L'Ami du peuple in the French Revolution

Susan Marie Hoffman
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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L'AMI DU PEUPLE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Susan M. Hoffman

1979
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Approved, May 1979

Thomas F. Sheppard

Dale Hoak

George V. Strong
To my family
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ABSTRACT

Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793) began publishing his newspaper *L'Ami du Peuple* while the Estates-General met in the summer of 1789. This study analyzes Marat's perception of the French Revolution in terms of the issues found in *L'Ami du Peuple*. Marat's political philosophy was based on the supremacy of the popular will which meant the supremacy of the legislature. Marat's frustration at the Constituent Assembly for surrendering political power to the monarch was the central theme of his journal. The guarantee of legislative supremacy was to be established by the Assembly's new constitution which was the endpoint of the Revolution and from which would flow a utopian society in which the wise would govern and the citizens would enjoy an "ordered life" with freedom from starvation and political oppression. Marat used *L'Ami du Peuple* to instill virtue into the French whom he considered ignorant children. Despite their helplessness and lack of initiative, Marat never wavered and continued to defend their rights against the royalist counter-revolution in his own search for glory.

Marat's eight-page newspaper was published daily for four years -- 1789 to 1793. The first and last years of the journal have been analyzed to determine how Marat, as a well known figure in the Revolution, viewed the character of the French people, the revolutionary Constituent Assembly, and the monarchy.
L'AMI DU PEUPLE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
INTRODUCTION

This is a study of Marat's perception of the French Revolution based on the political issues raised in his newspaper, L'Ami du Peuple, which was published in Paris from 1789 to 1793. Marat was a physician, scientist, and occasional writer of political pamphlets before the Revolution. The Revolution gave Marat a definative purpose in life. Four months after the first meeting of the Estates-General in May 1789, Marat became the self-appointed guardian of the Revolution. An analysis of L'Ami du Peuple reveals Marat's belief that the success of the Revolution depended upon the strength of the assemblies. Marat's obsession with the need for a role in the Revolution and the changes the Revolution was to bring to France can be seen in his prospectus.

Today is the day that the French have reconquered liberty by force, that Despotism is crushed, no longer daring to raise its head, that the disturbers of the State have been put in flight, that the enemies of the Country are forced to take a disguise, that disconcerted ambition fears to show itself, that the barriers of prejudice are beaten down by the voice of reason, that the rights of Men and of the Citizen are going to be consecrated, and that France waits for the happiness of a free Constitution. Nothing can oppose the wishes of the Nation, only the play of prejudice and passions in the Assembly of its Representatives.
It is up to the wise to prepare the triumph of the great truths which should bring the reign of justice and liberty, and affirm the foundation of public felicity. Thus, in present circumstances, the most beautiful gift to give to the Nation, or rather the only work of which it has need, is a periodical journal, in which one could follow the work of the Estates-General with solicitude, examining it with each impartial article, in which one could recall without ceasing the good principles, in which one could avenge the right of the Citizen, in which one could trace the happy organization of a wise government, in which one could develop the means to dry up the source of unhappiness of the State to bring back union, abundance, and peace: such is the plan the Authors of the Journal have imposed upon themselves and that the Public can claim to see scrupulously fulfilled, according to the purity of views, the vast knowledge and merited success of the political works of the Editor, zealous Citizen, who has taken such good care of his reputation in order to better serve the Country, and whose name will be inscribed among those of its Liberators.\(^1\)

Marat's message to his readers, be they representatives or shopkeepers, was that through the legislature the people assume the controlling role in the French government. This theme will be developed by first examining Marat's political philosophy and his views on the character of the French people. His views on the role of the assemblies and of the monarchy in the Revolution will then be examined.

This study is based on the first and last years of the newspaper's publication, September 1789 to September 1790, and August 1792 to July 1793. This investigation covers only two years because limitations of time do not allow a thorough study of the entire newspaper which was published daily for four years.

Issues from the intervening two years have been read to maintain continuity. For instance, information from issues of June 1791, which concern the king's flight to Varennes, has been included.

The two years chosen for the study, 1789-1790 and 1792-1793, were crucial years in both the course of the Revolution and in the development of Marat's political awareness. The outbreak of revolution occurred in the summer of 1789 when the Third Estate demanded a leading role in both the national and local governments. Within four years the French had killed their king and established a republic. L'Ami du Peuple in 1789 was the work of a novice revolutionary; in 1792, it was the work of a hero of the Revolution.

My most important primary source was Marat dit L'Ami du Peuple, a twenty-volume collection of Marat's newspapers published during the Revolution. This is a facsimile edition "reprinted from the complete collection of the original Papers, compiled and issued by J.P. Marat," according to the publisher, The Society for the Reproduction of Rare Books in Tokyo.

This study is based on volumes one through three, September 1789 to July 1790, a portion of volume four containing August and September, 1790, and volumes 14 through 19, containing issues of August 1792 to July 1793. Volume 20, which contains miscellaneous works by Marat, is also used.

Marat renamed his newspaper six times in the course of its publication: Le publisciste parisien, 12-15 September 1789; L'Ami du Peuple, 16 September 1789 to 21 September 1792; Journal de la république française, 25 September 1792 to
11 March 1793; and Le publististe de la république française, 14 to 22 March 1793 and 31 March to July 1793. In the last few months he retitled his journal twice for brief periods Observations à mes commettans, 25 to 29 March 1793 and Profession de foie de Marat, 30 March 1793. Footnote references in this paper refer to the page number of the collection.

The physical make-up of L'Ami du Peuple was consistent throughout publication. It was usually eight pages, though at times it ran twelve or sixteen pages.² The content usually consisted of one or two essays on the political events in France, mainly Paris. In the first year, Marat gave selected accounts of the previous day's meeting of the Constituent Assembly followed by commentary. By the final year Marat had stopped recounting assembly business in detail and concentrated on commentary. The journal contained more letters in this year because Marat's chronic illness, acute pruritus, had been aggravated by lung trouble caused by his activities of the past four years and he was prevented from writing.³ Marat made extensive use of footnotes which frequently suggested that readers consult a pamphlet he had published. He also used footnotes to ask rhetorical questions or to expand an argument.


