citizens in case of revolt. This revealed exactly how great of a conflict existed between the national government and the Provinces. In another decree published a few weeks later, the convention stated that all revolutionary tribunals that existed without the approval of the National Convention were to be considered null and void. This was a direct intervention against the cities of Lyon and Marseilles, which had established their own tribunals to process the crimes of local criminals.<sup>42</sup> The National Convention clearly viewed these cities as a threat, especially Lyon, which was named in the article as the main law violator. Another decree by the National Convention described laws governing the execution and use of communal goods. In this document, the National Convention prohibited revolting cities from trading and using the

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<sup>41</sup> Convention nationale, "Décret de la Convention nationale, du 4 mai 1793."

<sup>42</sup> Convention nationale, "Décret de la Convention nationale, du 15 mai 1793."



communal resources of Paris. This included such things as rivers, forests, and other natural resources.<sup>43</sup> This decree seemed to be part of a combined effort in preparation for the imminent siege at Lyon. The convention attempted to limit Lyon's resources, as well as punish the city for rebelling.

As Lyon's rebellion against the Convention continued, they eventually faced a siege that served as a precursor to the use of Terror in revolting cities. The siege was an affair that lasted two months and involved the deaths of many local citizens. As the city was surrounded by the National Convention's Army of the Alps, they were cornered within their city with only local volunteers and guardsmen to defend the city. Beraud described the actions of the defending Lyonnais as brave and full of valor as they fought against an army which he claimed was fifteen times its strength. Beraud claimed that the people of Lyon lived off of horses, cats, and dogs when they ran out of food. He also depicted a looming threat of the National Convention's soldiers that threatened to execute anyone that took up arms against the convention.<sup>44</sup> Beraud painted a very bleak scene for the siege and illustrated the futility of the people of Lyon in their efforts against the convention. Eventually they did surrender to the forces of the convention on the October 8, 1793, and suffered brutal consequences for their rebellion. Beraud described a scene where the soldiers of the convention mercilessly murdered any they believed fought against them during the siege. They killed women, children, and other prisoners en masse.<sup>45</sup> These consequences paved the way for the use of Terror in the French Revolution and left a memorable scar on the people of Lyon for years to come.

The use of Terror in the resolution of the Federalist revolts affected the remembrance of the revolts and served as a Jacobin method to dismantle their opponents by labeling them as

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<sup>43</sup> Convention nationale, "Décret de la Convention nationale, du 10 juin 1793 ."

<sup>44</sup> Beraud, 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Beraud, 11.

Federalists or enemies of the republic. Politics of Terror in the French Revolution were characterized by the use of paranoia and fear as manipulation tactics. The guillotine was the picturesque symbol of the Terror, as thousands were executed for claims of being political dissidents to the Republic of France. The Terror was also a time period where France was ruled by Committee of Public Safety in the National Convention without any opposition. Following the defeat of the rebelling cities in the Federalist revolts, the convention truly had little opposition. Another notable tactic in the use of Terror was detracting any opposition as an enemy of the revolution.

Under the politics of Terror, the extremist Jacobins of the Montagne often used the names of other existing counter-revolutionary movements as pejoratives to the Federalist revolts. The largest counter-revolutionary movement in France was the royalists that sought to restore the Old Regime. These royalists were comprised of the nobility and clergy of France. They often fled to neighboring countries that supported a monarchy in France, which earned them the pejorative name, émigrés. The royalists instigated counter-revolution throughout different areas of France during the Revolution, most notably in a region of Western France called the Vendee.<sup>46</sup> The first of the Vendee rebellion occurred in the Spring of 1793, directly before the Federalist revolts. The Vendee was characterized by peasants revolting against the National Convention in the name of the King. In an account written by Mme. de Sapinaud, a relative to a Vendee general, she claimed that the peasants “would never submit to a government that had taken away their priests and imprisoned their king.”<sup>47</sup> The Vendee represented a revolt that was heavily characterized with Royalist themes. It is important to recognize the characteristics of other

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<sup>46</sup> Jacques Godechot, *The Counter Revolution: Doctrine and Action*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 215-218.

<sup>47</sup> Mme de Sapinaud “Memoires Historique sur la Vendee” (Paris: 1823), 18-19 in E.L. Higgins, *The French Revolution: As Told by Contemporaries*. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1975), 277.

counter-revolution in order to demonstrate the distinctions within the Federalist revolts.

Regardless of the self-proclaimed reasons for revolt, the Montagne often labeled the participants of the revolts as “royalists.” The National Convention decreed that a monument in Lyon be constructed to remember the crimes of the royalists with an inscription that read “Lyon made war upon liberty, and has perished.”<sup>48</sup> In Ronchet’s address, he acknowledged the claims that Lyon’s cause was a royalist plot, and instead professed that their cause was for the safety of their city.<sup>49</sup> The Bordelais openly stated in documents to the National Convention that their cause was to restore the integrity of a French Republic.<sup>50</sup> While the revolts were not rooted in royalist principles, the extent of their Federalist nature was also questionable because of the lack of support for Federalism displayed by participants in the rebellion.

