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## Gabriel Bouquier: Revolutionary education at the height of sans-culottes power

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GABRIEL BOUQUIER: REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION AT THE HEIGHT  
OF SANS-CULOTTES POWER

by

Jonathan Douglas Deverse

Bachelor of Arts  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

**Master of Arts Degree in History**  
**Department of History**  
**College of Liberal Arts**

**Graduate College**  
**University of Nevada, Las Vegas**  
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## Thesis Approval

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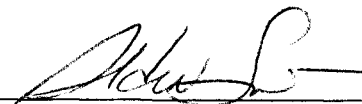
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## ABSTRACT

### **Gabriel Bouquier: Revolutionary Education at the Height of Sans-culottes Power**

By

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The central purpose of this thesis is to use Gabriel Bouquier and Michel Lepeletier as a means to investigate the greater educational debate in the radical republic of the French Revolution. I use the oppositional definition of public education in the writing of Bouquier and Lepeletier as a window into the character of Jacobinism as the height of the radical republic. Through this exploration, I revise the historiography on Bouquier by viewing him as an example of *sans-culotte* influence instead of a compromise with the liberal elements in the National Convention. Consequently, I revise the historiography of Lepeletier by interpreting his educational plan and its passage in the National Convention in terms of political culture and not ideology. This revision views Bouquier as a primary example of educational ideology in the radical republic and Lepeletier as example of its political culture. This changes our understanding of the context of events in the radical republic and the nature of the culture of Jacobinism. Finally, I situate the fervent anti-elitism in the writing of Bouquier within the National Convention as part of a greater trend in the French Revolution and part of the new trend of anti-intellectualism in democratic culture.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	ii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Biographies .....	7
CHAPTER 2 REVOLUTIONARY JANUS .....	10
Dualism in Education .....	12
Virtue in Education .....	18
Militarism in Education .....	23
Athens versus Sparta .....	25
CHAPTER 3 REVOLUTIONARY TRINITY .....	30
Classical Republicanism .....	32
Parallel Structures .....	34
The Constitution .....	36
The People .....	37
The Popular Society .....	39
The popular Society as Community .....	42
The popular Society and Education .....	47
The Reality of the Popular Society .....	51
CHAPTER 4 THE ORIGINS OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM .....	54
Learned Elites in the Old Regime .....	57
The Revolution and Bouquier .....	59
Anti-elitism in the Convention .....	67
Real or Imagined? .....	70
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION: LEPELETIER AND POLITICAL CULTURE .....	73
Trading Places .....	77
The Context of the Lepeletier Plan .....	83
Epilogue .....	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	91
VITA .....	95

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In 1793, during the radical phase of the French Revolution, a little known painter named Gabriel Bouquier authored a plan for creating a nationwide system of public education. It has the distinction of being the only plan the National Convention passed and attempted to implement. The plan was an apparent mix of liberal and radical influences. The first section on primary education seems to be liberal in that it called for what we might describe as private enterprise in education; secondary education, however, combined elements of Jacobin ideology, classical republican rhetoric and the language of the *sans-culottes*, in a zealous attack against higher education. The circumstances surrounding the plan also corresponded to the height of Maximilien Robespierre's power and the apex of *sans-culottes* influence. In light of these factors, historians attempting to understand the Bouquier plan have reasoned that the plan was a political compromise between the moderate middle ground and the radical leadership in the National Convention.

Among those historians who view the Bouquier plan as a political compromise is Robert Palmer. Palmer hypothesizes the Committee of Public Safety used the unknown Bouquier to pass legislation through the Convention because he was not associated with any of the other intractable factions.<sup>1</sup> Some historians like Palmer and the historian of

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<sup>1</sup>Palmer, R. R. 1985. *The improvement of humanity: education and the French Revolution*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 181

education, Dominique Julia, also see the plan as a compromise between proponents of religious freedom and de-Christianizers, who sought to bar priests and former priest from being schoolteachers. The Bouquier plan instituted no religious qualification for teachers, thus rejecting the extreme elements of de-Christianization, opposed by many prominent members of the Convention, Robespierre among them.<sup>1</sup> The warm welcome the plan received among the diverse factions appears to provide proof of this interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

Such an interpretation is based on political history, which in viewing the Bouquier plan as a compromise attributes the content of the plan and the context of its passage to wholly political causes. Dominique Julia in *Les trois couleurs du tableau noir* describes succinctly how political history views all the elements of the Bouquier plan. “Le décret Bouquier s’inscrit dans cette ligne politique d’apaisement qui ne pouvait que plaire aux homes de la Plaine et à l’aile dantoniste de la Montagne. Mais, en même temps, le décret Bouquier témoigne d’une orientation nettement anti-intellectuelle qui flatte l’antipathie viscérale de la sans-culotterie parisienne, alors à son apogée...”<sup>II,3</sup> The most important part of this quotation is that Julia mentions of the *sans-culottes* influence. This emphasizes that not only were there influences on the plan from the Convention, but also among the popular movement, which is fundamentally important for understanding the entirety of Bouquier’s plan.

There is one central problem with the perspective of political history. Political history is limited in its ability to encompass all the dynamics surrounding the Bouquier

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<sup>II</sup>[Please note that throughout the thesis all passages quoted in French are translated into English in the footnote.] The Bouquier decree fits into this political alignment of compromise which could only appeal to the men of the Plane (moderate middle ground) and to the Dantonist wing of the Mountain. But at the same time the Bouquier decree testifies to a distinctly anti-intellectual orientation which plays to the visceral antipathy of the parisian sans-culottes, then at their apogée...

plan because it investigates only the surface level of events. Because of this, the answers provided by political history seem superficial and uncertain. When we take stock of the circumstances of the Bouquier plan the type of consensus political history implies by attributing the passage of Bouquier's plan to a compromise is unconvincing. Is it plausible that the Convention could achieve a compromise of such different perspectives in the chaotic conditions of the radical republic? Could the environment of the Terror, the war in Europe and agitation of the *sans-culottes* really give birth to the most startling example of consensus in the Revolution? Using the analysis of political culture can open new possibilities of interpretation, which look at events on a deeper level than the simple back and forth of political contests. Therefore, I will use the cultural analysis outline by Keith Michael Baker in *Inventing the French Revolution*.<sup>III</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is threefold. The first purpose is to place Bouquier within the Jacobin movement. To do this I will use another prominent figure in the education debate, Michel Lepeletier. The Convention passed the plan of Lepeletier, yet it was suspended soon after. Understanding the differences of the two plans and the circumstances of their passage will be central to a discussion of the educational debate in the radical republic. Secondly, we will challenge the perception of the Bouquier plan as liberal by exploring the potential of viewing the plan in its entirety as an accommodation with the *sans-culottes*. Finally, if we are to revise Bouquier then a revision of Lepeletier becomes necessary. The two plans were vastly different so which one truly represents the Conventions' will and the will of the Jacobins?

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<sup>III</sup>Baker, Keith Michael. 1990. *Inventing the French Revolution essays on French political culture in the eighteenth century*. Ideas in context. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press. 4

The means to effect a revision in the historiography of education will also require us to move beyond political history with an examination the importance of culture. In addition, it compels us to consider education in the chaotic moment of revolution apart from a teleological view of education transforming into the modern. The historiography of education tends to be diachronic in that it concentrates on the evolution of educational theory with an eye towards the origins of the modern. Historians looking for ancestors or heralds to modern education are less concerned with those ideas, which have not contributed to current manifestations of educational theory. As a result, historians of education and the French Revolution have neglected Bouquier because they believe he does not form a part of this continuum. I will challenge this perspective through an investigation of Bouquier and education in the radical republic without prejudicing it against what eventually came out of it. An important consequence of this look into the creative moment of revolution is that it enriches the study of origins all the more. Trends in democratic culture, which may have seemed aberrant can be investigated with renewed purpose. The anti-elite rhetoric of Bouquier is one such trend, which can enlighten our understanding of the origins of modern anti-intellectualism.

To explore these crucial questions I will use two frameworks, one based on the work of Clifford Geertz and the other by Patrice Higonnet. There is real scholarly worth in a synchronic approach, which examines history of a particular moment. Historians influenced by Clifford Geertz have validated this approach. Historians like Robert Darnton and William Sewell use a synchronic approach to illuminate cultural history on a deeper level than historical approaches interested primarily in change over time. In the

article “Geertz, Cultural Systems, and History: From Synchrony to Transformation”<sup>IV</sup>, William Sewell Jr. offers a synthesis of synchrony and diachrony in potential harmony mutually aiding the historian in discovery. The method of thick description pioneered by Geertz to investigate a moment within a greater context of transformation will be extremely valuable to an analysis of Bouquier and Lepeletier. The framework produced by Patrice Higonnet in his 1998 work *Goodness beyond Virtue* asserts that the Jacobin movement, which Bouquier was a part, had a dual character. Higonnet asserts that the conflict of the dual aspirations of the Jacobins, individual becoming and universalism, explains their behavior. This dualistic perspective is an excellent means to understand the dynamics of the educational debate and the specific plans of Bouquier and Lepeletier. The educational plans of the two author represented extreme forms of the dual aspirations of the Jacobins. Bouquier offered an extreme vision based on free associations as the basis for education while Lepeletier represented an equally extreme vision for state sponsorship bordering on coercion.

The oppositional forms of the dual aspirations of Jacobinism represented by Bouquier and Lepeletier were also instrumental in defining the public. The two plans defined public education and in doing so, they defined the public realm. The parameters of the public and private realm were in the process of formation and education was one of the principal the means to define this new public arena. In this thesis, I will address how the specific plans of Bouquier and Lepeletier understood within the context of Jacobinism dualism can help explain how the current conception of public and public education were formed. The interaction between the state and the individual is one of the important axes

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<sup>IV</sup>Geertz, Cultural Systems, and History: From Synchrony to Transformation. William H. Sewell Jr. *Representations*, No. 59, Special Issue: The Fate of "Culture": Geertz and Beyond. (Summer, 1997) 42

where the realm of the public was defined. Bouquier's vision of independent associations and Lepeletier's vision of state sponsorship therefore have import to considerations on the democratic or despotic elements in Jacobinism.

The dual aspirations in Jacobinism also frame an important historiographical debate among historians concerning whether this movement was tending towards despotism or was representative of a democratic spirit, understood here to express the expansion of the franchise and the general increase in participation by the population in the work of government. Two influences on my perspective come from Robert Palmer and Isser Woloch. Their perspective emphasizes the dual character of the radical republic, which had both an expanding and a contracting sphere of democracy to borrow the phrase created by Isser Woloch.<sup>4</sup> Palmer and Woloch have emphasized the Revolution's democratic character, which views the radical republic as the time of the most democratic legislation in the republican period, while not ignoring the maladies of the republic, such as the Terror and the brutal campaign in the Vendée. To address the issue of despotism versus democracy in the French Revolution, this thesis explores how the oppositional positions of Bouquier and Lepeletier within Jacobinism dualism can uncover the despotic and democratic elements in the Jacobin movement.

I have organized this thesis into five chapters. The common thread throughout is Gabriel Bouquier whose words are used as a window into greater issues in the educational debate and Jacobinism. Chapter One is this introduction and Chapter Two, considers the dual nature of Jacobinism and how the aspirations of universalism and individualism motivated Bouquier and Lepeletier to create two vastly different visions of public education.

Chapter Three will explore the work of Bouquier and offer a new interpretation on the content of his ideas. It examines the possibility of viewing his ideas in light of *sans-culottes* rhetoric and classical republicanism instead of liberalism. Chapter Four will continue the examination of Bouquier ideas as one manifestation of a greater trend in democratic culture of anti-elitists sentiment against academics and lawyers.

Chapter Five will serve as a conclusion and a revision of Lepeletier in the historiography of education. The revision of interpretation regarding Bouquier will have a great deal of impact on how historians will interpret Lepeletier. The assertion that Bouquier was the exemplar of the radical republic recasts the role of Lepeletier heretofore identified by historians like Palmer and Jean-Pierre Gross as the most radical proposal of the this period.<sup>5</sup> In this concluding chapter, we will recast Lepeletier's significance under the rubric of political culture, which explains why the Convention passed both plans, but only applied the plan of Bouquier. It will also have significant implications for understanding the political culture of Jacobins.

### Biographies

Before we begin in earnest, a general biography of the important institutions and the two protagonists is in order to better support the observations made throughout this thesis. The context of this work is the period of the radical Republic of the French Revolution in the year 1793. During this period, the revolutionaries called the legislature the National Convention. It replaced the earlier Legislative Assembly, which existed in conjunction with the monarchy. The National Convention corresponded to the proclamation of the Republic and witnessed the most democratic and radical period of the

Revolution.<sup>v</sup> The debates in the Convention and in the various committees created out of the Convention were the context for our exploration of Bouquier and Lepeletier. The Committee of Public Instruction and the Committee of Public Safety, which served as the executive power in the revolutionary government, were two of the more important committees in the National Convention.

Bouquier was an aspiring painter in the old regime; his main inspiration came from the work of Joseph Vernet.<sup>vi</sup> During the Revolution Bouquier was a proponent of neoclassical themes in art. He dismissed the old regime painters like Boucher, Vanloo and Pierre as “effeminate”.<sup>vii</sup> In his revolutionary career, he voted for the death of the King and concerned himself with fostering art in the new regime.<sup>viii</sup> In conjunction with this, he was a member of the Committee of Public Instruction. He died not long after his political career ended in 1811.

Lepeletier was born in a wealthy noble family. His vision for education and his upbringing were in startling contrast to his affluent childhood. Lepeletier displayed the demeanor of a liberal nobleman in the earlier Revolution yet as the Revolution progressed he became increasingly radical as he associated himself with the Jacobin club. After Lepeletier voted for the death of the King on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1793 a member of

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<sup>v</sup>Hanson, Paul R. *Historical dictionary of the French Revolution*. Historical dictionaries of war, revolution, and civil unrest, no. 27. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press. 2004. xvii

<sup>vi</sup>Hoefer. *Nouvelle biographie générale depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours, avec les renseignements bibliographiques et l'indication des sources à consulter*. Paris: Firmin Didot frères, fils et cie. 1853. 22

<sup>vii</sup>McClellan, Andrew. *Inventing the Louvre: art, politics, and the origins of the modern museum in eighteenth-century Paris*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press. 1994. 103

<sup>viii</sup>Dowd, David Lloyd. “The French Revolution and the Painters”. *French Historical Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 2 (1959) 137

the King's royal bodyguard assassinated him.<sup>IX</sup> This act forever transformed him into a revolutionary martyr.

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<sup>IX</sup>Hanson, Paul R. *Historical dictionary of the French Revolution*. Historical dictionaries of war, revolution, and civil unrest, no. 27. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press. 2004. 195

## CHAPTER 2

### REVOLUTIONARY JANUS

Proposals to create public education in the French Revolution were instrumental in defining the public realm in modern democratic culture. Before the Revolution, the public realm was ill defined and its parameters were an open question. The King, the Paris Parlement law court and street pamphleteers all competed for the public's attention and bestowed upon public opinion a degree of infallibility.<sup>6</sup> Revolutionaries also engaged in a competition to define the public realm and diverse proposals for education presented different definitions for the role of public education. The chaotic nature of revolution and the dualism in the revolutionary ideology of Jacobinism, who controlled the Convention during this period, preconditioned these divergent proposals.

In this chapter, we will explore how the competing visions for public education proffered by Gabriel Bouquier and Michel Lepeletier competed to define public education and were also a manifestation of different views on the structure of democratic government. One of the important questions in this chapter is how two members of the Jacobin movement, produced two distinct and oppositional conceptions of the public. This question more than enlightening our understanding of Jacobin dualism speaks to what public meant in the French Revolution. How contemporary society currently defines public education as a nationwide system of state sponsored schools was only one of the ways the Revolution defined public education.

Jacobinism manifested individual and universal aspirations, but individual members of the movement could also be on opposite ends of the universalism and individual dualism. Bouquier represented the individual aspiration of Jacobinism and Lepeletier the universal. Higonet sums up his perspective on Jacobin dualism in this way. "...the Jacobins manifested a doubled and reconcilable but also unstable inspiration, at once individualistic and communitarian."<sup>7</sup> Specifically Bouquier viewed education as a realm of private initiative where the individual citizen created the system. Lepeletier charged the state with raising the children of the republic in a communal and equal atmosphere. Bouquier and Lepeletier manifested different aspects of the dual nature of Jacobinism, yet universal and individual themes also manifested themselves in each. Universal regeneration was the goal of each, but each attempted to reach it through different means.

Historians such as Dominique Julia have called the perspective of Bouquier liberal. Julia even describes it as extremely liberal in his excellent survey, *Les trois couleurs du tableau noir*.<sup>8</sup> There may be some influence from a liberal perspective in what seems to be a type of economic private enterprise; however, the reality of Bouquier ideas were more nuanced. The reason for some of this confusion is the mistaken association of *sans-culottes* rhetoric with liberal values. The *sans-culottes* rhetoric, which Bouquier appropriated, emphasized small producers in line with the artisanal tradition from the old regime.<sup>9</sup> Bouquier's other ideas explored in chapter three, especially his hostility towards academia and lawyers, fits far better in the *sans-culottes* category than in a liberal one.

