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From  
THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN HISTORY

This is to certify that Miss A. E. Shipley was admitted  
as a candidate for the degree M. Litt. on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1967.

Supervisor.

26<sup>th</sup> May, 1969

A STUDY OF  
BERTRAND BARÈRE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

A DISSERTATION  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LETTERS.

by Anne E. Shipley.

University of St. Andrews.

1969



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UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

From

THE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

ST. SALVATOR'S COLLEGE

ST. ANDREWS

I declare that this dissertation has been composed by me; that the work of which it is a record has been done by me; and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree,

22nd May 1969.

I declare this Dissertation of Miss A. E. Shipley to have been carried out under my supervision and otherwise in accordance with the relevant Ordinances of the University of St. Andrews.

This is Miss Shipley's own and original work.

Supervisor

28.4.69

## Introduction

In 1929 Robert Launay published the first biography of Bertrand Barère. Previously he had used Barère as the subject of his doctoral thesis, and before beginning the research, had discussed his project with the distinguished authority on the Terror, Alphonse Aulard. When asked his opinion of the terrorist, Aulard replied, 'Notre Bertrand est un individu bien trop léger, bien trop primesautier et fantaisiste pour se guinder dans la solennité d'une étude doctorale.'

There was no lack of material on which to base a study of 'L'Anacréon de la Guillotine'. In the preface to the Mémoires de Barère, Carnot describes the plethora of letters, reports, treatises and opinions, which Barère had produced during his lifetime; he was eighty-five when he died. The Mémoires, which were published in 1843, had been written over a period of twenty years. Barère had tried to persuade many people, including Grégoire, to be responsible/

responsible for their publication, but without success. He approached Carnot in 1836 and asked him if he would act as editor. The final version, which appeared posthumously, is the joint work of Carnot and David d'Angers. There is a long introduction to the Mémoires, written by Carnot, which is sympathetic and generous to Barère. Carnot says that his character has been one 'of the most ill-treated by history,' and he laments the fact that no justification of the author had appeared among the ever increasing number of apologies for the Revolution. The Mémoires are of dubious accuracy. This is due partly to the author's vacillation of opinion and also to the fact that he gave his editors carte blanche to alter any part which would be unacceptable to public opinion of the time. Although full of contradictions, it is possible to find in the Mémoires a consistency of thought on most fundamental issues and one can gain some idea of the character of the man himself and the motives underlying his actions.

Thomas Macaulay reviewed the Mémoires in the/

the Edinburgh Review of April 1844. It is due to his scathing comment that the idée fixe of the reprehensible character of Barère became established in England. It is possible that Macaulay was only meting out hatred in return for hatred; his fury against Barère is an equal match for Barère's invective against England. His opinion is that 'Barère approached nearer than any other person mentioned in history or fiction, whether man or devil, to the idea of consummate and universal depravity. In him the qualities which are proper objects of hatred and qualities which are objects of contempt preserve an exquisite and absolute harmony.' His accusations of sensuality, poltroonery, baseness, effrontery and barbarity are totally without foundation, they do not even present a genuine caricature of the real person.

Between Carnot's over-generous apologia and Macaulay's fantastic opprobrium, there was room for Launay to present a balanced assessment of Barère's career. Unfortunately this does not emerge. He is derisive and over-critical and accentuates too much the sinister aspects of his subject's character. While stressing/

stressing his feebleness, he chooses quotations which show Barère to be vindictive and cruel, and he was neither. The biography gives the general impression of being a veiled eulogy of the Girondins rather than a careful study of the terrorist. Barère is accused of betraying the Brissotins, despite the fact that he never counted himself one of their number. Launay dismisses the Terror as being the period of the 'National Abattoir', and makes little attempt to give an appraisal of Barère's work for the Committee of Public Safety during this time. 'Barère, L'Anacréon de la Guillotine' is not so much a biography as an Opinion.

Much of the hatred for Barère springs from the picture of him presented in the report of Saladin and the attack of Dubois-Crancé, which appeared during the Thermidorian Reaction. He became the scape-goat for the whole Committee of Public Safety and the Terror, probably because he had been a member of all three of the committees and was identified with them. His own meticulously prepared Défense, which he was never allowed to present, gives a more realistic picture/

picture of the man than historians have been prepared to admit. It was not until Professor Palmer suggested to Leon Gershoy that all was not well with the accepted view of Barère, that the facts relating to 'The Reluctant Terrorist' received an impartial examination.

There seems little connection between the carefree, successful son of a provincial<sup>1</sup> parlementaire and the Witling of the Terror. Of all the terrorists of the Revolution Barère had one of the happiest childhoods. Until he was over thirty he knew no hardship and only the most minor of disappointments and frustrations. He never knew the loneliness of Robespierre, the fury and rebellion of St-Just or the anger of Collot. He grew up in the security of a well-established bourgeoisie family, sure of the affection of both his parents; an affection, tinged with respect, that he returned. Before 1789 he knew nothing of the pangs of failure as had Billaud-Varenne or Fouquier-Tinville. There was no hint of sickness or deformity to embitter or humiliate him as it did Marat or Couthon. Neither had he become involved in the anomalies of the social system as had Hérault de Séchelles. He had never been brought into close contact with suffering or humiliation, or encountered stumbling-blocks to his own career which could cause deep-rooted/

rooted resentment against the Ancien Régime. There was nothing in his pre-revolutionary experience to imbue him with the fanatical zeal of a true rebel. It was not anger and bitterness which prepared Barère for his career as a revolutionary, but rather the atmosphere of the free-thinking society in which he lived, and the rationality of the Enlightenment; yet he was typical of the men who lay behind the Revolution. Most of them came from the intellectual middle class few of whom had known real poverty; all of them had imbibed the anti-traditionalistic, rationalistic spirit of the Age of Reason. They were, generally, very ordinary men who saw the need for a greater unity within society and a centralisation and rationalisation of government. Few wanted <sup>a</sup> Rousseauian Republic of Virtue, or even total eradication of the existing order, but they demanded an end of abuse and more equality of opportunity. Of all the men who arrived in Paris in May 1789 with visions of reform and an ideal state, Barère was the most ordinary, and his/

his vision was the least clear.

Bertrand Barère was born on 10th September, 1755, in the house in the Rue Bourg Vieux which had belonged to the family for several generations. His father Jean (1722-1788) was typical of the bourgeoisie de robe who married into the noblesse d'épée for the advantages of status, even though the droits de seigneur and the title ~~was~~ rarely passed on through the female line. Through his marriage to Jeanne-Catherine Marraste, a descendant of the family of Naise, not qualified for presentation at court but able to boast four quarterings of nobility, he acquired rights to property in the Landes, in S.W. France, and later to farmland in Anclades. But the title and honorific rights to the Abbey of Vieuzac, which he gained in 1774, were obtained from his wife's second cousin, Hector d'Anti, upon payment of 4,000 livres. To this was added the fief of Vieuzac, consisting entirely of feudal dues. When Hector died in 1778, Jean inherited further estates to the north of Vieuzac and the rights of entry into/

into Bigorre. He was, however, not able to lay claim to these rights due to his own failure to fulfil the requirement <sup>of</sup> four quarterings of nobility in his own family, but he did adopt the title of Seigneur de Vieuzac, and the right to pass it on to his son. The young Barère must have been very aware of the prevailing friction between the prosperous administrative bourgeoisie and the local nobility. His father's marriage, together with the use of the title by himself even after the night of the 4th August, demonstrate the yearning after status and social recognition so recognisable in the bourgeoisie prior to the Revolution. Barère belonged to that stratum of society which only emerged in France towards the latter part of the eighteenth century, a wealthy, influential cultured class, which although linked to the nobility either through marriage or the purchase of office, still lacked the recognition which would give it the undisputed qualification of the First Estate. Therefore when Barère vehemently denies in his Défense....'Je ne suis/

suis pas de la caste nobiliaire; je m'honore  
 d'être né dans la classe du peuple'<sup>2</sup>, he is  
 exaggerating his plebeian affiliation; and again  
 in his reply to Hébert's attack in 1793, - 'Je  
 suis peuple, et je ne suis pas d'origine noble'<sup>3</sup>,  
 he is denying the nature of his upbringing.

Jean Barère was a lawyer of the  
 Seneschal's Court of Bigorre. In his capacity  
 as First Consul and President of the Third Estate  
 in Tarbes he was required to examine the treasury  
 reports for the area. His discovery of certain  
 irregularities, due to the granting of fiscal  
 favours to the local nobility, brought him into  
 open conflict with the other two estates. He  
 refused to keep the discovery to himself, whether  
 due to honesty or indignation is hard to say.  
 But as a result of the publication of the  
 discrepancies he brought the wrath of the local  
 aristocracy down upon his head. The bishop of  
 the diocese found little difficulty in getting a  
lettre de cachet served against him which prevented  
 him from holding any administrative office in the/

the town. All the same Barère's statement in his Mémoires that his father had lived under the auspices of a lettre de cachet for most of his life is an exaggeration, for the order was revoked after a year. The slight, however, had its effect upon Barère, and he states that from the cradle he dedicated his life to the fight against the arbitrary power of the nobility and inequality of opportunity.<sup>4</sup> This again is a distortion of the truth for Bertrand never suffered directly at the hands of the aristocracy, but his efforts throughout his early career were bent more on helping those without status than pandering to those who possessed it.

In all ways, as R. R. Palmer says of Barère, 'his opportunities were equal to his capabilities'.<sup>5</sup> His early school days were spent happily in Tarbes, at the local Parish School, where, we learn, he was an exemplary pupil. From there he went to the College at Sorèze, between Toulouse and Castres, mixing with the sons of local aristocracy and bourgeoisie alike. There/

There is no record in his Mémoires of any feeling of antipathy engendered there. Despite the fact that the school was a Roman Catholic foundation it admitted Huguenot pupils and the curriculum appears to have been influenced by the writings of the Encyclopédists and Philosophes and its scholars were trained more for administrative posts than for ecclesiastical careers. There is no detailed information as to Barère's progress at the school except that he gained prizes for History and Eloquence, and his ability in the latter field was to be exploited fully during his time as a member of the Committee of Public Safety. He must have distinguished himself academically since he was admitted to the Law School of Toulouse University at fifteen instead of the usual seventeen. The Law School was dominated by the Parlement of Toulouse and as Barère's first year there coincided with Maupeau's edict suppressing the Parlements in 1771 it is easy to believe him when he speaks of his enthusiasm for the legal profession. At this time he saw the parlementaires as being the last/

last bulwark against oppression and arbitrary power. 'I had always loved the noble profession of the law, the courageous profession of defending the weak from the strong'.<sup>6</sup> Again little detailed reference is made to his achievements at the school. He became influenced in turn by the writings of Laseau de Mauléon, Elie Beaumont, Gerbier and Target. By 1774 he was an ardent admirer of Turgot and saw him as the great reformer of the age who would launch the first attack against despotism. His enthusiasm for Turgot was fired by the new Chancellor's decision to restore the parlements, for he saw the magistrates as the true champions of liberty and defenders of the rights of the people. He was not farsighted enough to see that Turgot's decision, far from opening the road to genuine reform of abuse, in fact restored one of the main stumbling blocks; the chief protagonists of the old order, however disguised, were returned to a position of even greater power than they had enjoyed before the dissolution./

dissolution.

It was in the atmosphere of rejoicing over the return of the parlementaires that Barère gained his Baccalauréat-en-droit at the age of nineteen, having spent three years specialising in Roman jurisprudence and French Law. The following year, 1775, he proceeded Maître-ès-arts and took his lawyer's Oath, and was then academically qualified, if not officially old enough, to practise law. His father went to considerable trouble to obtain a post for his son as a magistrate in Tarbes and have him recognised as a Royal Councillor at the Seneschal Court of Bigorre. He paid 8,000 livres for the position and for the recognition of his son as qualified to practise at twenty-one instead of the statutory twenty-seven. This was the second time that Bertrand had defied his age and one is tempted to see him as a brilliant young scholar in advance of his years. It is nonetheless ~~more~~ likely that his father's influence played a much greater part in the young man's advancement than his own innate/

innate capabilities; but despite all the pulling of strings the young Barère was not at all keen on the idea of the gratuitous position of judge in the court of his home town. He claims to feel a natural aversion to the position of judge, preferring to attack tyranny and injustice and occupy himself with 'lengthy and laborious work'. 'Je me retirai à Toulouse où je préférais les travaux consolans de défendre les accusés et les citoyens, au minstère terrible <sup>7</sup> de les juger'. Such a pronouncement sounds too affected and pompous for a young, newly qualified graduate, and although <sup>8</sup> the sentiments were probably quite genuine it is possible that what really motivated the choice of the twenty-one year old was the life offered by the city of Toulouse, and the reluctance to bury himself in a backwater such as Tarbes. He formally accepted the position offered by his father, as it was recorded in 1777, but he did not practise there until his return from Paris in 1788, except for a brief spell after his marriage in 1785, when he attempted to settle in Tarbes./

Tarbes. His desire to fight for the underprivileged was in keeping with the sentiments of many of the future revolutionaries, who saw in unprejudiced administration of the law the key to a new society, based on the laws of Reason, whose 'smooth running mechanism....and consistency and harmony would mirror the workings of the natural universe.'

As in other aspects of his early life, Barère was lucky in his first case. It proved to be successful and was sufficiently flamboyant and spectacular to win him the immediate admiration of the legal circle of Toulouse. Called upon, in 1781, to defend a young girl accused of killing her child he appealed to the court and the judge, 'with great entreaty'. 'I told him, ' he says, 'it was my first case and that the considerations of humanity demanded a thorough sifting of the evidence because the prisoner was innocent.'

The Ribes case appears to have established him as a lawyer, both in the eyes of the magistrates and in his own. 'I am a lawyer for life', he/

he declared after he had gained a verdict of not guilty. He had used his witnesses carefully, eliciting from the doctor who had attended the girl at the time of the birth of the child, a statement that the baby had been still-born. He secured a minor victory over superstition and prejudice by demanding and obtaining a post mortem examination on the child, which revealed a collapsed lung, thus substantiating the doctor's evidence. Such exhilaration as he felt after the case must have been similar to that felt by Robespierre after the case of the Lightning Conductor.

His second success at the bar filled him with even more jubilation, for he saw in it the opportunity for a fitting reply to the indignity of the lettre de cachet served against his father. Revenge however was not uppermost in his mind when he undertook the Noailles case. He was already becoming aware of the vexations caused by the remnants of ~~the~~ feudal attitudes, and it is with a certain amount of satisfaction/

satisfaction that he records that he 'brought about the hatred of the local nobility in his moral victory over the case'.<sup>12</sup> Although these sentiments are written in his Défense, he must have felt genuinely indignant and angry over the details of the case; but at the moment of the trial what appears to have moved him more than anything was the romantic aspect. 'What a fine opportunity for a young lawyer,' he says in his commentary on the case, 'the defence of Innocence and Beauty, seduced and betrayed'.<sup>13</sup> It was very much a case of les droits de seigneur against the 'Natural Rights' of the People. The Chevalier de Reys, a Knight of the Order of Malta, was demanding an annulment of his marriage with a commoner, a young girl whom he had seduced and married without her family's consent. He wanted the marriage annulled so that he could inherit a large fortune from his uncle, a Knight Commander of the Order, who refused to make him his heir as long as he was married to a commoner. Barère brought all his prize-winning eloquence to bear/

bear upon the court. He had elected to take his stand against the aristocracy in defence of the more fundamental rights of *Man*, yet his method of attack was to appeal to the very essence of the romantic notion of Nobility, chivalry and honour. 'Is this,' he pleaded, 'the blood of the French Nobility that cried, in the reign of Francis I, "All is lost save honour."?'... 'Is this the blood of those gallant knights, who fought for God, the King, and Beauty....' <sup>14</sup> and so he continued, trembling with indignation, for over an hour. It is the same tone, the same rhetoric with which he was to harangue the Convention during its moments of doubt, or in time of victory, and for which he earned himself the title the 'Anacréon of the Guillotine.'

Although the annulment was granted, the true victory went to Barère, for the Knight was ordered to pay heavy costs and was immediately prosecuted for abduction; but Barère had done more than establish himself as an eloquent and skilful lawyer and draw praise from even the/

the Archbishop of Toulouse, he had come to be recognised as a champion of the Third Estate. It was due very much to his performance during this case and the reputation he gained as a result of it that despite his family connections with the nobility he was chosen as the deputy for the Third Estate of Bigorre in 1789.

His reputation as a lawyer secured, between the years 1782 and 1788 he established himself in the intellectual circles of Toulouse and gradually gained recognition as a man of letters and academician of the area. Charming by nature, accomplished, champion of the underprivileged, it is easy to see how Barère drew rather reluctant praise from the leading hostess of the Orléans Circle of Paris. Writing her opinions of the deputies as she had met them in 1789, Mme. de Genlis thus described the man who was to become one of her most hated associates. 'C'est le seul homme que j'aie vu arriver du fond de sa province avec un ton et des manières qui n'auraient jamais été déplacés dans le grand monde/

moné et à la cour.'<sup>15</sup> Distinguished as an intellectual of the Enlightenment, and a regular visitor to the salons of the parlementaires of Toulouse, Barère developed a sophistication and social grace more applicable to the noblesse of the Ancien Régime than revolutionary Paris.

In 1785 Barère agreed to marry, at the instigation of his uncle, a daughter of one of the local aristocratic families. Launay begins his biography with a criticism of the marriage, which he describes as disastrous, and blames Barère for allowing himself to be coerced into a union which was doomed to failure and unhappiness from the beginning. It is true that they were not ideally matched couple but it is unlikely that the account given by Barère himself in his 'Melancholy Pages' is an accurate portrayal of his feelings at the time of the wedding. 'Une profonde tristesse me serrait le cœur,' he claims; tears streamed down his face during the ceremony and only his mother knew of the agony he was suffering. It is more probable that he controlled what misgivings he had, for the marriage was a social success, and of great advantage to the ambitious/

ambitious lawyer of thirty. It is true that his new wife was not in all ways ideal, for she was only twelve years of age and brought little to her husband but her title; but as a member of the impoverished noble family of de Monde of Vic-en-Bigorre she represented the true nobility, in fact those who passed the requirements, stipulated by the decree of 1760, for recognition as feudal nobility and for presentation at court. The de Monde family were not of the court circle by any means, they were far too impoverished, but branches of the family, very distant relations, included the Chevaliers de Saint-Louis and the illustrious Prince-Rohan-Rochefort, who due to his disgrace at court found time to be present at the wedding. Apart from the very considerable social prestige gained from the alliance, Barère gained little from the marriage, whereas the de Monde family in general and Élisabeth in particular reaped considerable financial gains from the settlement made by Barère's over-generous family. In his Mémoires Barère merely mentions his wife/

wife briefly and if with a certain endearment, yet without real warmth. She grew away from her husband during the long periods of separation, and refused to communicate with him during the Terror, having been bitterly upset when she heard that he had voted for the death of the King. She never forgave him for that, and remained until her death, an enemy of the Revolution, and a total stranger to her husband.

Except for a few months after his marriage, the years after leaving the Law School, before going to Paris, were spent in Toulouse. He worked hard, framing schemes for assisting the poor, fighting for victims of prejudice or poverty, and above all writing. His political opinions developed slowly and appear to have been influenced by the exigencies or the debates of the moment. Thus he could throw the same enthusiasm and conviction into a eulogy of Lafrance de Pompignon, Montesquieu or Rousseau. He elaborated a scheme for a charitable society, to be comprised of twenty-five older barristers and thirty young/

young lawyers, which would hear cases of the poor free of charge. It was adopted, and under its auspices he fought the case of a persecuted Protestant living in Vivarais, who had suffered the loss of his inheritance due to his Huguenot sympathies. Barère won for his client the recognition of his rights and part of the inheritance was restored to him.

His first attempt to gain recognition in the Académies came in in 1782. He entered for the prize presented by the Académie des Jeux Floraux of Toulouse. The discourse he presented, entitled, 'Éloge de Louis XII, surnommé le Père du Peuple', did not gain him a prize, and understandably so. It was a scholarly essay, but lacked conviction and was unoriginal and traditionalist in its argument, yet it is important in any assessment of Barère since it does give some idea of his view at that time on monarchical government. He puts forward the argument that the king should be the Father of the People and in this disagrees with the prevailing/

prevailing Philosophe view expressed by Voltaire that the monarch should be despotic but enlightened and above all benevolent toward his people.

Barère had only recently read Machiavelli, and his ideal monarch seems to fall mid-way between a Machiavellian Prince and a Joseph II of Austria.

At the same time his accent on the paternal nature of the monarch is qualified by a feeling for the grandeur of the state of monarchy. 'Good kings<sup>17</sup> inspire idolatry', he says, and he is far from satisfied with the idea that 'the King should be only the First Citizen of a free people'. It is perhaps a view he secretly held throughout the Revolution, and his fierce condemnation of Louis XVI was due to the fact that he fell short of this image and failed to inspire the respect and awe due to a monarch.

Having failed in this attempt to gain a prize, his next attempt in the following year was more successful, and the subject probably nearer his heart. The 'Éloge de Jean-Baptiste Furgole, Avocat du Parlement de Toulouse, (1690-1761)',/

(1690-1761)', praised the famous barrister, but provided the opportunity for him to make a direct attack on privilege. The opinions of Furgole with respect to the 'tyrannical maxims of feudal anarchy', were supplemented by his own support of a more egalitarian political policy. The essay was published and appealed to the magistrates who were his judges. It was a more competent work, since Bâreze was on his home ground when dealing with aspects of Roman Law and appealing for recognition of a man's talent rather than his genealogical qualification for office. It was just as well for his reputation among the savants of Toulouse that the essay he had written immediately prior to the 'Éloge de Furgole' was not published. This was the first of many written attacks he made upon England. <sup>18</sup> What began as a statement of physiocratic thought and ideals became nothing more than a veiled attack on France's only rival in the field of commerce. The essay was entitled 'Whether Navigation Has Proved Useful or Injurious to Men', but it became/

became a hysterical condemnation of Britain's Navigation Acts and her exploitation of the American Colonies. It is interesting to compare his sentiments on free trade and international commerce as expressed in this essay with those revealed in his speech supporting the Navigation Act of September 21st 1793. His anglophobia remains consistent in both, but in 1783 he declares that a navigation policy on the lines of that of England would bring about political breakdown of the state which passed such a policy, and he calls upon the reader to witness the collapse of Britain. On the other hand by 1793  
<sup>19</sup> Carthage still had to be destroyed, and it was to enforce the collapse of Britain that France had to pass her own Navigation Act. In 1783 he attacks any policy which restricted trade or encouraged tyranny, (he uses Venice as an example in the  
<sup>20</sup> essay, but he means Britain), in 1793 he spends over an hour persuading the Convention that no commodities should be imported into France unless they be carried in French ships, and no foreign/

foreign vessels may carry goods from one French port to another. In this, as in other political ideologies, Barère could present the same arguments for opposing issues. His basic tenets may change, but not his more abstract prejudices.