Marat published a simple newspaper. It was devoid of the artwork that was found in the larger, more sophisticated newspapers such as the weekly *Revolutions de Paris* edited by Louis-Marie Prudhomme or *Revolutions de France et de Brabant* edited by Camille Desmoulins. Marat's dedication to his work for the Revolution can be seen in what became a regular feature in the journal, "ERRATA." In "ERRATA" Marat attempted to correct the typographical and grammatical errors in the previous issues explaining, "I ask pardon of my readers: I am overwhelmed with an immense amount of work which at times prevents me from proofreading; but I will take care to correct the text by an 'ERRATA.'"5

Although he had financial problems, Marat financed *L'Ami du Peuple* himself until December 1791.6 In September 1789, he claimed to live in a humble retreat and to have lived on bread and water for nine years to finance his publications.7 At one point he tried unsuccessfully to obtain money from the Minister of Finance, M. Roland, who had a fund for writers concerned with public instruction.8 He turned to the Duc D'Orleans and requested 15,000 livres ("a modest sum")


which he said would pay for paper and labor for an unspecific period of time. This solicitation was also unsuccessful. After 1791, Marat's wife, Simonne Evrard, financed the journal.

*L'Ami du Peuple* was available both in Paris and in the provinces. One method of distribution in 1789 was by subscription as was common to all French newspapers at that time. By October 1792, however, subscriptions were no longer available in Paris because of the great demand for the newspaper by the news vendors. Individual issues were available at the journal's printer. Revolutionary journals were also read at meetings of the popular societies and even in the public squares. Marat's close association with the Jacobin and Cordeliers' Clubs would make this a plausible means of circulation. Marat himself was reported to have read Rousseau's *Social Contract* on London street corners before the Revolution. How wide a circulation *L'Ami du Peuple* had in the provinces is questionable because no subscription lists exist.

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9 Ibid., p. 315.
10 Gottschalk, Radicalism, p. 92.
17 Gottschalk, Radicalism, p. 96.
In 1789, Marat charged 12 livres for a three-month, postage-paid subscription. In October 1792 Marat advertised the yearly subscription rate as 36 livres while the three-month rate remained the same. This annual price put L'Ami du Peuple within the price range for dailies during the Revolution, which averaged 30 to 36 livres. Most dailies charged two sous a copy. Although Marat never quotes a price for individual copies, it is probable that his newspaper cost less than two sous because of its inferior quality.

These prices would seem to allow only occasional purchase by the laborers of Paris who were making between 20 and 30 sous a day and spending eight or nine sous alone for a four-pound loaf of bread even when inflation was under control. But these wage-earners could have gone to public readings or passed a copy around. More skilled craftsmen - the journeymen and masters - made 40 to 50 sous a day and could have bought L'Ami du Peuple daily. By October 1792 the newspaper was very popular as shown by the demands of the news vendors.

Although subscription lists do not exist and news vendor sales cannot be traced, the circulation of L'Ami du Peuple can be estimated

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18 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 14 September 1789, p. 36.
19 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 12 October 1792, p. 5698. Computation of the three-month subscription rate of 12 livres would lead one to believe that Marat charged 48 livres per year which appears not to be the case.
20 Gilchrist and Murray, Press, p. 10.
21 Ibid.
22 Rude, Crowd in the French Revolution, p. 21.
23 Ibid.
indirectly, knowing the facilities Marat had at his disposal. At the
time of the Revolution hand-operated presses could print 3,000 sheets
in 24 hours. If, at the outset of publication, Marat had access to
two one press, he could print 1,500 copies daily at the most, since two
sheets of paper were needed to make one issue. This figure is proba-
bly too high because in 1789, Marat had to use a printer who most
likely did not work exclusively for him. In 1792, Marat received four
presses confiscated from royalist journalists by the Committee of Po-
lice and Surveillance of the Paris Commune after the 10 August attack
on the Tuileries. Four presses would have given Marat the capacity,
provided he had help, to print 6,000 copies a day. Louis Gottschalk,
one of Marat's biographers, estimated that L'Ami du Peuple had a cir-
culation of 14,000 to 20,000 copies at the height of its popularity.
This estimate may only be true for 1792, because Gilchrist and Murray,
in The Press in the French Revolution, did not list L'Ami du Peuple
with those newspapers achieving a circulation of 2,000 to 5,000,
which was average for that time.

To analyze the influence of L'Ami du Peuple it is necessary to
identify its audience. A characteristic of Marat's writing style was
to address "the people." Louis Gottschalk identified Marat's audience
as being those people who took part in the popular protests during the
Revolution, "it may be stated on a priori grounds that the mob that

24 Rude, Crowd in the French Revolution, p. 21.
25 Gottschalk, Radicalism, p. 97.
26 Ibid., p. 183.
27 Gilchrist and Murray, Press, p. 9.
attacked the Tuileries on 10 August was of the very class to whom 
L'Ami du Peuple made its appeal. 28 These are the sans-culottes, and 
their attack on the Tuileries in 1792 signaled the end of the monarchy 
in France. The sans-culottes were people of such varied economic and 
social backgrounds that they cannot be fitted properly into a social 
class as such classes are defined today. 29 In Paris, the sans-culottes 
were a socially heterogeneous group of small shopkeepers, petty tra-
ders, craftsmen, journeymen, laborers, vagrants, and poor who were 
bound together by political aims. 30

The rhetoric of the sans-culottes was close to Marat's. The 
following was taken from an address of the société des Sans-culottes 
de Beaucaire to the Constituent Assembly, 8 September 1792.

We are the sans-culottes...poor and virtuous, we have 
formed a society of manual workers and peasants...we 
know our friends--those who have delivered us from the 
clergy, the nobility, feudalism, the dîme, royalty and 
all the evils which accompany it. They are the same 
people who are called anarchists, trouble-makers, and 
Blowers of Marat by the aristocrats. 31

The sans-culottes were egalitarian and anti-aristocratic. The follow-
ing excerpt from Père Duchesne, a paper similar to L'Ami du Peuple 
edited by Jacques-René Hébert, described them as militant nationalists.

The sans-culotte always has his sword with edge 
sharpened to give a salutary lesson to all trouble-

28 Gottschalk, Radicalism, p. 97.
29 Soboul, Parisian Sans-Culottes, p. 36.
30 Rude, Crowd in the French Revolution, pp. 12, 257.
31 Soboul, Parisian Sans-Culottes, p. 21.
makers. Sometimes he carries his pike with him, and at the first beat of the drum, he will be seen leaving for the Vendée, for the 'armées des Alpes' or the 'armées du Nord.'