We can better understand Bouquier's ideas under the framework of classical republicanism, which saw the simple and rustic citizen as the source of virtue in the republic. Bouquier combined his idea of the citizen with the image of the *sans-culottes*

and their ideas. Out of these elements, he produced an educational proposal comprised of both influences. Lepeletier, on the other hand, saw public education as a system of state sponsorship, where the state controlled a monopoly over schools. Equality and universal values of language, morality and culture were the central themes of Lepeletier's system. We will see through the lens of Jacobin dualism how his divergent views on the intersection of the individual and the state in regards to virtue and the creation of public schools fleshes out a more accurate understanding of his place in the historiography of the French Revolution.

### Dualism in Education

A comparison of the two plans of Bouquier and Lepeletier using the framework of Patrice Higonnet will contrast the individualism in the thought of Bouquier with the universalism of Lepeletier. This first section will deal with the structure of education envisioned by Bouquier and Lepeletier. It will treat the two authors in succession dealing with Bouquier first and then Lepeletier. One important point regarding education in the French Revolution is the separation of public education into instruction, which was the teaching of practical knowledge and education, which was moral education.<sup>10</sup> Schemes for revolutionary education were a crucial axis of interaction between instruction and education. For the sake of continuity in this thesis, the phrase public education will refer to both education and instruction and when referring to "education" the phrase moral education will be used, except in translations, which I have tried to keep true to the original.

The first aim of Bouquier's plan dealt with the creation and qualifications of teachers. He proposed that citizens whether male or female would have the freedom to assume the responsibilities of a teacher.<sup>11</sup> The state would salary teachers, but they would not merely be employees. Teachers would actually create the schools. The criteria Bouquier developed for the role of a teacher were minimal, mostly centered on moral credentials rather than teaching ability. In the passage quoted below from his second pamphlet, Bouquier emphasized that civicism and good republican morality were the merits of teachers. "Pouvoit – elle mieux remplir ce devoir qu'en appellant aux honorables fonctions d'instituteur & d'institutrice les citoyens & citoyennes qui, par leur civisme & leur bonnes moeurs, ont mérité la confiance du peuple?"<sup>X,12</sup> The guardians over civicism and good morals were the local city government and the committee of surveillance of the revolutionary sectional assemblies, which were akin to electoral units.<sup>13</sup> Bouquier required that teachers obtain a certificate from these two institutions to become teachers or start their school. The creation of curriculum on the national level and this certificate were the only role of the state in Bouquier's plan.

Overall Bouquier tied his educational plan to the existing institutions created by the Revolution instead of attempting to create new institutions for public education. This particular element of Bouquier's ideas becomes even more apparent in the next chapter, which discusses his general revolutionary vision. While it may seem on the surface to be a pragmatic and efficient proposal, it was also in line with a more general philosophical framework, which sought to establish revolutionary institutions at the center of the new republican order.

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<sup>X</sup>Might they (the potential teachers) want to fulfill this duty which they are called to, the honorable functions of the teachers male and female, the citizen male and female who, by their civism & their good mores, have merited the confidence of the people?

The reliance on individual citizens and the rejection of new educational institutions was part of a general theme of local independence in Bouquier's thought. Bouquier's plan granted teachers and parents a large degree of freedom. Teachers have the freedom to create school and parents could send their children to any school they chose.<sup>14</sup> The latter degrees of Bouquier's plan mirrored his plan for primary education. Bouquier was one of the proponents for a national museum, which would have been open to all.<sup>15</sup> In the latter sections of his first plan, he called for the creation of libraries of science where citizens could engage in scientific experimentation.<sup>16</sup> These facilities required participants to obtain a certificate of civicism like teachers of primary education and were open to the all citizens. In these cases, when the state could not rely on individuals to create educational venue it did so, but continued the theme of independence. This is why some historians classified Bouquier's plan as economic liberalism, with its dual emphasis on what appears to be entrepreneurship and competition of private citizens.

Bouquier's concept of the public was not a governmental realm, but the realm of the individual citizen. The public was an association of individuals acting for a common goal, which created a highly independent system, but also one where citizens could engage in the work of building the revolutionary order. In Bouquier's vision of public education, we can see a practical commitment to the individual citizen as the foundation of the republic. There is certainly a liberal influence on these ideas from other Convention members, but more so a politically liberal-democratic outlook, which sought to increase the direct involvement of citizens in the Revolution. Conversely, Bouquier's view of the public and his commitment to the individual producer in education is also indicative of influence from the language and ideas of the *sans-culotte* movement.

Historians of education before this thesis have only suggested at the influence of *sans-culotte* language on Bouquier. Dominique Julia hints at the association from the quotation in the introduction and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Eugène Defrance, wrote a biography of Bouquier titled *La conversion d'un sans-culotte*.<sup>17</sup> Throughout this thesis, we will explore more deeply the implications of seeing Bouquier as part of the *sans-culotte* ascendancy.

Lepeletier offered a starkly different perspective on the parameters of public education and the role of the state. The people in common replaced the citizen as an individual actor. The twin pillars of Lepeletier's "common" education were surveillance and equality. Lepeletier defined the public realm in his proposal through a commitment to universal and national values. Lepeletier used the metaphor of the family as a symbol of the nation and the republic as a whole. The statement that children belonged to the republic was part of the rhetorical repertoire of educational theorists and was an extrapolation of the familial metaphor often enunciated by the Convention's radical leaders like Danton who famously stated that his approval of the Lepeletier plan was all the more significant because he was himself a father.<sup>18</sup> This familial metaphor not only implied obligations on the part of the individual citizens but responsibilities on the part of the national government and universal primary education was an essential part of this language of familial duty, as Higonnet states.<sup>19</sup>

The apex of this familial metaphor was in the perspective that the duty of the state was to raise the children of the republic as wards. Ultimately, Lepeletier took the rhetoric of children being the property of the state literally and formed his plan with this in mind. "À cinq ans, la patrie recevra donc l'enfant des mains de la nature; à douze ans, elle le

rendra à la société.<sup>XI,20</sup> This type of language evokes the image of man as a tabula rasa, which viewed the child as innocent and ignorant, ready to be written upon by the educator. Lepeletier's idea that a child of five had come from nature merely implied that the child was free from society's prejudices and ready to be instructed by the state in moral and republican values. Once in the hands of the state the means to instruct the values of equality were to treat all pupils the same. "... et que tous, sous la sainte loi de l'égalité, recevront mêmes vêtements, même nourriture, même instruction, mêmes soins."<sup>XII,21</sup>

Lepeletier took universalism literally to mean that all should have the same experience and education. The equality of educational experience would result in the creation of morality, manners and republican culture on a national scale.<sup>22</sup> In short, this meant universal brotherhood and regeneration.

The essence of Lepeletier's perspective on education was that the individual did not naturally manifest the values of republicanism through acts of virtue, but that the government inculcated these values. Lepeletier believed that without the explicit intervention in childhood outlined above, regeneration of the nation was impossible. "Si, dans l'enfance, nous ne les donnons point à tous les citoyens, la nation ne peut pas être profondément régénérée."<sup>XIII,23</sup> The divine law of equality, quoted from Lepeletier above was the other pillar of his vision to use education to transform society. Equality had a two-fold purpose in Lepeletier's plan. It removed disparities of wealth and created national culture through the creation of an educational experience common to all.

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<sup>XI</sup>At five years the nation will receive the child from the hands of nature to twelve years when they will be returned to society.

<sup>XII</sup>... and that every student, under this divine law of equality, will receive the same cloths, nurturing, instruction and attention.

<sup>XIII</sup>If in childhood we do not give the children to all the citizens, the nation will not be profoundly regenerated.

Jacobin universalism did not cope well with disparities of wealth. Higonnet remarks that although some in the movement attempted to address the problem of material disparity, overall Jacobinism was more successful in areas where class divisions were less prevalent.<sup>24</sup> Lepeletier was one member of the Jacobin movement who did take an interest in the negative influence of social division on the Revolution. His solution was to alleviate social difference through forced equality. "Ici est la révolution du pauvre...mais révolution douce et paisible, révolution qui s'opère sans alarmer la propriété et sans offenser la justice."<sup>XIV</sup>,<sup>25</sup> Perhaps to his credit Lepeletier saw the dangers of social disparity and its potential to threaten the course of the Revolution. This is significant because Bouquier does not address the dangers of inequality in his plan. The universalism in Bouquier is confined to the brotherhood of the popular society.

Lepeletier's perspective of public education saw the realm of the public embodied in entire nation. The duties and responsibilities implied in this perspective defined the state's role as the primary force in creating good republicans through forced equality. "Cette loi consiste à fonder une éducation vraiment nationale, vraiment républicaine, également et efficacement commune à tous, la seule capable de régénérer l'espèce humaine, soit pour les dons physiques, soit pour le caractère moral; en un mot, cette loi est l'établissement de l'institution publique."<sup>XV</sup>,<sup>26</sup> The ultimate goal for all revolutionaries was the regeneration of the nation. Lepeletier attempted to achieve this through an education system, which combined education and moral education.

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<sup>XIV</sup>Here is the revolution of the poor...but it is a sweet and soft revolution which will take place without alarming property or justice.

<sup>XV</sup>This law exists to found a truly national education, truly republican, similar and efficient and common to all. The only one capable of regenerating the human race that is to say for physical gifts and of moral character. In one word, this law is the establishment of public instruction.

The educational plans of Bouquier and Lepeletier offered two vastly different understandings of the role of the state and of the parameters of the public realm. From the investigation of these different plans, we can see that Jacobin dualism reached oppositional extremes and that the differing visions of education also produced oppositional definitions of the public. The modern world did not evolve from one of these perspectives, but a mix of the two. The parameters of public education are more stable today as state sponsorship has won out over other choices, but charter and private schools are representative of the continued debate over education in a republic.

### Virtue in Education

Virtue was part of the interplay between the public and private realm and one of the primary intersections of universal and individual themes in Jacobinism. One of the central questions in an investigation of Bouquier and Lepeletier is where each located the source of virtue. This question centers on how they planned to instill virtue and how this affected their ideas on the structure of education. For both authors education was the means to instill virtue and surveillance was the guardian over it.

Bouquier viewed virtue as an emanation of spontaneous volunteerism. Military service, activity in the popular society and education were all manifestations of private virtue manifested in the public realm. For Bouquier volunteering in the institutions of the Revolution was the foundation of the republic. The relationship of private virtue and public good was crucial in Jacobinism as Higonet states here, "A Jacobin always fought on two fronts, as a private achiever and as a custodian of public mores, careful to put

community before private gain.”<sup>27</sup> Jacobins tried to live exemplary lives, but they also extrapolated this out into their concept of the common good.

Bouquier was a firm believer in the citizen as a private achiever and organized his plan to harness the power of the citizen. This was part of his use of *sans-culottes* language as Soboul states here. “The militant sans-culotte was always prepared to moralize; he tended to confuse his way of living with the practice of republican virtues. As far as he was concerned, private virtue was the necessary condition for public virtue; the two were combined to produce patriotism.”<sup>28</sup> The conduit where private virtue transformed into public virtue in education was the role of the teacher. Once a teacher had raised himself or herself unto the field of service, they would regenerate the republic and by extension humanity.

Service as a teacher and military service shared in the language of sacrifice to the nation. The monetary compensation of educational service did not reach the same level as a military pension but was significant.<sup>29</sup> Bouquier believed that the state completed its obligation to education by salarizing teachers. The remaining responsibility for education was the domain of the citizen. “Vous atteindiez ce but en établissant, aux frais de la nation, des instituteurs éclairés dont le zèle patriotique propage avec l’activité republicaine, l’art d’administrer des secours à l’humanité souffrante, aux défenseurs de la patrie....”<sup>XVI,30</sup> There were two important facets to this viewpoint. One is the small producer in education and secondly the literal interpretation of the classical republican rhetoric about the wisdom of the virtuous citizen. This proposal gives us an indication of how Bouquier and many Jacobins understood the necessary foundations of the republic.

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<sup>XVI</sup>When you attain this goal in establishing at the cost of the nation enlightened teachers whose patriotic zeal propagates with republican action, the art of administering aid to a suffering humanity and to the defenders of the nation...

Allowing citizens to create a fundamental pillar of the revolutionary state exemplified a certain commitment to democratic principles and practical knowledge above acquired learning. We will not find the same democratic impulse in the work of Lepeletier.

Lepeletier sought to create an educational system, which would be a custodian of virtue through strict surveillance of pupils. He was not satisfied with one or two hours, but demanded that all activities including sleep, eating, work and rest were controlled.<sup>31</sup> Idleness and the absence of state influence destroyed virtue, which this quote should display. “Il faut la dévouer tout entière à une surveillance de tous les jours, de tous les moments.”<sup>XVII,32</sup> Lepeletier believed that when not in the grasp of communal education the children were at the mercy of all the errors of the past. “D’abord, je remarque avec peine que jusqu’à six ans l’enfant échappe à la vigilance du législateur, et que cette portion importante de la vie reste abandonnée aux préjugés subsistants et à la merci des vieilles erreurs.”<sup>XVIII,33</sup> Surveillance became the means to create virtue and social regeneration and the means to prevent those vices from the old regime from reappearing.<sup>34</sup> The errors of the past were the vices of the old regime and education in the mind of Lepeletier was to remedy this influence by eradicating superfluous character traits in the students.

The classical republican attack against superfluity was a common and grand theme in Jacobin thought. Bouquier attacks it through a reliance on the individual citizen and a rejection of higher education. Lepeletier rejected superfluous influence through strict equality and in terms of economic policy a progressive income tax, which he believed the

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<sup>XVII</sup>It (childhood) needs to be sacrificed totally to surveillance every day and every moment.

<sup>XVIII</sup>Firstly, I remark with sadness that until six years the child escapes the vigilance of the legislature, and that this important portion of life remains abandoned to the remaining prejudices and the mercy to ancient errors.

rich would think beneficial, in that it taught austerity.<sup>35</sup> Lepeletier also believed that the physical conditions of the poor were the most beneficial for the inculcation of virtue. Thus to establish a virtuous and common education all pupils were to be raised in austere conditions. “Je désire que pour les besoins ordinaires de la vie, les enfants, privés de toute espèce de superfluité, soient restreints à l’absolu nécessaire. Ils seront couchés durement, leur nourriture sera saine, mais frugale; leur vêlement commode, mais grossier.”<sup>XIX,36</sup> Lepeletier, like Bouquier, had an affinity for authenticity, which was part of the classical republican concept of rustic virtue. Lepeletier’s understanding of authenticity was based on frugality, austerity and an opposition to superfluousness. This is why Lepeletier believed the path to virtue was equality in the conditions of poverty. Interestingly the provisions in Lepeletier’s plan, which call for austerity and an end to superfluous character traits, draw a striking contrast with his own upbringing as a nobleman. The two confront each other in stark opposition and Lepeletier must have been thinking of his own youth in the conditions of luxury when he appealed for an austere education. Alternatively, for Bouquier education was about relying on the manifestation of virtue from the individual.

Lepeletier sought to create a new man and sought to achieve this through remolding human nature. The two themes of state control and discipline would become second nature if taught in childhood.<sup>37</sup> More than this, he identified the state as the creator of this nature. Ultimately, the laws and the legislature were the source of virtue.

“Souvenons-nous que nous élevons des hommes destinés à jouir de la liberté, et qu’il n’existe pas de liberté sans obéissance aux lois. Ployés tous les jours et à tous les instants

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<sup>XIX</sup>I desire that for the ordinary needs of life, the children privileged with all types of superfluity, would be restrained to the absolute necessity. They will have hard beds, their food will be healthy, but frugal, their clothing comfortable but basic.

sous le joug d'une règle exacte, les élèves de la patrie se trouveront tous formés à la sainte dépendance des lois et des autorités légitimes.<sup>XX,38</sup> Bouquier used the word yoke to describe the tyranny of the old regime when Lepeletier described this process as the yoke he associated with the "legitimate authorities".

Both plans concerned themselves with national regeneration. Bouquier sought to achieve this through free association in the popular society. When the Convention first passed Bouquier's plan, the plan did not even require compulsory attendance. Only in a later law, authored by Le Charlier did education in France become mandatory.<sup>39</sup> The educational structure of Lepeletier's plan centered on a belief that in the early years of the pupil the prejudices of the old order were implanted. The rhetoric of nationalism was born in the French Revolution. The reality did not exist so many revolutionaries felt the need to create national institutions and therefore culture to flesh out their conception of the *patrie*. This impulse was present in both plans, Bouquier with his support of the national museum and Lepeletier in the radical plan for inculcating national culture. These two plans offer vastly different roles for the state in the enterprise of public education. Even within the differences of both plans, the authors understood that public meant a unified and regenerated nation.

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<sup>XX</sup>Let us recall that we raise men of destiny to the joys of liberty, and liberty does not exist without obedience to the laws. If you bend all their days and to all their moments under the yoke of an exact rule, the pupils of the nation will conform themselves to the saintly dependence of the laws and the legitimate authorities.