After his presentation of an essay on Pierre Séguier, (1588-1672) for the prize offered by the Académie le des Belles-Lettres de Montauban in 1784, Barère's reputation as an Academician was secure. He won a prize for the Éloge, which proved to be a condemnation of Richelieu and a defence of the Parlements. The subject, Séguier, himself, gave him some difficulty, but he merely used this regular turncoat as an instrument with which he could hammer political and religious persecution, and wars of aggression. He was not to recognise in this Chancellor of France weaknesses of character for which he himself would be condemned. There was a great similarity in the volte-face effected by the old President of the Parlement of Paris after his promotion to Chancellor under Richelieu in 1633, and in/

in Bâre's own lightning changes of political colour during the course of the Revolution. But the essayist did his subject more than justice when praising him for his erudition and skill as a jurist, and he saved his own reputation in the eyes of the Parlementaires by portraying Séguier as the 'implacable enemy of ministerial depotism'.

His 'Éloge de Georges d'Ambois, Cardinal Archevêque de Rouen et Ministre de Louis XII; was weak by comparison with the Séguier discourse, but a fitting sequel to his 'Éloge de Louis XII'. In it he made a veiled attack on the fiscal policy of Calonne, insinuating that d'Ambois' policy of setting finances in order, reducing taxation, and encouraging internal trade and agriculture was preferable to a deficit policy based on 'offensive indifference which permits abuses to accumulate'. The attack becomes less veiled as it proceeds, in fact his views on the existing economic policy of the country were so blatantly exposed that the jury failed to allow him to publish it, let alone win a prize./

prize.

During the period prior to his marriage, Barère spent a great deal of his spare time in the company of his friend Taverne, a fellow lawyer. He must have been extremely dedicated to learning, and worked extremely hard, even in those carefree days, for he speaks of evenings in which the two 'made extracts' from Tacitus, Montesquieu, Beccaria, Machiavelli and Francis Bacon. These are the names he specifically mentions, but he must have been familiar with most of the writers of the Enlightenment, although he says that literature and philosophy, as well as politics, were mere pastimes, and that it was law that was his first and last love and to which he devoted most of his energy. He did not become consumed by any one ideal during these years, as Robespierre did with his vision of the Republic of Virtue based on the Social Contract. Barère read Rousseau in detail, but preferred 'Émile' and 'Le Nouvelle Héloïse'. He displays a freshness and genuine eagerness for learning, untainted by/

by bitterness or bigotry during these years. In 1782 he had gone on a walking tour in the Pyrenees and had come across a tablet bearing the inscription, MONTIBUS DICAVIT CAESAR, which he was sure proved that Julius Caesar had visited that part of the Pyrenees. He presented a paper on the subject, in defiance of popular belief which was against the assumption, to the Academie des Sciences, Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. He did not convince the members, but the account in his Mémoires of his delight over this find and his enthusiasm for scholarship in any form cannot be feigned. He had in fact a genuine love and respect for learning, and for this deserved the recognition he got from the academies.

His 'Éloge de Jean-Jacques Rousseau' which won him third prize and election to the Academy of Floral Games of Toulouse, drew from the President of the Academy the prediction that, 'This young lawyer will go far', but it was accompanied by the warning, 'What a pity that he has already sucked the impure milk of modern philosophy! Mark my/

my words, this lawyer is a dangerous man! ' 21 Such a warning may well have been interpreted as praise by Barère, but seems too severe a judgement on his rather eclectic political philosophy of that time. The Défense of the plebeian democrat of Geneva had been preceded only a few months before by an 'Éloge de Jean-Jacques La France de Pompeignon', the conservative aristocratic satirist whose attack on Voltaire embodied a general ridicule of the philosophes and encyclopédistes. It was all the same possible for Barère to present his eulogy of Rousseau, which showed scant knowledge of (and less understanding of the principles of) the Social Contract, and his stilted praise of Pompeignon, while still delivering a speech to the Academy of Floral Games on the Benefits of Philosophy. It is therefore impossible to observe Barère's political credo in the Éloges.

His last attempt at a dissertation proved to be his best. In 1788 he presented an Éloge on Montesquieu to the Academy of Bordeaux./

Bordeaux. This shows an unreserved admiration for the 'Esprit des Lois,' and for the philosopher himself, and falls short of a panegyric only on the point of a criticism of Montesquieu's anglo-mania. His attack on Montesquieu's praise of the English parliamentary system is reserved, but his hatred of all things British shines through.

Barère's own view on the English political system is more fully expanded in his introduction to the first edition of Point du Jour, which came out in 1789, but the sentiments on this particular issue had not changed. 'Il faut louer beaucoup les anglais, mais il faut craindre de les louer trop. L'admiration qu'ils ont inspirée a été très utile à l'Europe....Ce qui a le plus étonné Montesquieu dans leur constitution est précisément ce qu'il ne faut pas en imiter.'<sup>22</sup> Barère saw the two-party system and the bi-cameral parliament as a threat to the unity of men within the society, and inimical to social equality. Despite his criticism he won the prize, and his days of collecting Academic laurels came to an end./

end. Before leaving Toulouse, however, his final triumph was crowned by his being accepted into the Lodge of the Grand/Orient of Toulouse, an Encyclopedic Masonic Lodge; its reputation was so well established that Barère's membership provided him with the passport to the most important meeting houses of the capital.

At this point in his career he was called upon to make a most opportune visit to Paris on account of a law-suit over his father's rights to feudal dues in Vieuzac. The case was settled by his father's death while he was away, but he could not have wished for a better moment to visit the capital. He arrived in Paris in May, 1788. It was his first visit, but since we can trust Mme de Genlis' picture of the provincial lawyer, he was not in the least overawed. The sections of the Mémoires dealing with this period have disappeared, so the only available accounts of his impressions (at this time) consist of sporadic entries in his diary and the short article, 'Les Derniers Jours de Paris sous l'Ancien Régime'./

Régime'. But as this is a contemporary account it is probably more trustworthy than his Mémoires would have been. Inexperienced in the field of politics, he watched events carefully, and during his nine months' stay his views were slowly adapted to the changing climate of opinion. He was just the sort of man to fit in well in Parisian Society on the eve of the Revolution. He professed sufficient superficial democratic principles to give him entrée into the more lively political circles, and sufficient aplomb to make him shine in the salons. His membership of the Grand Orient Lodge in Toulouse gave him admission to such political clubs as the Cercle Social of Fauchet, and the Amis des Noirs. He entered the Orleanist Circle on the strength of his wife's distant connection with the family, and met Mirabeau, Condorcet and La Fayette, one of the most popular men in Paris at the time. Also he encountered the Lameth brothers, Brissot and Pétion, but he gives no first impressions of his future Girondin associates./

associates.

The main debate with himself during his stay in Paris was over the rôle of the monarch and its form. He fluctuates violently in his opinion of Louis himself... 'Here I am,' he says, one minute, 'proud as a peacock. I have just seen the King of the most ancient monarchy of Europe in his palace.'<sup>23</sup> Then his first impression... 'He looked festive, he has a handsome face, open and noble, eyes cast down. But Brienne looked more like the King should look.'<sup>24</sup> Considering his early opinions that the King should emanate grandeur and power, one feels a little sorry for Barère, that he was so badly disillusioned. Before seeing Louis he had written, 'Reviews of military forces by kings form imposing spectacles; the drums and the bands strike sonorously on the ear, the arms glitter, and the imposing uniforms fascinate the eye; while the idea of royalty inflames the imagination.'<sup>25</sup> This was the fairytale image; the actual one was bitterly disappointing for him: 'I saw the King with pleasure, because I feel that/

that all Frenchmen like their sovereign; that is our own special patriotism. I saw, however, that he was despised.<sup>26</sup> From that it is but a short step to the final disillusionment: 'The King was about five feet five. His physical structure was large and common looking, presenting an appearance of far stronger health than his pale face. He had pale blue eyes without the slightest expression, and a loud laugh which savoured of imbecility. He was short-sighted, his carriage was most awkward, and his whole appearance was that of a badly brought up rustic.'<sup>27</sup> Yet despite all this, Barère believed him to have a clear judgement and to desire the best for his people. I think that of all the Revolutionaries, with the exception of Mirabeau, Barère understood Louis most clearly, and saw in him a good yet ineffectual man, but a weak and therefore dangerous king.

He had arrived in Paris at the moment when Lamignon had persuaded Louis to elect a new plenary court to register the edicts which would/

would in fact suspend the parlements and replace them with forty-seven new courts, whose business it would be to register the edicts of Brienne concerning the taxation reforms and the loan necessary to stabilise the nation's economy. Barère joined in the general indignation over Lamoignon's seemingly high-handed action; and coupled with his disillusionment over the King's appearance he decries the state of monarchy in general. 'Let others boast of warrior-kings; as for me, I hate them. The misfortunes of humanity extort only tears and cries of terror from me.' <sup>28</sup> This is, however, the invective of anger but it is not conviction. In a short time he decided that nevertheless, 'All we need is a firm prince of genius or character, with a true love for his people.' He was to hold this view to the end of the Constituent Assembly, and, one suspects, that it was the form of government he would have preferred.

Like Paris itself, he was confused over the rôle of the Parlements. For so long he had/

had been an ardent supporter of the magistrates and had seen them as defenders of liberty. After the Paris Parlement had been exiled to Troyes for refusing to register Brienne's edicts, they increased their popularity in the eyes of the nation in general by their demand that the Estates-General should be summoned. In May 1788 Barère was still one of their supporters and accused Lamoignon and Brienne of ministerial despotism; but gradually he became aware of the true nature of the Parlements' opposition to the edicts, and his attitude towards them changed. Hearing reports from the provinces of so called 'People's Revolts' stirred up by the noblesse and the parlements, Barère became suspicious. 'We must fear the aristocracy above all others. The judicial power is the obstacle to all reforms,'<sup>29</sup> he said when he realised that, far from standing up for the rights of the people, the parlements were effectively blocking ministerial attempts to solve the economic crisis by equalising taxation, a move which Barère had hinted at three/

three years before. By the time the King had realised that there was no alternative but to summon the Estates-General and had issued the edict on 8th August, and Brienne and Lamoignon had resigned, Barère saw the era of the Parlements coming to an end without regret. 'Soon the Parlements will be no more. It (the Third Estate) owes the (Convocation of) the Estates-General to the Parlement, but the former must strip it of its power.'

Barère had vacillated in his opinion of Brienne, but his final judgement of him is sound: 'An administrator full of wit but lacking in tact and ability, practising a versatile despotism rather than absolute power, having liberal views in his proposals but never carrying them out, M. de Brienne knew neither how to bend to public opinions, listen to public needs, nor foresee the dangers of the future'.<sup>30</sup> If, however, he was stringent in his criticism of Brienne he was scathing in his condemnation of Necker. Barère was not one of the many aspiring reformers who saw/

saw in Necker the answer to all ills. He could never understand the wild public adulation of the Swiss banker during the summer of 1789. Whether it was partly due to his xenophobia, or entirely to his keen perception of individual ability, is hard to decide, but he was in advance of his time in seeing Necker's limitations. He saw him at first as the 'crafty agent of despotism', then for a brief space he referred to him as the 'virtuous Minister' <sup>32</sup> after Necker had succeeded in doubling the Third Estate, but this was only a temporary reversal of opinion.

By November 1788 he had formed the views of a cautious moderate, anxious for reform, opposed to privilege. During the Second Assembly of Notables he wrote of his fears of popular enthusiasm and too radical reform, and this goes far to show that in the sphere of revolutionary thinking he was a very new and insignificant light. 'If we allowed liberty, equality and reason to prevail we should be doing too much at one time. Prudence counsels us to use this/

this Assembly first to obtain a little improvement for the people, for experience teaches us to do not that which we should like but that which we can...'<sup>33</sup> The fact was that neither Barère nor France had had any experience in real reform, or in a national participation in politics, but he shows some understanding of the urgency and of the potency of the climate of opinion in the winter of 1788-89. 'I ask only,' he writes in his diary, 'that the assembly of the nation be moderate in the demands that it will make. It is up to the strongest not to win support by violence.'<sup>34</sup>

It was not an eager, budding Revolutionary who made his way back to Tarbes in January 1789. He hoped for a chance to represent the Third Estate at the forthcoming elections, but we have no idea whether he felt confident that he would be chosen, since he affects polite surprise at the result in his Mémoires. Launay suggests, rather caustically, that had events not precipitated him into an active political life in Paris, he would have been happy to have stayed in/

in the dilettante world of Academy members, being praised for bad script and applauded for bad dissertations. On the eve of his departure for Paris in 1789, 'from which moment,' he laments in his *Melancholy Pages*, 'my career became as unhappy as my youth had been happy', he was a successful lawyer, 'Un homme de toutes les salons, de toutes les académies'. He would have been one of the last to admit that before the great bourgeois grievance of inequality could effectively be removed the whole quasi-feudal structure of French society would have to be destroyed. His views were moderate and humanitarian, and they lacked the depth of vision of Mirabeau's, the passion and conviction of Robespierre's. Far from being a potential revolutionary in character and inclination, he epitomised the upper bourgeoisie of the last phase of the Ancien Régime. It was an exaggeration to think of him as 'dangerous'. He was not to shape the Revolution, but to yield to it, as he had yielded to the conservative atmosphere of Toulouse. He lacked/

lacked the brilliance to direct the course of the Revolution, but he became sufficiently practised in the art of politics to remain useful to those who did. He himself admitted, as Carnot reminds us, that he was aware of this fact:~~himself:~~  
36  
'I did not shape my age, I obeyed it'.



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TUB SIZED - AIR DRIED

Notes to Chapter I.

1. Thomas Macaulay; Review of 'Mémoires of Bertrand Barère' in Edinburgh Review, April 1844.
2. Défense de Barère; Un Appel à la Convention Nationale et aux Républicains Français; 1795.
3. Op. cit.
4. Op. cit.
5. R.R. Palmer; 'Twelve Who Ruled'; Princeton 1941. P.9.
6. 'Mémoires de Bertrand Barère'; Ed. Carnot & David; trans. Payen-Payen. Vol.I. P.178.
7. Défense.
8. It is interesting to compare Barère's attitude with that of Robespierre, who expressed a similar antipathy to the task of 'standing in judgement on his fellow men.'
9. F.E. Manuel; 'The Age of Reason'; Cornell U.P. 1951. P.2.
10. Mémoires; Vol. I. P.181.
11. Op. cit.
12. Défense.
13. Mémoires. P185. Vol.I.
14. Op. cit.

15. 'La Belle Paméla.' L. Ellis and J. Turquan.  
London 1924. P.207.
16. Quoted by R.R. Launay; 'Barère, L'Anacréon de la Guillotine.' Paris 1929. Ch.I.
17. 'Éloge de Louis XII', Bertrand Barère. Collected Speeches and Decrees, Longleat Collection.
18. Barère's hatred of Britain was famous. Macaulay states that only in two things was he consistent; his inconsistency and his hatred of England. The antipathy appears to be merely an aspect of Barère's xenophobia and not prompted by a specific reason.
19. In his report on the Navigation Act of September 1793, he refers to Britain as the modern Carthage.
20. His description of the commercial policy which he criticises applies only to Britain, not to Venice.
21. Quoted by Leon Gershoy; 'Barère, Reluctant Terrorist'; Princeton U.P. 1962 Ch.2.
22. 'Point du Jour'. Prologue to first edition June 19th, 1789.
23. 'Les derniers jours sous l'Ancien Régime', B. Barère; Paris 1788. Longleat.

24. Op. cit.
25. Op. cit.
26. Op. cit.
27. Op. cit.
28. Op. cit.
29. Op. cit.
30. Op. cit.
31. Mémoires; Supplement. pp. 327-330 Vol I.
32. Preamble to cahier; Quoted by Gershoy.
32. Diary; qu. Gershoy.
34. Op. cit.
35. Qu. Carnot, Preface to Mémoires.
36. Carnot. Op. cit.

Barère returned to Tarbes as the preliminary ordinance from the Seneschal Court of Bigorre summoned the 288 local communities to elect their delegate for the General Assembly of Electors. Barère was in a strong position; his recent visit to Paris had caused a stir among the local people, as visits to the Capital, even among the more prominent citizens, were rare in that insular community. The impression that he was 'in touch' with the outside world coupled with his personal prestige and reputation as a brilliant orator, liberal minded jurist and scholar of note, was sufficient to get him elected to the secondary assembly. He was one of twelve delegates for Tarbes, and presented himself, despite his noble connections, as a candidate for the Third Estate. This move caused a minor stir among the electors, and a certain amount of opposition from the people themselves. With his mind on the recent trends of thought in Paris, and in an attempt to make good his position, Barère suggested, (In his Mémoires he says he was the first to do so,) the /

the abolition of feudal rights and tithes. Far from ameliorating his position, it merely caused the murmurs of disapproval to increase. For as he himself held the rights to property in Anclades and Vieuzac and as far as Préchac and Guzouf, they were suspicious of giving the proprietor of feudal dues a mandate to abolish them. However his reputation and the lack of any really convincing opposition won him the day. He was elected as one of the two deputies for the Third Estate for the Plain, of Bigorre. This was to distinguish this part of the Pyrenees from the Valleys and the Hills, and provided a coincidental parallel with the political territory he was to occupy during his office as Deputy in the National Assembly.

His fellow-deputies, of whom he fully approved, were Pierre Dupont de Luz, his companion for the Third Estate, Jacques Rivière, deputy for the clergy, a liberal of whom Barère was particularly fond, and François de Gennes, representing the nobility. He was a local/

local nobleman, who lived on his estates as opposed to Paris, and hated the court aristocracy. These four were fairly typical of the deputies arriving in Paris from the provinces. Liberal, non-extremist, most of them had almost composed themselves the Cahiers de Doléances they carried with them. There was a parity among the grievances voiced in them which suggested a unanimity of opinion in the country as to the type of reform wanted. Taking the 288 separate cahiers composed by the people of the Bigorre districts, Barère had shaped the final ~~draft~~<sup>draft</sup> in company with the specially commissioned magistrates, so that they reflected much of his own egalitarian thought. The gist of the cahier was that all 'humiliating distinction' between the Third Estate and the privileged orders be done away with. That there should be periodic meetings of the 'Assembled Nation', and only at such meetings should any new tax be voted, when the Estates General were assembled to verify the National Debt. Equality of taxation must be/

be imposed together with equality of opportunity in the Church and the Army, and there should be a check made on all ministerial expenditure. The more hated abuses of arbitrary power such as lettres de cachet and indiscriminate examination of private mail were to be unconditionally removed, and the rights to private property, individual liberty and personal security to be irrevocably secured. There is no hint in the stipulation of the cahier or in the preamble of a desire for a radical change in governmental form. In fact the Introduction, which was Barère's own work, shows a confidence that 'the Assembled Nation, in its moderation and dignity, will enable it to profit from the national and political advantages which the virtuous and enlightened minister (Necker) has just assured it in joint action with the most popular of monarchs.<sup>1</sup>' There was no question in Barère's mind when he went to Versailles that there should be any other head of the executive but the King. The desires of his constituents were for an extension of local democracy, a rearranging of/

of the local Estates, and for a general policy of decentralisation, and there is no indication that Barère disagreed with this programme in 1789.

He believed in 'The sacred rights of the individual and the supremacy of the General Will and the authority of the National Assembly'<sup>2</sup>.

The four deputies arrived at Versailles on May 4th, just before the grand opening. Barère stayed for the first few months in lodgings belonging to the Comte d'Artois opposite the Salle des Menus Plaisirs. Mme. de Genlis provided another description of him on his first arrival, 'Il était jeune, jouissait d'une très bonne réputation, joignait à beaucoup d'esprit, un caractère insinuant, un extérieur agréable et des manières à la fois nobles, douces et réservées...'<sup>3</sup> He was charming, impressionable and very conscious of the fact that he was one of the actors in the most momentous political drama of his age. In his recollections he gives the impression of being very conscious of his youth. 'I was very young,' he says, 'to form part of the finest assembly ever/

ever held in France, so I set myself to listen and observe.' <sup>4</sup> This may be an excuse provided by hindsight for his reticence during the first weeks, for there was nothing remarkable about Barère's age, he was thirty-four. J. M. Thompson remarks upon the youth of the members of the Legislative Assembly, and upon examination of the three Revolutionary Assemblies, the average age of the deputies was not much over thirty-eight.

There is scant reference in the Mémoires to the weeks between the opening of the Estates-General and the Proclamation of the National Assembly on June 17th. The first edition of the Point du Jour was not published until June 19th, and unlike Mirabeau he did not send daily Bulletins to his constituency. After the State opening his only reference is to the King... 'The King was alone with his deficit and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, and an apparent desire to put an end to the ills of France.' <sup>5</sup> He was immediately attracted by Mirabeau and Bailly. 'I made,' he says, 'every effort to make the acquaintance of the/

the illustrious deputies, my youth and admiration<sup>6</sup> for talent were my only claims to their notice.' He did not speak in the Assembly until the 15th of June, when he replied to the motion of Sieyès that the Third Estate constitute itself as the Assembly of Known Representatives of the French Nation as the other two orders had refused to verify their powers in the presence of all the representatives. 'Although one of the youngest deputies, I ventured to speak and was much encouraged because I dwelt on the question of how to constitute a National Assembly'<sup>7</sup>. The first edition of Point du Jour begins with an account of the struggle over the verification of powers and the adoption of the title of National Assembly. In the journal he gives a summary of his speech calling the members of Third Estate to regenerate the nation, to establish, not uphold a constitution. He pleads with them to begin again the history of the Estates-General. With reference to Turgot he declares that the rights of man are not founded on the annals of history but in the nature of man./

man. There is some indication, however, that his lawyer's mind was troubled by the arrogation of the title and authority vested in the Estates as a whole by the Commons alone. He realised that some assertion of authority by the Third Estate was necessary to break the stranglehold of the First and Second, on the government of the country.