Judging the influence of L'Ami du Peuple on the sans-culottes is difficult. The journal's popularity may be measured by the fact that while most revolutionary newspapers failed after one year, Marat's lasted four. His newspapers were among those found during house searches of sans-culottes' homes in the years II and III, September 1793-1795. L'Ami du Peuple gained popularity because the sans-culottes were convinced of Marat's sincere dedication to the Revolution. The sans-culottes wanted to hear Marat's vehement and unceasing calls against those who might thwart the progress of the Revolution.

The continual attempts by authorities to suppress L'Ami du Peuple show the newspaper was having an impact. Marat was often in hiding to avoid arrest by the Paris Commune, the Chaletet (the Parisian Police), and the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly of Representatives of the Paris Commune called on him to explain his charges of corruption against the Commune in September 1789. His continual attacks on

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32 Ibid., pp. 37-38. Soboul distinguishes the militant sans-culottes as a politically active minority even though the term "sans-culotte" is a political definition.


34 Soboul, Parisian Sans-culottes, p. 243.


Jacques Necker, the Minister of Finance, and the Paris Commune for mismanagement of the city's food supplies, led the authorities to believe Marat was partially responsible for the March to Versailles on 5-6 October 1789. On 8 October 1789 the Chaletet was unable to capture Marat and, in January 1790, the Commune summoned him to appear once again. He escaped arrest with the help of Georges Jacques Danton at the Club Cordeliers and fled to England, where he remained until April 1790. Marat's reputation was such that during his three month absence, five false editions of *L'Ami du Peuple* were published. Marat returned "determined to give (the plagiarists) continual chase." Later that year, the Assembly passed legislation against writers guilty of *lèse-nation* after Marat published a pamphlet attacking the *émigrés*. A revision of the law on 2 August 1790 made the law applicable only to Marat. Again he avoided arrest and left for England in December 1791.

Although *L'Ami du Peuple* is the chief source considered here, Marat also wrote other political pamphlets both before and during the Revolution. Two volumes of such pamphlets, with overlapping contents, are available. The pamphlets will supplement *L'Ami du Peuple*, as many were published the same day an issue of the journal was published and touched upon the same topics. One volume of pamphlets, entitled *Mélanges*, is actually volume 20 of *L'Ami du Peuple*. It contains twelve works by Marat and seven works by contemporary writers. Les

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Pamphlets de Marat, with introduction and notes by Charles Vellay, was published in 1911 and contains Marat's shorter published writings, each from two to eight pages, as well as some of his longer, better-known works.

 Mélanges contains "C'en est fait de nous" in which Marat warned against counter-revolutionary plots of émigrés who planned to invade France. This was the pamphlet that outraged the National Assembly and brought about the lèse-nation legislation against Marat. "Denonciation à la Nation contre Malouet," Malouet being Marat's chief accuser in this episode, was issued in response and is contained in Vellay's volume. Also found in Mélanges are three pamphlets in support of the mutiny in Nancy in August 1790. Marat considered the suppression of the soldiers by the officers at Nancy a disastrous victory for the counter-revolutionary forces. Another controversial pamphlet in this volume is "Denonciation contre Necker," written in October 1789, and refused by ten printers. It was only published in January 1790 after Marat printed it himself. Contemporary writings in Mélanges include the official "D'Acte d'accusation contre Marat" issued by the National Convention for Marat's trial in April 1793. The other works are reactions to Marat's death: an account of the assassination, three eulogies, and an account of the Section de la Cité's day of commemoration during which a bust of Marat was dedicated. Mélanges also contains a few pages of short revolutionary poems and songs written by Marat.

Charles Vellay's Les Pamphlets de Marat is helpful because the introductions which proceed most entries give the circumstances under which the pamphlet was written. The more important works not found in
Melanges are "l'Offrande la Patrie" and its supplement. These works, published in February and April, 1789, are statements of Marat's political ideas at the beginning of the Revolution. Revealing the influence of Rousseau and Montesquieu, Marat called for the separation of the branches of government, freedom of the press, and a constitution. They did not offer a program and cannot be considered original since they were only two of the many pamphlets with the same ideas circulating at the time. The nine shorter pamphlets contained in Vellay repeat Marat's cries for action by the people against the counter-revolutionary enemies of France.

The McClure Collection of French Revolutionary Materials, published on microfilm, contains some of the records of the proceedings of the French assemblies and miscellaneous government and delegates' reports. The first 13 issues of Camille Desmoulins Revolutions de France et de Brabant are also found in this collection. There are three entries by Marat: his "Denonciation Against Necker," (21 October 1789); his "Call to Arms Against Dumouriez," (13 April 1793); and his statement on the trial of Louis XVI (no date). The editors believe the original compiler of the McClure Collection to be Jullien de Paris, a commissioner for the Committee of Public Safety and a later supporter of Napoelian. How McClure, a merchant and Francophil, acquired the collection is undetermined, though the collection's editors believe de Paris might have given it to him.

Secondary sources for this study include biographies of Marat

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39 Gottschalk, Radicalism, p. 38.
and general histories of the French Revolution. No study of L'Ami du Peuple has been published. Of Marat's biographers, Louis Gottschalk presents the most thoughtful account of Marat's political ideas and activities during the Revolution. Gottschalk does not dwell on the unsubstantiated stories which make up Marat's notorious reputation. Jean Paul Marat: A Study in Radicalism proceeds on the belief that Marat can be explained as a human being, "extraordinary," but human. Gottschalk's goal is not to cleanse Marat's reputation; in the preface to his book (edition of 1967) Gottschalk states his preference for Lafayette whom he has studied for forty years. Gottschalk's concluding chapter on the influence of Marat is an excellent historical interpretation of the question. His goal with this book is to fill what he saw as a gap in historical studies, namely, a study of Marat's development from a bourgeois, pro-monarchist to a republican. A Study in Radicalism was written in 1927 and republished without revision in 1967. A supplemental biography was inserted in 1967 and lists the more recent books on Marat and the French Revolution, though they were not used in the writing. The book is useful, even after forty years, because Gottschalk analyzes Marat on the strength of his newspapers and pamphlets, not on other's opinions of him.

Several histories of the French Revolution were used. Two have been used most extensively. The French Revolution, 1787-1799, by Albert Soboul represents the orthodox Marxist interpretation which sees the Revolution as a bourgeois victory over aristocratic feudalism. Soboul

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40 Gottschalk, Radicalism, pp. vi, ix.
has a high opinion of Marat. In *L'Ami du Peuple*, Soboul states, "Marat defended the rights of the popular classes with considerable shrewdness and perspicacity."\(^{41}\) Soboul's selection of quotations from *L'Ami du Peuple* characterize Marat's concern with safeguarding the Revolution from its enemies.