## Militarism in Education

Both Bouquier and Lepeletier placed military training at a high priority in their educational plans. Partly this was necessary as France was engaged in a war with the rest of Europe. Beyond these practical reasons, the sacrifices of military service were important aspects of the revolutionary concept of virtue. The Jacobins especially viewed military service as the highest plane of sacrifice. Higonnet states it succinctly, “Militarism was the extreme form of the Jacobins’ involvement in civic matters.”<sup>40</sup> The Jacobins also saw the military as a prime location of moral education. For Bouquier in particular the military was one of the facets of his reliance on spontaneous volunteerism. In respect to Lepeletier, the military became a model for education and inculcation.

During the radical republic, especially in the wake of the *Levée en Masse*, the language of military sacrifice encompassed all of France. The rhetoric ultimately transformed all Frenchmen into soldiers. Alan Forrest states in the article “Citizenship and Military Service” that viewing all of France as soldiers was not just a practical or logistical declaration, but one related to the duties of citizenship.<sup>41</sup> One example of association of citizenship with military service was the decree by the Convention that the radical newspaper *Père Duchêne* be read to soldiers on the front lines.<sup>42</sup> For Bouquier military matters were also important, but for another reason. Military service, the kind of which exemplified by the revolutionary army of volunteers sent out to requisition grain and other duties were a manifestation of virtue spontaneously arising in the citizen inflamed with revolutionary fervor. Jacobins viewed the training of good soldiers as part of education, not merely for political and military expediency, but for the virtue inherent in sacrifice to the nation.

Military service was next to martyrdom in the language of sacrifice. It represented a pinnacle of republican commitment to the nation. Service represented the individual's private virtue manifested in the realm of the public good. Bouquier in this next quotation deals primarily with military concerns in education and contrasts the dandies (counter revolutionaries) with the youth of the republic. "Le muscadin crève dans une première campagne, ou, au premier coup de fusil, crie, en fuyant, Sauve qui peut, tandis que le jeune homme exercé dès l'enfance à des travaux pénibles, étayant son courage de sa force, devient bientôt un excellent soldat.... et devient par sa valeur, sa constance, sa fermeté, son dévouement, le modèle du vrai républicain."<sup>XXI,43</sup> The last sentence of the passage above is particularly important. A republican became an excellent soldier through hard work, but would become a model of true republicanism through the act of service. The soldier is the model of virtue as an exemplar, the act of sacrifice produces virtue.

The use of the term *muscadin* could mean a variety of things. *Muscadin* could be a generic phrase for counter revolutionary, but in different context, it could mean different things. Jean-Pierre Gross notes that in the countryside muscadin could mean a rich landowner.<sup>44</sup> The third possibility is that Bouquier was simply using the *muscadin* as a rhetorical device to symbolize the anti-republican, which he contrasted with a true republican. If we were to ascribe to this definition of *muscadin* then Bouquier was using dandy to represent the anti-thesis of the *sans-culottes*. Ostentatious in dress and attitude

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<sup>XXI</sup>The royalist is defeated in the first battle or at the first shots, cries and runs. Save who while a young man exercised from childhood to do the difficult work, supporting his courage of his strength, becomes quickly an excellent soldier.... and becoming through his valor and his constancy, his firmness, his devotion, the model of a true republican.

the *muscadin* or dandy was the opposite of the *sans-culottes* as Marisa Linton states in the compilation, *Conspiracy and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe*.<sup>45</sup>

The military use of control and discipline was literally the model of education in the plan of Lepeletier. This is clear in his analogy of military discipline creating men out of children. Here we see why Lepeletier gained the appellation of Spartan<sup>46</sup>, by attempting to institute a plan, which would turn the educational system and by extension the whole of society into a military camp. “Voyez ce jeune soldat avant qu’il ne s’engage, et retrouvez-le après qu’il a servi quelque temps: ce n’est plus le même homme; ce changement est pourtant l’ouvrage de quelques mois de discipline militaire.”<sup>XXII,47</sup> The dichotomy of virtue created by the individual’s choice to serve versus what we encountered above in the work of Lepeletier is another manifestation of the dualism in Jacobinism. It is much the same in regards to education and his vision of the popular society.

### Athens versus Sparta

Revolutionary proposals like the two discussed here often tied their philosophical content to antiquity. More than this, however, revolutionaries used historical examples from the republics of the past to validate a proposal or decree. These examples ranged from the ancient republics and even the new American Republic. When Bouquier and Lepeletier envisioned public education in the new order, they instinctively relied on these examples from Greece to support their visions. This was necessary in part, because as Dominique Julia states, the use of mythic examples from antiquity made conceptually

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<sup>XXII</sup>You see this young soldier before he has fought, and discover that after serving for sometime he is not the same man. This change is the work of a few months of military discipline.

possible the proposals for the future French republic.<sup>48</sup> Particularly fascinating about the use of Greek examples in revolutionary discourse were the characteristics associated with them by revolutionaries.

James Livesey makes one of the most important positions of his book *Making Democracy in the French Revolution* the failure of “modern” commercial republicanism in the French Revolution. Livesey states that this failure impelled revolutionaries to adopt classical republicanism models instead.<sup>49</sup> The reasons why revolutionaries made this choice were complex, but once made, the phenomenon saw the reduction of the Greek city-states into the product of imagination. Higonnet also describes this phenomenon much like Livesey.<sup>50</sup>

The use of Greece in this way was not unique to revolutionaries, but philosophers a decade earlier also used Greece as an imagined archetype. Gabriel Bonnot de Mably used the imagined characteristics of ancient Greece as a lens through which he interpreted contemporary events. Using this lens Mably envisioned the new republic of the United States as a reincarnation of the union of Greek city-states.<sup>51</sup> This involved taking quite a few liberties as Mably squeezed the new union was into a Greek mold. Others like Turgot rejected this caricature and instead emphasized the revolt of English colonies as an outcome of the conflict between Britain’s imperial interests and interest of free trade.<sup>52</sup> My point is not necessarily to say that the use of Greece led some astray, but the way in which thinkers used Greece, reflects a manifestation of their own ideas more than any resemblance to ancient Greece. Analyzing this dynamic can thus provide us with another window into how these thinkers perceived the events around them. The pre-

revolutionary Mably was certainly indicative of this; his understanding of the new union in America was comical in its vain hope that Sparta was reborn in the American citizen.<sup>53</sup>

The difference in rhetoric between Bouquier and Lepeletier relating to ancient Greece is a study in how the two used and appropriated Greece to serve as examples for different perspectives on education and as different manifestations of Jacobin dualism. Classical republicanism was a common thread through the work of Bouquier and Lepeletier. Appeals for simplicity and attacks against superfluousness and ornamentation appear throughout, but the evidence each used in the context of classical republicanism was interesting for the use of specific Greece city-states as examples of certain virtues. Revolutionaries seeking to define the limitations of the public realm used images of Greece to mold events into whatever image they desired.

The dualism of Jacobin ideology imposed itself upon this imagined representation of ancient Greece. The universal aspiration in the work of Lepeletier is clearly visible in his use of Sparta to support his ideas. Likewise, Bouquier uses Athens in particular to support his position against state sponsored higher education. Speaking about public education in France, Lepeletier relates it to previous forms of education in ancient Greece. “Prolonger l’institution publique jusqu’à la fin de l’adolescence est un beau songe; quelquefois nous l’avons rêvé délicieusement avec Platon; quelquefois nous l’avons lu avec enthousiasme, réalisé dans les fastes de Lacédémone; quelquefois nous en avons retrouvé l’insipide caricature dans nos colleges...”<sup>XXIII</sup>,<sup>54</sup> He goes on to say that Plato only made philosophers, Lycurgus<sup>XXIV</sup> the law giver of Sparta only made soldiers

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<sup>XXIII</sup>To prolong public education until the end of adolescence is a beautiful dream. At times we have exquisitely dreamed it from (reading) Plato, at times we have read of it realized in the magnificence of Sparta, sometimes we have found it in the insipid caricatures of our universities...

<sup>XXIV</sup> Lycurgus authored the militaristic and communalistic reforms which created the Sparta.

and old regime France only made schoolboys, but the French Republic must make men from all these states.<sup>55</sup> Lepeletier felt that if the French republic was to regenerate mankind it would need to manifest the virtues from all these ancient states. His conception of the French republic was as a universal consummation of all the virtues represented by the various city-states. Alone they were incomplete, together they represent perfection.

Bouquier conversely used Athens to represent his own ideas about education. Instead of emphasizing Platonic philosophy as an example of state funded education, Bouquier used it to reject higher education. He contended that Athens reached the heights of republican virtue in the arts and sciences without any state sponsorship. “La Grèce, qui porta les science, & sur-tout les arts, à un si haut degré de perfection, ne salaria jamais l’instruction. Cependant il sortit de son sein une foule de savans & d’artistes qui, en honorant leur patrie & leur siècle, ont mérité la reconnaissance de la postérité dont ils ont été long-temps les modèles.”<sup>xxv</sup>,<sup>56</sup> This view again saw the great accomplishments of republicanism deriving primarily from the private citizen. In Bouquier perspective the Lyceum, which educated great philosophers, was a product of the actions or rather the virtue of individual citizens. In the same section, he related this example to his own plan for education and compared the popular society to the lyceum of ancient Athens.<sup>57</sup>

The Jacobins hoped that education could unite the universal and individual impulses. However, it seems the opposite took place as Higonnet demonstrates. “They (the Jacobins) deemed the reshaping of young minds a priority, but they also believed that the

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<sup>xxv</sup> Greece, which carried science and particularly the arts to so high a degree of perfection, never salaried education, they have left from their bosom, however, a multitude of the learned and of artists who have honored their country and their century and have merited the recognition of posterity for which they have long been the models.

creation of a universal system of primary education could unite the Revolution's universal and individual aspirations."<sup>58</sup> We can see from the above exploration on the use of ancient republics as models that the Jacobins never achieved the unification of individual interest and common good. Far from it, the two aspirations splintered into extremes.

## CHAPTER 3

### REVOLUTIONARY TRINITY

This chapter is concerned primarily with Bouquier's rhetoric, its unique character and place in the Revolution. The content of this chapter will be an investigation of Bouquier's affinity in his educational proposal for the language of the *sans-culottes* and classical republic emphasis on simplicity. We will first discuss some historiographical issues related to scholarship on the *sans-culottes* and classical republicanism then use this scholarship to frame Bouquier's unique vision of all the central institutions of the Revolution mirroring each other. The three most important and the three which make up the revolutionary trinity were the Constitution, the people and the popular society.

Viewing Bouquier as a proponent of the *sans-culottes* clarifies the acceptance of his proposal by considering the context of the events surrounding its passage, which include the adoption of the general maximum on bread prices and the fall of the Girondin faction in the Convention. These events and the language of Bouquier suggest that his plan was not part of a compromise with the liberal elements in the Convention, but that it was part of an accommodation with the *sans-culottes*. While we should not consider Bouquier a part of the *sans-culottes* movement, what I will emphasize is that certain members of the Convention, Bouquier among them, appropriated the language and agenda of the radical sections, which the *sans-culottes* controlled.

The work of Albert Soboul in *The Sans-Culottes* and the revisions surrounding his work done by William Sewell and Michael Sonenscher is the principle foundation for the presentation of this chapter. We will use these three authors primarily for clues to the language and political culture of the *sans-culottes* as they relate to the rhetoric of Bouquier. Soboul was primarily concerned with the social composition of the *sans-culottes* and its relationship to rhetoric and identity. This is less important if we view, as William Sewell does, that the *sans-culottes* language created a political culture and political identity independent of social standing. Sewell notes in the article, "The Sans-Culottes Rhetoric of Subsistence" that having the identity of *sans-culottes* was defined by the use of their discourse.<sup>59</sup> Sewell gives the radical journalist Jacques René Hébert, author of *Père Duchêne* as one example.<sup>60</sup> With this perspective, it becomes possible to view persons outside the Convention and some inside as part of the *sans-culottes* ascendancy.

The origins of *sans-culottes* rhetoric is critical when deciphering the impact of the political culture this language helped define. Richard Mowrey Andrews views the origin of *sans-culottes* language as branching from the artisanal masters while Michael Sonenscher sees it as emerging from the perspective of the journeyman. The context of events supports Sonenscher's claim that *sans-culottes* rhetoric was based on the idiom of the journeymen and not the masters.<sup>61</sup> The general maximum limiting bread prices enacted by the Convention has been seen as an accommodation with the *sans-culottes* and Sewell also identifies the maximum as an appropriation of the *sans-culottes* language of subsistence by Robespierre.<sup>62</sup> One might suggest that Bouquier does the same appropriation in the realm of education.

## Classical Republicanism

Classical republicanism was an essential aspect of Bouquier's ideas. Simplicity as a virtue was set as the foundation of his vision for the French Republic. The influence of classical republicanism came from a variety of Enlightenment sources, one of the most important being Jean-Jacque Rousseau. The revival of the ancients was not exclusive to the ideas of Rousseau, but citing a passage from his work will give us a good picture of the importance of simplicity in the classical republicanism of the French Revolution. "We cannot reflect on morality without fondly looking back on that picture of simplicity of long ago. A lovely shore, adorned only by the hands of nature.... When innocent and virtuous people were happy to have the gods witness their deeds...."<sup>63</sup> In the context of the French Revolution this perspective was used theoretically and applied to practical models for the new republic.

The article by Keith Michael Baker entitled "Transformation of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France" will be a vital way to understand how classical republicanism transformed from a concept of rustic virtue outline above to an idiom of revolutionary action. Baker outlines some general characteristics of classical republicanism in the Revolution, which partly explain its appeal to revolutionaries and some of the problems it created. Primarily classical republicanism was an idiom, which highlighted the failings of despotic government more than it offered a solution in political terms.<sup>64</sup> Thus it was extremely appealing for opponents of monarchy, but provided them little basis for creating a republic after the fall of the monarchy. Baker also notes that classical republican rhetoric offered a world where there was no middle ground between despotism and liberty.<sup>65</sup> The Revolution became a war against despotism on a universal

scale. By overturning, the political order revolution removed the constraints on classical republicanism. Without these limitations classical republicanism “metastasized” into an extremist language of Terror.<sup>66</sup> The extreme oppositional language and the portrayal of France at the precipice of either salvation or destruction are all hallmarks of this transformation of classical republicanism in the French Revolution. Likewise, these themes are also prevalent in the words of Bouquier.

In the specific case of Bouquier who was an artist before his revolutionary career, the influence of neo classical art must have had some influence on his ideas about the classical themes of virtue and simplicity. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, preceding the Revolution the Rococo style, exemplified by the painter Boucher was popular in Europe, but was rejected as trivial by the proponents of neoclassicism.<sup>67</sup> In the Revolution artists on the side of the Republic swept away, the art of the old regime as their compatriots destroyed its institutions. In a passage quoted from the book *Inventing the Louvre*, Bouquier rejected the effeminate culture of the old regime and called for a type of art, which captured the spirit of a free people.

“It is time to do away with the traditional French system, that monarchical routine which, in subjugating art to the whims of false taste, corruption and fashion, has narrowed its genius, mannered its methods, and perverted its goals.... It is time to replace the dishonorable productions [of the Old Regime] with paintings worthy of a republican people who cherish morality and who honor and reward virtue.... Effeminate works by the likes [of Boucher, Vanloo, and Pierre] are incapable of inspiring the virile and energetic style that must represent the revolutionary exploits

of the defenders of equality. In order to capture the energy of a people who, in breaking the chains that bound them, has voted for the liberty of mankind, we need dignified colors, an energetic style, a bold brush, a volcanic genius.”<sup>68</sup>

The language Bouquier used to describe revolutionary art in the above quotation is very similar to his expositions on the education. In the Revolution, Bouquier combined his two passions of art and politics under the classical republican idiom in condemnation of the old regime and invocation of the new order

Finally, the role of the *sans-culottes* in the creation of an idea of citizenship is vital for understanding Bouquier’s visions. James Livesey notes that the sans-culottes became the model for republican citizenship in the Revolution.<sup>69</sup> Soboul remarks that, “The sans-culottes idealized the simplicity of their daily existence. They built their lives around a system, and condemned those who were not part of it.”<sup>70</sup> Bouquier based his vision on the popular society and the practical expression of the amalgam of the *sans-culottes* and the theme of virtuous simplicity in institutions of the Revolution. Outside of his more theoretical perspectives, he wrote several artistic pieces in praise of the *sans-culottes*.<sup>71</sup>

### Parallel Structures

The Jacobin ideology sought out balance and harmony in the world. Higonnet states it succinctly, “Central to the Jacobins’ unifying sensibility was the classically enlightened belief that all forms of life made ordered, balanced sense. The cosmos, history, public life, and the duties of the citizens formed interlocking rings of concentric truths.”<sup>72</sup> Bouquier accomplished his own version of alignment through two elements, a reliance on

those institutions created by the Revolution and simplicity. The Constitution, the people and the popular society corresponded well into these two categories and Bouquier endeavored to adjust them further so they fit into the mold of classical simplicity.