'This solemn deliberation of the Commons spared France a dissolution and checkmated at one blow the wretched greed of the clergy and the arrogant attitude of the nobility.'<sup>8</sup> He excused the illegality of the Assembly's decree concerning taxation by saying, 'There are times when we must momentarily violate general laws in the interests of public security.'<sup>9</sup> These sentiments he was to repeat in very similar words during the massacres of Lyons in December 1793. On the question of the title itself, Barère suggested a rather long-winded, pedantic version of Sieyès's original proposal, - Great Majority Party of the French Nation within the National Assembly.- However, after the debate, he finally voted in favour of/

of Le Grand's suggestion for the simple title of National Assembly. 'Le silence profond qui régnait dans toute l'assemblée animait le grandeur de l'objet dont on était occupé,'<sup>10</sup> he reports in Point du Jour. His own account in the journal gives some indication of how he himself was moved by the occasion, despite his doubts over the legal niceties.

In David's picture commemorating the Tennis Court Oath, Barère is portrayed sitting on a stool, pen poised over a scroll, presumably committing the scene to paper for the Point du Jour. This journal, which provided a day to day account of the workings of the Assembly from June 19th 1789 to October 11th 1791, was the joint work of Barère and a fellow-journalist from Tarbes, Dominique Domerville. Robert Launay claims that Domerville did most of the work,<sup>11</sup> and certainly the majority of the reports seem to be his. There is a definite distinction between the style of reporting of the most outstanding events, which is flamboyant and interspersed with comment, and the/

the day-to-day routine accounts which are clipped and factual. Leon Gershoy asserts that the journal was popular, bringing in about 3,000 livres a month,<sup>12</sup> but Launay claims that its appeal was limited to the 'aristocratique' circles, such as the Valois club and the Orléanist faction.<sup>13</sup> Its limited circulation he attributes to its veiled criticism of the left wing faction of the Assembly, and he states that it was spurned by the Jacobin club. His censure against the mode of reporting is too severe, for its main aim appears to have been to support the working of the Assembly as a whole, and any overt criticism of any one faction is absent throughout. He was accused, late in 1789, by a journalist from Bigorre, of spending more time on reporting events than helping to shape them.<sup>14</sup> Whether this was the same journalist who was to accuse him of inaccurate reporting of the Peace and War debate in 1790 is not known, for both letters are unsigned, but if so, the attack is unjustified and springs probably from professional jealousy./

jealousy.

After the events of 20th June, which culminated in the Tennis Court resolution, Barère shows increasing mistrust of the King in all his reports and letters. In the Preamble to the Point du Jour he attacks the very sentiments he himself had expressed the previous year. He claims that the idolatry which had attended the concept of French Monarchy was strangling freedom of thought and individual expression. He states that the image of the King as being God of gods in his temple of Versailles has become anathema to the French people. He says of the discourse which followed the King's order to the three estates after the Royal Session of 23rd June, 'On y a reconnu le stile adopté depuis long-temps par les rois, un stile qui s'oppose, pour conserver la dignité du trône, à l'épanchement du coeur dans le sein des peuples, qui concentre la sensibilité dans l'âme du monarque, pour faire parler au maître; qui substitue la gravité au sentiment, l'affection de la sévérité à la douceur du caractère, le ton /

ton impérieux du despote au langage de l'amour  
qu'un roi doit avoir pour ses peuples.' <sup>15</sup> Whether  
his fluctuating doubts concerning the position of  
the King were influenced by his own impressions  
or by anti-royalist reports and feeling within the  
Assembly is hard to judge. He gives an account  
in his Mémoires of some 'unknown facts' relating  
to the King's attitude to the situation in June  
1789 after the Royal Session. He gives no  
indication, however, whether these were 'unknown'  
to him at the time, or when his informant, one of  
the King's bodyguards, gave him the information.  
He states that after the King had left the session,  
Artois approached him saying that the deputies  
of the Commons refused to leave and that they  
deserved to be cut down with the sabres of the  
bodyguards. The King refused to reply to Artois  
and ordered the coachman to drive immediately to  
the Castle. Artois apparently insisted that the  
order be given immediately for the Third Estate to  
be 'cut down' or all would be lost. Louis,  
losing his temper replied, 'Go and do it yourself!'/

yourself!' Finally after Artois' further insistence that the order must come from the King, he cried, 'Go to the devil!' and then, 'To the Castle! - The Castle!' He left Artois standing, ineffectually watching the coach disappear. <sup>16</sup> If this story is true, and Barère knew of it before July, it may account for his periodic statements of doubt concerning the strength of the King, but also in support of Louis' goodwill toward the people. In a conversation he held with Mounier during July, shortly after the fall of the Bastille, he stated plainly that although France was 'in mid ocean, without sails, without helm, and without ballast, she could only ever be a constitutional monarchy,' for this was the only form of government she understood and would accept.

The dismissal of Necker on July 11th did not move Barère to fury as it did the people of Paris. Nor did he see in this act the casus belli for the Storming of the Bastille. He had never really trusted Necker's ability, despite his brief praise for him in the preamble to the/

the Bigorre cahier. In the supplement to the Point du Jour for July he inserted an article entitled, 'A Patriot', unsigned, as were all his reports, but very definitely his own work. It is a sarcastic attack in which he hails Necker as a modern Sully who has visions of reshaping France but does nothing about actually doing so. He states that although he invoked the Estates-General for his own purpose he could do nothing to hold back the tide which was inevitably to sweep away the foundation of the old state. 'Hâte-toi d'arriver au milieu de nous, âge tutélaire de la France! que ta présence désirée vienne enfin calmer nos terreurs, nous rendre à l'espoir, recréer notre crédit expirant et déformer nos haines sangüinaires! C'est ton Roi, c'est l'auguste assemblée que tu convoques, c'est la France entière qui t'en pressent, qui t'en conjurent et qui attendent ce sacrifice, digne de ta gloire et de ta vertu.' <sup>17</sup> Realising that Necker's dismissal, far from being the root cause of the popular uprising of the 14th, was merely/

merely the spark which set alight the fire of unrest caused by the scarcity of food in the capital, Barère was one of the first deputies in the Assembly to actually blame monopolists for withholding supplies until near-famine conditions prevailed, and then selling at a higher price than the vast majority of the population could afford. He declared on July 4th that there was no real shortage of grain, but that the hoarders were preventing the free distribution of basic commodities, and that they were the cause of the famine which paralysed Paris in 1789. He pleaded with the Assembly, 'Il faut donner du pain au peuple avant de lui donner des loix.' He proposed that a commission be established to examine the means of dispersing grain, a motion of which Robespierre was in full support. The commission would be drawn from members of the Assembly and due to the urgency of his plea, he himself was appointed for the districts of Auch and Pau. He then began the arduous task of sifting evidence and gleaning information from/

from reluctant sources against the rising tide of looting and burning which was beginning in the provinces in the summer of 1789.

It is difficult to understand why Barère saw the 14th of July as being the real beginning of the Revolution. It is as if he sees nothing significant in any of the events prior to the Storming of the Bastille. 'Thus the Revolution was before 14th of July only conceived and prepared for; it was the material fact of the unforeseen storming of the Bastille by the mob which started and consecrated the Revolution.'<sup>18</sup> The lawyer in him must have realised that real beginning of the Revolution was marked by the Proclamation of the National Assembly on June 17th, which was challenged by the legal power in the person of the King and the ministry, but which endured to be consecrated by the Tennis Court Oath. He always had, throughout the Revolution, a fear of the mob and of popular violence. He supported the declaration of Martial Law on October 21st 1789 and again in July 1791. He was continually/

continually to refer to the threat posed by la canaille and the section armies, during the Terror. Yet he saw in the storming of the Bastille the real turning of the tide. In his Mémoires he claims that the 14th of July drew together all the sections of the population, the people and the 'agents of despotism' and the King's guards. He claims, 'The Revolution was not effected until July 14th, under the inspiration of civil and political liberty and the strong arms of the population of Paris and the French Guards.' He also insinuates that much of the momentum for the insurrection came from the area of Paris which was to become the Cordelier Section. It is perhaps not so much the event itself which seemed to him so significant as the atmosphere in the Assembly and in the capital during the successive days. Although he describes Paris as being 'no better than chaos' during the days immediately following, he does appear to believe that the general effect of the news throughout France was instantaneous and from that moment the Revolution/

Revolution became a 'national Affair'. He rather naively attributed, in his report on the day in the Point du Jour, the sentiments of those present at Versailles to the mob of Paris and the representatives at the Hôtel de Ville. 'Amid the fear and the uncertainty, the public were only reassured by the ideals and the courage of the representatives and the good heart of the King.'<sup>19</sup> The fact that the heroes of the Bastille looked more to their representatives of the electoral assemblies, and the hastily formed Commune, than to the rather remote representatives in Versailles seems to have escaped Barère's notice when he visited Paris on the 16th in company with the deputies specially chosen to accompany the King. He was also one of the deputies who went in person to persuade the King on the 15th to withdraw his troops from the vicinity of Paris and recall Necker. This last stipulation was not Barère's idea of a solution to the problem, but he acquiesced in the decision. Of the King's visit to Paris on the 16th the accounts vary from the/

the loyal account in the Point du Jour to the highly critical description in the Mémoires, which has been affected by the events of the intervening years. But it is also obvious from letters to Bigorre, written at the time, that Barère was doubtful of the efficacy of royal intervention at this, or any point in the Revolution. He is enthusiastically pro-royalist in his description of the King and Queen on the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville, and <sup>in</sup> ~~of~~ the account of the reception of the crowd to Louis on his arrival. 'Cette explosion d'amour pour le roi, si naturel à des français, a été tempérée ensuite bien difficilement par les réflexions des meilleurs orateurs de l'Assemblée...' <sup>20</sup> but, as if anticipating the next visit of the King to Paris, he goes on to say, 'le silence des peuples est la leçon des rois.' It was as if Barère were measuring his own confidence in the King by the confidence demonstrated by the people throughout 1789 and 1790. As the cheering dies down, so does Barère's faith in the monarchy.

During the summer of 1789 Barère moved/

moved from his temporary lodgings to Number 13, Rue des Filles de St. Thomas, near the Manège, very close to the apartments of the Duke of Orléans. He was a member of the social circle of the Orléans clique which was to be accused of attachment to this faction after the Pamela affair. He participated in the activities of the political clubs such as Des Amis des Noirs, which still functioned during the summer and autumn of 1789. He joined the meeting of the recently-arrived, garrulous Breton deputies in the café Amaury, and after the Assembly moved to Paris in October he was among the first members to take his seat in the convent of St. Jacques in the Rue St. Honoré. He was also among those who broke away from the left-wing club des Amis de Vérité and joined the 1789 club of La Fayette. But by the beginning of 1790 he had returned to the Jacobins. He was at the meeting in the café Amaury on the night when the suggestion was made that the Duc d'Aiguillon should lead the field in a renunciation of privilege of class and that it should be suggested in the/

the Assembly that all feudal dues and services should be redeemable by purchase. D'Aiguillon was forestalled in this noble gesture by the Duc de Noailles, who had little property worth surrendering but a good deal of enthusiasm for the moment. Barère, however, puts forward a further claim to originality. He states that it was he who had suggested, on 3rd August, to Talleyrand, Aiguillon, and Noailles that feudal rights should be abolished, and that he himself would be willing to surrender his own dues without compensation. Perhaps he was farsighted enough to realise that there would be little or no compensation forthcoming, with the finances of the country in such a turmoil. Barère's description of the proceeding in the Assembly on the night of the 4th August is famous for the vivacity of the account and for the impression he creates of tension and expectancy associated with this Night of St. Bartholemew of Privilege. The report is Barère's own, not Domerville's and is typical of his most hyperbolic, rhetorical style, which he/

he used on all momentous occasions. Nothing can profane the patriotism of the French Nobility, 'Cette (journée) du 14 Juillet fut affreuse par le complot qu'elle couvrit de son voile, Cette (journée) du 4 Août sera à jamais mémorable par les bienfaits qu'elle a fait éclore.' He recreates the atmosphere, from Target's attempt at the beginning of the session to enforce order in the provinces, through the tedium of minor quibbles over constitutional points to the thundering applause which greeted Noailles' demand for complete equality of taxation and the abolition of all feudal dues. 'Cette assemblée, si politique, si morale, si profondément occupée de déclarations métaphysiques, marche subitement à des idées plus utiles, à des résultats plus certains; elle parle d'abattre les privilèges'.<sup>21</sup> Thus he gives the impression that the whole occasion was carried forward on a wave of spontaneous enthusiasm. In his Mémoires he gives a different account, and one probably nearer the truth. There he claims that the whole proceeding had been arranged in lobbies beforehand, /

beforehand, and that the few really ardent supporters of the measure won a speedy victory over those who wished to be more cautious and that once the first renunciation had been made the others followed as if under some compulsion from without.<sup>22</sup> He himself, in his Mémoires, rather testily complains that whereas he gave everything, his post as magistrate, that of councillor in the Sénéchaussée court of Bigorre and 12,000 francs' worth of feudal dues, others surrendered little. At the end of the Point du Jour account he proclaims, 'Jamais les Français n'ont mieux suivi cet esprit de leur nation que dans cette fameuse nuit où les provinces et les ordres sont venus tour à tour abattre leurs privilèges devant l'espérance d'une constitution nationale.' Later he made a specific request, probably bearing in mind the triumphant court case of earlier years, that the Order of Malta be disinherited. He argued that this body was one of the most rigid supporters of privilege within its ranks and in its dealings with those not of the order. In his/

his Mémoires he makes scant reference to this episode, and lays a much greater emphasis on the chateaux-burning in the provinces. He implies that the night of 4th August merely gave the official seal to the de facto revolution of the provinces.

Barère's attitude to the October Days shows how unaware he was of the undercurrents of the Revolution during the autumn and winter of 1789. He chose the very moment that the people of Paris entered the Revolution as a positive force to support the image of the King, describing him in the Point du Jour for October 6th, as 'the most just, popular and adored monarch in Europe'. It was the very moment that the mob was demonstrating its own lack of trust and resentment under the window of the Royal family. It is doubtful whether Barère in fact wrote the report on the march to Versailles, but in the account appears the rhetorical question, 'Who could really think that the capital would ever be separated in wishes and interests from the majority/

majority of the nation?' The reporter speaks of the 'courageous citizens of Paris to whom we owe the two great revolutions which by a single stroke destroyed aristocracy and despotism'.<sup>23</sup> Whether he believed this statement, of dubious veracity, or not, is hard to judge, but certainly by the time he wrote his Mémoires he believed very differently. 'It is for history to record these deplorable scenes of violence and cruelty,' he says some thirty years after the fall of Robespierre. Then he declares, 'Paris is not convenient for national assemblies; there exists influences at once corrupting, chaotic and calumnious.'<sup>25</sup> an interesting comment in the light of his later attitude towards federalism. He had a suspicion of the power of Paris, as had most of the deputies who came from the provinces far removed from the capital, and it must have been with mixed feelings that he saw the Assembly move to Paris under pressure from the mob. He speaks in his Mémoires of an interesting incident, shedding a clear light on his real feelings at the/

the time. He reports that on the 6th of October he was one of the deputies who returned with the King, 'I shared in this good work,' he says, speaking of the action of the mob, 'But all the time one of the King's bodyguards was hidden in my lodging, away from the fury of the crowd.'

His main concern during the furor of the October Days was for the success of the Declaration of Right. While the mob had been gathering outside the windows of Versailles, prior to their interruption of the debate in the Assembly, Barère had been speaking in support of the independent registering of the Declaration. Despite his remarks on the goodwill of the King, and his solicitous attitude toward the Royal Family during the journey to Paris, he had expressed the view that the King's signature was unnecessary on the Declaration of Rights as this was not a constitutional article. Such rights, he claimed, dated back to the time before kings and were independent of the throne. (pdj) It was only necessary that the King publish, not /

not decree. In this he had come into open conflict with Mirabeau, for the first time. The latter claimed that the King was the sole head of the executive and that in his capacity as head of the body politic, he had both the right and the obligation to decree the basic tenets of the Constitution. Barère had already questioned the right by which the King could oppose the constitution, 'which is to deny the liberty of his people'. On the 2nd of October he had spoken in the Assembly during the debate on relative merits of a loan or increase of taxation, of the necessity for an immediate discussion of the constitution which would provide the basis for a set of laws which would be respected and adhered to by the people. After the debate he had remarked to Mounier, 'All depends on passing a Declaration of Rights,' and then concerning the form of government, 'After the fall of the two orders it would be imprudent to reinstate them by creating two chambers as in England. It would entice them to greater reaction.' According to his Mémoires,/

Mémoires, Cicé, who had been present during the conversation, communicated his ideas and his urgent appeal for a declaration of rights to the Constitutional Committee.<sup>26</sup> He expressed his anxiety concerning the drafting of a constitution in Point du Jour. 'It is time to make clear and just laws,' he stated, 'and to define all powers.' During the autumn his faith in the King's goodwill and desire to co-operate with the Assembly was unshaken. He accused the ministry of hindering the work of the Assembly and of preventing the King from giving his support to the deputies. 'Ce n'est plus le temps des oracles',<sup>27</sup> he angrily declares in Point du Jour. He criticised Robert-Pierre de Franche-Comté for his determination to relegate the King to the position of a puppet. He supported the concept expressed by Barnarve that 'la personne du roi et l'Assemblée Nationale sont inséparables.' There is no question of his loyalty to the monarchy at this time. He believed the King should be head of the executive and should be respected both for his position and his royal status. His/

His comment after the King had been forced to accept the Declaration of Rights is almost paternal in tone, 'La réponse de sa Majesté a été analogue au voeu de l'assemblée et au caractère connu de ce bon roi, qui n'a jamais cessé d'aimer son peuple, et à qui l'histoire n'attribuera aucune des erreurs de sa règne.'<sup>29</sup> This loyalty to the monarch was to remain firm from October 1789 until the King's ignominious return from Varennes.

On September 10th the Assembly rejected the proposal for a Second Chamber. It is doubtful whether Barère's own stand on this issue had in any way influenced the final debate, but he had by that month made himself known among the moderates who veered slightly to the left of the centre. On the subject of the Veto he is non-committal. He reported in Point du Jour after the decision was taken to accept the Suspensive Veto of the King by 728 votes to 224, 'only time and experience will show the wisdom of this decree.'<sup>30</sup> Despite Barère's sympathy for Louis at this time he was more in agreement with the Left/

Left Wing of the Assembly on this issue, not so much because he was opposed to monarchical control over the government but because he could see such a power being used to paralyse the workings of the Assembly.

During the autumn of 1789 and the early part of 1790 he was involved with two of the main committees of the Assembly. Elected in November 1789 as a member of the Comité de Lettres de Cachet, with Mirabeau, the Marquis de Castellan and M. Frétean, he, like his fellow committee-member, felt specially qualified to deal with such business. In fact he states that Mirabeau did very little work within the committee, while he himself and the other two dealt in great detail with reports on all the prisons in France, and in examining the individual cases of all persons incarcerated as a result of a lettre de cachet. One of the most outstanding cases which he laid before the Assembly in his report in December, dealt with the Comte de Créqui, who had been imprisoned by arrangement with his family in a/

a castle at Stettin which was under the jurisdiction of the Prussians. Barère was particularly indignant over this case, as he was forced to examine the possibilities of other Frenchmen imprisoned in fortresses owned by another European nation. His report is full of the most detailed accounts of the prisoners in the Bastille, although he did not have much 'living evidence' to corroborate his account.

31

The most important work he did for the Constituent Assembly was in connection with the Comité des Domaines. His final report for this committee was not presented until May 1791, and then he was again challenged in connection with this during the Iron Chest debate in November 1792. He worked hard on the reports for the committee, which dealt with all woodland and open country which had been held by the King or the local seigneurs under les droits de chasse, and had thus become devastated and useless. He pointed out in his first report in December 1789, how much land was being wasted which could be used/

used for the cultivation of timber and for experimental agriculture. His physiocratic views shine through this report as he urged the Assembly to make immediate arrangements for the land to be taken over by the State for industrial purposes. Yet this view conflicted sharply with his personal ideas concerning the sanctity of property and he spent many hours determining to what extent the sequestered property really belonged to the nobility and how much of it had been acquired for hunting simply because it bordered on the local estates. A special request was put to him from the King, on the recommendation of Artois, that he persuade the Assembly to preserve the King's own hunting rights, as the chase was Louis' only real pleasure. In the Iron Chest debate it is reported that Artois had suggested that he ask Barère the favour because it was known that he was a supporter of the Monarchy and of the rights of private property. This may have been true, but Barère was scrupulously fair in partitioning only the land round the main royal residences, the/

the Louvre, Versailles, Tuileries, Marly, St.-Germain and St.-Cloud. Also, he stipulated that the land must be enclosed so as not to border dangerously onto the private property of others or to risk the damaging of agricultural land by the hunt. He presented his reports, 'Sur les chasses du Roi' in September 1790, amid angry murmurs from the Left. He pleaded that the King, as head of the Nation, be granted certain extraordinary rights, pointing out that the King's right to hunt on certain days was not a violation of the rights of property but a mark of respect to the King himself. 'Cette suspension momentanée et courte de l'exercice d'un droit de propriété n'est pas un attribut de la royauté, c'est un hommage pour Louis XVI.' He pointed out that after all the royal parcs had been enclosed there would be no infringement of the law regarding property surrounding the royal estates, but until then the King was to be allowed to hunt freely on certain days. The decree was passed giving the King the right to hunt in areas around the royal domains/

domains providing the municipal authorities of  
that area were informed before hand. <sup>33</sup>

Throughout his period of office as deputy to the Constituent Assembly, Barère kept in close contact with his constituency. He was very anxious that the people who had elected him should feel that he really was the champion of their rights. He had been disturbed to hear of reports during 1790 that his house had been attacked, and wrote a worried letter to them demanding what it was he had done so to offend. He pointed out that he had been among the first to renounce his privileges, and that he had done so willingly with the welfare of the people of Vieuzac and his other domains at heart. He had received letters from the Electoral Assemblies full of confidence in his goodwill and assurance that he had their full support in what ever he undertook. His great triumph, and the high-water-mark of his career as deputy in the first assembly, was greeted with joy by constituents, and secured their confidence in him for all time. He/

He succeeded, in the winter of 1789-90 in establishing Bigorre as a *département*, and what is even more surprising, gaining the recognition of Tarbes as the chief town. When the first proposals for the reorganisation of local government were presented to the Assembly in December 1789, he realised with horror that Bigorre was about to be taken over by Béarn, an area which had long waged a private war on economic and social fronts with the area of Bigorre. Barère threw all his energy into compiling a discourse which would force the Assembly to realise what a disaster such an amalgamation would be. He spoke for nearly an hour and a half 'sur la nécessité d'établir en Bigorre un département dont la ville de Tarbes soit le chef-lieu et sur la nécessité d'annexer au pays de Bigorre une certaine quantité de pays voisins, et principalement ceux qui en étaient autrefois des dépendances'.<sup>34</sup> He used the full force of his picturesque style of oratory in the speech, describing at length the beauties of Tarbes, the difficulties of the/

the geographical position with respect to Béarn, and the lack of any common understanding between the two peoples. 'Croît-on que le Béarn voulût donner sa part des cent mille écus pour réparer les chemins des eaux minérales et nos ponts? Croît-on qu'il voulût payer nos dettes et nous les siennes?' He pleaded that if Bigorre became the Department, then the town of Tarbes was the only town worthy of being its capital, for most of the other larger towns of the area were too far-flung and lacked reasonable roadways and canals. He dismissed, half-way through the speech, any possibility of Béarn taking over the Bigorre district by stating that they had different laws, culture and customs and that 'les deux nations sont encore plus séparées par les moeurs et par une forte antipathie qui rendrait à jamais orageuse toute liaison entr'eux et surtout une liaison de dépendance.' He won his case, having appealed for support to Mirabeau, who at that time was very favourably disposed toward Barère. As the two dined together twice a week/

week it is possible that the Elder Statesman of the Revolution agreed over dinner to support Barère's demand. The joint effect of Mirabeau's tremendous power of persuasion and Barère's rhetoric must have been more than sufficient to sway the Assembly over such a minor point as the Bigorre versus Béarn affair.