J.M. Thompson's *The French Revolution* is a more detailed chronology than Soboul's. Thompson credits the bourgeoisie with having given much needed direction to the first years of the Revolution, though they proved incapable of coping with the changes they brought about. Thompson shows none of Gottschalk's understanding of Marat. Marat's sense of the dramatic and his lack of modesty receive short, sharp, almost sarcastic treatment:

> Marat's habitual disrespect for accepted opinions gave him a reputation for farsightedness which he did not deserve. He suspected everyone, and generally proved right in doing so. But he had no eye for proportion, and no sense of humor; his denunciations added to the evils they were meant to cure.\(^{42}\)

In his short piece on Marat in *Leaders of the French Revolution*, Thompson gives more attention to Marat's private life than does Gottschalk and acknowledges that Marat will never be completely understood.

The preface to *The Press in the French Revolution* by J. Gilchrist and W.J. Murray contains information on distribution, circula-

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tion, and prices of newspapers during the French Revolution. It also contains a chronology of the revolutionary press and examines individual newspapers.

The major works on the sans-culottes are George Rude's *Crowd in the French Revolution* and *Crowd in History, 1730-1848*, and Albert Soboul's *The Parisian Sans-culottes and the French Revolution, 1793-1794*. *The Crowd in the French Revolution* is a study of the composition of specific public protest groups during the period. The value of this book in an analysis of *L'Ami du Peuple* is that it gives an identity to the people who read Marat and inquires into their motivations. Rude sees the radical press as playing a large role in inciting the sans-culottes to action, especially with the 5-6 October 1789 March to Versailles. He singles out Marat as a leader. But for all the influence the press had, Rude lays the cause of the march on hunger and the fear of starvation which had resulted from the shortage of bread. 43

Soboul, in the *Parisian Sans-culottes*, examines their political organization and practices by tracing the ideology behind their objectives for political, economic, and social change. Although the time frame of this book lies outside that of this study, the book is useful when examining Marat's influence on the sans-culottes. After Marat's death in 1793, he became one of the three revolutionaries enshrined in the Pantheon; and the Section *Théâtre Française* took his name, as did the army of the Revolutionary Committee of Nantes. 44

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I.

THE REVOLUTION

Understanding Marat's belief that the Revolution was the country's most immediate goal is prerequisite to understanding his attitude toward the Constituent Assembly and the monarchy. His journal and pamphlets reveal a man with a mission. His critiques of issues reveal a curious blend of Enlightenment thought, a desire for personal recognition (as seen in his prospectus), and an obsession with the need to conclude the Revolution quickly. This chapter sets forth Marat's goals for the Revolution and examines the means he was willing to use to attain those ends.

Marat could not understand that troubled times necessarily accompany political revolutions. France, in 1789, was in a state of economic collapse and was ripe for political and social change. The tremendous excitement created by the calling of the Estates-General in the spring was felt throughout France. Even the smallest village met to compose cahiers setting forth their grievances. The upper ranks of the Third Estate were able to assume political power and struggled with the nobility and the monarchy to control the direction of the Revolution. Marat could not accept the disorganization or "chaos" which is inherent in the process of intense social and political change. Within one year of the fall of the Bastille, Marat was living in a state-of-war
with those whom he considered enemies of the Revolution.

Marat believed society's only purpose was to guarantee the common good. In France, the construct of that guarantee, the constitution, did not exist. The Constituent Assembly had been working since June 1789, and by the summer of 1790 had still not completed its work. Frenchmen, Marat reasoned, had given up certain rights to live in French society and were now betrayed. "It is impossible for us to escape civil war, and not end up being massacred ourselves."¹ He believed that with the state unable to protect its citizens, they could only protect themselves at the point of a sword.² During the summer of 1790, Marat chided the optimistic souls in the Assembly who believed France was well on its way to an ordered constitutional government.

A destructive assumption of newly-born liberty in all states that free themselves from bondage and retake their arms, is the belief that the wicked should only be punished by legal means. This assumption is only realistic in well-ordered governments where it is also superfluous. But in times of anarchy and confusion, it is the height of folly...Let us therefore finally understand that we are in a state of war; that the safety of the people is the supreme law; and that all means are good, when efficacious, to destroy the perfidious enemies who have placed themselves above the law, and who never cease to conspire against public happiness.

The anarchy of the Revolution had destroyed the social pact which formed the basis of society.

¹Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 30 July 1790, p. 1296.
²Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 17 July 1790, p. 1148
³Ibid., 30 July 1790, p. 1296.
Marat's philosophical interpretation of the origins of society followed that of Rousseau. Marat believed man's natural rights were self-preservation and happiness, but that unrestricted exercise of those rights led to warfare. The social pact assured men their civil rights: personal safety, individual liberty, and the right to secure their possessions. When the social pact failed its obligation under the tyranny of the Capets, men regained their unrestricted right to self-preservation and happiness. Herein lies Marat's justification for violence. Violence was to preserve the new social order which the Revolution was to bring.

Marat called for violence in the interest of the good of the state and to insure public safety, both phrases having the same meaning in Marat's vocabulary. But Marat's violence was not always that of the sword or guillotine. The cries for "heads to roll" first appeared in L'Ami du Peuple only after April 1790, when Marat returned from England where he had fled to escape the wrath of the courts and the Paris municipality. Before he left in January, during the first four months of the publication of L'Ami du Peuple, he spoke daily of purging the Constituent Assembly and of insurrection, but he never advocated murder. It is not unreasonable to assume that purging was to take the form of a moral condemnation against the suspect deputies. Moral condemnation was, for Marat, far more dishonorable than death. Speaking of Mirabeau, Marat claimed there would have been no need for further revolutionary violence if he had been "shamefully driven out of the national senate"
Marat defined tyranny as any action by government which prevented men from taking up the rights that the social pact guaranteed them. In France, government collusion with grain hoarders caused people to starve, according to Marat. He also told stories of the Paris police making night forays into homes of innocent citizens. Under such tyranny, vengeance became a just principle according to which a few would be sacrificed to save many. Marat saw vengeance as simple justice. To disagree was to wallow in "a false humanity and a false pity."

To sacrifice 600 heads in order to save 3,300,000 is an all too simple calculation dictated by wisdom and philosophy. All sensible citizens believe it and all courageous citizens avow it. You preach it yourself if you have a soul. Only a monster vomited by hell would not feel this way.