Early in his first pamphlet, Bouquier recorded all the accomplishments of the Revolution such as the transformation of the French people from slaves into heroes, the overthrow of the old regime and finally the formation of the popular society. He ends with a telling statement, “Tels sont les effets miraculeux qu’a produits notre Révolution; tels sont les moyens dont elle a fait usage.”<sup>xxvi,73</sup> The Revolution purified France and Bouquier considered the foundations of the republic – the Constitution, the people and the popular society – as the necessary means of regeneration. In Bouquier’s vision of the new order, these three elements all mirrored each other and were based on the theme of spontaneous virtue and simplicity. Likewise, Bouquier believed that education would as well share these same foundations. Beyond associating education with virtuous simplicity, Bouquier wanted to make education an auxiliary and even a byproduct of these three institutions, especially the popular society.

Bouquier rejected other educational proposals, which created new institutions for education. Bouquier felt that educational institutions outside of this triumvirate of revolutionary pillars would add superfluous influence in the republic, which was a violation of the essence of simplicity, which he places as the corner stone of his philosophy. Higonnet in *Goodness beyond Virtue* states that the Jacobins in general shared a common distaste for ornamentation, we see it here manifested in unique ways. “Baroque obfuscation was completely foreign to the Jacobins’ way of thinking. They prized immediate comprehensibility and created or appropriated many images of light,

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<sup>xxvi</sup>Such are the miraculous effects which our Revolution produced; such are the resources it has made use.

transparence, and all-seeing (Masonic) eyes.”<sup>74</sup> The reliance on classical republicanism with the *sans-culottes* as the representation of the simple virtuous citizen is the practical representation of the Jacobin ideological rejection of superflousness.

### The Constitution

Appeals to the Constitution in revolutionary discourse were symbolic more than they were realistic. The revolutionary period had three successive constitutions, one inaugurating the Revolution in 1789, the Jacobin Constitution of 1793 and the last one creating the Directory in 1795. The Constitution of 1793 was by far the most democratic in character, but soon after its creation, the Convention suspended it. In the fall of 1793 (early year II) a leading Jacobin and associate of Robespierre, Saint-Just made a speech in the Convention proposing that the government would remain revolutionary until the peace. With this, the Constitution of 1793 receded into the background of the Revolution. Revolutionaries, however, continued to invoke its memory and symbolic significance. When Bouquier referred to the Constitution, it is undoubtedly the one of 1793, yet this appeal was to idea of the Constitution not the reality. Higonnet notes that constitutionality was not a great concern for the Jacobins, instead, “...what came to matter was the spirit not the letter of the law.”<sup>75</sup> When Bouquier viewed education as springing from the same foundation as the Constitution, this perception did not represent an affinity for the rule of law; instead, it meant that both shared the same conceptual foundation.

For Bouquier the Constitution was a symbol of simplicity and virtue, thus he wanted education to be comprised of the same principles. The following passage from his first

pamphlet is indicative of the position the Constitution had in Bouquier's basic philosophy. "...et (Committee of Public Instruction) s'est determine à vous presenter un nouveau plan: un plan simple, naturel, facile à executer; un plan qui proscrivît à jamais toute idée de corps académique, de société scientifique, de hiérarchie pédagogique; un plan enfin dont les bases fussent les mêmes que celles de la constitution..."<sup>XXVII,76</sup>

Along with a taste of Bouquier's antagonism against academic elites, we also see his philosophy on the nature of education. Bouquier understood his plan as being in line with the Constitution because both were in line with virtue, simple, accessible and understandable by the people. In the second pamphlet, he reiterated this basic tenant of his educational philosophy. "Les lois doivent être simples, claires & en petit nombre; elles doivent être telles, que chaque citoyen puisse les porter toujours avec foi."<sup>XXVIII,77</sup>

Bouquier wanted to banish forever the need for superfluous intermediaries and create a direct connection between the Constitution and the people. To accomplish this Bouquier called for each citizen to carry a copy of the Constitution, which he believed would banish forever the need for intermediaries.

### The People

The people second pillar of the revolutionary trinity was the people. They were the literal and conceptual foundation of the republic. In Bouquier's vision, the people were the source of inspiration for revolutionary institutions. Symbolically revolutionaries also

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<sup>XXVII</sup> ...and the Committee of Public Instruction is determined to present to you a new plan, a simple, natural and easy to execute plan which will banish forever the idea of academic corporation, of scientific society, of pedagogical hierarchy; finally a plan which has the same foundations as those of the constitution.

<sup>XXVIII</sup> The laws must be simple, clear and small in number; they must be such that each citizen is always able to carry them.

viewed the people as a whole, transformed into a mystifying source of rationalization and legitimization. In the context of the Revolution, the sacred monarchy had collapsed and in its place, something more perplexing grew as Higonnet describes here. "...the quasi-mystic loyalty that the French had once felt for their father-king had merely transmogrified into a new, quasi-mystical entity, the People."<sup>78</sup> Bouquier's concept of the people started from a very Rousseauian like position of a people transformed from slaves into heroes. "Mais l'heure du réveil arrive; le tocsin de la liberté retentit au loin; la nation se lève, reprend sa puissance, et, dans un clin d'oeil, un peuple d'esclaves devient un peuple de héros."<sup>XXIX,79</sup> Bouquier's concept of the people was binary. It contrasted the new man of the republic with the slaves of the old regime.

Revolutionaries made endeavors like universal regeneration conceptually possible by imagining five million individuals as one family. In this next passage from the second pamphlet Bouquier again emphasized that regeneration would transform five million isolated individuals into brothers. "Le tocsin de la révolution vient frapper leurs oreilles; il réveille dans leurs âmes le sentiment de la liberté, les pénètre de la nécessité de s'unir pour vaincre les tyrans: &, dans un clin d'oeil, vingt-cinq millions d'égoïstes isolés ne forment plus qu'une immense famille de frères & d'amis."<sup>XXX,80</sup> Bouquier believed that the Revolution accomplished this miraculous regeneration and thus the Revolution would also consolidate them. Additionally the symbol of the tocsin also was a common invocation of popular crowd action. It was a signal that the people were in insurrection as Soboul illustrates.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>XXIX</sup>But the hour of awakening is here, the alarm of liberty resounds far and wide, the nation raises up, takes back its power, and in the blink of an eye, a slave people become a heroic people.

<sup>XXX</sup>The alarm of the Revolution strikes their ears; it awakens in their souls the sentiments of liberty, they understand the necessity of unity to vanquish the tyrants: and in a twinkling of an eye twenty five million isolated selfish people form but one immense family of brothers and friends.

The institutionalization of the Revolution was the essence of Bouquier's vision of education. This was the only sure way to ensure that the regeneration of France would continue on its march. The role of education in this project would be the training children physically to endure the hardships of warfare and all the while, "...en mettant sous les yeux des lois simples et sages, de grands exemples à suivre, de grands modèles à imiter."<sup>XXXI,82</sup> This act of regeneration would produce a man, which was the perfect opposite of the men of the old regime as simple and virtuous as men of the old regime were materialistic and decadent. Bouquier stated that selfishness and self-interest were the "natural children of monarchy"; a republic would naturally be the arena of unity and common interest.<sup>83</sup> Above we see the marriage of simple laws and simple citizens. The Constitution and the people both mirrored each other in the essential theme of simplicity.

### The Popular Societies

The popular society was the third pillar and certainly the strongest in Bouquier's vision. Bouquier used it, as a catchall phrase spanning all associations of political participation. Bouquier referred to the public meetings in the departments, districts and municipalities and the revolutionary tribunals all under the name of the popular society.<sup>84</sup> This collection of associations was a mixture of state sponsored groups and independent clubs. The two types melded together under the umbrella of the revolutionary state during the radical Republic.

The role of education in this vision was as an auxiliary to the popular societies. In the next passage Bouquier lists the various popular associations, some governmental and others independent as the "schools" of the republic. "Qu'avons-nous donc besoin d'aller

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<sup>XXXI</sup> Place under their eyes, simple and wise laws, great examples to follow and models to imitate.

chercher loin de nous ce que nous avons sous nos yeux? Citoyens! Les plus belles écoles, les plus utiles, les plus simples, où la jeunesse puisse prendre une éducation vraiment républicaine, sont, n'en doutez pas, les séances publiques des départements, des districts, des municipalités, des tribunaux, et surtout des sociétés populaires.<sup>XXXII,,85</sup> In the passage above you can see that he uses "education" not "instruction" to emphasize the role of the popular societies in moral education. Bouquier's union of popular society and moral education was a natural affinity because he believed the popular society was a byproduct of the Revolution and inherently manifested the themes of simplicity and virtue. The greatest danger for Bouquier was in the adoption of a system, which did not owe its existence to this revolutionary heritage. "C'est dans ces sources pures que les jeunes gens puiseront la connaissance de leurs droits, de leurs devoirs, des lois et de la morale républicaine..."<sup>XXXIII,,86</sup> Here we see the revolutionary trinity clearly: the people, the laws in the venue of the popular society.

Bouquier reserved the first section of his plan for education in practical and useful subjects. Bouquier hoped that beyond the moral education taking place in the popular societies they would also provide venues for all public education, practical and moral. "D'après cet exposé rapide, on doit voir clairement que la Révolution a, pour ainsi dire d'elle-même organisé l'éducation publique et placé partout des sources inépuisables d'instruction."<sup>XXXIV,,87</sup> In Bouquier's rhetoric, he defines the popular societies as being

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<sup>XXXII</sup> Why must we look for that which is far from us when what we need is under our eyes? Citizens! The most beautiful schools, the most useful, the simplest, where the youth may acquire a true republican education, do not doubt it, the public sessions in the departments, the districts, the municipalities, the tribunals, and above all the popular societies.

<sup>XXXIII</sup> It is in these pure sources which the young people draw the knowledge of their rights, their duties, of the laws and of the republican morality.

<sup>XXXIV</sup> After this quick display one sees clearly that the Revolution itself has organized public education and created everywhere the endless sources of instruction.

the means by which the Revolution has itself organized public education. The revolutionaries only had to harness the existing institutions to create public education.

We could consider Bouquier's use of revolutionary institutions as the basis for education part of a yet unrealized vision or an ongoing process already underway. What we will find is that Bouquier's words were partly a vision for the future and an exaltation of existing conditions in the popular societies. In the first two quotations in this section, there was a special concentration on the youth of the republic. Incorporating youth into the popular society was an explicit statement on the educational capacities inherent in popular associations. Youth, who were not yet ready to become full participants in the Republic because they could not vote, were to be morally educated through observing the republican rites in the popular society, especially the Jacobin type clubs. Higonet makes notes of this phenomenon where he discusses the merging of youth and adult clubs and the gradual reduction of age limitations. The age of active participation in the political process remained the same while the age upon which the burden of moral regeneration and sacrifice were being lowered. "Indeed, a paradoxical sign of the sincerity of the Jacobins' interest in youth was the gradual disappearance of the youth clubs as they generally merged with the clubs for adults, sometimes on order of the authorities. Because the Jacobins believed that young people could achieve great things in a regenerated republic, the age limit for joining a club was gradually lowered from twenty-one to eighteen and, in some places, sixteen."<sup>88</sup> In line with this, Robespierre claimed that only the French Revolution had heroes as young as thirteen referring to the revolutionary martyrs, Bara and Viala.<sup>89</sup>

Events of the time especially the failure of the Convention to enact the latter degrees of Bouquier's initial proposal, greatly affected the content and spirit of Bouquier's second pamphlet. The Convention in the radical period did not deal with the subject of higher or moral education. Not until Thermidor had superseded the radical republic and discarded the Bouquier law, did a plan with higher education become law. The second pamphlet is thus indicative of a certain frustration with this inaction as well as a further exploration of the practical role of the popular society in the Revolution. Bouquier began his second pamphlet with a reminder to the Convention that it had only fulfilled one part (primary education) of the task of public education. "...la Convention n'a rempli qu'une partie de sa tâche relative à l'instruction. Il lui reste à procurer à la jeunesse des moyens de perfectionner ces premières connoissances, & d'acquérir les notions relatives à l'organisation du gouvernement démocratique..."<sup>xxxv</sup>,<sup>90</sup> Moral education, the forming of civic responsibility and the creation of good republicans was incomplete. In this pamphlet, Bouquier again emphasized how the popular society was the central institution of the republic. In this perspective, there were some interesting parallels with his view of the popular society and the previous position of the church in pre-revolutionary France.

### The Popular Societies as Community

War was the only hindrance to the future role of the popular society envisioned by Bouquier. The war demanded the attention of the popular society as a center of defense, which impeded its other capacities. This state of war naturally made the popular society even more qualified as a source of virtue, but it also meant that it was currently occupied

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<sup>xxxv</sup> The convention has fulfilled only one part of its task relative to instruction. It has yet to procure for the youth the means to perfect his early knowledge, and to acquire the notions related to the organization of democratic government....

with more political and military matters than educational matters. Once the Republic achieved victory, however, Bouquier believed the popular society would become the natural choice for the center of education. “Les sociétés populaires... lorsque le torrent de la révolution aura englouti les ennemis de la liberté, n’étant plus en surveillance permanente, s’occuperont, dans le sein de la paix, de l’étude des lois, des sciences & des arts. C’est alors qu’elle deviendront pour la jeunesse de vrais lycées republicains où l’esprit humain se perfectionnera dans toute espèce d’art & de science.”<sup>xxxvi</sup>, 91 What is startling about this quote is that Bouquier called for the popular society to educate morally but also in the arts and the sciences. The philosophy of aligning education the Revolution and having no additional structure for education comes alive here. The goal of this vision was to institutionalize the popular society in a similar role as the national museum and the science libraries we encountered earlier in his work.

Bouquier sought to prevent a return to the old regime, but he ironically viewed the popular society as functionally replacing the church not just as a venue of social organization but of education. Like the church, the popular society in Bouquier’s vision organized education only as an auxiliary to its central position. For Bouquier the popular society would assume the necessary functions, which the church provided, in the previous social order. What follows is a passage, which outlines the practical means for the popular society to replace the church as the center of social organization.

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> ... the popular societies, when the torrent of the Revolution has swallowed the enemies of liberty, they will no longer be on permanent guard, they will occupy themselves, in the bosom of peace, in the study of the laws, of the sciences and the arts. It is then that they will become for the youth true republican lyceums where the human spirit will perfect itself in all the types of arts and science.

“Favorisons donc l’établissement des sociétés populaires dans les communes où, soit faute de local, soit faute des moyens pécuniaires, il ne s’en est pas encore formé.... Le fanatisme avoit un temple dans chacune de ces communes.... Que ces temples deviennent ceux de la liberté, de l’instruction, de la propagation des lois & des mœurs républicaines. Décrétez que les édifices de la superstition actuellement abandonnés, & qui le seront dans la suite, appartiennent aux communes; & par ce decret vous aurez beaucoup fait pour l’instruction publique.<sup>XXXVII,92</sup>

Bouquier wanted to set the groundwork for future universal primary education not by creating a large state sponsored system of schools, but by establishing popular societies in every city and town. He saw this as the foundation of public education. This would naturally protect the gains of the Revolution from any retreat back to the old regime. It would also lay a foundation for the popular societies to mature into the basis for revolutionary life from education to the exercise of democratic government. State sponsorship for primary education and the arts and sciences did exist in the plan of Bouquier, but only as a function of state sponsorship of revolutionary popular associations.

In the previous quotation, we get the impression that Bouquier also wanted the popular society to assume the social and logistical functions of the church socially and logistically. In regards to remnants and parallel structures from the old regime seeping

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<sup>XXXVII</sup> Thus let us support the establishment of popular societies in the cities where there is no venue, where there is a lack of monetary means and where they have not yet formed.... Fanaticism has a temple in each one of these cities.... These temples should become those of liberty, of education, of the propagation of the laws and of republican morality. Decree that the buildings of superstition currently abandoned, and those which will be abandoned in the future, will belong to the city government; by this decree you will have done much for public instruction.

into Jacobin ideology Higonnet notes in *Goodness beyond Virtue* that the violent and conspiratorial aspects of the Jacobin ideology are remnants from the old regime. These cultural remnants manifested themselves in a variety of ways, perhaps the most important being the Terror. Influence from the old regime also spilled into education. Radicals like Bouquier accused educational planners like Condorcet, an academician and Gilbert Romme a former teacher<sup>93</sup> of attempting to create an educational system, which resembled the old regime. One may suggest that Bouquier as well unknowingly carried these remnants of the old regime, which expressed them in his educational proposal.

The historian Vignery specifically associates Bouquier's plan of education with a direct affinity with the old regime and especially the role of the church. Bouquier's plan for schools outside of government control and the important of the popular society are two factors, which Vignery uses as support for this argument.