From the first week of the meeting of the Estates-General, Barère had admired Mirabeau, as a person, and orator and as a politician. Gradually, toward the end of 1790 he was beginning to suspect that Mirabeau was playing a double game as far as the Assembly and the Monarchy were concerned. He was right, and the other deputies likewise became less enthusiastic over their response to the thundering power of Mirabeau's voice, and the persuasion of his argument. It had taken a stand against him in November 1789 when the decree had been passed excluding deputies from holding office in the ministry. Barère had agreed with the motion, though it is unlikely that he himself voted in its favour, mainly to prevent/

prevent Mirabeau from becoming a prominent minister. He was certainly aware of Mirabeau's position, and regarded him with a little trepidation. During the summer of 1790 Mirabeau offered to unite his own journal, Le Courrier de Provence with the Point du Jour. Not surprisingly Barère refused the offer, but in gracious terms. He pointed out that the 'sheep of the Pyrenees do not herd with the wolves', and that Mirabeau was a 'power which would soon crush the humble editor of Point du Jour.'

The real stand against Mirabeau, and the most firm statement of his own position, was made during the great debate 'Sur l'exercice du droit de faire la paix *et* la guerre,' on 22nd May 1790. The debate was precipitated by the appeal of Spain, in the name of the old Family Compact, to France for armed support in her dispute with England over Nootka Sound. In this instance Barère's constitutional convictions and his hatred of wars of aggression came before his antipathy to England. Mirabeau, in a real effort to establish the King/

King as the true head of an executive with more than nominal power, attempted to persuade the Assembly that the right of declaring war or peace was vested in the King alone, as head of the executive. The motion had in fact been opened by the Archbishop of Aix, who had stated that there was no question as to where the right to declare war lay, and that the Assembly, as a legislative body only was not in a position to question the possibility of abuse by the executive of its powers. Dupont objected, on the grounds that the legislature, always assembled, could not transmit the power of beginning an offensive war into the King's hands, because the legislature does not hold this right in the first place. This was a mere constitutional quibble, but it opened one of the most furious debates of the whole session, and brought into question the real nature of legislative power of one-chamber government. The debate reached its climax on May 20th when Mirabeau delivered his long speech on the Right of Declaring War and was defeated by the full force/

force of the centre and left of the Assembly. Barère spoke in support of Sieyès' reply to Mirabeau, in which he stated that the right of peace and war belonged to the nation and that the exercise of this power is given to the legislature and the executive jointly, 'de la part du roi, au nom de la nation.' Barère argued that since the nation is sovereign, it alone had the dread right to declare war. Cazalès objected; he argued that the plenary power lay with the King, however vague the term 'King' may be. They had already agreed that the legislature formulate laws, but a declaration of war or peace was not a law.<sup>36</sup> The real heart of Barère's objections to the King holding this right lay in his fear that France would be plunged into a war with England, which she could not afford, and which would undo the work of the Assembly and open the door to arbitrary government just at a time when the country was at its most vulnerable. Had the debate arisen as a matter of constitutional procedure, and not been precipitated by an actual/

actual request for an alliance, then his attitude *might* have been less absolute, but this is mere speculation. There is an interesting slant on Barère's attitude provided by a letter sent to him by an unnamed journalist, attacking him for his report in Point du Jour of this debate. The journalist points out that Barère places much more emphasis on the contribution of Barnave, Lameth and Dupont than on that of Mirabeau. He points out that while the speeches of these deputies are reported in full, that of Mirabeau, so much more important and eloquent, is cut to a few lines. This is a valid criticism, as this is exactly what Barère has done. In the report for 22nd May, he has stated that Mirabeau's speech, though powerful, is far too long to quote in full, and in fact he gives a very brief summary. The journalist attacks him on the grounds that he has slighted Mirabeau, whom he (the journalist) sees as the one conciliating voice between the royalist faction and the Assembly, and that as Barère objected to Mirabeau's view he has omitted the speech through/

through prejudice. This is perhaps true, as Barère did feel very strongly about this issue, and must have been aware, and forced to admit with chagrin, that the most powerful and convincing speech of the entire session was that of Mirabeau.<sup>37</sup>

During the latter part of 1790 Barère drew further and further towards left of centre, away from the atmosphere of the Genlis Salon and the 1789 Club, towards the Jacobins, away from Mirabeau and Robespierre. The deputy who had in October 1789 favoured excluding wage-servants from the list of active citizens and had opposed the inclusion of non-propertied citizens to the legislature, in 1791 was demanding that action be taken against émigrés and praising Robespierre's fervour for the interests of humanity, describing him as 'this independent spirit who has always linked social laws with the eternal laws of equality of natural rights.' Yet the two attitudes are not incompatible. He opposed the marc d'argent qualification yet he did not oppose Le Chapelier's law forbidding illegal assemblies or protest./

protest. For Robespierre had done exactly the same, but whereas Barère was approaching an almost pure Girondin policy, Robespierre was beginning to formulate the programme which was to become known as Jacobinism. There is, however, a confusion apparent in Barère's attitude towards policy during 1790 and 1791 which Robespierre does not display. Barère was bitterly upset over the King's flight to Varennes and it is difficult to determine what his position with regard to monarchy really was at that time. He was one of the deputies sent to meet the King on his enforced return and to conduct him to the Assembly. His comments are blatantly contradictory, even in his Mémoires, written long after the event, in which one would expect to find some consistency of opinion. Of the atmosphere within the Assembly he says in Point du Jour, 'Les motions se succédèrent avec rapidité au milieu d'un silence profond et du calme que donne la vertu originelle aux représentants d'une grande nation, qui prouvera combien elle est digne de la liberté.'

38

Everyone felt delivered/

delivered from the evils of Kings. He claims that a republic was not called for but the people had republican sentiments without realising it. In a description of the political climate of the moment he claimed that the Spirit of the Age was for democracy; the Spirit of the Jacobins was for a Republic; the feeling of the National Assembly was solely for a monarchy. This assessment, given in the Mémoires, is very much a later view. After the Flight to Varennes both the Assembly and Barère had lost faith in the monarch and the dissatisfaction with the idea of a constitutional monarchy was no longer confined to the extreme left. Barère cautiously attacked Louis in early July in a speech on émigrés. 'L'émigré perd le nom de citoyen et devient un étranger puisqu'il renonce à l'obligation d'être présent et de verser son sang pour la Patrie.'<sup>39</sup> The King had attempted to escape from the country and was therefore to be considered an émigré, despite the fact that his attempt had been thwarted. In his Mémoires he claims that he was among ~~of~~ a group of thirty-five members of the left of the assembly who wished to

to reinstate Louis. He claims that this group was willing to take over the attempts of Mirabeau to imbue the King with greater power and to abolish the decree excluding members of the Assembly from the ministry. To this end Barère was opposed to a revision of the constitution, and, so he claims, was the majority of the assembly.<sup>40</sup> He states that the thirty-five members were willing to re-open negotiations with Louis, despite the attempted emigration, and he refers to this group as being 'a working number' which would have succeeded in swaying the rest of the assembly away from the idea of revision. He himself did attempt to return cautiously to the more moderate section of the assembly, after his outburst against Louis, but was being over-optimistic in his belief that the deputies were generally willing to forgive the King. Lafayette was the only person who could have taken over the position as mediator between court and assembly after the death of Mirabeau, and he was under suspicion already for the part he played in the Flight to Varennes.

Barère had been driven to anti-monarchical opinions as a result of Varennes but he was forced away from republicanism by the Champ de Mars. In Point

Point du Jour <sup>he</sup> blamed the Flight to Varennes for provoking such 'anti-French' sentiments. In reaction he was among those who broke with the Jacobins and joined the Feuillants'. 'Les vrais Amis de la Constitution seront désormais assemblés aux Feuillants. Des idées républicanaires sont aussi contraires au bonheur de la France.' Within weeks however, he realised that he had joined the ranks of reactionaries who seemed about to reinstate the 1789 club, with all its monarchical principles. He hastily rejoined the Jacobins and was hailed by Fréron for having done so. But the momentary break was remembered and was to be used against him after Thermidor. But Launay again suspects his motives, and says of him, 'Il avait acquis déjà cette connaissance du métier qui permet d'opérer le glissement opportun dans la confusion des crises.'<sup>41</sup> He was to make many such 'glissements' during his future career as a deputy. It is probably this instinct for political survival that prompted him to eulogise Robespierre on his return to the Jacobins, referring to him as 'That/

'That incorruptible deputy who has never deviated in his views.' The same could never be said of Barère, and it is as if he were aware of this. It is also interesting to note that this was the first reference made in print to Robespierre as being 'Incorruptible', the adjective which was to remain with him throughout the Revolution.

Barère had supported the self-denying ordinances of May 1791 on the grounds that indefinite re-election would lead to inequality between the governors and the governed, create ministerial domination and corruption, and with reference to England, create politicians along the lines of Fox, Burke and Pitt. By submitting the legislature to re-election every two years the true representation of the people would be preserved and would not threaten the country with aristocratic legislation. He could see in perpetual appointments a monopoly of power similar to that held by the Parlements developing among 'professional politicians'. In his Mémoires he contradicts his statement of 1791 and declares/

declares that the Constituent Assembly committed suicide, and that it was due to the self-denying ordinance that the Constitution, so precious to France, failed. If he really believed this at the time of writing his Mémoires, then it would appear that he understood the Revolution less after it than during its course. He also claims that 'there was not one good citizen, not one wise person who did not desire in 1791 that the Constituent Assembly should resolve itself into a Legislative Assembly'. But in his Mémoires Barère speaks only of the sublime and invaluable legacy of the Constituent Assembly; he sees it as the only great period of the Revolution, and the only Assembly which contributed to the growth and progress of France.<sup>42</sup> But this is a totally subjective view, for it was not the Constituent Assembly which turned Barère into a terrorist. It had made him into a Revolutionary, and a politician.

Notes to Chapter II.

1. Quoted by Gershoy. P 62.
2. Gershoy; P.67.
3. Précis de la conduite de Mme. de Genlis depuis la Révolution. 1st edition 1796. Quoted; Carnot, Preface.
4. Mémoires. Vol I. P.207.
5. Op.cit. P.209.
6. Op. cit. P.207.
7. Op. cit. P.210.
8. 'Les Alors ou L'Origine des Mesures Révolutionnaires'; Paris 1795. P32.
9. 'Point du Jour', Prologue to first edition.No I.
11. Launay. P38.
12. Gershoy. P.71.
13. Launay P.39.
14. Unsigned letter from Bigorre to M. Barère de Vieuzac; Longleat Collection; Letters and Decrees.
15. 'Point du Jour', for June 24th 1789.
16. Mémoires; P.216. Vol I.
17. Supplement to Point du Jour for July 1789.  
Incl. Mémoires; P327. Vol I.
18. Quoted, Carnot; Preface to Mémoires
19. 'Point du Jour' for July ~~for~~ 15th 1789.



un département, dont la ville de Tarbes soit le chef-lieu. 1789. pp22.

35. Decree making Bigorre a département; Jan 15. 1790.

36. 'Point du Jour', for May 21st;

'Mercure Universel' for May 21st and 22nd.

37. Letters and Reports relating to Barère, Vol II.

Longleat Collection.

38. 'Point du Jour', for June 22nd-23rd, 1790.

39. Opinion sur les mesures de police à prendre contre les émigrans; prononcée dans la séance du Samedi 9 Juillet 1791; Moniteur,

40. Mémoires, P.277. Vol I.

41. R. Launay. P.107.

42. In his Défense, Barère claims that the dissention in the National Assembly during the end of 1790 was caused principally by Lameth and Barnarve.

On September 14th 1791 Louis accepted the constitution which was designed to set France free of despotism and establish, it was believed, true representative government. It had taken nearly two years to evolve and was to completely collapse after a further two years. By the time Barère reentered the political arena the principles for which the Constituent Assembly had worked so hard were no longer applicable to the state of France. The deputies had strived to bring into effect a constitutional monarchy which recognised the sovereign power of the people. Obeying the principle that, at all times, the legislature must be truly representative of the people, they had voted themselves out of office and departed, making way for an assembly of legislators already practised in the art of politics and law-making.

Barère stayed long enough in Paris, -from September 1792 to January 1793 - to realise that the Legislative Assembly was faced with problems more intense and widespread than those with which the Constituent Assembly had had to contend. The/

The right wing of the new assembly advocated a Feuillant policy of conciliation between the monarchy and the nation through revision of the constitution and a non-aggression pact with Austria. What was to emerge as a Girondin faction, or the group of deputies which affiliated itself with Brissot, <sup>1</sup> saw a vigorous war policy as being the only answer to dissension at home and mounting hostility in Europe. Barère, as strongly against any war policy as he had ever been, and yet suspicious of a conciliation with the monarchy, decided that he would not involve himself in even the fringe politics of the capital, and had no wish to enter the ministerial ranks. He was offered, tentatively, the position of Minister of the Interior and would probably have succeeded better than Roland in the position, but he felt disinclined to accept and begged leave of absence from his position as judge in the High Court of Appeals. He returned to Tarbes.

He did not spend an entirely peaceful interlude in his home town. He was welcomed back/

back with honour but was almost immediately attacked in the local Jacobin club for his moderate views. He bought a considerable amount of local property which had been confiscated from the church and this caused considerable adverse comment among the more extremist Jacobins and also plunged him into debt, which he did not succeed in clearing during the rest of his lifetime. He followed the events in Paris as closely as was possible during his stay in Tarbes and communicated with ~~those~~ of his friends as much as occasion demanded. When Dumouriez was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in March, Barère, who had known the General well during the days of the Constituent Assembly, wrote congratulating him on his appointment, 'My dear friend and distinguished patriot! What a brilliant career is opening before you! With your energy and understanding and your military and diplomatic knowledge, I already see you preparing either solid peace or decisive war....'<sup>2</sup> Had it been either he would have still praised Dumouriez for/

for he admired him and felt him to be a man<sup>of</sup> power, and therefore a useful friend. For Barère had no doubts concerning his own re-entry into active political life as soon as the opportunity arrived. His personal views concerning the war, however, were not those of Dumouriez. In his Mémoires he states that he never believed that war with Austria was necessary or inevitable. Leopold was always totally opposed to war and it would have been possible to prevent conflict even after his death. This is hindsight; but even at that moment he was not in favour of squandering the important gains France had made at home on the field of battle, or threatening an already precarious government with the complications of a full-scale war policy. He did not see that it was Austria which was to be feared from any standpoint; rather, the potential aggressor and the real danger to France<sup>was</sup> England. Even before England's formal entry into the war Barère firmly believed that she had been unofficially engaged in hostilities towards France; that it was her subsidies which furnished the/

the Austrians and the Prussians from the very beginning of the European struggle in April 1792. It was a very astute guess, for he had no evidence, but he was convinced that it was Pitt's influence which finally persuaded Leopold to sign the Declaration of Pilnitz. His argument was that Pitt saw in the possible war between France and Austria an opportunity to reduce the power of both the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons, and that Prussia was encouraged to intervene simply as a lever between the other two powers. Barère remained in Tarbes until August 8th. He received the news on the 4th that the fédérés, together with the sections, which had been declared permanent in July, had issued a petition demanding the deposition of the King. Barère had warned the Constituent Assembly in 1791 of the danger of autonomous bodies within the capital and had seen them as a very real threat to the power of the national assembly. He had heard with horror of Chaumette's demand that the sections be armed. Remembering that, as early as July 14th 1789, the cry of the/

the mob had been for arms and not for bread, he opposed wholeheartedly any motion which would encourage the militancy of the Paris Commune or the Sections. In his summing up of the night of 10th August, 'that terrible night', he states that it 'destroyed at one blow the monarchy, the constitution, and the prosperity of France for many years.'<sup>3</sup> Yet, he adds, 'this act of justice was a necessity for the existence of the nation.'<sup>4</sup> As soon as he arrived in Paris he realised that it was the King himself who had destroyed the trust and goodwill of the people and that the night of the 10th had been a natural consequence of the section demands for the deposition of the King which themselves were a response to the Brunswick Manifesto. Barère realised that Louis himself had not actively betrayed the nation, he had been in no way responsible for the actual presentation of the Manifesto, but that through his inactivity and duplicity he had destroyed all remaining trust in his people. All future attempts to treat with Louis would be futile. 'He passed for an/

an impostor,' Barère states with disgust, 'Having first given his adherence to the Constitution he then disavows it.'<sup>5</sup> Yet he loathed the idea of intervention by the mob. He saw its action as being illegal and its influence as being inimical to the central government and the progress of the Revolution. 'Liberty is inextricably matched with obedience to the law,' he wrote in the 'Discours sur le respect dû à la loi'<sup>6</sup> He believed that any constitution of a free people must guard against the violation of the law by any one faction or any one person, whether it be the king, his ministers or a Paris mob. The sectionnaires had carried pikes on August 10th against the wishes of the Assembly, and they had disregarded the individual rights of property by forcing an entrance to the Tuileries. He refused to accept Danton's premise that when a people puts itself into a state of insurrection it arrogates to itself all law and power. Barère was sufficiently convinced of the illegality of the Insurrectionary Commune as to openly criticise it/

it and to turn down Danton's first offer of a place on the Council of Justice. Yet his personal relations with Danton at that time were sufficiently cordial for him to respect the new Minister of Justice, if not the Council, and he accepted the offer when it was repeated a few days later. This could be due to the fact that Barère was extremely susceptible to flattery and the offer had been couched in very flattering terms. However, as Danton and Barère were both elected to the Convention, neither held their respective offices for very long.

While the Legislative Assembly sat paralysed by the September Massacres, France went to the polls to elect its deputies for the National Convention. Barère offers no surmise as to the organisation of the massacres, even in his Mémoires, and his criticism of the event is slight. His account of his own activities during the 3rd and 4th of September sheds an additional light on Danton's movements. The Abbé Bousquet of Narbonne, who had known Barère during the Constituent/

Constituent Assembly, was imprisoned as a 'non juré' priest when the massacres began. He appealed to Barère who immediately decided to place the case before Danton. He went to look for the Minister of Justice at the Commune. The latter being significantly absent, Barère decided to wait until he reappeared. By the early hours of the morning Danton arrived and promised Barère that the Abbé would be released immediately. Presumably Danton had had much on his mind for the Abbé was never seen again, and no record of his release was to be found. Barère's comment on the incident is interesting, as it provided the only clue as to his real opinion of Danton's involvement in the September Massacres. 'I never saw the Abbé again. He must have been forgotten by the Minister of the Revolution.'

As a result of the elections, Barère was chosen as deputy to the Convention simultaneously for Seine-et-Oise, (Versailles) and the Hautes-Pyrénées. He chose to represent his home district where, despite his critics, he was generally/

generally popular and trusted by the electorate. He took his seat when the Convention opened on September 21st among the deputies who were to become known as the Plain. Although it is impossible to find in the Convention any formal party division or official political programme, the faction interests, made manifest during the Legislative Assembly, perpetuated into the Convention. If Barère adhered to any one set of ideas it was that of the Girondins rather than the Montagnard Jacobins. He was a reluctant Republican in the autumn of 1792 and believed, with the Girondins, that, basically, the concept of republicanism was inimical to France. After the first session and the declaration of the Republic, however, he simply accepted it as 'obeying the spirit of the time.'<sup>8</sup> He believed that, although France had accepted the declaration, her real desire was for a Federal Republic, and that in the absence of a hereditary monarch a president should be elected in the image of a monarch. He could not accept that the Republic was, and must always/

always be, 'One and Indivisible'. He believed that the only way to guarantee freedom was to establish a federation of semi-autonomous states, exercising independent administrative rights and answerable to Paris only on matters of foreign policy and national issues. In holding such a belief he could be identified with the Girondins, and was considered ~~as~~ a heretic by the Montagnards who believed Paris had to be the hub around which the indivisible republic revolved. Barère's additional clause in his political charter of that moment brought him closer to the views that Robespierre and St.-Just were to develop during the last phases of the Terror. It was necessary to have a central, charismatic figure to hold the warring factions apart and stand as the emblem of the sovereignty of the People. Barère was later challenged on the grounds that he would have liked to have seen Orléans in this role, and that he worked secretly with the Orléanist faction to promote the Duke. The accusation is unfounded, for although Barère had been a close friend of/

of Orléans during the Constituent Assembly, and had witnessed the annuity made to 'la belle Paméla'<sup>10</sup> the natural daughter of Mme. de Genlis and Orléans, he never entered any conspiracy for either a regency or a dictatorship. His faith in individuals never lasted long enough for him to become anything resembling a kingmaker.