The revolts of the summer of 1793 are often referred to as the Federalist revolts, however not necessarily because of heavy roots of Federalism in their beginnings. Very few of the leaders of the rebellions cited Federalism as the reason for their uprising. Detractors of the rebellion, did often call its participants by several different anti-revolutionary names. In his memoirs, Louvet mentioned how him and his compatriots were considered to be proponents of Federalism by their enemies in the Montagne.<sup>51</sup> While he, himself, never claimed to be a Federalist, he was labeled as one for his actions. In a statement on July 15, 1793 from Committee of Public Safety member, Jean-Nicolas Billaud-Varenne, he condemned the revolts as a “black conspiracy [that] is evinced by the uniformity of plans, principles, and impostures which characterize the rebellion of the federalized administrators.”<sup>52</sup> This Montagne leader

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<sup>48</sup> Convention nationale “Decree for the Destruction of Lyon” in E.L. Higgins, 326.

<sup>49</sup> Ronchet, 218.

<sup>50</sup> Leris and Duvigneau, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Louvet, 156.

<sup>52</sup> Jean-Nicolas Billaud-Varenne, *Memoires inedits et correspondance*, (Paris, 1893) in E.L. Higgins *French Revolution: As Told by Contemporaries*, 298.

venomously described the revolts and simultaneously depicted the pattern of Montangards naming the revolts as Federalist. He condemned the revolts as a product of a Federalist conspiracy. While not directly declaring themselves as Federalists, the revolting cities indirectly illustrated Federalist concepts, especially in Lyon, by vying for a level of local independence from the convention. Their Jacobin opponents therefore condemned their actions as both Federalist and treason against the Republic. This common theme of never explicitly claiming for Federalism directly tied together all of the revolts. While the different cities had different roots for revolting, they were commonly referred to as Federalists, regardless of their affiliation with the movement.

Steady trends in political alignments demonstrated the long-lasting significance of the revolts to their respective regions. The cities that participated in the Federalist revolts undoubtedly were affected on a large scale by their stance against the National Convention and the subsequent Terror. According to election results in the years of 1792-1794, the departments of Gironde and Bouches-du-Rhône elected representatives that aligned with the Jacobin left. However, in the years of 1795-1798, their election results revealed a shift towards a political right.<sup>53</sup> It is important to note that this change in political alignment occurred exactly around years of the Federalist revolts and subsequent Terror. This indicated a more anti-left shift in these cities that coincided with the events of the revolts, where Bordeaux and Marseilles were alienated from Paris by the arrest of their representatives. Such a shift demonstrated the incredible political changes that the counter-revolution was able to produce on a large scale.

Election results in the department that housed Lyon yielded a constant alignment with the

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<sup>53</sup> Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 131.

political right throughout the years of 1792-1798.<sup>54</sup> These election results supported evidence of Lyon's strong local roots in revolt. The city's political affiliation remained a constant anti-left from the onset of revolt and continued years after it had ended. This illustrated how Lyon's local politics not only were a major cause of revolt, their deeply-embedded local anti-Jacobinism persisted with the region for a significant time. After the siege in late 1793, the National Convention referred to Lyon as "Commune-Affriche", which exemplified their complete rebranding of the city.<sup>55</sup> The Jacobins used Terror to display the city as an example of the consequences of counter-revolution. They attempted to completely recreate Lyon as a new city that was freed from its counter-revolutionary ties. The extent of anti-Jacobinism in Lyon was only increased by their harsh treatment at the hands of the National Convention. Almost three years later in 1797, a report from a resident of Lyon described a scene where a single Jacobin walking through the streets "was immediately greeted with howls, a huge crowd came running, and there was question of doing no less than throwing him into the Rhône."<sup>56</sup> Even years after the Lyonnais revolt, the people of the city still exhibited anti-Jacobinism reminiscent of their original rebellion. The retainment of such an anti-Jacobin attitude echoed the deep effects of the revolts and their local roots in Lyon.

The cities of Bordeaux and Marseilles were examples of cities that were heavily influenced by events of the National Convention in their respective insurrections. Both of these cities seemed in direct reaction to the events of May 31, 1793 at the National Convention. They similarly declared that the National Convention's Republican integrity was at risk after the arrest

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<sup>54</sup> Hunt, 131.

<sup>55</sup> Convention nationale, "Decree de la Convention nationale du 23 jour de Brumaire".  
[Freed City]

<sup>56</sup> Blane. Blane to Citizen Minister of the General Police of the Republic. 11 March 1797. In Mason, Laura and Rizzo, Tracy. *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 312-313.

of their representatives. In response they threatened to send troops to Paris, however their efforts were essentially fruitless. Lyon, however, demonstrated another unique root for its revolt, as a mix of local economic and political factor that manifested into an anti-Jacobinism that lasted through their revolt and consequent siege. However ineffective these revolts were at restoring a sense of Republic to a France gripped by Terror, their outcomes demonstrated the volatility of counter-revolution.

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