"The kinship of Bouquier's approach to the practices of the Old Regime was not limited to the mechanics of administration. In this case organizational parallelism reflected a significant similarity in basic theory. Bouquier broke with the popular revolutionary concept of public schools as the keystone in the arch of moral and political regeneration.<sup>xxxviii</sup> In his educational philosophy they enjoyed only a supplementary role as devices for indoctrination. Just as the Catholic clergy put the church and its religious ceremonies at the pinnacle of its hierarchy of character-building institutions, Bouquier gave the predominant place in the cult of republicanism to the popular society, the representative assembly, and the civic festival."<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>xxxviii</sup>Vignery using public in the contemporary sense, as state sponsored

The similarities between the church and popular society were one of function, but also in purpose. Moral regeneration was the object of both religious education and revolutionary education. This is supported by Higonnet's observation that, "Thoughtful revolutionaries who understood that the power of the church depended heavily on its social role in society instinctively responded by turning the clubs into rival social centers."<sup>95</sup> One has to be careful using this analogy and state that the revolutionaries admired the structure of the church in its ability to propagate itself and organize society for precisely the same reasons they also despised the church for aiding the corruption of the nation.

In Bouquier's writing the popular society was accorded an analogous function to the church in organization and social position. In essential character, however, it was different. The popular society held a kernel of democratic spirit, with hierarchy defined by meritocracy in the context of a free association of individuals. The Jacobins may have borrowed unconsciously from the old regime as Vignery supposes. However, it seems more likely that the desire to see abandoned churches used in the creation of popular societies was a direct call for the replacement of the church as the center of community life. Bouquier associated popular associations like the societies, sections and festivals with all the spiritual necessities of religion, virtue, morality and the elevation of the soul. "Les véritables écoles des vertus, des mœurs & des lois républicaines sont dans les sociétés populaires.... C'est-là que la jeunesse acquerra, pour ainsi dire, sans travail, la connoissance de ses droits & de ses devoirs, qu'elle puisera des sentimens propres à élever son ame à la hauteur des vertus républicaines; c'est-là qu'elle apprendra qu'il est grand, qu'il est beau de se dévouer pour le salut de la patrie, qu'il est sublime de mourir

pour elle!<sup>XXXIX,,96</sup> Sacrifice, martyrdom as well as salvation were all part of the overall project of universal regeneration revolutionaries claimed as the ultimate goal of the Revolution. For Bouquier the popular society was the temple for this regeneration.

The role Bouquier accorded state sponsorship in his ideas is telling. The role of the state was to facilitate this regeneration through sponsoring revolutionary institutions where citizens could come together in brotherhood. This free association of citizens transforming their private virtue into public good was the key to regeneration for all Jacobins and here we see how the flux of Revolution could produce a unique vision of how regeneration might be achieved. The role of state sponsorship was to create the physical and moral means to facilitate regeneration.

### The Popular Societies and Education

Bouquier definition of valid knowledge was knowledge based on the themes of simplicity and usefulness. Bouquier emphasized practical and useful knowledge as a function of a rejection of esoteric and mystical knowledge found in the schools of the old regime. “Est-ce de nos écoles gothiques où docteurs en bonnet quarré n’enseignoient d’autre science que celle d’obscurcir la raison par le raisonnement, de substituer aux idées simples qui nassent de la contemplation de la nature des idées métaphysico-mystique...?”<sup>XL,,97</sup> Along with anti-elite sentiment hostility towards the power of

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<sup>XXXIX</sup>The true schools of virtues, of morality and of republican laws are in the popular societies.... It is here that the youth will acquire, so to speak, without difficulty, the knowledge of their rights and duties, that they will draw from their own sentiments to raise their soul to the heights of republican virtues; it is here they will understand that it is great and beautiful to sacrifice oneself to the salvation of the nation, that it is sublime to die for her!

<sup>XL</sup>Is it our gothic schools where doctors in caps create out of teaching another science with which they obscure reason by reasoning, they substitute the simple ideas which are born in the contemplation of nature with metaphysical-mystic ideas...?

academics to obscure the simple wisdom of the people he also states that these types of schools could not create the necessarily virtue required for the future of the republic.

Bouquier put moral and practical education at a premium. He saw mystical or metaphysical education as superfluous, like the elite who professed it. The statement we encounter above, obscuring reason through reasoning was certainly an indictment of esoteric knowledge. Elites obscured reason by creating layers between the people and their government. Thus for Bouquier both knowledge and access to government would have to be easily accessible to the citizen, which was defined by a removal of all intermediaries. Sciences, where taught was to be practical and directly related to the duties of a citizen. “Non, sans doute: la Republique, nous l’avons déjà dit, ne doit à ses enfants que l’enseignement graduit des sciences qui leur sont nécessaires pour exercer les droits du citoyen & en remplir les devoirs.”<sup>XLi,98</sup> Only science, which served a practical purpose and a moral purpose constituted useful sciences. The defense of the nation, the maintenance of commerce and infrastructure such as communication, navigation and mining were in the realm of useful science.<sup>99</sup> Bouquier believed that the state should not have any influence in the realm of theoretical sciences or any secondary education. He stated that the state should neither create such education nor pay for such education.<sup>100</sup> One way to understand this perspective is by recalling Bouquier’s use of Athens as a model for education.

Bouquier accorded well with the *sans-culottes* ideas on education. Soboul states in *The Sans-Culottes* that practical skills for future employment were a primary concern for the *sans-culottes*. “The sans-culottes, however, had no intention of being satisfied with a

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<sup>XLi</sup>No, undoubtedly, the Republic, we already said, must do no more than the free teaching of sciences which are necessarily for the exercise of the rights and fulfill the duties of the citizen.

mere civic education for forming future citizens; they also wanted a practical education which, being professionally organized, would prepare the young for specific activities.”<sup>101</sup> Bouquier concentration on practical knowledge along with anti-elite rhetoric is part of the same dynamic. The rejection of superfluousness was not theoretical, it had a deep impact on the ideas and plans of Bouquier as well as the events in the Convention.

In Bouquier’s writing, we see reference to the rejection of previous plans of education like those of Condorcet, the academician, and perhaps specifically to the plan of Daunou who was a teacher in the old regime.<sup>102</sup> “L’idée d’établir des écoles secondaires ou intermédiaires, consacrée à l’enseignement des lois, & à je ne sais quelles autres sciences... a été déjà produite plusieurs fois; une pareille idée, émanée sans doute du cerveau de quelque ci-devant professeur d’université, nous a paru, pour ne rien dire de plus, subversive des institutions républicaines, dont les bases simples doivent être prises dans la nature.”<sup>XLII, 103</sup> The context of this statement was the parade of preceding plans, which crossed the Convention floor before the Bouquier proposal. Labeling an educational plan before the Convention as resembling the old regime was a trump card, which played on the paranoia and fervent atmosphere of the radical republic. The last sentence is the most crucial because it creates a conjunction between anti-elite sentiment and his ideas on a purified system of education.

The anti-elite perspective was not a fanatic response, but conditioned on a literal interpretation of classical republican rhetoric about simplicity and the wisdom of the

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<sup>XLII</sup>The idea to establish secondary or intermediate schools, consecrated to the teaching of the laws and other sciences... has been already produced various times; the same idea, emanated without a doubt from the minds of those who previously were professors of the university, it has appeared to us, nothing to say moreover subversive to republican institutions, which the simple foundations must be encased in nature.

citizen. Perhaps that level of commitment to ideology was in itself fanatical, but it is not an arbitrary fanaticism, but conditioned on its own internal logic. Bouquier believed that knowledge like all other elements of the new order must be part of the concentric truths of simplicity and virtue and here we see this perspective taken to its logical conclusion. In this light Bouquier made a stark and Rousseauian statement about knowledge.

“Pendant le cours de notre révolution, la société des Jacobins de Paris a produit elle seule plus d’héroïsme, plus de vertus que n’en ont offert pendant des siècles tous les établissemens scientifiques de l’Europe.”<sup>XLIII,,104</sup> If one assumes that Bouquier is speaking about the Enlightenment then his position offered a startling contrast between valid and elite knowledge. In attempting to subordinate knowledge to the Revolution Bouquier rejected knowledge from the old regime, no matter the source.

The popular society with its exemplar in the Jacobin club was public education. We need only remember a vague outline of the plan of Lepeletier to see the contrast. The first article of the second pamphlet of Bouquier established secondary education to be none other than the popular associations. “La réunion des citoyens en assemblées de communes, de sections & en sociétés populaires, les théâtres, les jeux civiques, les évolutions militaires, les fêtes nationales & locales, sont partie du dernier degré d’instruction publique.”<sup>XLIV,,105</sup> Each as part of the agenda of the *sans-culottes*, the primary part of education would mirror the small independent producer while the latter stages of education would be the brotherhood and direct democracy in popular associations. The foundations for both were the same, a free association of citizens with

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<sup>XLIII</sup> During the course of our Revolution, the Jacobin club in Paris has produced greater heroism, greater virtue than has been offered by all the centuries of scientific establishments in Europe.

<sup>XLIV</sup> The meeting of citizens in city government assemblies, sections, popular societies, theaters, civic plays, military training, national and local festivals, are part of the last degree of public instruction.

no intermediaries between them and their rights and duties as citizens. What has been and seen as perplexing mix of fanaticism and seemingly liberal philosophy of private enterprise in education come together as an example of a literal exposition on classical republicanism's commitment to the virtue of the individual citizen and the direct democracy of the *sans-culottes*.

### The Reality of the Popular Society

One question, which we must address in regards to the popular society, is how close was Bouquier's vision to reality? Was his proposal for a future society or a defense of an existing reality? We can answer this with an exploration of the context of Bouquier's proposal and information about the Jacobin clubs from the work of Crane Brinton. What Brinton states in his study, *The Jacobins* is that the melding of the Jacobin based popular societies with governmental popular associations like the section meetings was a real phenomenon. Brinton confirms that the clubs often trespassed on the prerogatives of the elected officials and controlled the political situation through their clubs.<sup>106</sup>

During the Terror, the intermingling of different popular associations intensified. The local Jacobins increased their involvement in the arena of civic responsibility, the kind Bouquier envisioned and encouraged.<sup>107</sup> Higonnet also validates this position when he states that the official popular associations like the sections and committees of surveillance worked with the clubs and at the apex of Jacobin power the two mixed.<sup>108</sup> The statistics in Jean-Pierre Gross' book *Fair Shares for All* also support this. "While during the Year II more than 3,000 new *sociétés populaires* appeared and the *sans-culottes* were admitted into the urban political clubs in large numbers"<sup>109</sup> This process

was particularly important in regards to education. The societies started taking it upon themselves to engage in educational activities especially in the context of the Bouquier plan, which gave sections the power to grant the certificate of civicism necessary for teaching.<sup>110</sup> The vision of Bouquier reflects this fact and a desire to see this reality continued and furthered.

The role of the *sans-culottes* in this process is also important as they began asserting greater influence on events during this period. The *sans-culottes* felt that the role of the popular movement was to be the guardian over liberty. They worked to achieve this by demanding sectional meetings be permanent and sought autonomy from the central government even demanding the right to sanction laws.<sup>111</sup> Bouquier supported the *sans-culottes* in their desire to see the sections in permanent session as a guard against tyranny.<sup>112</sup> In September 1793, the permanence of the sections was threatened, but the sections continued to have political affect as Soboul describes in *The Sans-Culottes*.<sup>113</sup> Soboul also describes that when the permanence of the sections was threatened the various popular associations were adapted into sections like organizations. Both Brinton and Soboul are speaking about the same process from different perspectives.<sup>114</sup> This is the same vision of Bouquier who lumps all popular societies, official and unofficial, into one system of state sponsored associations. Bouquier's official sponsorship of popular societies in every city was a vision for the future and a response to the closure of the sections.

In conclusion, certain elements of *sans-culottes* language could be confused with a liberal perspective. Although the origins of the *sans-culottes* rhetoric generated from the perspective of the artisanal journeymen, certain elements of *sans-culottes* rhetoric did

resemble liberal ideas. The idealization of small independent producers and the instinctive hatred for aristocracy could at times resemble liberal values. Soboul supports this with this description of *sans-culottes* values. “Visibly productive, they based the foundations of property on individual work and dreamed of a society of small owners, each with his own field, his own workshop, his own store.”<sup>115</sup> Unlike liberals, the *sans-culottes* sought to maintain their desired world through state intervention to prevent all forms of monopoly, real and imagined. The political culture created by the *sans-culottes* appealed to people like Bouquier and analysis of *sans-culotte* language is one way to understand the logic of Bouquier’s proposal. Bouquier wanted to create a society of small independent producers in education just as the *sans-culottes* wanted to create the same in the economy. Another extremely important aspect of the rhetoric of the *sans-culottes* was their hostility towards elites. We have already encountered some of this perspective with our investigation of education inspired by the *sans-culottes*. In the next chapter will look more closely at the anti-elite rhetoric of the *sans-culottes* in respect to the origins of modern anti-intellectualism.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ORIGINS OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

The first part of this chapter will consist of a discussion on the existence of academic and judicial elites in the old regime. Following this, we will analyze how the French Revolution understood and acted toward such elites. The central issue will be how the Revolution transformed attitudes towards elites using the specific example of Bouquier's writings. Finally, I will attempt to answer how the language of classical republicanism on virtuous simplicity in conjunction of the *sans-culottes* as a model of the republican citizen transformed the hostility towards aristocracy into modern anti-intellectualism.

The historiography of anti-intellectualism in France is sparse compared to the history of the intellectual. This historiography tends to trace the birth of the intellectual and therefore anti-intellectualism to the Dreyfus affair. This historiography concentrates on the intellectual as a political actor entering into the public discourse for reasons of social justice.<sup>116</sup> This thesis, however, is less concerned with the intellectual as an individual and instead seeks to understand hostility towards learned elites, as they are constituted in communities, which were separated from society by elite status and privilege.

This investigation will move beyond view of learned elites as a product of industrial society. When historians state that intellectual only emerged, as a class in industrial society is to fall prey to the idea that as a class it had to be the product of industrial conditions. Current post-structuralist theoretical approaches are more flexible when

considering the creation of group identity in a pre-industrial environment. The existence of a learned group identity before the creation of coherent class identity is central to our investigation of the origins of anti-intellectualisms. Using the field theory of Pierre Bourdieu in particular allows historians to peer farther back into the pre industrial past for the existence of such groups and their cultural behaviors. We can look for the development of elite culture before coherent class identity existed because Bourdieu does not tie the development of separate cultural spheres to economic conditions.

Using this type of analysis, this thesis will offer a different perspective on the origins of anti-intellectualism apart from the maturity of the intellectual consummated in the Dreyfus affair. This exploration will be based on two propositions; firstly, that modern anti-intellectualism sprang from democratic culture and secondly that the French Revolution as the genesis of this culture should be the first area of study. Bouquier will provide the axis between the pre-revolutionary learned elites and the reaction to them in the Revolution.

In reference to the origins of anti-intellectualism, this thesis is not concerned with the competition between right and left intellectuals, but in the origins of a particularly democratic hostility born of the classical republican emphasis on the virtue of the citizen. The Dreyfus affair falls into the category of politicized intellectuals attacking and defending ideological positions. Darrin McMahon in his book *Enemies of Enlightenment* does an excellent job of charting the interactions of learned elites from right and left sides of the political spectrum and their hostilities towards each other.<sup>117</sup> He deals with the origins and evolution of this phenomenon from its birth in the anti-Enlightenment to the modern right. This is good starting point to make a crucial separation between criticisms

from the right and left couched as a defense of the nation or religion, versus attacks against elites in defense of democracy and the practical wisdom of the citizen.

The type of anti-elitism, which I am attempting to explore, originated from the democratic impulses among the lower social groups in society. In the French Revolution, the *sans-culottes* represented this impulse yet there were also later analogies in the evolution of anti-intellectualism into its current form. Pascal Balmand in *Intellectuals in twentieth-century France* notes that during the Dreyfus Affair the rhetoric of anti-intellectualism was shared by the intellectuals of the right and the “working-class”.<sup>118</sup> This speaks to the attack against elites, which McMahon is addressing, and the *sans-culottes* attack against lawyers and academics. The two groups were not ideologically aligned, but did share in the same rhetoric and imagery.

Balmand presents a clear distinction between these two types of lower “class” based anti-intellectualism in his discussion of the Dreyfus Affair. “Certainly even at this stage anti-intellectualism was multifaceted and it is clear that the version associated with the working-class protest cannot be superimposed totally upon that of the extreme right, but it was nevertheless undoubtedly the case that both to an extent used the same images and similar points of criticism.”<sup>119</sup> It is this labor-based rhetoric, which I consider distinct from the history of elites in the historiographical work on the Dreyfus Affair. One might suggest that the formulation of William Sewell in *Work and revolution in France*, about the evolution of the working class idiom, which he traced back to the artisans in the old regime, is relevant to our studies on anti-intellectualism. He traces this idiom from the *sans-culottes* in the French Revolution to the more modern labor movement in the

Revolution of 1848.<sup>120</sup> The work done in this thesis suggests that anti-intellectualism too emerged from the rhetoric of the *sans-culottes* in revolutionary France.