Although there were certain similarities in the views held by Barère in the autumn of 1792 with those of the Girondins, he should not be identified with them. It is possible during those first weeks to associate him with Brissot, Danton or Robespierre. He had swung to support the war, possibly for the same reason that Robespierre had decided to support it; the war was a very real fact, France had been threatened with invasion, and there seemed no quick solution to the threat of the major European powers concerted in their efforts to defeat the principles of the Revolution. Also, the glorious accidental victory of Valmy had renewed faith in the Republic for the people of France. It almost seemed as if/

if the Girondins had been justified in their claim that a successful war would unite France and show Louis in his true colours. The fédérés, as they arrived in Paris, filled Barère with a patriotic joy, and he saw them as 'the harbingers of change who would carry freedom to the enslaved people of Europe still living under the yoke of despotism.' 'The volunteers, who were marching in arms to the frontiers from all directions were alone exclusively animated by love of their country and deeply alive to its dangers. There alone dwelt enthusiasm, true civil and military courage and above all unity.'<sup>11</sup> He, therefore, like Robespierre, was prepared to give the war his full support, although he never fully understood it. He persisted in his belief that the real enemy of France was England, and attributed every set-back of the war to the machinations of that power alone. In his Mémoires there is an inserted passage dealing with the contents of papers found on the double agent Niquille, a Swiss, who worked for the royalists under Bertrand de Moléville while/

while involved with the activities of the Paris Commune. He states that the papers show beyond any shadow of doubt that the agents of the Duke of York and Pitt were working in Paris and suggests that Brissot knew of this. He has no other proof against Brissot other than the vague inference that because the Girondins were suspected of 'dealing lightly' with the English - he does not say in what way - they took their lead from Brissot. He claims that due to Brissot's lenient attitude towards England he compromised the Girondins and prevented them taking a strong line against them earlier.<sup>12</sup>

During the first few weeks of the Convention he appeared little on the floor and although he was appointed to the commissions of Instruction and Monuments and was made reporter of the Constitutional Committee, he spoke to little effect. What reports he did make were ineffectual. The one made in October in the name of the Constitutional Committee was more or less an open admission that not only had he no constructive/

constructive ideas to present, but neither had the committee. At the end of a general criticism of the 1791 Constitution he suggests that the public in general give some indication of what they want, or give some direct expression to the General Will. 'La Constitution d'une grande république ne peut pas être l'ouvrage de quelques esprits, elle doit être l'ouvrage de l'esprit humain.' He then invites all the citizens to mount the tribune and give their views on the ideal constitution, a truly impossible procedure, and in total opposition to his attitude to the appeal to the nation which he was to express with regard to the trial of the King.

Despite his lack of originality or power of leadership, he was fast becoming one of the most well-known and respected members of the Convention. In his account of the events in Paris during the autumn of 1792, Dr. More excludes Barère from any list of significant personalities, but states that by December he appears as a promising figure. 'He (Barère) has not hitherto taken a decided part with either party, but, I am/

am told, he is courted by both.' <sup>13</sup> He distinguished himself, during the first weeks, as the chief conciliator of an assembly given so much to internecine warfare. His whole aim seemed to be to prevent any situation from becoming inflammable, and to prevent the assembly itself from losing control of the galleries. He spoke against the Girondin attempt to provide an armed guard for the Convention, as he foresaw what power such a body would assume itself, and could envisage an open clash with the forces of the municipality. During the debate caused by Louvet's attack on Robespierre at the Jacobin Club he attacked all the deputies who waged private war against their own rivals within the Convention. 'Let us end all partisanship within this assembly,' he demanded, and begged Louvet to exert his energies only for the good of the nation and not belittle himself and the convention by hurling private abuse across the floor. It would appear that he had chosen to defend Robespierre but although he gave Robespierre time to prepare his own reply, his so-called/

called 'défense' ~~had~~ had a sting in it. 'To accuse a man of having arrived at dictatorship is to pre-suppose a great character, genius, boldness and great political and military success.

Citizens, let us not attribute importance to men whom public opinion will put in their places better than we, let us not set up pigmies on pedestals,'<sup>14</sup> Robespierre never forgot the insult.

A few weeks later a further Girondin attack obliquely accused Danton of complicity in the September Massacres. Again Barère attempted to forestall any really dangerous debate. On November 8th he begged the assembly, 'It is time to estimate those little undertakers of revolutions at their face value, and it is time to stop thinking of them as manoeuverers...we ought to turn our attention to the great questions which interest the Republic.'<sup>15</sup> Delivered with the same veiled insult as the speech in answer to Louvet, Barère had turned the wrath of the factions away from their objects but had insinuated weaknesses in both Robespierre and Danton, and the assembly had/

had listened to him. 'He appeared to be listened to as an impartial voice in all the hubbub, and his speech was always prepared.' <sup>16</sup> (*d.m.*)

It may therefore, have been no accident that he was chosen as President of the Assembly during the debate on the trial of the king, and during the first part of the trial itself. Although in his Mémoires he affects surprise at the choice, he must have been aware that he was one of the few speakers who could call the galleries and the debating chamber to silence and be obeyed. 'I cannot imagine to what motive I was indebted for this honour, since I was isolated in the Convention. I did not belong and never have belonged to any party or faction...' It is probably for this very reason that he was elected to handle the trial debate, for though his claim was made in his own defence it is no more than the truth. No one really knew to which side he was committed, and it is quite possible that he didn't know himself. He was prepared to trim his sails according to the wind./

wind.

His term of office as President coincided with the opening of the Iron Chest on November 20th. Among the letters which sealed Louis' fate was one from the Intendant of the Civil List, who had held office during the Constituent Assembly. In it he referred to the abolition of hunting rights, which Louis had resented so much, and states that Barère, a member of the committee of domains, was the person to contact concerning the maintenance of such rights on the royal domains, as he was well-disposed to the monarch. The original suggestion had come from Artois, and in fact Barère had gone to considerable trouble to gain an amendment of the decree in favour of royal hunting rights. The letter was dated February 1791 and Barère found it easy to convince the assembly that there were many deputies at that time who were well-disposed towards the monarch and believed that the institution of monarchy should maintain certain privileges. He temporarily resigned his position/

position as President, leaving the tribune to defend himself from the floor of the chamber. So successful was his reply, and so 'innocent his face'<sup>17</sup> that he drew tumultuous applause from the assembly and rendered his attackers speechless.

On December 2nd the question of the king's trial became urgent. A deputation from the sections of Paris arrived before the bar of the Convention and demanded that the proceedings be speeded up. Barère dealt with the situation carefully but firmly. He stated that the Convention would always listen to the pleas of petitioners, as that was its duty, but it could not be instructed on matters of public safety. The National Convention was only accountable on matters concerning the king to the entire nation. In his Mémoires, Barère laments his position as President during a case which 'exercised the most terrible influence on the spirit and the fate of the nation.'<sup>18</sup> He stated that such was the excited state of public opinion that he could neither decline the sad duty of interrogating the king nor/

nor even let it be suspected that the function was disagreeable to his heart and accorded ill with his character. <sup>19</sup> This may have been true to a certain extent, but it is certainly obvious from the rest of the account that he was proud of the position which had been forced upon him. He could not have declined, but neither would he have wished to do so, he realised too well that it afforded him the opportunity of making his mark before the assembly. He had come to terms with the exigencies of the moment and in his own words <sup>20</sup> 'On ne rétrograde pas en révolution.' Carnot points out the anomalies in Barère's attitude to the monarch just before the trial, which demonstrate how confused he was as to the outcome. ~~of the issue.~~ In a letter to a colleague he states, 'A deposed King has no right to live.' Yet immediately after writing this he states in the Assembly, 'We ought to give all the latitude that natural law establishes to the defence of the deposed monarch.' True to this latter utterance, Barère tried to persuade the reluctant Target to undertake the/

the King's defence and when he refused it was Barère, so he says, who went to see Male~~x~~sherbes, a man he had long admired, who agreed to contact Louis and offer his services.

The series of polemical exchanges over the defence of the King revealed the very real division between the Mountain and the rest of the assembly. In his maiden speech on November 13th, the twenty-five year old St.-Just laid down in precise terms the principles of the new Republicanism. There could be no case for the defence of Louis, he stated, for he was not being tried as a criminal. There could therefore be no debate as to whether he were guilty or innocent, the very fact that he was king was a crime in itself. Besides, there was no real basis for a trial, for Louis was outside the common law of the people, his very existence was opposed to the concept of Republicanism; he was the 'Enemy of the People' personified.<sup>21</sup> The theme was repeated by Robespierre on December 3rd, when he tried to persuade the Convention that a trial of the king/

king was irrelevant, he must die anyway. Very much on the lines of the argument of Cromwell, Robespierre saw that it was necessary to cut off the head of the king with the crown on it, to eradicate the concept of monarchy, not simply to exterminate one monarch. If Louis were proved innocent then the guilt of the People, who had brought him to trial, would be implicit in the pronouncement of his innocence. But the People was sublime and incorruptible, and the Will of the People was supreme and incapable of error. 'La victoire et le peuple ont décidé que lui seul était rebelle; Louis ne peut donc être jugé; il est déjà jugé. Il est condamné ou la République n'est point absolue.'

22

The Girondins disagreed, as did the majority of the Convention. In a powerful speech on December 31st, Vergniaud stated that Louis should be tried by the representatives of the people sitting in the Convention, but that he should be judged by the people themselves. Any judgement/

judgement passed by the Convention should be ratified by plebiscite. He conceded that the voice of the people made itself heard through the freely elected representatives and that these representatives had been vested with the right to make laws in the name of the people. 'C'est le pouvoir de faire les lois, les règlements, en un mot tous les actes qui intéressent la félicité du corps social. Le peuple exerce ce pouvoir ou par lui-même ou par les représentants. Dans ce dernier cas, et c'est le nôtre, les décisions des représentants du peuple sont exécutées comme loi; mais pourquoi? Parce qu'elles sont présumées être l'expression de la volonté générale.' But he argued, 'les juges des tribunaux sont, il est vrai, des mandataires du peuple; mais leur mandat n'a aucun caractère de représentation. Ils n'ont point de volonté individuelle à exprimer par la loi; ils ne font qu'appliquer cette loi.' <sup>23</sup> The judgement of Louis Capet was not an aspect of Legislative responsibility. The People had not elected a despotic body but an organ of/

of representation, therefore, 'Tout acte émané des représentants du peuple est un attentat à sa souveraineté, s'il n'est pas soumis à sa ratification formelle ou tacite. Le peuple qui a promis l'inviolabilité à Louis peut seul déclarer qu'il veut user du droit de punir, auquel il avait renoncé.'<sup>24</sup>

Barère agreed with neither faction whole-heartedly. He fell midway between each. He believed in the necessity for a trial as Louis should enjoy the rights due to any French citizen. He believed that Louis should be charged with treason, for he had betrayed the nation in having accepted the constitution and then violated its tenets. He had conspired against the nation and had attempted to overthrow its elected assembly by recourse to foreign aid. He was therefore a traitor, but even traitors had the right to defend themselves before their accusers. But he saw in a trial the last fight between despotism and freedom. 'C'est ici le dernier combat entre le despotisme et la liberté....C'est la destinée des/

des rois de causer des maux au peuple, soit qu'ils demeurent sur le trône, soit qu'ils en soient précipités.' He confirmed his belief in the king's guilt before the Convention. 'Ainsi dans mon opinion, je trouve Louis coupable d'avoir attenté à la sûreté intérieure et extérieure de l'état.'<sup>25</sup> To those who opposed the trial he acknowledged that Louis was 'par le caractère de ses fonctions et la nature de son crime...une forte d'exception à <sup>la</sup> forme générale des jugements.' Yet he insisted that he was a citizen and equality under the law meant equality without distinction of persons.<sup>26</sup> He was strongly opposed to the plebiscite, however, as he believed that any decision of the assembly was, by definition, that of the nation. 'on parle de toutes parts d'appel au peuple, de ratification du peuple, de la souveraineté du peuple. Je sens qu'il est facile de se décider par d'aussi hono~~r~~ables motifs à déposer sur tous nos concitoyens le fardeau de la responsabilité personnelle à laquelle aucun de nous ne peut échapper, quelque chose qui arrive, si la/

la nation est asservie...'. He declared that in electing their representatives to the Convention the people vested them with the power to make all decisions for them,.. 'Est-il conséquent de rejeter sur le peuple l'exercice de la souveraineté qu'il vous a expressément déléguée?'<sup>27</sup>.

The King appeared before the Convention for the first time on December 11th. Barère treated him with respect and deference. His description in his Mémoires of the King is contradictory to his description of 1788, 'he appeared calm, simple and noble, as he had always appeared to me at Versailles.' Launay unkindly cites Prudhomme's description from the 'Révolution de Paris', that Barère's voice shook so much during the opening of the session that he drew jeers and whistles from both sides of the assembly. This is possible, for in the Mémoires, Barère himself states that he was nervous as he began to question the King, but very soon found himself in control of the situation, and succeeded in calling the riotous galleries to order.<sup>28</sup> He ordered a chair/

chair to be brought so that Louis could sit as he could not bear the sight of him being the only person in the hall standing up. He carefully avoided the use of the appellation Capet, as Malexherbes had told him that Louis particularly hated this name, declaring that it was not his name but that of one of his ancestors.<sup>29</sup> Barère questioned the King for three hours, but as Louis had had no previous knowledge of the text he could not answer and appealed for time to allow his council to draw up the reply.<sup>30</sup> Barère supported this plea and persuaded the assembly to do likewise. Malexherbes, Tronchet and de Sèze attempted to defend Louis on the grounds that he had abdicated on August 10th and that since that date he had committed no crime for which he could be tried. They had few grounds for a defence, but worked on the principle that Louis was being tried for violating the Constitution,<sup>31</sup> and since he had ceased to fulfil the office of King, the constitution was inapplicable and therefore any violation of it was irrelevant. Neither could/

could Louis be blamed for inciting the Revolution of August 10th as 'within the hall men had boasted of the success and the glory of the day and had claimed that events had been totally unpremeditated,'<sup>32</sup> therefore Louis could have had no prior knowledge of the event and could not have conspired to bring it about in any way. Barère gives no comment on the work of the defence counsel but opines that whatever case had been placed before the assembly on behalf of the King it would have been to no avail. For, although the assembly may not have agreed with all the arguments of Robespierre and St.-Just, they were sufficiently aware of the veracity of the statement that, if the King be proved innocent, the People will have proved itself guilty.

Between the 11th and the 26th of December, when the trial reopened, Barère's term as President expired and Fermont was elected to the chair. This period coincided with a series of the stormiest debates ever known in the national assembly, and Barère was on more than one/

one occasion called back to control the hall. His own views underwent a radical change during the Girondin attack on Philippe Égalité, and the debate on the future of the Bourbons. It was Barère who demanded the expulsion of all Bourbons from the soil of France and at the same time demanded a total reorganisation of the ministry, which was a direct attack on the Rolandists. It is hard to say why he made these demands at such a moment. Gershoy suggests that it was to gain time, as he knew that all matters of policy would be tabled until after the last phase of the King's trial, during which time it was possible that the atmosphere within the Convention would become a little calmer. However, whatever his motives, he had forcibly stated his own position with regard to the fate of the King. In reply to Buzot's suggestion that the King be judged but the sentence be mitigated, or a reprieve granted after the passing of judgement, Barère states. 'Entre les tyrans et le peuple il n'y a que des combats à mort...L'arbre de la liberté croît lorsqu'il est/

est arrosé du sang de toute espèce de tyrans. La  
loi dit la mort et je ne suis que son organe.' <sup>33</sup>

A violent reverse from his former suspicions that justice had been subverted by the tyrannies of policy. His conception of the execution of the King as 'une mesure de sûreté générale, un acte révolutionnaire,' brought him into the Montagnard camp, and his vote in favour of death with no reprieve was as resolutely cast as that of Robespierre and Danton.

The months succeeding the death of the King found the Convention locked in a desperate struggle for power between the Brissotins and the Montagnard Jacobins. Barère remained aloof from the struggle and earned for himself the title of 'the impartial', originally bestowed on him by Robespierre. He seemed to be following a path of his own, leaning first toward the Girondins and then aligning himself with the Jacobin of the Mountain. He had been elected to the Committee of Defence, the precursor of the Committee of Public Safety, and in February 1792 supported the/

the Girondin proposal to oust Pache, a Jacobin, from the War Ministry. Pache had in fact been helped into the ministry by Roland, who had resigned from the ministry of the interior on January 22nd. Barère mistrusted Roland, and his protégés, and was made increasingly uneasy by the fact that Pache was elected Mayor of Paris immediately after his dismissal from the war office. Although Pache had been firmly entrenched in the Rolandist circle he was very popular with the municipality of Paris and the department, and gained his position as mayor by an overwhelming majority. Barère was afraid that the schism which tore the assembly would be repeated in the capital itself where there was little or no restraint upon the contending factions. Within the Committee of Defence he was attempting to act as mediator between the Brissot and Gensonné faction whose sole aim was to raise an army of volunteers from the provinces to protect the Convention, and the more serious-minded and stronger group dominated by Danton. Danton and Lacroix both supported/

supported Dumouriez' policy of vigorous action in the Netherlands to be followed by appeasement with Prussia and England as soon as the natural boundaries of France had been established.<sup>34</sup> Barère too believed that all effort should be made to bring about a successful and speedy conclusion to the war, but had not the foresight and understanding to realise that conciliation with England was as necessary as settlement with Prussia. Neither had he the first-hand knowledge of Dumouriez and Danton of the attitude of the French armies in the Netherlands. To Barère the armies of the Republic were beyond suspicion, it was always the generals who were at fault. He had not seen the pillaging of the Belgian villages, or waited for days for supplies to arrive which in fact had not left Paris. To Barère the armies of France were fighting in the spirit of the 'Fraternité et Secours' decree, and the early successes seemed to endorse this belief. He therefore did not hesitate to support Beurnonville's decree that France must declare war on Spain. He had/

had forgotten that he had also supported Servan's suggestion that France could not afford to extend the war further and should not contemplate new offensives. But Servan had resigned, and Barère was ever the man of the moment. In his report to the Convention in the name of the Committee of Defence recommending war with Spain he declares 'One enemy more will only be a presage of new victories.'<sup>35</sup> and to this end he asked that the army of the Pyrenees be raised to 100,000 men and that a commission of six deputies be sent to assist with the recruiting.

In his capacity as reporter to the committee he was compelled to support Dumouriez in the latter's attack on Marat. The business of the committee was to ensure that supplies and men reached the front. Marat, from the depths of his Paris cellar, demanded that the People, by which he meant the section armies, be armed, fed and clothed in the same style as the armies at the front, so that they be equipped to fight the enemies of the Revolution at home. Dumouriez and/

and Beurnonville had complained that supplies were not reaching the front and unless a firm line were taken on the subject by the Convention the armies would suffer and the fortunes of the war be reversed. Cambon took up their plea and demanded that a greater support be given to the generals at the front. Barère could only possibly support Cambon, for he had a horror, already expressed, of an armed Paris mob. He spoke angrily against the food rioting in February and March and opposed Jacques Roux's demand that his enragés be armed on the grounds that they would turn Paris into a battle-ground the moment arms were issued. 'Cette section terrible qui ne redoute point la puissance des baïonnettes', would not hesitate to hold the Convention to ransom if roused to anger and so destroy all the work of the Revolution.

It is possibly due to his fear of total anarchy in the capital that Barère agreed to the foundation of the Revolutionary Tribunal on March 10th. In his Mémoires he states that he tried to/

to prevent the decree being passed. This is not so. What he did ask was that jurors elected from the Convention be appointed to the tribunal and that it become endowed with the full status of a criminal court. In this way it would constitute a genuine legal body and guarantee all the benefits of justice. Even when the jurors were not appointed he refused to support Vergniaud's farsighted statement that such a body would develop into an inquisition in whose activities all vestiges of legal integrity would be lost. As with so many 'actes révolutionnaires', Barère was prepared to offer tentative suggestions during early stages but once effected he accepted any measure as inevitable and withdrew his opposition completely. In fact the idea of a tribunal, which would 'take cognisance of every enterprise and plot and attempt against the liberty and sovereignty of the people, and the unity and indivisibility of the Republic,' ~~was~~ offered tempting security against the constant threats against the Republic from inside as well as outside the country. Barère/

Barere must also have been very conscious of the significance of both Danton's and Robespierre's support of the tribunal.

The defection of Dumouriez on April 5th *not only placed* Barère and the Girondins in an embarrassing position, but also disclosed the weakness of the Committee of Defence. Barère had supported the policy and the demands of Dumouriez, as up to a point had Danton, but it was the Girondins who bore the brunt of his defection. He had been their general, and had pursued their policy in the early days of the war, he had become identified with them. His attempt to march on Paris, his arrest of Beurnonville and the representatives of the Committee of Defence, and finally his defection, threw Paris into turmoil. The incident demonstrated too clearly the lack of real executive power within the Convention and the confusion in the aims of those fighting the war at the front and those directing its course at home. Out of the fury and confusion the first Committee of Public Safety was created on the ruins of the/

the old Committee of Defence. Danton had realised that in its fear of any separation of powers the Convention had not endowed one of its many committees with sufficient power to allow it to act directly in moments of crisis. Cambon had attacked the committee system as early as January, begging that the freedom of the people would not be stifled in the numerous committees and killed in interminable debate. Barère did not agree with this view; he was so very much a committee man at heart, due to his own lack of initiative. He believed that only through frequently changing groups of deputies or representatives could the voice of the people be heard and the General Will freely interpreted. He accepted Danton's suggestion that the new Committee of Public Safety, although primarily concerned with defence, should act on its own initiative, presenting ~~only~~ reports to the Convention <sup>only</sup> when its sanction of the decrees was needed. Barère realised that Danton was attempting to form a real executive committee <sup>36</sup> made up of members of the Convention. In the/

the context of the moment he could only offer his support, and hope to be elected.

Barère was not disappointed. He gained by far the highest number of votes for the new committee, beating Danton by 127 votes. He was unique among the twelve members in gaining a virtual majority from the whole Convention, gaining a total of 360 votes. There can be little doubt that he was the most generally popular and trusted member of the first committee as far as the Convention was concerned. He had distinguished himself over the trial and had become known as a forceful and non-partial orator. The assembly and the galleries responded to him, and it was due to this fact that he was appointed reporter. As yet he had not incurred the wrath of either faction and was not identified with any group. He was forced by circumstance to commit himself more definitely to the Jacobin faction with the Revolution of 31st May.