Marat called for 500, 600, or any number of heads to roll in order to defeat counter-revolution. Leading French citizens, such as Mounier and Mirabeau, were honored with specific condemnations. Numbers and names meant nothing to Marat. Marat's writing style and flow of words conjured up a picture of the author thinking faster than he could write and throwing off the first number, or name, that came into

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5 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 26 July 1790, p. 1263.
6 Marat, Project de Constitution, p. 15.
7 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 10 November 1789, p. 291.
8 Ibid., 3 August 1790, p. 1350.
9 Ibid., p. 1320.
his head. Marat became so wrapped up in some articles that he would leave names blank. He once apologized saying he could not remember the name at press time. He often used "etc." after listing suspected enemies of the state. He even used "etc.'s" in listings of their crimes, as if the crimes such men would commit were obvious. Marat, like most revolutionaries, especially during the Terror, were convinced that the problems of the country were caused by individuals and could be solved by killing these individuals.

Marat's call for violence was his response to tyranny, not a blank check for anarchy. Disorders outside the limits he himself set disturbed him because he knew that chaos in the streets could be used for counter-revolutionary purposes as well as his own. He called for public work projects to keep the unemployed off the streets. An incident on the docks at la Ferraille, in which a thief was lynched, brought a sharp response which shows the distinction Marat made between justifiable and unjustifiable violence.

Whatever basis the indignation of the people may have against the prevaricating judges, and whatever motives there may be [for the people] to withdraw their confidence and render justice themselves, one can only deplore the all-too-cruel effects of their fury against simple delinquents who have not endangered the public safety. One can only fear the terrible consequences of the people's blindness. How many honest citizens, objects of hidden hatreds, would become victims of popular vengeance! What am I saying? These furious moments can turn against the people themselves.


furnishing the enemies of the Revolution a perfidious excuse to arm against their proper defenders, inciting them to oppose the regeneration of the kingdom, and to deprive themselves unnecessarily of the benefits of liberty.\textsuperscript{12}

Marat was totally immersed in the Revolution. Every line, every thought written in \textit{L'Ami du Peuple} was written terms of the good or evil being done to the progress of the Revolution. This obsession explains Marat's early declaration of war against counter-revolution. His virulent rhetoric and violent solutions show the frustrations of a man who saw a goal within his grasp but who could not reach it. The calling of the Estates-General charged a special destiny upon France. Delays were inexcusable. The Revolution became a series of lost moments. The Revolution would have been achieved without violence if, on 15 July 1789, 10,000 Parisians had swept the nobles and prelates out of the Constituent Assembly, or if, on 6 October 1789, the Assembly had given passports to the 300 aristocrats who were prepared to flee.

Instead of profiting from these moments of terror to get rid of [the aristocrats] forever, [the Assembly] gave them the time to recover from their fears, and [the patriots] ended up being subjugated themselves.\textsuperscript{13}

The purging of the Assembly would be "a sole act of rigor" which, if displayed from the first, "would have dispensed with our having re-

\textsuperscript{12}Marat, \textit{L'Ami du Peuple}, 27 May 1790, p. 788.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, 29 December 1789, pp. 515-156.
course to it again." On the occasion of Louis return from Varennes under guards of the Assembly Marat exclaimed with disbelief:

> It is true that heaven watches us and that always some unforeseen event (Our revolution is a continual tissue of miracles) stops us at the edge of the abyss into which we are about to plunge. 

One means Marat consistently advocated to bring the Revolution to a successful close was the establishment of a tribunal which would be authorized for a few days only to try crimes of lèse-nation. Marat usually specified three days. He once claimed if given the power he could perfect the constitution and get the political machinery working smoothly within six weeks. He vehemently opposed giving the Châtelet authority over crimes of lèse-nation which was done in 1789. He claimed the legislature had no power to make such a decision. This argument conflicts with his own theory of legislative supremacy in government. Marat's real motive for criticism lay in the past suspicions of the Châtelet under the ancien régime as bearers of the hated lettres de cachet. Even with the Revolution the Châtelet had been persecuting citizens, notably Marat himself. The Châtelet, Marat claimed, was full of his personal enemies. Marat's proposed tribunal would consist of men worthy of trust. All other

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14 Ibid., 26 July 1790, p. 1263.
15 Ibid., 25 June 1791, p. 4002.
16 Ibid., 26 July 1790, p. 1263.
17 Ibid., 6 November 1789, p. 257.
18 Ibid., 6 November 1789, p. 257.
tribunals were unacceptable.19

But if the Revolution could succeed with one action, it could also be destroyed with one move, "the single moment that they find to surprise us will suffice to consummate our ruin."20 This extreme fear lay behind Marat's acceptance of violence as an instrument against counter-revolution.

All is lawful to wake the people from their fatal lethargy, to make them realize the value of their rights, and to inspire the courage to defend them.

Before the Revolution, Marat had given much thought to the character of the French people. His conclusions were set forth early in his writing career in Polish Letters (1770), which was patterned after Montesquieu's Persian Letters. Throughout the Revolution Marat believed the French were a vain and frivolous people. He saw French society as vain because he believed Frenchmen lived off admiration for and obsessive concern with public opinion. To be accepted in aristocratic society was the major goal, to be accepted at court was the ultimate honor. The French were frivolous because these priorities meant that manners took the place of laws. The court rewarded sycophancy with power and influence.22

19 Ibid., 11 January 1790, pp. 254-255; 26 July 1790, p. 1263; 30 July 1790, p. 1296.
20 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 2 June 1790, p. 838.
21 Ibid., 6 August 1790, p. 1343.
22 Jean-Paul Marat, Polish Letters (Boston: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1971) p. 118. Manuscript was unpublished until 1905, letters are dated 1770.
Marat entertained no bitter feelings toward the aristocrats in Polish Letters. He treated them more like children who had never grown up, excusing them as being more ridiculous than wicked, and imbued with "fatal assumptions." "Fatal assumptions" could be corrected and the call in L'Ami du Peuple for virtue and talent were an attempt to reeducate French society with the values which would insure the new era. This belief was the main motivation behind Marat's decision to use a newspaper to help fulfill the Revolution.

The main point is to enlighten them, to make them feel their rights, to penetrate them. This done, the revolution will operate infallibly without any human force able to oppose it.

Those who did not learn Marat's lessons immediately were guilty of trying to prolong the ignorance and sycophancy of the ancien régime.

Marat gave his ultimate condemnation when he said of Louis XVI's government, "here glory is often manifest devoid of honor, and what is worse, without a moral basis." Interestingly, Marat devoted only a few lines to the plight of the French peasants and the poor in Polish Letters. Their lot, he stated on another occasion before the Revolution, could never be improved no matter what kind of revolution might come about.