There is evidence that some of these same themes existed in the Revolution of 1848. As quoted from a passage in Pierre Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus*, Gustave Flaubert's protagonists in the novel *Sentimental Education* railed against academia and called for the people to judge the standards of education. "'No more academics! No more Institute!' 'No more committees!' 'No more baccalauréat!' 'Down with university degrees!' 'Let's keep them', said Senecal, 'but let them awarded by universal suffrage, by the People, the only true judge!'"<sup>121</sup> Having noted the appearance of elite hostility in a particular moment in French cultural history we will move on the specific case of the first French Revolution.

### Learned Elites in the Old Regime

The two groups Bouquier attacked with the most intensity were lawyers and academics so these two groups will be the subject of our study of learned elites. In the old regime, these two groups were undergoing a process of increasing professionalism, which accompanied the creation of a unique cultural sphere. In the specific case of the Order of Barristers and the Paris Academy of Sciences, each group acquired certain privileges from the Monarchy. The institutional position of the Paris Parlement as adjudicating criminal offences and occasionally proclaiming remonstrances against the Kings' decrees was the highest form of this privilege among lawyers in the old regime. Roger Hahn notes in *Anatomy of a Scientific Institution* that the Paris Academy as well had certain privileges associated with elite status. Feudal privilege allowed academicians

to use the Paris court of law, exempted them from military service and from paying certain taxes.<sup>122</sup>

Privilege and elite status mutually reinforced already existing attitudes of separate identity. The formation of separate identity was well under way before the Revolution. Isser Woloch describes the dynamics of the lawyer's culture. "To be accepted by the order (order of barristers) candidates had to undergo a long probationary period, show evidence of a certain financial status, and gain the approbation of the order's leading members. Depending on how one looked at it, the order's control over the roster of barristers and professional discipline amounted to an extreme form of corporate privilege or a model of the self-regulating profession."<sup>123</sup> The Academy of Science saw itself as explicitly part of the corporate state of the old regime as Roger Hahn notes. "The Academy, no less than other *corps d'état*, developed its share of luster and pomp."<sup>124</sup> The Academy and the Order of Barristers were inextricable intertwined with the privilege and position of the absolute Monarchy.

The association of the Order of Barristers and the Paris Academy with a kind of republic emphasized their unique and separate character. In the old regime, critics of the Order referred to the corporation as a "republic" because of the Order's autonomy and independence.<sup>125</sup> Hahn notes that the privilege of these groups and in the particular instance of the Academy of Sciences, the corporation was more like an aristocratic commonwealth than a republic.<sup>126</sup>

The elite status of privileged organizations like the Order and the Academy competed over the ability to define the realm of their expertise. The highest court in old regime France, the Paris Parlement, competed with the King over jurisdiction and application of

laws. The historian David Bell states, “The Old Regime was an unusually litigious society, an especially anxiety-provoking situation since laws were extremely complicated and the limits of jurisdictions unclear and conflicting.”<sup>127</sup> The Academy of Sciences also engaged in competition over the definition of proper science. Hahn describes the Academy’s desire to achieve a monopoly on the development of science. “But behind all its individual acts as the ever-present but unconscious conviction that, as the elite body of French science, it was best suited to determine what is proper for the development of science.”<sup>128</sup>

In the old regime, the imagery of lawyers and academics exemplified their prestige, but could be both hostile and positive. Hostility towards lawyers existed in terms we mind find familiar. David Bell notes that hostility to lawyers centered on the imagery of ravenous vultures preying on the weak. Positive statements by lawyers themselves reached to the other extreme. “...lawyers are depicted as a secular priesthood, the conscience of a nation, and generally the thin wedge protecting civilization from barbarian hordes.”<sup>129</sup> Attacks against the Academy in the old regime were more mundane and consisted in opposition to the stagnation of its corporate culture and sought to have the Academy operate free from state control.<sup>130</sup> Both these linguistic strategies appear in Bouquier’s writings and in the ideas of the other Convention members.

### The Revolution and Bouquier

The assault on feudalism in the French Revolution decimated the overt privilege and corporate status of lawyers and academics. Attacks against state monopolies were one type of attack, which was common to both the judiciary and academic realm. Another

style of attack was born of classical republicanism, which denied the importance of metaphysical and abstract knowledge. From the first moments of the Revolution Abbé Sieyès in *What is the Third Estate* framed the hostility towards feudalism and the aristocracy in the language of parasitism.<sup>131</sup> *What is the Third Estate* labeled the nobles and clerics of the first two estates as parasites feeding on the people. An essential part of this critique was the view that associated separation from the body politic with moral deterioration. This sentiment evolved in the radical phase of the Revolution and in the sections of the *sans-culottes* into hostility towards ever encroaching aristocracies.

In 1793, the Convention abolished the Order of Barristers and other institutions associated with the law. Eventually the Parlement court disappeared and the Convention altered the essential function of the *avocats* or barristers and the *procureur* or attorneys.<sup>132</sup> The abolition of the order opened the function of the barrister to the individual citizen. The transformation of attorneys into *avoués* completed the rejection of privilege and monopoly in the judicial realm. Also in 1793 the universities and Academy were closed.<sup>133</sup>

Condorcet was President of the Academy and among other prominent figures in the educational debates like Joseph Lakanal, wanted to save the institution from disillusion. Condorcet attempted to stave off the end of the Academy and challenged the assaults against it. Condorcet rejected the notion that higher education would create a new corporation or priesthood.<sup>134</sup> One might assume that the Revolution had purified the Academy from actual privilege, but the taint of old regime privilege was inescapable. Ultimately, the political atmosphere of the radical republic would not tolerate the survival

of the Academy and its president, Condorcet. The Terror claimed Condorcet and the Convention closed the Academy.

The existence of elitism within a republic was the primary concern of revolutionaries like Bouquier. The threat of a quasi-privileged elite group separate from the rest of society acting as an arbiter against the people impelled Bouquier to equate higher education with a reinstitution of the old regime. This desire to prevent a return of the old regime took on a particularly fervent character in the context of his support for the direct democracy of the popular societies and the rejection of intermediaries. Convention members like Bouquier became a conduit through which the political culture of the *sans-culottes* expressed itself. This political culture, exemplified by hostility towards aristocracy and armed with the *sans-culottes* as the model of citizenship, spawned a new trend in democratic culture.

The *sans-culottes* emphasis on small independent producers and hostility towards all elites proved to be convincing influences on Bouquier. The paranoia of nascent aristocracies of wealth, politics, and education were common in the *sans-culottes* rhetoric. Albert Soboul notes that the *sans-culottes* attacked not only aristocracy, but lawyers, attorneys and merchants.<sup>135</sup> The *sans-culottes* were always on the watch for a new aristocracy and in certain instances, it even extended to the Convention, when some radicals lamented that the aristocracy of representatives would replace the landed aristocracy.<sup>136</sup>

The fear that higher education would become an aristocracy of knowledge and infect the republic was the animating spirit behind Bouquier's plan for secondary education. In Bouquier's first pamphlet, we get a glimpse of this perspective. "Les nations libres n'ont

pas besoin d'une caste de savant spéculatifs.... Les sciences de pure spéculation détachent de la société les individus qui les cultivent, et deviennent à la longue un poison qui mine, énerve et détruit les républiques.<sup>XLV</sup>,<sup>137</sup> We see two principle critiques in this passage; Bouquier was attacking the previous plans of education and the potential of education to separate individuals from society thus creating a caste of learned elites. Bouquier referred to this cast as savans or rather savants, which referred to scientists, specialists.<sup>138</sup>

The context of the above quotation from Bouquier in relation the way revolutionaries understood the institutions of the old regime, namely the first two estates. Separation from society in revolutionary thinking was analogous to being a parasite or even a traitor who would seek to destroy the republic. This hatred of the first two estates created a framework during the Revolution for the continued evolution of anti-elite sentiment. It is no chance that the artisanal language of the *sans-culottes* centered its hostility towards ever present aristocracies. In reference to Bouquier's view of education potentially creating a caste of scientists, we find a reference to this perspective.

In the second pamphlet, Bouquier laments about higher education creating a new academic corporation, which he believed, would be just as dangerous to the republic as the aristocracy of birth. "N'est-ce pas vouloir organiser de nouveaux corps académiques, établir de nouveaux repaires de savans où les égoïstes spéculatifs puissant encore s'isoler impunément de la société, & y nourrir l'aristocratie pédagogique, tout aussi funeste que

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<sup>XLV</sup>Free nations do not need a caste of speculative scientists.... The sciences of pure speculation detached from society and the individuals who cultivate them become before long a poison which eats away, upsets and destroys republics.

celle du pouvoir arbitraire de la naissance & des richesses?<sup>XLVI,139</sup> Bouquier equated the pedagogical aristocracy with the old aristocracy of birth and riches. In addition, Bouquier also emphasize a slow corrupting influence rather than an overt reinstitution. This new aristocracy of academics and lawyers would accomplish its aims through subtle and subversive means.

Bouquier addressed the creation of elite institutions in judicial realm in a slightly different manner than in education. He attacked other plans for creating central judicial institutions and his critique centered on a competition over language as the potential avenue of infection. The danger of this type of corruption was in its legality, which would allow elite institutions the freedom to impose their opinions over the people. “Proposer l’établissement de chaires de loi... créer une Sorbonne de légistes, dont... parviendroient bientôt à substituer aux lois leurs opinions, hétéroclites; c’est vouloir livrer encore une fois le peuple à la voracité des ci-devant procureurs ou avoués, qui ne manqueraient pas de s’enrôler dans cette nouvelle bazoche...”<sup>XLVII,140</sup> Bouquier did not spare the revolutionary equivalent of lawyers as he mentions the old regime institution of the *procureurs* and even the new revolutionary creation of the *avoués* in the same breath. He lumps them together as he warns against the creation of a new *bazoche*, which was a pejorative term describing the legal profession as a whole. Bouquier’s major point about the *bazoche* is that under the aegis of law a reinstitution of the old regime would take place. Bouquier’s fear was that lawyers would use legal methods to create a new

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<sup>XLVI</sup>Do we wish to organize a new academic corporation, to establish a new sanctuary of scientists where the speculative egoists again have power and isolate themselves with impunity from society, and nourish a pedagogical aristocracy, quite as disastrous as those of the arbitrary power of birth and of riches?

<sup>XLVII</sup>To propose the establishment of pulpits of law... is to create a Sorbonne of jurists, which... would soon succeed to substitute the laws for their heterogeneous opinions; it is to require that the people once again delivered to the truth of leading attorneys and barristers who would not fail to enroll themselves in this new bazoche.

*bazoche*. This new corporation would then would impose its will or more precisely its own interpretation on the law and slowly destroy the meaning and content of the Republic. Bouquier's solution was to make the law, like the people and the Revolution itself in line with virtuous simplicity. A simple law implied the removal of a caste of interpreters who would take a unified and simple law and confuse it with heterogeneous opinions and private interest.

The key factor in Bouquier's attack against learned elites and the appearance of anti-intellectualism is that in the context of a republican government and in a democratic culture, elitist and corporate identity could emerge. The perception of a separate social group preying on society fueled the rage of revolutionaries against elite institutions. The earlier passage about the creation of a "new academic" corporation and the most recent passage quoted above about a new *bazoche* reveal a perception of a two pronged threat to republican institutions. The essence of the threat posed by learned elites was the separateness of their social group and also the power they could potentially wield in places like the Sorbonne. The separateness of a social group, which was elevated above the practical and virtuous people, was the crux of the hostility in the anti-elitism of Bouquier in 1793 and today.

Seeking the control over language was a common thread in Jacobin thought and Bouquier emphasized this trend in his anti-elitism. Bouquier appeals to the Convention not only to prevent the return of the old regime, but also to forbid all interpretations legal and academic which would threaten to subvert the Revolution through language. "Ainsi, loin d'établir des écoles de lois, la Convention nationale doit interdire, sous de sortes

peines, toute espèce de paraphrases, interpretation, glose & commentaire.<sup>XLVIII,141</sup>

Keeping control over the ability to define the meaning of the Revolution was crucial to the maintenance of the Revolution. Jeremy D. Popkin states in the compilation *The French Revolution and the Meaning of Citizenship*. “The government of Year II (1793-1794), although it stopped short of creating a state press monopoly, not only imposed censorship but subsidized the circulation of pro-Montagnard newspapers....”<sup>142</sup> The dichotomy between the need to expose the citizenry to the work of government with the potential of opinion to threaten virtue was a tightrope from which some Jacobins slipped.

The experience of the old regime influenced revolutionaries in their desire to see control over language. Bouquier wanted to destroy the Bar and the Academy to abolish any hope of their return. In doing so, he instinctively understood that their power to define public opinion against the state in old regime could return.<sup>143</sup> The competition over public opinion in the twilight of the monarchy in conjunction with desacrilization certainly influenced how revolutionaries viewed the prospects of lawyerly power and the ability to use legal briefs to control language. In the specific case of the Paris Parlement, the state failed to control language and lawyers succeeded in defining legal questions under the rubric of ministerial despotism. This centered on the skill of interpreting written text as David Bell notes in *Lawyers and Citizens*. “Barristers also profited from the fact that even claims pressed outside the venue of law courts—for instance, in the ‘remonstrances’ of the *parlements* and the clergy—tended to involve the sort of interpretation of formal written text at which they excelled.”<sup>144</sup> The atmosphere of

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<sup>XLVIII</sup> Thus, far from establishing a school of laws, the National Convention should forbid, under punishment, all types of paraphrases, interpretations, annotations and commentary.

revolution heightened competition over language as the values and standards of the old regime fell.

Bouquier understood that there was a competition over language and that lawyers were crucial participants. We can understand Bouquier's appeal to forbid all types of interpretation in the law as a reference to the legal briefs that characterized the competition between the Parlement and the King in the old regime. Just as the Revolution had overthrown the monarchy, Bouquier called for the Revolution to overthrow and destroy the elite institutions of learning. In the next quote, Bouquier uses naturalistic language to create an analogy between conquering nature and conquering the institutions of the learned. "Citoyens, la révolution a pénétré jusqu'aux entrailles de la terre pour en extraire le salpêtre!...Des murs de collège, d'université, d'académie, pourroit – ils l'arrêter dans sa marche rapide?"<sup>XLIX</sup>,<sup>145</sup> The extreme language underlies the reality that language itself was also a weapon. Control of public opinion was a prize in revolutionary France as it had been in the old regime and ensuring victory in the Revolution demanded the destruction of potential adversaries.

Bouquier's solution was to both destroy elite institutions and prevent their return in another guise. Bouquier's solution to the problem language was to retain control in the hands of the Convention. Bouquier again relies on revolutionary institutions as a guardian over virtue. This next passage illustrates this point succinctly. "Ce ne font pas les moeurs q [sic] sont le gouvernement, c'est le gouvernement qui fait les moeurs."<sup>L</sup>,<sup>146</sup> Bouquier may rely on individual citizens for the generation of virtue, but the final say on defining it and the rest of the Revolution remains with the Convention and the Jacobins.

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<sup>XLIX</sup>Citizens, the Revolution has penetrated to the marrow of the earth to extract saltpeter! Could the fortresses of the college, university, academy, stop it in its rapid march?

<sup>L</sup>It is not morality, which makes the government, but government which makes morality.

It is impossible now to simply claim that Bouquier was an extremist who was against higher education in principle, because why then would he also attack the judicial arena? Bouquier rejection of intermediaries based on classical republicanism and adoption of the *sans-culottes* rhetoric against the aristocracy is how we should understand his educational philosophy.

### Anti-elitism in the Convention

Bouquier was not alone in his warnings of a new corporation of academics and jurists. Opponents of higher education couched their rejection of plans like the ones created by Condorcet in terms of a new learned aristocracy.<sup>147</sup> The two major critiques of Condorcet's plan for higher education were that the plan would create a corporation much like the clergy of the old regime and a hierarchical and unequal system of education.<sup>148</sup> This first inclination of hostility towards learned elites continued and intensified throughout the Revolution, only ending with Thermidor.

Throughout the educational debates, we see examples similar to the language of Bouquier. What follows is a brief exploration, which will give us some background on what was happening in the Convention, keeping in mind of course the nuance of what happened. Roger Hahn notes the particular position of a certain Pierre-Toussaint Durand-Maillane who for example stated that because Condorcet had designed his plan at a different time when the indoctrination of patriotism was less of a concern it was no longer applicable. Hahn again states that, "Behind this position lay a profound mistrust of science, which Durand-Maillane expressed publicly without fear."<sup>149</sup> Durand-Maillane was not alone as this was a common enough position in the Convention.

A laundry list of names can be associated with Bouquier's position; far from being a lone fanatic, he presented a strong current in the Convention and in democratic culture. Antoine-Claire Thibaudeau criticized Gilbert Romme, another key figure in the debate over education. The rejection of Romme's plan drew from the same rhetorical staple as the attacks against the previous plans. Thibaudeau rejected the creation of state institution of teachers as a new type of clergy.<sup>150</sup> Jacques-Michel Coupé attacked another key figure in the educational debate, Joseph Lakanal for attempting to create a new aristocracy.<sup>151</sup> Jean-Henri Hassenfratz as well condemned the plan of Lakanal partly because Sieyès an ex-priest had influenced it. Hassenfratz styled the creation of central commission on education a new aristocracy like the Sorbonne.