In his Memoires Barère speaks of 'that execrable 31st of May, which degraded the national/

national representation for ever.' <sup>37</sup> He has been heavily criticised for his so-called betrayal of the Girondins, <sup>38</sup> but the opprobrium is unfairly founded, for he never expressed any allegiance ~~to~~ the Brissotins, and openly mistrusted the Rolandist circle. The allusion of his affiliation with the Girondins could have sprung from his admiration for Condorcet and his early federalist leanings, and his open opposition to the sections and the enragés. It is true that he rarely visited the Jacobin club, as he was appalled by the lack of discipline during their debates and the noise of the outside supporters. Yet he had opposed Vergniaud on the question of the appeal to the nation and Buzot over the reprieve of the King. He was not alone in his attempt to forestall the action of the Commune on April 15th, when Marat presented his petition demanding the arrest of twenty-two members of the Girondin faction. Robespierre also warned the Commune against hasty denunciations. Although Marat had expressed acute dislike of Barère, and the dislike was mutual, his name was not on the famous list./

list.

Towards the end of May Barère had swung very much away from any association with the Girondin attitude. He blamed them for Dumouriez's defection and for the failure of the Committee of General Defence. He believed that it was due to their constant attacks on the Mountain and their ineptitude over matters of immediate policy that the Commune had been allowed to gain such power and effectively threaten the Convention. He believed that the lack of control by the Convention on the capital, the country and the war was due to the Girondin inefficiency and fear. Launay suggests that Barère's swing to the Mountain was due to his own fear. 'Cependant, la Commune voulait ses têtes et son succès n'était pas douteux. C'est ce qui décida Barère à s'orienter vers la Montagne.'<sup>39</sup> It is more likely that he felt irritated by the panic measures the Girondins seemed to wish to adopt, which only exacerbated their own position. On May 17th Gaudet had demanded a total reorganisation of the/

the sections. He warned the Convention that the mob was about to descend on the assembly and dissolve it by force. His speech was hysterical, although accurately based. He suggested that should the threat<sup>be</sup> carried out then the entire National Convention should move to Bourges, where the Girondins were trusted and popular. Barère realised the foolishness of such a suggestion made at such a moment and lost his remaining faith in the Girondins. He may have once believed that a federal republic was preferable to total domination by the capital, but he had never doubted that the national representation must always reside in Paris. The suggestion made at any time would have brought violent opposition, and memories of royalist betrayal, but that it should have been made when Paris was seething with unrest and suffering from famine was suicidal. He tried to calm the frenzied assembly in a speech in which he hotly opposed Gaudet's motion, stating that there was no real evidence of a section conspiracy to overthrow the Convention, but that/

that if doubt remained then a commission should be appointed by the assembly to inspect the workings of the sections and the Commune. His proposal for a Commission of Twelve to inquire into the machinations of the Revolutionary Committees was a real attempt at conciliation and not a deliberate sacrifice of the Girondins.<sup>40</sup> The commission was appointed on May 20th and went into business with alarming alacrity and thoroughness. The commissioners demanded, in their first report, that all the section clubs be closed by ten each night and that certain arrests be made, including Hébert, a suggestion with which Barère was in full agreement. The demands were placed before the Convention and brought immediate and violent complaints from the Commune. In answer, Isnard, as president of the assembly, made his famous remark that if the spontaneous insurrections of the capital were not prevented then Paris would be rased to the ground and 'men would search the banks of the Seine in vain for traces of the city.' Protest followed protest to the bar of the Convention until Danton/

Danton pressed Hérault-Séchelles, acting president, to demand the abolition of the Commission, before it pressed its demands too far. Hérault agreed with Danton's warning and had it abolished. No sooner had the decree been issued than, on the motion of Lanjuinais, it was reformed. It was now too late to save the city from insurrection, and a formidable ally of the Commune had given his approval of any action the People found fitting in the crisis. On May 29th, Robespierre had made the pronouncement at the Jacobin club, 'Je suis incapable de prescrire au peuple le moyen de se sauver.....il ne me reste d'autre devoir à remplir dans ce moment.'

41

On May 29th the Insurrection Committee merged with the section committees and reconstituted the Commune. The newly-formed body promoted one of its own nominees, the hard-drinking, swash-buckling Hanriot, to take charge of the National Guard, as Santerre was in the Vendée. Added to the guard was an auxiliary militia of 20,000 volunteers drawn from the sections, and the promised support/

support of workers and general supporters from most of the sections who had declared in favour of the Commune. The people had once more prepared themselves for a state of insurrection. Danton, who was more than familiar with the organisation behind spontaneous revolt issued another warning to the Convention that, although it was possibly too late, an attempt at appeasement could be made if the Commission of Twelve was once more dissolved. Ironically, it was Barère, who had first suggested that it be formed, who in conjunction with Danton and the Committee of Public Safety, framed the address, delivered on the morning of the 29th, demanding its dissolution. In an attempt to break the stranglehold of the Commune over the city of Paris he issued a plea to the sections to rally to the support of its elected assembly. The appeal won only marginal success, a few of the sections sent declarations of support to the assembly, but the majority opted in favour of the insurrection government at the Hôtel de Ville./

Ville.

At three-o'clock on the morning of May 31st the city gates were closed and the tocsin sounded. When the Convention assembled later in the morning the deputies found the Tuileries Gardens filled with Hanriot's henchmen.

Petitioners from the Hôtel de Ville demanded the arrest of the twenty-two proscribed members together with all the members of the Commission of Twelve and the two Girondin ministers Clavier and Lebrun. In addition they made a series of staggering demands which included a heavy taxation on 'the rich', subsidies on food supplies, a system of poor relief and a revolutionary army to be maintained and commanded by the city of Paris. The sectionnaires went little further than delivering their demands on May 31st. It was a Friday and the additional popular support from the workers of the sections had fallen short of expectations. They did however succeed in gaining the support of Robespierre, who attacked Vergniaud from the rostrum and received ~~the~~ cheers from the section of the/

the mob which had invaded the hall and taken the seats next to the Montagnards. Danton remained silent; he had attempted to prevent the events from reaching this peak and had failed. He was to support the revolution in his speech of June 14th, but at the time he was apprehensive. Barère too said nothing during the events of the thirty-first, but he did make a further attempt at conciliation the following day. On June 1st he proposed an address to each of the section committees and to the Commune. Vergniaud resisted the attempt, stating that it was unnecessary.<sup>42</sup> Lasource attempted to steal the moment from Barère and proposed a proclamation himself.<sup>43</sup> The proclamation was rejected and Barère was invited to make one in the name of the Committee of Public Safety. The result was very much the same as the one suggested by Lasource, but the gesture demonstrated yet again how much confidence the Convention had in ~~the~~ Barère. A further warning was issued on the night of the first and the second when Cambon suggested that some reply be made to the accusations/

accusations of the Commune before the events of Friday were repeated. Unfortunately the convention hesitated too long over the reply.

The culmination of the insurrection followed on June 2nd. The assembly had taken heart at the proclamation from the Hôtel de Ville that it would guarantee the sanctity of private property, but the body as a whole was still fearful of renewed attack. After the event Barère accepts its inevitability, 'La loi relative aux gens suspects est générale, elle doit être exécutée révolutionnairement.'<sup>44</sup> When the crowd of 80,000 surrounded the Tuileries on Sunday and the deputation marched into the hall demanding the arrest of the twenty-two, Barère attempted to preserve the dignity of the national representation by requesting that the proscribed members voluntarily resign their seats. A few of them refused to yield to the force of arms even at the request of the Committee of Public Safety. Barère tried again, this time on his own initiative, suggesting that the entire assembly of deputies/

deputies leave the hall in a body. In his Mémoires he states that at this suggestion Robespierre turned to him and sharply demanded what he was trying to do. 'A nice mess you're making of it', was the reputed phrase. Some moments of tense hesitation followed, then as Barère did not ~~appear to~~ have the courage of his convictions and lead the deputies out himself, Hérault-Séchelles rose and conducted the deputies out into the gardens. He asked one of the armed citizens what it was they wanted, and received the same demands as those expressed in the petition. The deputies walked slowly round the gardens to be faced with fixed bayonets on all sides. Finally they returned to the hall having achieved nothing. The moment was rescued by Couthon who, half wheeled, half lifted to the rostrum, saved the face of the Convention. 'Citizens', he declared, 'all members of the Convention should now be assured of their liberty. You have marched out to the people. You have found it everywhere good, generous, and incapable of/

of threatening the security of its mandatories.'

He then moved a motion of accusation against the twenty-two denounced members. An order for the arrest of thirty-one of the Girondins followed. The decree was introduced by Barère in the name of the Committee of Public Safety. In a desperate letter of the first of June he had lied to his constituents, 'Il y<sup>a</sup> eu des défilés des sections, mais surtout pour la parade. Dans l'assemblée c'a été une réconciliation générale des partis.'

The 'parade' had become a fact and Barère himself had set the seal on the rupture des partis. In his Mémoires he claims that he was overcome with anguish and bitterness at what had happened. It is possible that he was, and because he could do nothing about preventing the arrests, he should not be blamed for throwing the Girondins to the mob. The only man who could have saved the situation was not Barère but Danton, and he remained silent. The revolution was moving into the phase in which a patriot had to prove his virtue or go to prison. In St.-Just's words, a patriot/

patriot was one who supported the Republic in general, anyone who opposed it in detail was a traitor. At the same time the only convincing way to support the Republic, or appear to, was through force, and it was ~~to be~~ through force that the Republic was to be maintained.

### Notes to Chapter III

1. As M.J. Sydenham has proved in his study of the Girondins, the Brissotins did not form a party in the twentieth-century use of the word, but due to the similarity of views within the group they did form a definite faction opposed to the ultra-Jacobins, and distinct from the modérés.
2. Quoted by Gershoy, p122.
3. Mémoires, inserted passage, vol.II. p16.
4. Défense
5. Mémoires vol.II, p.14.
6. Discours sur le respect dû à la loi.
7. Mémoires p22. Vol.II
8. Défense.
9. Mémoires, vol.II p13, inserted passage.
10. La Belle Pamela, Ellis and Turquan pp206-208.
11. Défense
12. Mémoires vol II. p36.
13. John More, 'A Residency in France.' London 1794.
14. Moniteur, Mercure Universel.
15. Quoted by More, a 'Residency in France.'
16. More, Op.cit.
17. Buchez and Roux. Vol 27
18. Mémoires, p.46, vol II.
19. Op.cit. loc cit.

20. Discours sur le Jugement de Louis Capet, Barère.
21. Buchez and Roux, vol 25
22. Moniteur No 77 & 78
23. Morse Stephens, 'Orators of the French Revolution,'  
Vol I. p320.
24. Op. cit. loc. cit.
25. Op. cit. p322.
26. Quoted by Carnot, Preface to Memoires, Vol I.
27. Barère, Discours sur le Jugement de Louis Capet.
28. London Chronicle December 29 - January 1st 1794.
29. Last Days of Louis in the Temple,
30. Op. cit.
31. London Chronicle. Jan. 2nd-3rd, 1794.
32. Op, cit,
33. Barère, Jugement de Louis Capet.
34. Danton aimed to establish France within her  
natural boundaries of the Pyrenees, the Rhine and  
the Alps.
35. Moniteur
36. The existing Executive Committee had been ineffectual,  
but, although obsolete, was not abolished as a  
body until the end of March 1794.

37. Mémoires p76, Vol.II.

38. Launay condemns Barère for betraying the Girondin faction, p.133.

Bouchez and Roux state that it was due to the Commission of Twelve that the Girondins were arrested, and that had been Barère's suggestion.

39. Launay, p.124.

40. Launay p.132.

41. Moniteur No 254, 255, pp1036-1043.

42. Stephens, p335. Moniteur No 257, pp1045-1046.

43. Op.cit. Loc. cit.

44. Speech in support of the Law of Suspects, Moniteur, no.169

45. Moniteur, No.258.

The arrest of the Girondins had been necessary for the safety of the Revolution. For the sections and the Commune this was merely a justification of their actions which had been based on fear of reprisal and arrest. To St.-Just and Robespierre it was the reason and not the excuse. Both Jacobins and Girondins had believed that the Will of the People was supreme; they were all Rousseauists, and wanted a society based only on laws of truth, justice and reason. Vox populi vox naturae: but the Girondins had misinterpreted the Voice and the Will. The Montagnards believed the Voice of the People was heard at the Jacobin clubs, in Paris and throughout France; and at the section meetings, its Will was made known through petition. Paris was the hub of a Republic, unified and indivisible, and should not be suppressed by the provinces. Spontaneous insurrection was merely the implementation of the National Will, despite the fact that Paris alone participated; and it was the duty of the deputies to be true to that Will./

Will. The Girondins, through their ineptitude in dealing with the war, their federalist leanings, and their petty attacks on personal rivals within the Convention, had not only destroyed the unity of the representative body but also threatened the indivisibility of the Republic. 'Our aim is to create an order of things, which establishes a universal tendency towards good,'<sup>1</sup> so declared St.-Just, and that meant a universal faith and morality. It had been necessary therefore, that the Convention be purged of elements which inhibited the consolidation of the Republic and the Law.

There are two plausible interpretations of Barère's attitude to the Revolution of June 2nd. Either he could have been persuaded that Robespierre's rigid republican philosophy was right, that the deputies must at all times bow before the manifested will of the people. It is more likely, however, that 'Little Barère, who always rides the crupper of those who have the best horses,'<sup>2</sup> had decided to sail before the political wind. It/

It is unfair to see him only as an opportunist. He believed in the inviolability of the national representation, and had resented the invasion of the assembly by the mob, whom he saw as constituting only a section of the People. He had therefore demanded that the leader of the invaders be arrested. When his demand for the arrest of Harriot was ignored, and his suggestion that the whole assembly leave the hall in a body failed, he could do no more than acquiesce. In his capacity as reporter he could at least uphold the unanimity of the one remaining committee.<sup>3</sup> He therefore prepared his report on the arrest of the twenty-nine members, upholding the 'decision of the People.' He did not however see them as criminals, and in this differed from the Montagnards. He saw only that their expulsion was necessary for the union of the Convention, but he abhorred the idea that they might fall victim to the rough justice of the Commune. He was therefore very ready to support the suggestion that hostages be sent from the Commune to guarantee/

guarantee their safety.<sup>4</sup> Later when the deputies had been exiled to their départements he again supported Couthon's and Danton's suggestion of June 6th, that hostages from the Convention be sent to the départements to protect them from the fury of the local Jacobins. His resolution collapsed, however, under the measured attack of Robespierre. The Montagnard victory was complete.

Following the arrest of the Girondins, the relative peace which reigned in the Convention and Paris contrasted sharply with the intensified unrest in the provinces. The people of Paris had effected their own Revolution, but their decision was plainly not that of the majority of France. The provincial reply to the Parisian insurrection was civil war. It was necessary, therefore, that the legislature define the new morality, the new freedom; that it make the Republic work. This was necessary, not only from the point of view of the civil unrest, but as an alternative to the programme which the Commune of Paris had drawn up. If the Convention failed,/

failed, then the Commune could take over. Such a capitulation to anarchy was more than even the Montagnards could condone. A constitution was therefore miraculously produced by June 24th, after only eight days' work.<sup>6</sup> Although Barère was one of the members of the committee appointed to draft the Constitution, the real work was undertaken by Héroult-Séchelles, who managed to produce his first draft by June 10th. It embodied much of the Montagnard theory outlined by Robespierre in his speech on property, delivered to the Convention on April 24th. The final constitution, which was never implemented, was a logical outcome of the strife between the socialistic trend of Marat's Commune and the bourgeois tendencies of the Girondins.<sup>7</sup> While the sanctity of private property was guaranteed, a system of poor relief to the needy was pronounced to be a sacred obligation;<sup>8</sup> sovereignty was declared to reside only in the People; universal manhood suffrage was introduced. The document presented an outline of democratic freedom which no-one in the/

the Convention could oppose. Barère introduced the draft to the Convention on June 24th. 'In a few days,' he said, 'we have reaped the enlightenment of all the ages.' Later he was still of the same opinion, 'Without doubt this Constitution was too perfect, too severe for Frenchmen, but the Assembly made a mistake in not putting it into effect.'

The new constitution became the pretext for the inevitable follow-up to the events of the 31st of May and 2nd of June. It had become necessary for the Montagnards to define their position more clearly than they had done while in opposition to the Girondin domination of the Convention. They had leaned towards Paris, rather than the National Representation, and had used popular force to effect their supremacy within the Assembly. It was therefore their turn to confront the popular powers to prevent a usurpation of the legally constituted form of government by the illegal, spontaneously created forces at work in the capital. Robespierre bore/

bore the full force of this confrontation when he introduced the provisional draft to the Jacobin club on June 10th.<sup>10</sup> He was challenged by Chabot on the motion that a copy of the new constitution be sent to all the departments for approval.

'Elle ne parle pas des droits naturels de l'homme... elle laisse à l'arbitraire de la législation l'establisement de la Constitution.'<sup>11</sup> He

continued to accuse it unjustly of making little provision for the needy, 'Il manque d'assurer du pain à ceux qui n'en ont pas.'<sup>12</sup> On the day that

Barère presented the finished constitution to the Convention the enragé, Jacques Roux, attacked Robespierre and the Constitution in the Cordeliers club.<sup>13</sup> Robespierre delivered a virulent attack

against the new 'monarchical upstarts of the Revolution', and Collot d'Herbois accused the Cordeliers of wishing to provoke renewed disorders. The threat of renewed internal strife coupled with disasters at the front, made it necessary for the central government, having purged itself of dissenters, to stabilize the executive. It had/

had become obvious that the Dantonist committee had failed in its task of guiding the Revolution and executing laws sufficiently firm to prevent its power being challenged. Therefore, when the time came for the committee to be reviewed it was necessary that certain changes be made, both in personnel and policy.

The election of the second Committee of Public Safety marked another reverse in the political affiliations of Barère. The political weathercock finally rejected Danton for much the same reasons for which he had rejected the Girondins. He blamed the failure of the committee to control the events of May 31st and June 2nd onto Danton's refusal to speak; he was suspicious of the old Cordelier, especially in the light of the Jacques Roux affair. As a hard-working, meticulous member himself, he resented Danton's lassitude in connection with the committee work, but above all he had noted the influence of Robespierre over the Convention, both as far as the constitution was concerned and over the outcome of events. It had/

had been Robespierre who had emerged triumphant from the skirmish at the Jacobins, and Barère was beginning to realize that whoever controlled the Jacobin club controlled Paris.

Seven of the Committee elected on July 10th were to sit on the Great Committee. Again Barère took the lead, gaining 192 votes; the fall in the number indicated not so much the fall in his popularity but the reduction in the members of the assembly. The most significant newcomer to the committee was St.-Just, and it was probably due to his influence rather than Barère's, (as Barère claims) that Robespierre was added to the number on July 27th. He entered the committee at the very moment when Danton suggested a total reorganization of the executive, a suggestion which was spurned.<sup>14</sup> It is a strange coincidence that the fall of both the principal demagogues of the Revolution should occur on the anniversary of their respective entries into the two Committees of Public Safety.

The committee was not completed by the/

the arrival of Robespierre, but he promised the directive force which would inspire an undefined collection of legislators which lacked either the personal power or the initiative, with the exception of St.-Just, to form an effective executive committee. Barère and Lindet were the only two who had sat on the Danton Committee, and who had experience of close committee work. They were trusted by the Convention and had done nothing to daunt the faith it had in them. Carnot and Prieur de la Cote d'Or joined those elected in August to provide the first really competent directive force behind the organisation of the war. The remaining terrorists, Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois, did not appear on the committee until after the Hébertist insurrection of September 4th. In his uncompleted 'Histoire du Comité de Salut Public', Barère claims that the failure of the first committee was due to its incompetence in dealing with the municipality of Paris, and its failure to prevent that body from holding the Convention to ransom. The answer of the second/

second Committee of Public Safety to the recalcitrant nation and insurgent capital was the Terror, and in his Histoire, Barère applauds its success, 'The Committee of Public Safety was the sublimest creation of the Revolution. This band of specialists was the only means to make France victorious....'

15

The pressures exerted on the central government from outside and the fear of personal attack from within turned Barère into the uncompromising terrorist of the Great Committee. Fear lay behind most of the attitudes and actions of those directing the Revolution. Not only was the country so often in danger, but each individual felt himself threatened. Barère, more than many of the others, was susceptible to any form of attack, however oblique. Marat hated him, and waged a private war from his cellar against 'Barère the royalist, Barère of the mocking smile!'

16

It is possibly fortunate for Barère that Charlotte Corday removed this implacable enemy of all moderates, for his attacks were becoming dangerous/

dangerous. Barère was attacked for his reports on the Vendée and the war by those who knew how desperate the situation was, and they blamed him for toning down the truth to make it palatable to the Convention. He was accused of personally nominating the inept Beauharnais as Minister of War in place of the sans-culotte, Bouchotte, and for defending the aristocratic Custine in the Convention. <sup>11</sup> In September, Robespierre, who had long nursed a grievance against him for the remarks Barère had made about him during the King's trial, attacked him at the Jacobins. Yet it was Robespierre who in fact defended him from the attacks of the Hébertists. When the sections warned the Convention that Barère was the most insidiously dangerous of all the members of the Committee of Public Safety, Robespierre came to his defence, stating that he was not politically dangerous, but hardworking and valuable to the executive.

It was not only personal attack that created the new Barère, which led him from his/

his statement of June 24th that, 'What matters it to the public liberty, the passing fate of a few individuals? The nation, like philosophy, sees only results,'<sup>18</sup> to the more insistent terrorist doctrine, 'In Revolution, everything which tends to save the fatherland, to strengthen the new government, to ensure liberty is religiously commanded.' It was not only to strengthen his own position and reply to the previous accusations with severity that he was instrumental in ordering the arrest of Custine on the pretext that he had failed to relieve Mainz. He turned his back on all compromise, and followed up that order with one recalling Biron from the Vendée. In his first report to the Convention from the newly formed committee he called for a concentration on the defence of the country and the liberty of the people and to allow nothing to prevent an absolute dedication to this cause. 'Liberté, égalité, voilà nos maximes; une constitution et des lois, voilà notre bonheur,'- albeit a suspended constitution,- 'la destruction de la Vendée, la/

la, punition des traîtres, l'extirpation du royalisme, voilà nos besoins; la réunion franche et prompte de toutes nos forces contre les ennemis connus, voilà nos devoirs et le seul gage de nos succès.<sup>20</sup> Remembering the cry of the sans-culottes against all moderates and pacifiers he rebukes the uncommitted, 'Où est donc le danger si grand? affecteront de dire les ennemis constants, ces modérés spectateurs inutiles de la Révolution'. His days of being a moderate spectator were over. No attempt is made in this speech to cover up the dangers which face the country, 'Le danger est plus terrible encore, il menace nos espérances, nos travaux, notre fortune publique, nos propriétés nationales par des incendies combinés...'<sup>21</sup> Yet, as before, he still saw the real enemy as being England, and it was due to her influence that the counter-revolutionaries in France could operate. In the same speech he declares that papers have been found which 'annoncent que le gouvernement anglais soudoie dans nos places frontières, près de nos armées, des agents de plusieurs sortes.'<sup>22</sup> /

sortes.' <sup>22</sup> He claims that the letter gives an outline of the English plans to discredit the assignat by persuading the counter-revolutionaries to refuse all credit notes which do not bear the portrait of the king. <sup>23</sup> In an all-out attempt to stamp out the counter-revolutionary movement, Houchard was relieved of his command of the army of the Moselle; commissioners were appointed to visit all the armies at the front, and the Vendée, to administer 'la médecine politique;' finally all the relations of the royal family were to be expelled, and Marie-Antoinette be transferred from the Temple to the Conciergerie. It is because of this clause in the report that Macaulay accuses Barère of being the first person to suggest the Queen's death. It is slender evidence on which to convict Barère of inhuman cruelty, as the decrees had been drawn up by the entire committee, and Barère's claim that Robespierre first suggested it is far more likely to be true.