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23 Ibid., p. 164.
24 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 18 (should be 19) November 1789, pp. 379-380.
In *L'Ami du Peuple* Marat cast aside the subtlety of his earlier works and became an aggressive didactic journalist. His opinions of the French character remained the same. The French were good-at-heart but too carefree, ignorant, and materialistic to bring the Revolution to completion. He attempted to marshall the moral strength of the French people against the power and corruption of the ancien régime. Marat saw the Revolution in moralistic terms as a struggle between virtue and baseness, humanity and barbarism. The people embodied the humanity of the new French nation and they held the hidden values that, once revealed, would confirm the new order in France:

> Idleness, vice, and libertinage will disappear along with misery. The taste of domestic pleasures, inseparable from love of work, will succeed dissipation and debauchery. Morals will be purified. Marriages will multiply. The population will increase, and abundance, ordered life, health, and joy will regenerate the species debased by misery and oppression.  

Marat attempted to bring these values to light believing they alone could defeat counter-revolution. "It is not force," Marat said in August 1790, "It is our vices, our need for gold, avidity, rapacity, and venality, which will lose the state." Ignorance, he continued, is to be more feared than corruption. *L'Ami du Peuple* carried unceasing exhortations to the people to think and to demand the happiness which was their's by right. "We have nothing to fear but ourselves, our ignorance, our credulity, our blind confidence in

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our supersitious respect for authority. Will we be therefore eternal-
yly children . . . "  

29  His anger often turned to despair:

I saw this with bitterness; liberty does not appear made for us. Slaves by our ignorance, our needs and vices, our vanity, our love of luxury, our avarice, our ambition, we support the first who wish to buy us. And we pretend to enjoy the advantages of a free and just government: Impossible.

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The change in Marat's perception of French society which is shown by a comparison between Polish Letters and L'Ami du Peuple is identical to the change the Revolution brought to France. In both there was a change in emphasis from aristocratic "society" under the monarchy, to the "people," those who composed the egalitarian society living under the banner of the new French nation.

Marat saw the Revolution in both political and social terms. Politically, the representatives in the Constituent Assembly were to write the constitution, a framework which would guarantee the French their civil rights. He realized the people were conscience of their opportunity for happiness and security but he believed their nature prevented them from grasping it. Marat believed himself to be their teacher and leader. He alone could distinguish between good and evil, justice and tyranny, and vengeance and anarchy. Marat's identification of his personal desires as the only true revolutionary goals not only obscured his perception of the Revolution but condemned him never to see its fulfillment.

29  Ibid., 26 July 1790, p. 1264.

30  Ibid., 8 January 1790, p. 593.
II. THE ASSEMBLY

L'Ami du Peuple was, above all else, Marat's attempt to mold the Revolution in his own image, and to control the flood of discontent and reform which was far larger than any one man. Marat overestimated the opportunities which the Revolution presented to France. He saw the Revolution as a panacea for all the ills of the country. He believed the destruction of the ancien régime would necessarily bring peace and prosperity to France. The political unity which should now be possible would be established and preserved by the cooperation of free and learned men. Marat forgot, or ignored, that politics is always an arena for conflict. The Constituent Assembly (1789-1791) was no exception and for this reason it was a main topic in L'Ami du Peuple. As will be seen, Marat's fears of counter-revolution were reflected in his criticism of the Assembly's slowness in approving a constitution.

Marat identified the Revolution with the successful completion of a constitution which would have the Declaration of the Rights of Man as its preamble. To that end he hounded the revolutionary assemblies. He attacked the disorganization of the Constituent Assembly as an unnecessary delay in the march of the Revolution.
Marat wanted "union, harmony, and rapport" in the country's assembly. Instead he got an assembly newly born to its task and working with few rules. There were no time limits placed on speeches so it was easy to prolong debate or digress. Because any member of the Assembly could propose legislation there were so many proposals and objections the Assembly often forgot the status of the matter under discussion. Marat lamented that not only was there endless debate before the vote but after the passage of the law as well. Marat was not the only observer to criticize the proceedings of the Assembly. An English observer called one particularly lively meeting a "bear-garden." Marat never mentioned the tomatoes that at times came down from the galleries. The issue was entirely too serious for Marat to treat with levity, believing as he did, that the Constituent Assembly held the future of the Revolution in its hands. It is also just possible that as the self-appointed censor of the Assembly, he felt it best to keep such unseemly conduct from his readers. The Constituent Assembly was, after all, the expression of the people's sovereignty in France.

The guiding principle in Marat's political philosophy was the supremacy of the people. Upon this principle he judged the legislatures of revolutionary France. Marat believed the people exercised

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1 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 17 September 1789, p. 68.
3 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 17 September 1789, p. 68.
4 Thompson, The French Revolution, p. 115.
their sovereignty by virtue of their union of wills. The union of wills was "independent of all human power and enjoyed a limitless liberty which each of its members holds from nature."\(^5\) The supremacy of the union of wills made the legislature, as the lawful expression of supremacy, the highest political power.\(^6\) The identification of the sovereignty and independence of the legislature lay behind much of Marat's dissatisfaction with the Constituent Assembly. Since the main motive for the Assembly's existence was the writing of a constitution, no delay was tolerable. Yet the politics of the Revolution demanded otherwise. During the first autumn after the fall of the Bastille, the Assembly was trying to establish its authority with respect to the monarchy. This meant negotiating and compromising with the king, action which Marat could not accept. He accused the Assembly of trying to construct a house from the roof down, without a blueprint.\(^7\) Much of the Assembly's time in the autumn of 1789 was taken up with discussions regarding the Royal Sanction. Marat treated such discussions with impatience. The Assembly, he said, was neglecting the sacred rights of the people in order to discuss a matter of secondary importance, the prerogatives of the crown.\(^8\) Granting or renewing prerogatives of the crown was more than a delay in the promulgation of a constitution. Each prerogative stripped

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\(^6\) Ibid., p. 25.


\(^8\) Ibid., 17 September 1789, p. 68.
the legislature of some of its sovereignty, exposing the new order to the threat of counter-revolution.