This type of barrage signaled the fate of many plans for education, even the radical plan of Lepeletier. Nicolas Hentz attacked the advanced portion of higher education in the Lepeletier plan and proposed a vision very similar to Bouquier.<sup>152</sup> Vignery also notes that attacks against higher education appeared regularly in the Convention.<sup>153</sup> Condorcet, Talleyrand and Romme are among the names who represented quite a large chunk of the evolution of educational plans over the course of the Revolution that were assaulted for recreating the universities of the old regime.<sup>154</sup>

Ironically, some of those who assailed the potential aristocracy of learned men were themselves members of the Academy. Two important figures among this group were Antoine François Fourcroy and Hassenfratz. Vignery observes that on December 10, a day before Bouquier's initial plan was read before the Convention, Fourcroy harangued the Convention members against what Vignery translates as a "priesthood of intellectuals".<sup>155</sup> I think we can understand this apparent contradiction as a manifestation

of elites and the *sans-culottes* sharing in the imagery and rhetoric of anti-elitism.

Fourcroy and Hassenfratz were part of a libertarian attack against state sponsorship, which saw the Academy like a small republic, a free association of individuals. Likewise the *sans-culottes*' emphasis on small independent producers appealed to this position. These distinct views mutually reinforced each other during the apex of *sans-culottes* power.

Another example of the shared rhetoric was certain individuals who straddled the two perspectives. Fourcroy considering himself at the service of the *sans-culottes* and was head of the Jacobin club along with Bouquier during this period.<sup>156</sup> Bouquier an artist and Fourcroy a chemist were cultured men although Bouquier was not nearly as renowned as Fourcroy in his field, they both shared in an anti-elite rhetoric with the *sans-culottes*. We could view Fourcroy, especially due to his renowned status in the field of chemistry and membership in the Academy, as part of the phenomenon where elites and laborers shared in the rhetoric and imagery of anti-elitism.

The fervor of the radical republic swept up many Convention members who later recanted. After remorse had settled in former radicals blamed Robespierre for much of the destructive impulse.<sup>157</sup> For example, Abbé Henri Grégoire a revolutionary priest, labeled it vandalism and the name stuck. Fourcroy like many had a change of heart and mind after the ascendancy of Napoleon. He kept his affinity to the Bouquier philosophy on independent primary education, but he no longer railed against the dangers of higher education, instead he made a centerpiece of his educational plan of 1802.<sup>158</sup> In conclusion, it seems far too easy to label revolutionary anti-elitism an extremist position and disregard it. It is clear from this that Bouquier was no mere fanatic nor was his

position extreme in relation to the rest of the Jacobins. Bouquier and other Convention members tapped into a developing current in the emerging trend of anti-elitism in democratic culture.

### Real or Imagined?

Did the revolutionaries create an image of the people exemplified in the image of the *sans-culotte*, which contrasted and equally imaginary group of superfluous intermediaries who interfered between the people and their government? The comments made by Bell and Hahn describing the cultures of lawyers and academics encountered earlier shed some light on this question. Work from the sociological discipline can also illuminate the culture of learned elites and the dynamics of hostility, which developed towards them. Pierre Bourdieu attempted to describe the qualities of the cultural field of lawyers as well as the culture of academics and intellectuals in his works on cultural theory. The characteristics of elite culture share certain commonalities therefore it is possible to make some general statements regarding this culture in reference to both lawyers and academics although we must be certain not to imply too much regarding the analogies between an analysis of modern elite culture and that of pre-Revolutionary France. In the work "The Force of Law", Bourdieu outlines the culture of lawyers and much like his analysis of other elite cultures they generally function in a similar fashion. In the book, *the Field of Cultural Production* Bourdieu deals with literary and artistic culture. Finally in the article "Universal Corporatism: the Role of Intellectual in the Modern World" will give us a good foundation to make some statements about elite culture and how it was transformed in the Revolution.

The characteristics of the culture of lawyers in the work by Bourdieu portray a culture that competes with other groups to separate itself and impose a monopoly on who may define truth (in this case legal precedent). As a result, the culture of lawyers demands separation from the social body.<sup>159</sup> In a section of *Field of Cultural Production* Bourdieu speaks about the culture of writers. "In other words, the field of cultural production is the site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the writer and therefore to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the writer."<sup>160</sup> The creation of an autonomous culture common to elite to culture in general, creates a separation, which defines those within the culture as professionals. This elitism challenges notions of common sense and fairness by those outside of the culture.<sup>161</sup> The elite culture does this through imposing its own definition of the truth through competition with the rest of society over the meaning of text.<sup>162</sup> In specific regard to lawyers, Bourdieu says this, "The juridical field is the site of a competition for monopoly of the right to determine the law."<sup>163</sup> In the Article about the role intellectuals Bourdieu notes that while the autonomous character of the culture of elites has fluctuated it did exist in the old regime and those this process was continuing to take place entering into the Revolution.

Hostility to these elites changed and once in the matrix of democratic culture of the French Revolution a new hostility to elite culture was born in the radical ideas of the *sans-culottes*. The notions of fairness and common sense represented by the symbol of the simple and virtuous citizen in classical republican language and the paranoia of the *sans-culottes* felt threatened by the elite culture of lawyers and academia. Bouquier by adhering to classical republicanism and identifying with the *sans-culottes* became a

participant in a new innovation in democratic culture. Anti-elitism appears in democratic culture is a variety of ways, one particular strand evolved into modern anti-intellectualism. This thesis has highlighted the particular origin of anti-intellectualism in France.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION: LEPELETIER AND POLITICAL CULTURE

I have endeavored to offer a different interpretation in the preceding chapters, which asserts that Bouquier was an example of the *sans-culotte* ascendancy. Interpreting Bouquier in this way corresponds more closely to the content in his plan and contemporary events in the Convention. With this new interpretation, a revision of Lepeletier becomes necessary. In the following section, a brief exploration of the historiography of education should explain to us why historians have neglected Bouquier and given more attention to Lepeletier.

The traditional historiography of political history views the passage of the Bouquier plan as a political compromise. This hypothesis views the passage of the plan as a deal made by the Jacobin leadership with the rest of the Convention to end the prolonged and contentious subject of establishing public education. Robert Palmer questions how an unknown entity like Bouquier could author the only plan accepted by the Convention. "It may supposed, therefore, unfortunately without direct evidence, that Robespierre or some other member of the Committee of Public Safety approached Bouquier, as a little known and noncontroversial member of the convention, and persuaded him to submit the plan..."<sup>164</sup> Dominique Julia also supports the theory that the plan was political compromise.<sup>165</sup>

The Convention passed Bouquier proposal with a great deal of unanimity as Julia recalls.<sup>166</sup> This seems to support the thesis of compromise but also creates other questions. The ambiguity arises when we associate the Bouquier with the Convention then the place of Lepeletier, who historians traditionally view as representing the educational philosophy of radical Jacobins, becomes more confused. The analysis of political history, which attempts to establish wholly political causes to the events in the Convention, perceives events on the surface level of political manipulation and compromise. This type of analysis certainly has its place, but using the methods of political culture enriches our analysis and understanding of these events and can potentially explain the paradox of Bouquier and Lepeletier. Cultural perspectives take what is an approach from a single perspective and make it multidimensional. Political history is thus impaired in its ability to deal with the subject of this chapter, which is the dynamics at play in the passage of the Lepeletier and Bouquier plans, respectively.

Using cultural techniques provides greater insight into the passage of each plan in light of their differences. If we associate Lepeletier with Jacobinism then we must ask why the Convention discarded his plan so soon after its passage. Likewise, if we were to associate Bouquier and his proposal with Jacobinism then explaining the place of Lepeletier and his radical approach to education becomes problematic. One solution is to view, as does Higonnet, Jacobinism as a dualistic ideology. This can help explain how both Lepeletier and Bouquier represent Jacobinism yet present very diverse positions. This merely scratches the surface of the internal dynamics of Jacobinism. To move forward we must consider the importance of culture in the context of these events.

In the historiography of education with its concentration on the diachronic evolution of educational philosophy has not fully explored the implications of Bouquier because he appears to be an aberration along the linear movement of educational philosophy. Thus, the interplay between the passage of Lepeletier's plan and that of Bouquier has been the subject varying degrees of speculation. Historians studying the origins of education, however, have considered Lepeletier an originator of a certain tangent of educational theory with his vision of educational egalitarianism. Lepeletier's awareness of the social impact of economic disparity and his intense concentration on equality as remedy to this problem has influenced modern socialist thinkers.

Socialist thinkers looked back on figures like Michel Lepeletier as an inspiration. The utopian socialist Ferdinand Édouard Buisson in *Nouveau Dictionnaire de Pedagogie* cited Lepeletier as one of the influences on education in the Third Republic in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. "C'était là, comme on le voit, une organisation de bourses nationales destinée à rendre les degrés supérieurs de l'instruction accessibles à tous ceux qui s'en montreraient dignes : c'est l'idée que le gouvernement de la troisième République a commencé à réaliser."<sup>L1,167</sup> Historians who were searching for the origins of modern education may have looked to Condorcet for the democratic world, but also looked to Lepeletier for origins to education in the socialist world. This was due in part because the model, which Lepeletier created was used by the Conspiracy of Equals, the insurrectionary movement of Gracchus Babeuf.<sup>168</sup> Babeuf called the plan of Lepeletier "sublime", quoted by Palmer in *The Improvement of Humanity*.<sup>169</sup> The idea of a progressive income tax in Lepeletier's

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<sup>L1</sup>It was here, like have seen, an organization of national expense destined to make the higher degrees of education accessible to all those who manifest worthiness. This is the idea which the government of the Third Republic has begun to realize.

plan was also critical for this continuity. Babeuf and later Marx both used it as part of their theories.<sup>170</sup>

Babeuf and the Lepeletier brothers, Michel and Felix did share an ideological affinity for equality as well as association in the Conspiracy of Equals, of which Felix Lepeletier was a founding member.<sup>171</sup> Socialist historiography associated Babeuf with the birth of communism in part because the insurrectionary methods and ideas on equality, the Conspiracy of Equals employed.<sup>172</sup> In conjunction with this, Marx described Babeuf as a proto Communist.<sup>173</sup> The purpose of this tangent on origins is to emphasize how a diachronic approach by historians has dismissed Bouquier and concentrated on Lepeletier.

In an effort to rehabilitate Bouquier in the historiography, we must first view him outside the labels of compromiser, extremist or a strange liberal. These positions endeavor to separate Bouquier from his plan as a means to explain the disparate elements of the plan the unanimity of its passage. The misunderstanding of his anti-elitism and the perplexing passage of his plan above all others has caused historians to engage in this separation. If historians see the plan as a compromise, it becomes the work of back rooms in the Convention where power players manipulate and cajole the political process for their own ends. In contrast to this Higonnet in *Goodness beyond Virtue* describes Bouquier as a “left-wing iconoclast”<sup>174</sup> whose views represent the fringe of Jacobin hostility to elites. Other works view him as a peculiar liberal peaking out from a moderate Convention during the radical republic.

This thesis presents some different perspectives in regards to Bouquier and Lepeletier. To appreciate fully the significance of Bouquier we should not divorce

Bouquier from his plan or view his attacks against academic elites as unique or arising from a fringe position. In reality, the anti-elitism directed towards academia and the elites of the judicial arena formed an integral portion of his philosophy and had support in the Convention. For our purposes to separate Bouquier and his plan and therefore the passage of it is inadequate for historians trying to understand the educational debates, Jacobin ideology or the place of Bouquier.

An examination of the entirety of Bouquier's ideas makes him seem less explicitly liberal than a mix of classical republicanism and the democratic impulses of the *sans-culottes*. Viewing Bouquier's plan as more representative of the Convention, a position, held by political and educational history, does not negate the rehabilitation of Bouquier or the new interpretation of Lepeletier I will offer below, in fact it supports it. Is the Convention's will represented in the utopian plan of Lepeletier or in the accommodation with the *sans-culottes* in the extremely democratic plan of Bouquier?

### Trading Places

Above we explored how the plan of Lepeletier has been traditionally associated with the most radical impulses of the republic. In this section, we will challenge this assertion by reversing the position of Bouquier and Lepeletier in the historiography. Instead of viewing Lepeletier as an example of radical Jacobinism, we will view Bouquier as a truer representation of radical Jacobinism. Jean-Pierre Gross describes the plan of Lepeletier as the plan of the Mountain and Bouquier as being "railroaded thought the Convention".<sup>175</sup> I will take the opposite view and to do this we must then understand the specific context of the passage of the Lepeletier's plan. This new interpretation will

support the previous assertions about Bouquier and the *sans-culotte* ascendancy and offer a different interpretation of Lepeletier based on the analysis of political culture.

We will begin with the circumstances of the Lepeletier plan and how cultural analysis can provide a better explanation for this episode in the Revolution than the analysis of political history. The events of Lepeletier's plan are a unique and excellent example of symbolic culture. On the day of the plan, the icon of Jacobinism, Robespierre stood before the Convention and extolled the plan of the martyr Lepeletier. Robespierre gave his appeal and the Convention debated the plan for about a month with Robespierre and others continuing to press the Convention on its adoption. Eventually the Convention passed the plan, but one day later the Convention suspended application of the decree. How can we make sense of this? Isser Woloch provides an excellent starting point to answer this question, from the *New Regime*.

“Robespierre and the Jacobin Club publicly endorsed the plan, as homage to the Montagnard martyr. Despite pointed criticisms of its 'chimerical' qualities, the Convention, in an act of momentary political expediency, adopted a modified version of the proposal on 13 August 1793, decreeing that such state boarding schools would be offered as an option without being obligatory. The willingness to endorse this Spartan fantasy even momentarily may have been an ominous portent of the Jacobin mentality, but it had no practical impact on the issue of primary schooling. On the very next day the Convention 'suspended' application of its decree, and it was never heard again.”<sup>176</sup>

This is an excellent start but I will endeavor to make some modifications. Two things about this passage are important for our purposes; one is to see the willingness of the Jacobins to endorse the Spartan “fantasy” is less a portent to an odious mentality than a indication of a cultural behavior. The second is that practically speaking the content of the plan was not important, but the symbol of it was essential. As a symbolic act of deference to the martyr of the Revolution and a testament to revolutionary credentials, it is supremely important for understanding the actions of the Jacobins.

It is also interesting that attendance to the schools based on Bouquier’s plan required an additional decree by the Convention to be made obligatory and here the reverse happened. This gives further support to the position offered here, that Lepeletier was not a practical or even ideological choice, but a cultural choice. Robert Vignery also supports this perspective in his work *The French Revolution and the Schools*. “In reality, reception given by the Jacobins to the Lepeletier Plan on July 19 meant very little. They would undoubtedly have given the same treatment to almost any product of Michel Lepeletier’s pen, provided it did not prove downright reactionary.”<sup>177</sup> The content of the plan was irrelevant, the content of Lepeletier’s character as a martyr and thus an embodiment of virtue was the most important factor in the passage of the plan. Many historians do support this, Woloch above and also James Livesey who states that the passage was recorded as an act of recognition.<sup>178</sup> The Jacobins mixed their revolutionary culture and the rhetoric of sacrifice with political exigency. The passage of Lepeletier’s plan was a combination of the two. It was a compromise of two incongruous elements not a political compromise where an agreement comes from making concessions.

The words uttered by Robespierre preceding the plans unveiling at the Convention are a fitting cultural context for exploring the symbolic power of Jacobin language. We must keep in mind not only what Robespierre says, but also what import the words had on the individual Convention members. “Ce grand objet occupait encore ses pensées, lorsque le crime plongea dans son flanc le fer sacrilège. Celui qui disait: « Je meurs content, ma mort servira la liberté », pouvait se réjouir aussi de lui avoir rendu d’autres services moins douloureux pour la patrie; il ne quittait point la terre, sans avoir préparé le bonheur des hommes par un ouvrage digne de sa vie et de sa mort.”<sup>LII, 179</sup> Robespierre’s words are decisive in understanding the passage of Lepeletier’s plan. We see Robespierre equating passage of the plan with sacrifice to the nation. Robespierre equated the sacrifice of martyrdom and the act of voting. It suggests that voting was both an act of sacrifice itself and a service to Lepeletier. This would put an enormous amount of internal pressure on those present to pass the plan. We may speculate that there was significant pressure on the participants who understood voting for Lepeletier was also an act of committing themselves to the Revolution. There is direct evidence, however, for the existence of the second kind of pressure, which was to associate the passage with homage to Lepeletier. This perspective is more apparent based on the words of Robespierre and the secondary sources.