The style in which he delivered, this, <sup>23</sup> his first real 'carmagnole', as his reports were to be/

be called, was epic. He had long been known for grandiloquence which could bring an unruly assembly to order. In his report to the Convention in the name of the Committee of Public Safety he brought the ring of personal conviction to a mode of oratory which already embodied every trick of eloquence that he had learned during his long career of public speaking. Launay is scathing in his criticism of Barère's style. 'Cette médiocrité glorieuse, et cette aptitude pour le pathos, l'enfilade indéfinie de phrases'<sup>24</sup> He claims that there is little change between the style of the Éloges and the style of the Rapports, 'Cette goût pour la phraséologie et son besoin d'émerveiller un public par l'élasticité de ses périodes, les pirouettes de son style, la fantaisie étourdissante de sa rhétorique,' remains the same. He is not entirely correct in that Barère's reports were generally rhetorical, packed with hyperbolic allusion, and in the case of the reports on the war, panegyric in style; but there were times when he presents mere fact, unadorned/

unadorned and clipped, depending upon the mood of the Convention and the matter of his report. His exaggerations were famous, especially the case of his report on the Vengeur, and Launay is right in criticising him for giving a false impression to France of what really happened, and creating an entirely fallacious revolutionary legend; what was important, and more relevant at the time, was that Barère could hold the attention of the Convention and inspire it with confidence throughout the dangerous months when the spirit and the optimism of the deputies was at its lowest ebb. If anyone could restore their faith in the Republic it was Barère, and during moments of crisis or dissention cries of 'Barère à la tribune!' could be heard above the cries of dissent.

During the stormy session of September 5th Barère was conspicuous by his absence. While the Convention listened to the harangue of Chaumette, and quivered under the threat of yet another insurrection, this time by the Hébertist enragés, even Robespierre admitted that nothing/

nothing could be done until Barère arrived to present the report of the Committee of Public Safety. Paris, under the shadow of an eclipse of the sun, waited for the outcome of another journée, and Robespierre as president of the assembly was faced with the demonstrators from the Commune who demanded that 'terror be made the order of the day', and that Chaumette, who was openly declaring war on the rich, be their spokesman. While Chaumette demanded a Revolutionary army to scour the provinces for food, and the section committees presented their somewhat communistic petition, Robespierre and the Convention procrastinated until Barère arrived. Barère and the rest of the committee, however, were waiting also to see which way events moved before framing their report, and as the day drew on, Billaud-Varenne seized the opportunity to take the lead and supported the motion for a revolutionary army. He then attacked the Committee of Public Safety, which was ineffectually defended by the only other member of it present, St.-André. No one listened/

listened to him, however, for Danton had mounted the tribune amid hysterical applause and proved, in a speech in support of Billaud-Varenne, that he could still bend an assembly to his will. It was into such an atmosphere of hysteria that Barère arrived and prepared to compete with Danton at the tribune. He was sure of himself but the occasion required courage. Only a few days before he had presented his famous appeal for a national war effort and the levée en masse and had received rapturous applause. But these two measures had exacerbated the unrest caused by food shortage and physical hardship and lay at the back of the Hébertist rising. He was therefore marked as one of the enemy by the mob in the hall, and his views on internal revolutionary armies were well known. The future of the Committee of Public Safety was at stake, for if he failed to gain the confidence of the assembly after Danton's speech, then another May 31st would probably result. In a masterly speech he rescued not only Robespierre and St.-André but the Convention and/

and the Committee. He pronounced a decree for the organization of a revolutionary army, he promised the 'blood of Brissot and Marie Antoinette', he blamed the food shortage on to conspirators, and with an irrelevant, and slightly suspect anecdote, ended by informing a wildly cheering assembly that the nephew of Pitt had been found hiding in a French Château.<sup>25</sup>

Afterwards it was Barère who suggested that Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois join the committee. Danton was also asked, not at the suggestion of Barère, but he refused, saying he could best serve the needs of his country outside any committee. In withstanding this latest attack on its power and authority, the Committee of Public Safety emerged stronger than ever. In no small way did Barère help to win confidence for the committee from the Convention. On September 25th the Committee of Public Safety again came under attack, this time by the Convention itself. The assembly accused the committee of withholding information, and framing decrees without/

without consultation with the deputies. In an unprepared speech, divided for effect between supplication and concise commentary, Barère asked for the strength and confidence of national representation in all that the executive found fit to do. He explained that the committee kept nothing to itself, but because the material it had to handle was so diverse it was necessary to select and order the information before it was presented. If the work of selection was not done beforehand, he informed them, the amount of detail would be so overwhelming that no sense would be made of it. The pretext for the attack was the failure of Houchard, after the battle of Hondshoote, to take adequate precautions against a renewed attack from the English. Although technically beaten and forced to retire from Dunkirk, the English had effected a counter-attack which had seriously depleted the Army of the North. Under such criticism from the Convention, Barère and the Committee could only uphold the view that all reverses at the front were due to treachery among/

among the generals. Houchard was therefore blamed for not having shot all the English prisoners after the battle, and massacred the retreating army. Barère himself advocated such a policy, making the often misquoted remark that 'Dead men don't come back'. He does not retract this statement, even in his Mémoires, as he claims that such disasters as Valenciennes would never have happened had this policy been carried out from the beginning. Houchard was subsequently arrested and eventually executed on November 17th, with no word of protest from Barère. In sacrificing Houchard Barère saved the Committee, and restored confidence in its ability to direct the war efficiently. As a final test of the Convention's support he demanded, 'If the Committee has forfeited your support, recall us to your midst.' The Convention did not recall the  
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twelve members.

Barère had drawn from the Convention a vote of confidence in the Committee of Public Safety, and when he asked that there be no change/

change of personnel for a further month, the request was granted without further debate. From that moment the Committee became a de facto executive, and without being fully aware of what they had done, the members of the Convention transferred the mandate, to interpret the Will of the People, from the elected representative body to the smaller oligarchy. The Convention, however, still had to be cajoled and persuaded to accept the decrees, and this became the task of Barère. He committed himself absolutely to the task of maintaining the link between the Convention and the Committee, and in order to do this his own faith in both must never be seen to waver. He therefore used all his oratorical power to force the Convention to accept the Law of Suspects on September 17th, despite the fact that in his Mémoires he describes it as iniquitous. It is possible that secretly he thought so at the time, but it was necessary at that moment to use every method open to the committee to prevent the spread of counter-revolution. 'If we had thunder/

thunder we would use it,' he declared and in a word he turned his back on the fate of the Girondins, his friend the Duke of Orléans and his own conciliatory nature of the past. <sup>27</sup>

In this new, uncompromising frame of mind he introduced a decree on October 1st for dealing with the 'Inexplicable Vendée.' The speech was delivered in the tone of the Terror. He outlined plans for isolating the seaboard towns, for totally destroying Lyons, and any other offending town which raised its flag against the Republic. He also promised that measures would be taken to curb treachery among the generals. He pleaded for renewed supplies, informing the Convention that 'Dieu se met toujours du côté des gros bataillons,' <sup>28</sup> His plea was answered. He had flattered the Convention by referring to it as the 'instrument of the Revolution' and he had terrified it by describing the size of the English forces. He had appealed to the representatives of the people to take the lead and concentrate their collective power, 'Ce travail ramènera dans la main de la/

la Convention des pouvoirs trop disséminés; il rétablira dans un seul point l'autorité nationale,' Barère more than anyone else managed to disguise the fact that the 'seul point' of authority was the Committee of Public Safety, but in doing so the Convention responded to him. When on October 12th he announced to it the recapture of Lyons, 'Lyons is no more,' he declared to deafening applause,-the Convention was prepared once more to place its confidence in the Committee of Public Safety.

The only way in which France could withstand the onslaught of both civil and foreign war was through total unity of the nation. The same deputy who had fought to keep his native town of Tarbes out of the clutches of Béarn, who had claimed that the individual characteristics of the provinces of France must be retained, in 1794 dedicated all his energy to bringing into effect a policy of total unification. On January 27th he presented a speech urging the standardisation of the French language. He argued that local/

local patois and dialect, as well as foreign languages, provided a weapon for the war against centralisation. He argued that the French language was the 'instrument journalier' of the 'pensée révolutionnaire' and must become the standard means of communication throughout France. In allowing local dialects to persist, the state was encouraging federalism, 'Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent Bas-Breton; l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent Allemand; la contre-révolution parle l'Italien, et le fanatisme parle le Basque.' He admitted that the appeal may appear frivolous but at a time when unity was vital to the safety of the Republic every hindrance to such unity must be removed. Finally he appealed, 'Nos ennemis avaient fait de la langue française la langue des cours; c'est à nous d'en faire la langue des peuples et elle sera honorée.'

Concomitant with the Committee's policy for total unification, a plan for the nationalisation of all industry concerned with the war was presented to the Convention by Barère in February/

February 1794. He had lent his support to the Law of the Maximum, first decreed on May 4th 1793, for he saw it as being no more than an extension of the nationalisation of all vital products. In his support of the law he states 'Products of our territory are national property, all real property belongs to the State; Revolution and liberty are the citizen's first creditors; the Republic should have preferred credit when it wishes to purchase.'<sup>30</sup> He saw no anomaly in a regime which claimed it upheld all individual rights and at the same time demanded the subjection of the individual's wishes to those of the State. He could therefore also declare, when irate merchants stormed shops and food wagons in protest against the maximum, 'As long as I am one of the people's representatives I shall wage pitiless war on those who violate the rights of private property.'<sup>31</sup>

The basis of 'economic terror' had been outlined by St.-Just as early as May 1792 when the Girondins had passed a motion fixing a maximum/

maximum price for all consumer goods. On September 3rd, 1793 the Committee of Public Safety introduced more rigorous measures to control not only the price of food but the amount consumed. 'L'économie est la vertu des peuples libres,' stated Barère when he introduced the measures; or so he tried to persuade the people.<sup>32</sup> It is doubtful that he succeeded in persuading himself, for he was among the first to criticise the Maximum in December 1794. In February however, there were armies to feed and clothe and famine was one of the causes of civil unrest. The law may have been 'un piège tendu à la Convention par les ennemis de la République; un présent de Londres,'<sup>33</sup> but it was necessary to save France from starvation. Barère had insisted on the formation of subsistence committees in September, as he rightly believed that some account of regional economy had to be taken. He had framed the Navigation Act of September 21st, and was thus responsible for the closing of French ports to all English shipping. No English goods were to be/

be imported. He had declared that France must, and could, produce everything herself, that the commercial power of the Modern Carthage must be broken. <sup>34</sup> It was necessary for the integrity of the nation that France become a Commercial Republic, 'c'est-à-dire un commerce qui aime son pays plus que celui des autres.' <sup>35</sup> It would have been easy to do just that, had France been able to produce sufficient raw materials to meet the demand for armaments, or had she developed her own industries sufficiently to make her independent of all imports. Barère appealed time and again, until Thermidor, for more rigorous measures against black-marketeers, a greater concentration on the collecting and manufacturing of saltpetre and a persistent surveillance over all who violated the Law of the Maximum. Undeterred by reports of farmers hoarding grain, carters filling brandy bottles destined for the front with water, and housewives chasing from their doorsteps, commissionaires sent to check on food supplies, Barère appealed to the Convention for their/

their support in the face of an apparently failing policy. It was with great jubilation that he announced to the assembly that Berthollet and Le Blanc had found a method of producing saltpetre, which even the English did not know about, and that the commissionaires no longer had to comb the cellars of all France for the vital commodity.<sup>36</sup> The effect of the Navigation Act coupled with the totalitarian policy drained France of supplies and initiative in industry for a time. But the measure saved her from starvation and equipped her armies to a degree that rendered futile the allies' policy of waiting until France dropped with exhaustion before forcing humiliating conditions of peace upon her.

On December 4th the Committee of Public Safety decreed the Law of Revolutionary Government and the Convention was compelled to accept the principles of the Republic of Virtue. Barère, although he lacked the fanaticism of St. Just and the vision of Robespierre, accepted that it was necessary to overcome all opposition to the/

the Republic with force and that all laws necessary for its protection must be executed promptly and with minimum revision. There was no time to implement the principles of the new constitution; that would come when the danger was passed. Terror must be made the order of the day to prepare the way for those principles. His remark made during the Lyons massacres characterises his attitude to the Revolution at that moment. 'But what is the present generation in comparison with generations which are to come?' <sup>37</sup> He had become a real rousseauist in that he realised, like Robespierre, that the people had to be forced to be free. Yet like St.-Just he believed that these measures were temporary and that after the nation had been purged of all concepts which ran counter to the new ideology the new day would dawn when the nation would be free under the law. In the meantime, as the reaction to the death of the Girondins and Marie Antoinette, and the closing of the churches, caused the civil war to intensify, it was necessary to exercise maximum surveillance./

surveillance. To this end the Committee appointed new 'missionaries' to exercise extraordinary power in the provinces. The sovereign people, represented by the Committee of Public Safety, had to exercise dictatorial power and the law of December 4th enabled it to do so. 'The committee, being forced by circumstance to arrogate to itself, extraordinary powers, became a Despotism of Liberty.'<sup>38</sup> For the time being Barère was dedicated to that despotism. In answer to one of the many petitions presented to the bar of the Convention protesting against the severity of the deputies on mission, Barère answered, in defence of Lebon's activities in Arras and Cambrai, 'Lebon qu'on avait calomnié a pris dans le département où il était en mission des mesures qui ont beaucoup contribué à ces victoires.' It is true that when Lebon's measures became too much for even Robespierre to excuse, Barère joined in the attack against him, but in the winter of 1794, too much was at stake to allow even the slightest relaxation of the police surveillance. When/

When Desmoulins openly attacked the Terror in the 'Vieux Cordelier', Barère warned him in a speech made in reply to other attacks on the Law of Suspects, which he described as 'a terrible but necessary institution which has saved France.'<sup>39</sup>

During the critical months of Frimaire and Nivôse, before the tide turned in favour of France in the war, the safety of the Republic was all that mattered. 'For the nation it was a question of liberty and for France it was a question of existence.'<sup>40</sup>

'All means of defence become legitimate,' he declared when the trial of the Hébertists opened. The trial was a mockery of legality, but Barère could not protest against a measure which protected the Committee. The Hébertists had attempted again to force the Cordeliers to take the lead in opposing the Terror and the Committee and therefore they had become enemies of the people and lost their right of citizenship. It is doubtful whether he was as persuaded of the appearance of legality in the case of Danton's/

Danton's trial. He had lost his faith in Danton, but he had admired him, and liked him, as had Robespierre. Barère was not convinced of the premise that 'all pleasure-seekers are counter-revolutionists' and he did not oppose Danton on the grounds that he had betrayed the Republic of Virtue through his, (Danton's) personal vices. Barère's concern was more with public morale than public morality. It is possible that he believed, as he says in his Mémoires, that Danton was working with the counter-revolutionaries in the Vendée.<sup>41</sup> It is more likely that at the time of the arrest his concern was not so much Danton but Héroult-Séchelles. In his capacity as reported to the Convention Barère handled all documents appertaining to the war. He had in his possession, during March, some papers said to have been stolen from a neutral ship in Toulouse. These contained plans drawn up by the coalition for the partitioning of France, and clauses of the proposed peace treaty. Héroult-Séchelles had asked to see the papers, and then asked to borrow them. Barère/

Barère had lent them to him, despite the fact that Héroult had been dropped from the Committee of Public Safety in December on suspicion of treason. Barère eventually asked for the papers back again as he had to make the report. Héroult hesitated and said that he would let him have them later.

The papers which came to light during the investigation after his arrest showed him to be a close friend of the Comte de Poly, the natural son of Baron Thugut, the Austrian Chancellor, and also showed that on one of his missions to the upper Rhine he had in fact been in Basle, together with evidence provided by the French Ambassador in Constantinople. The committee were convinced of the treachery of Héroult. It is not surprising that Barère was so vehement in the condemnation of the Dantonists, or that he who had demanded a jury for the Revolutionary Tribunal should insist that the condemned go to the guillotine without a hearing.

Since the establishment of the Law of Revolutionary Government the Committees of Public/

Public Safety and General Security had taken over nearly all the tasks of the various executive commissions. After the end of March, when all other commissions were abolished, the volume of work which the Twelve handled was prohibitive. They worked hard, and none harder than Barère. He still held responsibility for legislation dealing with foreign affairs, naval administration, public monuments, theatres, libraries, public education, poor-relief and the repression of mendicity. He published reports and dealt with all the facts relating to the work of the commissions which had once dealt in these matters. 43 He worked all day, and often until two or three o'clock in the morning framing the reports and dealing with correspondence. His main concern, however, was the reports from the front, and he spent most time on those he was to present to the Assembly announcing victories or incidents of republican glory. Couthon attempted to relieve him of the task, and with reason, for his exaggerations were sometimes embarrassing and his/

his inaccuracies appalling. St.-Just demanded that he deliver his reports without 'being allowed to add froth to the victories.' The report on the taking of Charleroi is typical of the style in which these 'carmagnoles' were delivered. 'Vous voyez à la barre les signes d'une nouvelle victoire.. Entendez comment des esclaves capitulent; en tombant aux genoux des républicains il font l'éloge de leur générosité...voilà donc les fruits de ses efforts; voilà les résultats précieux de votre union; voilà les garanties de la belle République que vous avez fondée sur les cadavres des Capet et des fédéralistes.'<sup>44</sup> His 'report' on the sinking of the Vengeur is a hilarious example of his exaggeration and inaccuracy. 'Depuis que la mer est devenue un champ de carnage, et que les flots ont été ensanglantés par la guerre, les annales de l'Europe n'avaient pas fait mention d'un combat aussi opiniâtre, d'une valeur aussi soutenue, et d'une action aussi terrible, aussi meurtrière que celle du 13 Prairial...' The report of the battle of June 1st in which the French vessel/

vessel 'Vengeur' was de-masted and forced to surrender to the English contains little true fact but gave Barère the opportunity to use his invective against the English. 'Misérables esclaves de Pitt et de George, est-ce que vous pensez que des Français républicains se remettront en des mains perfides, et transigeront avec des ennemis aussi vils que vous.' The captain reports that he signalled for help to the English ships in the area and they immediately answered his call. According to Howe's dispatch 277 Frenchmen were picked up out of the water; the rest went down with the wreckage, despite desperate efforts to rescue them by the crew of the English ship which had done the damage. 'Imaginez,' Barère begs the Convention, 'le vaisseau Vengeur percé de coups de canon, s'entrouvrant de toutes parts, cerné de tigres et de léopards Anglais, un équipage composé de blessés et de mourants, luttant contre les flots et les canons...' The English stopped firing as soon as the masts fell, according to the report. The captain, Renaudin, describes a small/

small incident of the battle, 'Nous entendîmes, en nous éloignant, quelques uns de nos camarades former encore des vœux pour leur patrie. Les derniers cris de ces infortunés furent ceux de Vive la République.' Barère interprets the information differently. 'Tout-à-coup le tumulte du combat, l'effroi du danger, les cris de douleur des blessés cessent; les cris de Vive la République! Vive la Liberté et la France! se font entendre de tous côtés.' Renaudin claims that as many as possible were saved by cutters and taken to the English vessels, but Barère insists on the wilful drowning of many of the French. Barère must have read the report. Why he chose to ignore most of the facts and extenuate all of them is hard to say, except that the enemy had been English. Also he was by then a practised politician and knew how to use facts to advantage, and by July 9th when he delivered his report, the Convention was showing signs of rebellion. He knew how to restore its confidence and also he was too much the showman not to use every patriotic/

patriotic and romantic gesture to full histrionic effect.

There is evidence in his Mémoires and in his Défense that Barère's relations with the other members of the Committee became more strained after Danton's death. In March St.-Just and Robespierre forced through the Convention the Laws of Ventôse which confiscated all émigré property or that of suspected persons and placed it at the disposal of the indigent. Barère, with his deep-seated respect for private property, mistrusted the law, and had been shocked at the method by which St.-Just had by-passed the committee in the early stages of the framing of the decree. He attempted to persuade its author to modify certain clauses, but was simply told to prepare a report on the best means of redistributing the property among the poor. The report on the Ventôse Laws which finally reached the Convention lacks the conviction of earlier decrees. He never did draw up the required list of persons who might benefit, mainly because the French people themselves were/

were far too proud to declare themselves indigent. St.-Just's proposal for the decree of 21st Germinal brought the two into open conflict once more. Barère was again asked to prepare a report on those of the nobility who could be 'of use' to the Republic. But Barère misunderstood the request. He was shocked by St.-Just's proposal that ci-devant nobles should mend the roads, and Barère's report in fact became an apologia for those proscribed nobles, and a series of requests for exemptions from manual labour. St.-Just delivered a scathing attack on Barère's own noble origins and accused him of favouring and protecting the nobility still left in France.