The franchise under which any representative body is elected plays an important role in securing its authority and maintaining its self-respect. For these reasons Marat criticized the active/passive citizenship qualification, passed by the Constituent Assembly, as being an arbitrary decision and one that would create a divisive force in French society. "You forget we are brothers at a time when the country needs all the patriots it can find." 9

According to the law the right to vote went only to those "active" citizens paying taxes equal to three days wages, about one and one-half to three livres. "Passive" citizens, though having no political rights, retained a guarantee of their civil and natural rights. Marat claimed this distinction would exclude three-fourths of the French population from participation in the political process. Although Marat proved right in predicting the divisive effect of the "active/passive" distinction, he overestimated the number of men excluded. Estimates today are that the franchise excluded one third of the six million adult male population. 10 Eligibility for municipal offices required payment of ten days wages, about five to 10 livres. Eligibility for election to the national legislature required payment of 50 days wages, or the marc d'argent. The marc d'argent became Marat's rallying cry against the franchise require-

9 Ibid., 30 June 1790, p. 1058.

ments. He was not against all restrictions, but he believed those decreed were irrational. Virtue and intelligence, not wealth, were the proper attributes for public officials. Political rights distributed on the basis of wealth could only result in a country bitterly divided between rich and poor. He accused the Assembly of starting a new aristocracy in violation of the right to hold public office guaranteed by article VI of the Declaration of Rights.

As soon as the right of suffrage is restricted to the man of independent fortune, the elections will fall only to the rich; the empire will be their spoils, and the people will be surrendered to their mercy. What will we have won from the destruction of the aristocracy of the nobles, if it is to be replaced by the aristocracy of the rich? And if we should groan under the yoke of these new parvenus, it would be better to conserve the privileged orders.¹¹

Marat also considered the suffrage requirements a humiliating blow to those 10,000 poor workers of the faubourg Saint-Antoine who had brought down the Bastille.

You demand neither fathers nor sons be bankrupt, unsuccessful, or insoluble debtors without having made exceptions for the honest people: as if it is not enough to be reduced to poverty and then be cheated by rogues, as if you wanted to insult our happiness, punishing us for our (fathers) bad faith . . . We have sacrificed for you. Today for the price of our sacrifice we do not even have the consolation of being reputed members of the state that we have saved.¹²

¹¹Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 30 June 1790, p. 1060.

¹²Ibid., pp. 1056-1057. Marat overestimated the number involved in the storming of the Bastille. The Constituent Assembly estimated only 800-900. However, after the great event, all of Paris had taken the action for its own. Rude cites Michelet who found estimates of 180,000 and 300,000 under arms during those July days. Rude, Crowd in the French Revolution, pp. 56, 59.
Although Marat criticized the franchise qualification, he accepted the Assembly's indirect system of election. Accountability of the representatives was either to be rendered willingly or taken by their constituents. In July 1790 Marat called upon the non-active citizens of Paris to assemble in their districts and demand the right to vote. If the Constituent Assembly contests your rights, Marat wrote:

I invite them to remember that resistance to oppression is a natural right, a civil right, a political right, a celestial and human right, and that it has been solemnly consecrated by the Constituent Assembly itself.

Marat accepted the Assembly's other two requirements for franchise: residency and age. The Assembly required one year's residency. In agreement Marat wrote, "In order to be a member of the state, it is necessary to be fixed in the state. Therefore it is constant residence which gives this quality." The Assembly also required a voter to be 25 years of age. "It is necessary to have light and reason; It is therefore age, where judgement is formed in the communion of men, which fixes the periods in which the exercise of the rights of the citizen begin."

So while Marat accepted the age and residency restrictions he unrealistically expected the Assembly to support a franchise based on good character rather than wealth. He opposed the property

13 Ibid., 25 July 1790, p. 1256.
14 Ibid., 25 July 1790, p. 1250.
15 Ibid., 25 July 1790, p. 1250.
requirement because he mistrusted the power of the wealthy, whose corruption, he argued, had been proven. This belief led him to reason that if the rich were evil the poor must be good. Marat rightly foresaw that the lower classes had to be brought into active participation in the Revolution in order for the Revolution to succeed. Yet he believed the poor would always act in their best interest, or in what Marat believed was their best interest. This championing of the poor did not make Marat a democrat because he was not willing to accept the consequences of majority rule. He believed the "union of wills" was beyond ("independent of") a collection of human desires. Nothing could shake his belief in popular sovereignty, the right of public assembly, the need for accountability from the representatives, and insurrection. Yet he held such beliefs because he believed the poor would always agree with him. Marat supported popular assemblies and demanded that voters have every chance to examine candidates' backgrounds and opinions. He considered popular societies necessary for political liberty, yet he preferred a small national assembly of 50 men to one of 700.\footnote{Ibid., 30 September 1789, p. 195, and 20 March 1793, p. 6737.} In times of crisis he preferred the leadership of a tribune or tribunal with full power to insure civil order. Yet at times Marat advocated policies which he would not accept in practice. Perhaps actual experience with the Committee of Public Safety and the Terror would have tested Marat's confidence in the omnipetency of tribunals. He certainly did not support the tribunal, which in March 1793, tried him for treason.
If Marat believed the people's active support of the Revolution was necessary, the fidelity and competency of the national legislature was just as important. Marat saw the future of France in terms of the happiness of the French people which would come from the political harmony between the people and their representatives. When this harmony was not immediately forthcoming Marat blamed the treason of counter-revolution.

Yet despite all of his condemnations, Marat never rejected the authority of the Assembly as the true government of France. During the first year of the Revolution Marat's attitude toward the Constituent Assembly was one of relative tolerance. His criticisms were condescending chastisements to misguided, ignorant children. However, by the spring of 1790, after Marat returned from exile in England, his rhetoric became increasingly hostile. His tendency to view the Revolution in terms of black and white was actually mirrored in rhetoric which labeled the deputies who opposed him "noirs" and those who agreed with him, "patriots." Marat seemed to rationalize his continued acceptance of the Assembly's authority by conceding that a number of deputies had simply been misled.

Marat sketched a dark picture of the conditions of France on his return from England that spring of 1790. Disorder had broken out in cities throughout the kingdom -- Toulon, Lille, Metz, Mimes, Marseilles, and Caen. The Constituent Assembly was considering war with Spain against England over the Natooka Sound incident. Marat felt that any war at this point would be fatal to the Revolu-

17 Ibid., 18 May 1790, p. 716.
tion. The Châtelet had been investigating the people involved in
the 5 October 1789 march to Versailles. Would the patriots of 14
July be next? In this atmosphere came word that the citadel in
Marseilles had been attacked by citizens. The Assembly demanded
that Marseilles send extra-ordinary deputés to appear before the
Assembly and explain the city's actions. Marat was horrified by
the Assembly's reaction. He viewed such an order as equivalent to
questioning the taking of the Bastille. For the first time he spoke
of the Assembly as being irreparably divided. The people of Marseilles, according to Marat, had as much right to destroy the fortress which menaced the city as a man had to get rid of a bomb planted in his home by enemies.  