Only among a small minority was allegiance to the substance of Lepeletier’s plan held in favor, the reminder of the Convention was hostile to its provisions. Felix Lepeletier and Robespierre were the two principle supporters of the plan and continued to

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<sup>LII</sup>This great objective has again occupied your thoughts, when the murderer plunged in his (Lepeletier) side the weapon of sacrilege. Those who have said, ‘I die content, my death will serve liberty’, could also be delighted to have returned to him the other services less painful for the nation; he has not left the earth without having prepared for the happiness of men through the dignified work of his life and his death.

fight for it in the Convention and the clubs.<sup>180</sup> In the Convention, the debate proved difficult however, and a large segment of the Convention was against it. Several deputies criticized in the same language as Bouquier<sup>181</sup>, but the largest segment of criticism against the plan centered on Lepeletier's use of Sparta as an exemplar. Julia recounts the specific criticism of Joseph Lequinio and Abbé Grégoire, two prominent figures in the educational debates, who attacked the plan for its impracticality. Grégoire commented that what sustained ancient Sparta was a substantial population of peasants called helots and this illustrated the absurdity of Lepeletier's plan. Grégoire asked the Convention who would be the new helots if France attempted to recreate Sparta.<sup>182</sup> This underscores both the impracticality of Lepeletier's proposal and the problem of using models from antiquity.

The plan endured a slow demise in the Convention after a month of debate only sustained by the influence of Robespierre. The atmosphere of the Terror and the attempt at creating a Republic of Virtue placed external pressure on the deputies, which gave deputies pause as to what provisions they endorsed. Quoted in Vignery's book is Robespierre laying out threats against those who did not share his vision for the plan of Lepeletier. "Up to this point I have heard only the cause of prejudice pleaded against republican virtues. I see on one side the wealthy classes, who reject this law, and on the other the people, who demand it. I will hesitate no longer. It must be adopted. I demand priority for the plan of Lepeletier."<sup>183</sup> We may construe from this that Convention members certainly felt pressure to adopt the plan and that a failure to do so could be viewed as a transgression against the culture of conformity that had developed during the Terror.

Internal pressure must have also affected the deputies; this pressure was self imposed and associated Lepeletier with a symbol of sacrifice and commitment to the Revolution. It is easily at times to view the Convention members as a faceless collection of individuals, historians choose some to investigate, but the rest are forgotten. What we cannot forget, however, that in this moment they were all committed revolutionaries who believed in what they were doing. Veneration of the hero and the language of sacrifice were personally meaningful for Convention members. Higonnet states that the idealization of the hero played an important role in the Jacobin's commitment to the Revolution. "For the Jacobins, heroic deeds towered over both past and present and, fittingly, it was they who invented the war memorial, to carry into the future the memory of fallen and revolutionary warriors."<sup>184</sup> The induction of Marat into the Pantheon and the paintings by David of Marat and Lepeletier were indicative of the practical expression of the Jacobin reverence for heroes.

The exaltation of death in martyrdom became a fundamental aspect of the language of sacrifice for revolutionaries. David Lloyd Dowd a historian of art comments that death became central to the Jacobin rhetoric as martyrs to the Revolution increased. "As the Revolution advanced, this devotion was more and more frequently coupled with the idea of death.... This preoccupation with violent death was shown in the countless graphic representations of the cruel and untimely ends of Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau, Marat, Pierre Baille, Joseph Barra, Viala, Chalier, and other martyred heroes of the Revolution."<sup>185</sup> Lepeletier's death signified the validation of his life and deeds. The romanticism of death in Jacobinism manifested itself in the erotic sexualized portrait of Bara, the portrait of Marat in the apex of martyrdom and in Lepeletier's plan of public

education. Lepeletier like Marat was eulogized by David in a portrait<sup>LIII</sup> and was also conducted into the pantheon of revolutionary heroes.

### The Context of the Lepeletier Plan

In the context of the Revolution, the plan of Lepeletier ceased to be a work of educational philosophy and became instead a testament to his death as a martyr for the Revolution. It was at this very moment that the Convention was considering Lepeletier's plan that Charlotte Corday assassinated Marat. This contributed to a supercharged atmosphere in the Convention and in the Jacobin club. Robert Palmer makes note of this in his discussion of the passage of the Lepeletier plan. "Michel (Lepeletier) had been a member of the Convention and had voted for the death of Louis XVI. For this he was assassinated by a royalist a few days later. Michel Lepeletier thus became a fallen hero, and when Marat was also assassinated in June, at the very moment now under consideration (the discussion surrounding Lepeletier's plan), both the Jacobins and the sans-culottes demanded solemn honors for Marat and Lepeletier as martyrs of liberty."<sup>186</sup> The twin martyrdoms of Lepeletier and Marat transformed the debate on public education into a revolutionary act for the Convention members. Voting signified not a political or ideological position, but a moral stand. It became a testament to revolutionary credentials.

The atmosphere in the summer and fall of 1793 (summer of year I and fall of year II) was dominated by the most radical impulses in the political culture of Jacobins. In the Jacobin club during August, the idea of martyrdom coalesced around Marat and Lepeletier as busts of both were commissioned.<sup>187</sup> David the iconic revolutionary painter

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<sup>LIII</sup>This painting of Lepeletier unfortunately no longer exists.

immortalized the two martyrs in paintings as well and each stared at the podium in the Jacobin club.<sup>188</sup> On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August several days after the plan of Lepeletier was passed and within the month it was first put under consideration, the Convention decreed the *Levée en Masse*. This act decreed that every citizen would rise to defend France, effectively making France a nation at arms. The law of the general maximum was also inaugurated shortly thereafter which was in response to the critical events on the war front and to the demands of the *sans-culottes*.<sup>189</sup> Finally, only four days separated the apotheosis of Marat on July 15<sup>th</sup> and the presentation of Lepeletier's plan by his brother Felix in the Jacobin club.<sup>190</sup> This barrage of dates each supports the thesis that the particular atmosphere of France and the Convention during the passage of the Lepeletier plan instead of ideological affinity was the reason for its passage.

Viewing Lepeletier as a representative of political culture and not ideological content also speaks to the historiographical perspective of whether Jacobinism and indeed the whole Revolution is representative of a despotic tendency or a democracy spirit. The plainly despotic elements in Lepeletier's plan and its endorsement at the height of the Terror might impel historians to view Jacobinism as having a despotic character with the educational plan of Lepeletier as one manifestation. If we were to view the passage of Lepeletier's plan as an act of symbolic culture within the political culture of the Jacobins then the extremely democratic elements in the Bouquier proposal could be viewed as the essence of the radical Convention. Jacobinism as well changes from a despotic movement exemplified by the coercion of Lepeletier to a movement seeking to increase participation on the part of the individual citizen in the work of government and the

revolutionary order. Changing our interpretation of Lepeletier and raising Bouquier's position accomplishes this perspective of a democratic Jacobinism quite effectively.

The perspective outlined above makes a case for the passage of Lepeletier's plan as an act of political culture, but also its ultimate failure to sway the Convention members in ideological terms. After the fact, the Convention members had buyer's remorse. Attempts were made at modification, but it was to no avail as the plan eventually disappeared. Ferdinand Édouard Buisson from *Nouveau dictionnaire de pédagogie* remarks that, "Ces objections parurent assez fortes aux républicains de l'an II pour les déterminer à renoncer à l'exécution d'un projet que la majorité de la Convention avait d'abord accueilli avec enthousiasme."<sup>LIV</sup>,<sup>191</sup> Woloch quoted several paragraphs above states that the plan was suspended the next day.<sup>192</sup> Other works on education give varying degrees of details as to how the Convention tried to modify and change the plan to make it more acceptable before discarding it altogether. Only a small cadre of Robespierrists and those in Conspiracy of Equals supported it. The plan simply did not fit into what the Jacobins were trying to build. In the end, a minority of Jacobins supported Lepeletier's vision.

## Epilogue

Historians in the 1930's like Crane Brinton and Charles Vignery associate certain aspects of Jacobinism with a religion. In the 1960's social history and its use of structuralist techniques disavowed the realm of ideas, religious and ideological. Post-structuralist analysis however reinvigorated the realm of ideas. With this in mind we can

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<sup>LIV</sup> These objections seemed quite substantial to the republicans of year II. They determined to abandon the execution of a project which the majority of the Convention had initially approached with enthusiasm.

use Brinton and Vignery in the hopes that their analysis can once again be useful without making too much of the association of Jacobins as a religion. Using the analysis sensibly we can delve into the ritualism and symbolism of the political culture of Jacobinism and glean valuable insights. Gerald Livesey makes this very connection by using Higonnet's dual approach and resurrecting the importance of Crane Brinton's analogy of the Jacobins as a quasi-religious movement. "Jacobin universalism was so unconstrained that it could not confine itself to the sphere of politics and found its most distinctive expression as a religious commitment...."<sup>193</sup> This analogy of Jacobinism as a religion is also used by Vignery and is important to the assertion made above about the place of Lepeletier in the Revolution.

What concluding remarks and observations may we glean from this exploration? The language of the *sans-culottes*, classical republicanism and Jacobin ideology all contributed important parts to Bouquier's overall vision. Considering this, we must not conflate the three influences, but must see them as separate facets in the development of Bouquier's complex revolutionary vision for education. Classical republicanism was an underlying frame, which provided for the transformation of the *sans-culottes* into the image of the citizen, while also defining crucial parts of Jacobin thought. The *sans-culottes* represented a model for revolutionary action, while the Jacobins and the Jacobin club represented a model for fraternal association. All three influences, one theoretical and two practical, allowed Bouquier to create a model for a future society.

Bouquier was no mere liberal even if influenced by some like Fourcroy who himself was also a supporter of the *sans-culottes*. We must understand Bouquier as a supporter of the *sans-culottes*, representing a Convention at the apex of the radical republic.

Thermidor was the liberal Convention rediscovering itself after the fall of Robespierre. This is no more clearly stated than by Isser Woloch in his essay “the Right to Primary Education” in the volume, *The French Revolution and the Meaning of Citizenship*. In this volume, Woloch specifically mentions the response to Bouquier’s law in the thermidorian period. “After Thermidor, however, the fate of the Bouquier Law became moot in any case when deputies, whether in good faith or demagogically, assailed it as an emanation of Robespierrist terrorism.”<sup>194</sup> It is hard to imagine why the founders of the Directory would feel so hostile to a so-called liberal proposal.

The other plan, which has some claim to be a representative of the *sans-culottes*, was the Paris plan. This plan was supposedly the work of the Paris section and straddles the plans of Lepeletier and Bouquier, but far from the work of the radical sections, it was most likely the work of journalists and other “intellectuals” as Palmer states.<sup>195</sup> The individual independent producer of the *sans-culottes* was represented in Bouquier’s ideas. Soboul recalls the Bouquier plan, not by name, but states that it had public support. “On 29 Frimaire, the Convention adopted a decree that concerned public education and particularly primary schools. It established a system of free education, controlled by the state, and decentralized, which corresponded fairly well with public opinion.”<sup>196</sup> While we should not view the *sans-culottes* as a whole, the similarity in rhetoric from the *sans-culottes* perspective points to an affinity with the ideas of Bouquier more than any other educational planner. Just as the plan of Lepeletier before it, the Convention suspended the Paris plan the day after its passage.<sup>197</sup>

The assertion of this thesis that the educational policy of the radical Republic can be understood as part of the ascendancy of the *sans-culottes* does not fully address whether

Bouquier's plan was the result of coercive pressure on the part of the *sans-culottes* or part of an ideological affinity between the revolution in the streets and in the Convention. Looking at the course of educational planning after Thermidor may support the idea that the Convention members were bowing to pressure from the radical Jacobin leadership and the *sans-culottes*. Looking at the moment of the radical Republic, however impels me to suggest that the educational policy of the radical Republic during the apex of *sans-culottes* power was a real attempt to bring the Revolution into the lives of all Frenchman and have the Republic benefit from their participation in the revolutionary project. Virtue superseded talent and acquired knowledge as an indication of revolutionary credentials. Partly inspired by the direct democracy of the *sans-culottes* and also related to the principles of democracy, exemplified by universal manhood suffrage inaugurated in the fall of 1792, there was a real attempt to increase the sphere of participation. The issues raised by creating a republican system of national education were the need to educate pupils in practical knowledge and the need to educate citizens in the practice of republican government. Bouquier was part of this phenomenon and he designed his particular vision for education to instill the knowledge of democratic government based on the model of the popular society.

On the subject of Jacobinism, we learned that the movement strove for harmony of the universal and individual impulses in society, but instead the two fractured into extremes. This is not to say that private interest and the common good were incompatible, but that the circumstances particular to Jacobinism and revolutionary France prevented a stable interaction between the two. In each aspiration, there were

despotic and democratic tendencies so despots and democrats have claimed the heritage of Jacobinism. Historians can likewise emphasize either impulse, as both are present.

One element discussed here, which has a fascinating parallel with modern democratic culture, is the hostility towards learned elites. These elites are separate from society and act as intermediaries through their intellectual production. They existed in the old regime, in the Revolution and in modern culture. Hostility to them, however, changed in the Revolution. The example of the lawyers in particular is interesting because still today popular culture uses the language of parasitism to refer to lawyers. The continuity of the culture of lawyers was one, which began in the old regime, survived the Revolution and has emerged to play a significant part in contemporary society. The crucial nexus between pre-modern France and the modern world was the Revolution, which buttressed the old and new conceptions of learned elites. The ideas of classical republicanism, the *sans-culottes* movement and its hostility towards elites combined to foster certain impulse in democratic culture. One strain of this anti-elitism became modern anti-intellectualism.

Historians have investigated the old regime for clues to the origins of the French Revolution since it broke out in 1789. Robert Darnton proffered an explanation, which centered on the individual motivations of revolutionaries; his ideas have garnered a good deal of debate and perhaps can be used to understand the motivations of Bouquier. In the article "The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France" Darnton describes how in the late Enlightenment an unusually wide gap developed between the "grub" street pamphleteers and the philosophes of the High Enlightenment.<sup>198</sup> This economic and cultural disparity spawned a high degree of

hostility on the part of philosophes who discouraged and derided potential emulators.<sup>199</sup>

These low-level writers in turn resented the elitism of the men of letters<sup>200</sup> and Darnton supposes that eventually this hostility grew to include the monarchical system and the old regime society as a whole.<sup>201</sup> Finally Darnton lays out the essence of his thesis; the Revolution resolved the gulf between high and low literature when “grub” street, exemplified by Brissot, Desmoulins and Marat, overthrow the old guard of the High Enlightenment. Men like Marat were particularly fervent in their attacks against the institutions of the men of letters like the salons and the academies.<sup>202</sup>

Darnton is speaking about writers turned revolutionaries, yet one could easily see Bouquier among these men. Darnton’s description of what motivated some revolutionaries could partly explain the anti-elitism of Bouquier. “...during the years 1789-1791, the Revolution realized many of the ideas propagated by the high enlightenment. But the Revolution at its most revolutionary expressed the anti-élitist passions of Grub Street.”<sup>203</sup> This quotation by Darnton fits well in the linguistic repertoire of the radical period and the ideas of Gabriel Bouquier. One might suggest that the phenomenon outlined by Darnton could explain what fueled revolutionaries like Bouquier. Did Bouquier aspire to reach the heights of the art world of the old regime and fall short? Could Bouquier’s hostility towards the renowned painters of France, like Boucher, Vanloo and Pierre in the quotation cited in chapter three indicate this hostility? The suggestions made here only reach the level of speculation, but perhaps further investigation can add an even greater level of depth to the content and character of revolutionaries like Bouquier and the radical Republic.

## END NOTES

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- <sup>4</sup>Woloch, Isser and Baker, Keith Michael. "The contraction and Expansion of Democratic Space during the Period of the Terror". *The French Revolution and the creation of modern political culture*. Oxford: Pergamon. 1994. 309
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- <sup>10</sup>Palmer, R. R. *The improvement of humanity: education and the French Revolution*. 125
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- <sup>12</sup>Bouquier, Gabriel. *Rapport et projet de décret sur le dernier degré d'instruction*. Paris: Imprimerie nationale. 1794. 2
- <sup>13</sup>Boulad-Ayoub, Josiane, Michel Grenon, and Serge Leroux. *Lepeletier et Bouquier*. 76
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid. 78
- <sup>15</sup>Bouquier, Gabriel. *Rapport et projet de décret relatifs à la restauration des tableaux et autres monuments des arts formant la collection du Muséum national*. Paris: Impr. nationale. 1794
- <sup>16</sup>Boulad-Ayoub, Josiane. *Lepeletier et Bouquier*. 81
- <sup>17</sup>Defrance, Eugène. *La conversion d'un sans-culotte: Gabriel Bouquier, peintre, poète et conventionnel, 1739-1810*. Paris: Mercure de France. 1912
- <sup>18</sup>Barnard, Howard Clive. *Education and the French Revolution*. London: Cambridge U.P. 1969. 123
- <sup>19</sup>Higonnet, Patrice L. R. *Goodness beyond virtue: Jacobins during the French Revolution*. 195
- <sup>20</sup>Boulad-Ayoub, Josiane. *Lepeletier et Bouquier*. 35
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid. 34
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid. 42
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid. 43
- <sup>24</sup>Higonnet, Patrice L. R. *Goodness Beyond Virtue: Jacobins during the French Revolution*. 5
- <sup>25</sup>Boulad-Ayoub, Josiane, *Lepeletier et Bouquier*. 49
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid. 33
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