The division within the Committee of Public Safety and its rivalry with the Committee of General Security became increasingly marked after the decree establishing the Police Law of 27 Germinal was pushed through the Convention. Barère remained aloof from most of the intrigues between the emerging factions. He returned more and more to his old conviction, expressed in a/

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a speech in Frimaire that 'La Convention gouverne seul, et doit seul gouverner.' After the attempt on Robespierre's life in Prairial there had been a request made that the members of the Committee who felt their lives threatened should be provided with an armed guard. Barère had opposed such a request when made by the Girondins and he did not hesitate in opposing this one. 'Le Comité de Salut Public a ordonné telle mesure comme si la Convention n'existait pas.' He came more and more into conflict with the 'triumvirate', and was resented by St.-Just and Couthon. One incident reveals the opinion they held of him. St.-Just, returning from the front with the report of the battle of Fleurus, refused to give it to Barère. When he was asked to give the details of the battle he refused, remaining silent and sullen in Barère's presence. The details were acquired from elsewhere, but the report differs so much from Barère's other accounts of victories that it would be easy to believe that the framing of the report was done by someone else. The incident/

incident troubled Barère and became the overture for several attacks on him by the Robespierre faction. Augustin Robespierre warned him at the end of Prairial in the Jacobin club, 'We missed you on 31st May, but you will not escape a second time.'<sup>46</sup> He became at first suspicious and then afraid of the emergence of the triumvirate. By Prairial he observed that 'St.-Just, Couthon and Robespierre were constituting a kind of triumvirate, which concerted and took measures to break forth at the proper time and take possession of the power of the Committee as soon as they had succeeded in discrediting it and rendering it suspect every by the Convention and as soon as they could dispense with its information and work.'<sup>47</sup>

The greatest shock came when Robespierre informed the Committee of his designs to replace the Cult of Reason, which he dismissed as being 'aristocratic', with the worship of the Supreme Being. Barère was not only startled at this sudden volte-face, as he saw it, but suspicious of Robespierre's real motives. He had agreed to a/

a certain extent with the attack on atheism made by Robespierre in November. He could accept that in the absence of the King there is the People, but although a rationalist, he had never totally acceded to the thesis that in the absence of God there is only Reason. The root of his opposition to the decree of May 7th was not a philosophical repugnance at the re-establishment of a Godhead which had been legally destroyed, but rather a fear of the political implications of a new State Religion.

The plan for the fête was presented by David during Robespierre's presidency. Barère was asked to present the rather embarrassing decree concerning the dress to be worn by the deputies. <sup>48</sup> He was also asked to read the decree proclaiming the day as a national festival. His report following almost immediately Robespierre's rhapsodic introduction 'Il est enfin arrivé.

L'auteur de la Nature avait lié tous les mortels par une chaîne immense d'amour et de félicité,' is rather flat and lacks enthusiasm; there is a/

a total absence of personal comment. Vilate describes an incident which happened during the day of the fête which indicates Barère's own feelings. 'Afin de jouir du coup d'oeil de la fête,' he met Barère, Collot, Prieur and Carnot in the garden of the Tuileries. 'Barère ne paraissait pas content,' he says. Vilate describes him as being downcast and restless, but deep in conversation with Carnot on the subject of the fête. They tried to persuade Vilate to have lunch with them, but the latter refused as he was due to meet Robespierre. When he told them this a silence fell and they parted company hurriedly.

The law of the 22nd Prairial tore the Committee asunder and brought it into open conflict with the Committee of General Security. The decree was introduced by Carnot, again during the presidency of Robespierre, immediately following the Fête of the Supreme Being. Barère had not forgotten the appearance of Robespierre on the summit of David's cardboard mountain, and was convinced that it signified more than honour/

honour normally due to a president of the assembly. When the decree of the 22nd was presented to the Convention before the other members of the committee had seen and discussed it, Barère joined Vadier, representing the Committee of General Security, in a protest against both the contents of the decree and the mode of presentation. Billaud openly challenged Robespierre and Couthon for their high-handed methods and with Collot d'Herbois they formed the group, referred to by Bouchez and Roux, as, 'les gens révolutionnaires' in opposition to 'les gens de la haute main.' With the exception of David and Lebas, the Committee of General Security declared itself opposed to the triumvirate and to the decree. Barère was president of the Jacobins in Messidor when Robespierre and St.-Just attacked Carnot for his financial policy, of which Robespierre at least understood little. Barère hotly defended Carnot against St.-Just, 'I do not fear you,' he said, 'I have always defended our country openly and without personal interest. I/

I will answer you from the tribune if you lay  
 blame on Carnot.<sup>49</sup> Yet despite attempts  
 made by Barère, Vadier, Moïse Bayle and Carnot, and  
 the growing opposition of the Convention 'The  
 horrible law was passed and its consequences were  
 deplorable.'<sup>50</sup>

Early in Messidor St.-Just demanded the  
 union of the Committees of Public Safety and  
 General Security. He informed the members of the  
 former that France was in a state of the utmost  
 anarchy, both of power and will, and that the  
 Convention was inundated with unexecuted and  
 unexecutable laws. On being challenged to  
 explain himself more fully he stated that France  
 needed a dictatorial power different from that of  
 the two committees. What was needed was a man  
 of sufficient talent and power and energy to  
 accept the full responsibility of public control.  
 In the absence of a national ideology, - by this  
 he meant a complex of beliefs and values which  
 were acceptable to the entire nation, - and of  
 traditional institutions some form of charisma was/

was necessary to prevent the fragmentation of the Republican virtue. St.-Just saw the need for a man endowed with such a habit of Revolution in his principles, actions and agents that he would be able to answer for the maintenance of liberty and the public security. His demand for a virtuous, inflexible and incorruptible citizen left no one in any doubt as to whom he would see promoted to dictator.<sup>51</sup> Barère had a profound admiration for St.-Just, 'That brain of fire and heart of ice' as he refers to him in the Mémoires. He saw him as a 'deeper, cleverer revolutionary than Robespierre' and he understood the power the younger man exercised over the Incorruptible. He saw in St.-Just the real power behind the triumvirate and feared him. Thus when this speech was made Barère was in no doubt that it would be the Kingmaker rather than the King who would rule, and he did not see himself acting as one of the courtiers. Barère had once believed in the sentiments which St.-Just now expressed in clearer, more dynamic terms than any one else/

else could have done. He had doubted the efficacy of the Committee of Public Safety but he could not accept the concept of dictatorship in the terms outlined by St.-Just; in a republic it was not lawful for one man to raise himself above the other elected representatives.<sup>52</sup> The fear of the impending fight for supremacy within the Committee itself and the constant rumours that another 31st of May was imminent, made him appeal again and again during Messidor and Thermidor for the full confidence and support of the Convention in all the efforts of the Committee to avert a new insurrection. He blamed the rumours on the resurgent Hébertist movement, latter-day Dantonists, and, as always, the infiltration of English agents.<sup>53</sup> He openly opposed the concept of dictatorship on 2 Thermidor, without actually mentioning Robespierre, although in his reply to Saladin in 1795, he claims that this speech was intended to be a direct attack on him. 'Il faut que les fonctionnaires publics soient les instruments du peuple et non ses dénominateurs.'<sup>54</sup> The Convention knew his views, /

views, yet he was not approached by any faction and was uninvolved in the machinations of Fouché before Thermidor. As on May 31st, Barère remained apparently impartial, unconnected with any plot, and uncommitted to any cause, save that of avoiding as much acrimony and bloodshed as possible.

From 28th of Messidor, Barère, as president of the Jacobin Club, had been made aware of the clandestine plot to curb the power of the triumvirate. Robespierre had appeared infrequently at the Convention, since the passing of the law of 22 Prairial, but he had concentrated all his efforts on winning renewed support at the Jacobins, and insinuating that there were plots being hatched by the Convention to overthrow him. Barère attempted to prevent denunciations of other members of the two committees and the Convention by encouraging irrelevant and harmless discussion. Hence, two whole evenings were devoted to the reprimand of a pupil of the *École de Mars* for wearing gold earrings. In his speeches to the Convention he concentrated on the programme of the/

the nationalisation of the war effort and supplies, and made repeated references to the day when help and victory would come to people of liberty and all the tyrants would be chased from the land. These speeches were not a veiled threat to the triumvirate, as Launay and Mathiez suggest, nor do they indicate that he knew of the plots to overthrow Robespierre, they were simply an attempt to inspire confidence and optimism. The tension of the weeks preceding 9th Thermidor is echoed in the reports he made to the Convention. His constant allusion to the rumours of a 31st of May, and the lack of his usual verve, coupled with the forced optimism, show the strain under which he himself laboured. He was perhaps relieved when the Committee of Public Safety decided that St.-Just had been right, and united the two Committees, for in so doing one source of the friction within the executive would perhaps be removed.

After Robespierre's discours of the 8 Thermidor, Barère demanded the printing and circulating of the speech, against the wishes of/

of the majority of the assembly. In fact it is due more to his argument that, 'dans un pays libre il n'est aucune vérité qui doit être cachée,'<sup>56</sup> that Bourdon de l'Oise's motion that it be subjected to scrutiny by the Convention was overcome. In Vadier's attack on Robespierre in which he challenged him on the case of Catherine Théot,<sup>57</sup> Barère played no part. He remained silent during the ensuing debate until he obviously could stand it no longer and declared 'Il est temps de terminer cette discussion qui ne peut servir qu' à Pitt et au duc de York. J'ai proposé l'impression du discours de Robespierre parce que mon opinion est que dans un pays libre on doit tout publier. Si depuis quatre décades Robespierre eût suivi les opérations du Comité, il aurait supprimé son discours. Il fallait surtout que le mot d'accusé soit effacé de toutes vos pensées.'

The discourse was ordered to be published and circulated. In an attempt to forestall further discussion of the issue, Barère began immediately his report on the progress of the war. In his/

his reply to Dubois-Grancé he persists in supporting his own action on the 8 Thermidor. He claims then that he supported the printing of the discourse to neutralise the effect it had produced on the Convention and to enlighten Paris and the departments on the powerful intrigues which threatened to invade and usurp everything.<sup>58</sup> There is no reason to doubt his word. He knew of the intrigues and he was afraid of the outcome of the debate, also he played a well-calculated move in expressing an opinion which could be interpreted either as support for Robespierre or as a counter-attack.

After St.-Just had been forced to leave the tribune during the session of 9 Thermidor, the Convention burst into uproar. Barère played no part in the actual attack on the triumvirate. After Élie-Lacoste had demanded the arrest of Robespierre for setting the Jacobins against the Convention, Fréron attacked St.-Just and Couthon for wishing to 'mount the tribune on the bodies of the Assembly.'<sup>59</sup> Carnot claims that Barère/

Barère said quietly to Fréron, 'Attack only Robespierre, leave St.-Just and Couthon alone.'<sup>60</sup>

It is difficult to judge his reasons for wishing to defend these two, who had appeared equally guilty of scheming for a dictatorship. It is possible that he wanted to avoid another mass execution, or it could be that he had a genuine admiration for the 'enfant terrible' of the Revolution. Certainly in his Mémoires he dedicated more space to an appraisal of St.-Just than to any other of the revolutionaries. His admiration of Robespierre was tempered by his knowledge of the failings of the 'Incorruptible.' 'Virtues and vices were equal in him,' he says of him in the Mémoires. 'On the one side, honesty, love of liberty, firmness of principle, love of property, devotion to the popular cause; on the other side, a dangerous moroseness, a bilious rage against his enemies, an atrocious jealousy of talents that eclipsed his own and a fanaticism of principle that made him prefer the establishment of a law to the existence of a population.'<sup>61</sup> The/

The two men could not have been more different, but Barère had the generosity to admire in others qualities which he himself lacked, a generosity which Robespierre did not have.

During the heat of the morning's debate, Robespierre and Couthon had attempted to mount the tribune and defend themselves, to be met with jeers and cries of, 'Barère to the Tribune!' Barère had nothing to say at that point of the proceedings, and he would have been placed in a very difficult situation had he been forced to take a stand. By seven o'clock in the evening, when the Convention re-assembled, the atmosphere was cooler. On the request of Tallien, the Convention had been declared en permanence, and the two committees had united to frame a report on the events of the morning. Barère presented this report about eight o'clock in the evening. It is interesting to compare the speech introducing the decrees of 9 Thermidor with the report of the following day. Before the arrests were made, while the position at the Commune was uncertain, Barère remains/

remains cautious. He begins the report of the ninth by citing a letter confiscated from an enemy officer in Belgium. 'Tous vos succès ne sont rien; nous n'en espérons pas moins traiter de la paix avec un parti, quel qu'il soit, avec une fraction de la Convention, et de changer bientôt de gouvernement.'<sup>62</sup> He claims that while the uncertainty remains as to the outcome of events, the government of the country must grind to a halt and the direction of the war suffer. 'Citoyens,' he appeals in the Proclamation to the French People following the report, 'voulez-vous perdre en un jour six années de Révolution, de sacrifices et de courage?'<sup>63</sup> During the entire speech and proclamation no word of invective against any of the accused appears. The following day, however, after the arrest of the Robespierrists, he uses once more the style of the 'carmagnole'; 'Elle a donc éclaté, cette horrible conjuration tramée sous le manteau du patriotisme, et par des usurpateurs de l'opinion publique! Elle tenait à des ramifications nombreuses, et qui se sont découvertes dans cette/

cette soirée avec une rapidité effroyable..' As a consequence of the first report of 9 Thermidor Robespierre and his supporters were arrested, as a result of the report of the following day the power of the Convention was declared supreme. 'Enfin, le cri unanime de tous les citoyens a été; 'Vive la Convention Nationale! vivent la liberté, la République!'<sup>64</sup> During the night of 9 and 10 Thermidor, Barère had given frequent reports on the movements of Hanriot, the activities of the Commune and the movements of Sections. He had framed the appeal to the cannoneers on the Place de Grève to remain faithful to the Convention. He says in his Mémoires that he had joined the opposers of Robespierre and was prepared to die if necessary, should events turn against the Convention. There is, however, a caution about his words and actions during that night which, when compared with the virulence of the attacks of Tallien, Fréron and the resolution of Billaud and Collot, renders his commitment suspect.

In his report of the 10th he declares,/

declares, 'Le 31 Mai le Peuple fit sa révolution, le 9 Thermidor la Convention Nationale a fait la sienne, et la liberté a applaudi également à toutes les deux.' After the event Barère also found it safe to 'applaudir également à toutes les deux,' for he had been neither a Girondin nor a Jacobin, neither a Brissotin nor a Robespierrist. He had been afraid of the prospect of a dictatorship, but one suspects that had such been established, he would have been ready to adjust to it and work as conscientiously and wholeheartedly for a dictator as he had for a democracy.

Notes to Chapter IV.

1. Quoted by Camus, 'The Rebel'. p.93.
2. Quoted by Carnot, Preface to Mémoires,' vol I.  
Original remark by Legendre.
3. All other committees had been temporarily suspended.
4. Buchez and Roux, Vol. 27 p.167.
5. Op. cit. p.171.
6. R.R. Palmer, 'Twelve Who Ruled,' p.34.
7. Condorcet's proposals for a Constitution, presented to the Assembly on 15th April, 1793, did not differ greatly from the Montagnard proposals, but the intricate and indirect system of elections would have favoured the propertied class, although he had proposed universal manhood suffrage.
8. The demands made by the Commune on May 31st were,
  - i. The members of the Commission of Twelve, the twenty-two named deputies and the Brissotin ministers, Clavière and Lëbrun, were to be arrested.
  - ii. The 'rich' were to be taxed'
  - iii. A system of poor relief and food subsidies were to be introduced.
  - iv. The army and civil administration to be purged of all 'noble' elements.
  - v. The Revolutionary army to be armed.
  - vi. The franchise to be restricted to the sans-culottes.

9. Mémoires, Vol II.
10. Robespierre made the mistake of claiming that the constitution had already been decreed by the Convention, when in fact Héroult-Séchelles had only introduced his rough draft to the deputies for consideration.
11. Buchez and Roux, vol. 3<sup>1</sup> p.189
12. Op, cit.
13. Palmer p.37.
14. The members elected to begin the committee were,-  
Jeanbon St-André, who received the same number of votes as Barère; Gaspárin, who resigned on the pretext of illness and was replaced by Robespierre; Couthon; Héroult-Séchelles; Thuriot; Prieur de la Marne; These members were added to those already mentioned in the text.
15. Quoted by Carnot in the Preface to the Mémoires.
16. Quoted by Gershoy, p.171.
17. Barère is reported to have called out 'He is my friend, my friend,' when Custine was first attacked in the Convention.
18. Moniteur for June 25th. 1793.
19. Speech on Law of Suspects, Moniteur for Sept. 18th,

20. Rapport sur l'état de la Nation. Moniteur August 3rd, '93.
21. Op. Cit.
22. Op. cit.
23. This was the name of the anthem of the Jacobins and also of the vest worn by the sans-culottes.
24. Launay, p150-151.
25. Moniteur for September 7th 1793.
26. Under pressure from the Convention Kellerman was recalled from the front on October 3rd, 1793. Barère stated that 'The voice of the People has been accusing Kellerman for years, the Convention thinks as the People does.'
27. In his Mémoires he appeals, 'My calumniators have never paid any attention to the courageous opinions which I have manifested, to prevent the illegal arrest of deputies on 31 May, to prevent the establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal and to oppose the iniquitous law of Suspects!'
28. Moniteur for October 17th '93.
29. <sup>8</sup> Stephens, Vol II. p.48.
30. Quoted by Palmer, p.225.
31. Quoted by Carnot, Preface to Mémoires.
32. Moniteur for 24th February, 1794.

33. Rapport sur la publication des tableaux du maximum. 4th Ventôse, Feb.22nd, 1794.
34. England.
35. Rapport fait sur le Maximum.
36. Mercure Universel, February, 1794.
37. London Chronicle, Thursday, January 21st, 1796.
38. Unfinished History of Committee of Public Safety, inserted into the Mémoires, Vol III.
39. Mercure Universel, December 20th.
40. Mémoires, Vol IV.
41. 'It was impossible for me to discover for whom or with what purpose Danton's party was working in that disastrous war(Vendée).'Mémoires' Vol IV.
42. If Barère is right in his statement that these papers came into his possession in March, then he had even more cause to fear accusation of inefficiency for Héroult had been inculpated in other official papers which had fallen into the hands of the Committee in January.
43. Since April 1793 he had sat on committees dealing with all these aspects of administration.
44. Rapport sur la prise de Charleroi. Stephens vol. II.p69 et seq.

45. Moniteur, 12 Frimaire.
46. Barère, Reply to Dubois-Crancé.
47. Letter quoted Carnot, Preface to Mémoires.
48. La Convention Nationale a senti il y a quinze mois le besoin de donner un costume aux représentans du Peuple.' Moniteur.
49. Barère, Reply to Saladin's Report.
50. Reply to Dubois-Crancé.
51. Later in the speech he names Robespierre. Moniteur
52. Report of 10th Thermidor. Moniteur for 11 Therm.
53. Si nous avons à répondre à des Hébertistes, à des complices des Danton et <sup>de</sup> Chaumette, nous n'aurions à prononcer qu'un simple renvoi au tribunal révolutionnaire. La liberté répond aux contre-révolutionnaires et aux traîtres par la mort et la Convention par les loix.
54. Moniteur No. 345.
55. Mercure Universel, 3 Thermidor, 1794.
56. Moniteur, 9 Thermidor.
57. The Fall of Robespierre', and other Essays, Albert Mathiez. Essay on Robespierre and Catherine Théot.
58. Reply to Saladin.

59. Moniteur, No. 311-312.
60. Preface to the Mémoires.
61. Mémoires, Vol IV. 351.
62. Moniteur, No. 311-312
63. Moniteur No. 313-314.
64. Op. cit. Loc. cit.

## Conclusion.

The Committee of Public Safety was reorganised on July 30th, 1794. A motion demanding the arrest of Barere had been defeated and he remained as its reporter. As the reaction to the Terror intensified into the 'White Terror', the Thermidorians, centred round Tallien, led the Convention into attacking the three former colleagues of Robespierre, until it appointed a commission to examine the papers and reports of all the former members of the committee. Finally, as hostility against them mounted, Collot, Billaud and Barere left the committee on September 1st. Barere fell victim to more scathing attacks than either of his colleagues, and many of the indictments against him were not only unfair but grotesque. Dubois-Grancé, who had long held a grievance against him, blames Barere, above anyone else, for the excesses of the Terror. 'J'accuse notamment Barrere,' he says in his detailed denunciation, 'd'avoir été l'instigateur des persécutions que j'ai éprouvées.' In the report on the three former members of the Committee of Public Safety, Saladin lays stress on the inefficiency and the intentional cruelty of Barere over and above/

above the blame he places on Collot and Billaud. Scores of newspaper articles, pamphlets and letters accused him of the most fantastic and heinous crimes. On December 27th a commission of twenty-one was appointed to investigate the case of the three terrorists while Barère began work on his formal Défense. The returned Girondins pressed for more than impeachment; Legendre demanded arrest and imprisonment and was loudly supported by the Convention. Saladin's report in the name of the Commission of Twenty-One was drowned by the jeers and cheers which alternately filled the hall. The demand for the arrest was made on March 2nd and the trial began three weeks later. Amid the uproar of the insurrection of 12 Germinal, the three terrorists were sentenced to deportation to French Guiana. Barère was quietly working in his room on the speech he was to present the following day, when the gendarmes arrived to arrest him.

Jeering crowds surrounded the coach in which he was to be driven to the port, prior to deportation. While the drivers of the two coaches

coaches struggled to get their 'passengers' safely out of Paris, Tallien was trying to persuade the Convention to order the execution of Barère, Billaud and Collot. Barère had already begun to regret, as he was to do so many times during the rest of his life, that he had not only deserted Robespierre on 9 Thermidor but had denied him many times afterwards. For he realised then that not only had he turned his back on a colleague whom he had respected, but also on the Revolution. Yet Robespierre had left him no choice; the triumvirate had threatened the National Representation, in which Barère had placed his faith and confidence. A more critical factor in the final moment was that Barère's own safety had been threatened. Barère was no martyr.

It is easy to condemn Barère for a career of political compromise, especially in the light of his attempts to ingratiate himself with each succeeding regime. Yet he was not by nature a sycophant any more than he was a terrorist. He lacked the vision which would have enabled him to comprehend the 'Republic of/

of Virtue' and recognise its essential credo, that the People is everywhere good. He had believed that the sovereign power lay with the People but was convinced that the General Will could only be interpreted by its assembled representatives. Yet he would never have the fanatical faith in the supremacy of that Will which made Robespierre hesitate before signing the appeal to the Section des Piques, or prevented St-Just from offering one word in his own defence. Despite his complicity in the Terror he was fundamentally a moderate and a liberal. 'Il faut donc un juste milieu pour asseoir un bon gouvernement républicain; vous ne le trouverez jamais dans les extrêmes.' Although he was arguing a case for the Directoire in 1797, such a sentiment is convincingly Barère's own. Perhaps the most realistic assessment of Barère is given by Carnot, 'He will fight to the last for any cause to which he has committed himself, but on the defeat of that cause he accepts the yoke of the conquerer with deplorable facility.'

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