Have no doubts, this is the signal for civil war . . .
As for our representatives, to the friends of liberty
and to the defenders of the revolution, they will al-
ways be the object of our respect. It is around them
that all the forces of the nations should be reunited
to deliver themselves, once and for all, from the cruel
enemies of its liberty, its repose, and its happiness.

Although Marat had declared civil war, some representatives still
maintained their integrity. Marat held out hope that the misguided
could be brought back into the fold. It was obvious to Marat that
eventually the support of these fence-sitters would save the Revolu-
tion. But the royalists and aristocrats, the "aristocrates ganarenes," were hopeless. Marat saw the continued presence of the nobles in
a divided assembly as a creeping poison which would soon infect the

18 Ibid., 30 May 1790, p. 813.
19 Ibid., 30 May 1790, p. 814.
Assembly, the Paris Commune, and the national guard.

Under the pretext of being your allies, and like you, defenders of the country, they will control your plans. They will stop your projects. They will wreck your enterprises. Then they will openly oppose the measures you take to assure liberty and public safety. Finally they will set a thousand traps. They will break your leaders and they will enchain your arms... Look over your shoulders and see the extent of the dangers which threaten you. At the news of your insurrection, these cowards, seized with fright, will keep a mournful silence and as many as [those who] will endure your terror, docile to your wishes, will quickly renounce their tyranny. They will break your heavier chains and appear to want only your happiness. Scarcely will the storm be appeased than they will again become tyrants. They will try to recover lost power, and they will quickly oppose the solemn decrees which should consecrate once and for all, your impre­scriptible rights.

Marat unrealistically expected the Assembly to legislate an utopian society according to his dictates. In his role as guardian of the Revolution, he played devil's advocate on practically all issues before the Assembly. Although Marat considered its short­comings treason, it remained the legal government in France and retained his support.

20 Ibid., 13 June 1790, pp. 924-925.
III.

THE MONARCHY

Marat's approach toward the monarchy during the Revolution was based on a curious combination of respect for its traditional leadership and an emotional attachment to the monarch, and a hatred of its continual striving for power; his attitude seemed to be dependent upon the circumstances. Before 1792, Marat regarded the institution of the monarchy as the necessary executive power for a well balanced government of an important state. He believed the monarchy grew out of the historical process and, as such, was so vital to the needs of France that it would remain forever a part of the government, "even when the character of the people would permit another choice."

This belief, expressed in 1789, did not survive the discovery of the iron chest in November 1792 at the palace. The chest contained Louis' letters to emigres which seemed to confirm his role in the counter-revolution.

In his political writings published before the Revolution Marat revealed a deep distrust and contempt for the monarchy. According to Marat, no matter what they professed, all monarchs ached deep in their souls to become absolute masters over their subjects.

\[1\] Marat, *Project de Constitution*, p. 17.
and would gladly, if given the chance, "sell their Citizens like sheep." Early evidence of Marat's mistrust can also be found in Polish Letters. Marat's traveler, Kamia, saw the ritual of subjects attending the monarch at court and considered it an exhibition of humiliation (for the subjects) and arrogance (for the king).

The more I reflect on the powerful influence exerted by the monarch on the minds of his subjects, the more I am convinced that he has not their welfare at heart. Instead of wanting to imitate a merciful god, a king would rather have the pleasure of exercising his authority as a monster.

This same sentiment was found in L'Ami du Peuple when he warned his readers not to allow the fortunes of the new nation to depend upon the virtues of the prince.

Marat distinguished between the monarch as a king and as a man. For the first he wanted close surveillance, for the second he had genuine affection. After distinguishing between the man and office, Marat stripped the office of power and gave Louis the task of moral leadership as "protector of the people."

Marat rationalized his support for the monarch by blaming his ministers. Marat showed the warmest sympathy toward him because, being born into such a privileged position, he was isolated from the realities of the world. The causes of executive misuse and corruption

\[ ^2 \text{Ibid., p. 38.} \]
\[ ^3 \text{Marat, Polish Letters, p. 118.} \]
\[ ^4 \text{Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 4 October 1789, p. 208.} \]
\[ ^5 \text{Marat, Project de Constitution, p. 33.} \]
of power lay in the king's ministers and "courtisans," always a label of contempt in Marat's vocabulary.

No one better than L'Ami du Peuple knows how difficult it is for a man most happily born, but reared under the dais, to conserve some feeling for humanity when on the throne. No one better than L'Ami du Peuple appreciates the good nature of the king. No one more than L'Ami du Peuple is touched by the unhappiness of this prince, to be surrounded by scoundrels who abuse his confidence every day and who will, by the force of heinous crimes, end up losing for him the love and esteem of his citizens.

The blame for the major problems in France in the months following the fall of the Bastille fell on the ministers, and on one in particular, Jacques Necker. The king's other ministers and councilors, as well as the officers of the municipality of Paris, were simply Necker's puppets. Marat saw the lack of bread and high prices as a plot by Necker to starve Paris into submission to the aristocrats and royalty. In a particularly eloquent passage for L'Ami du Peuple Marat condemned government bureaucrats for the people's misery.

Today the horrors of scarcity are felt anew, the bakeries are besieged, the People lack bread, and this is after the richest harvest. In the midst of abundance we are on the point of starvation. Who can doubt that we are surrounded by traitors who look to complete our ruin? Is it to the rage of public enemies,

6Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 30 (should be 31) August 1790, pp. 1538-1539.
to the greed of monopolists, or to the incompetence of the administrators, that we owe this calamity?

He pleaded to the Parisians to wake up to their danger.

What are you waiting for! . . . Day and night (the cruel enemies) strive to involve you in disturbances, to overwhelm you with worries and alarms, to make you tired of your independence . . . to reduce you to looking to the arms of a ruler for rest, abundance, and peace.

Marat saw Louis as a counter-weight to ministerial plotting. He believed that Louis would be the perfect monarch if his councilors ever allowed him "to conduct himself according to his own heart." Marat greeted any of Louis' concessions to the Revolution with warm praise. He saw the king's return to Paris from Versailles on 5 October 1789, as a gesture of approval, albeit forced, of the Revolution. Marat accepted the king's gesture and attributed to him a vague power to destroy the forces of counter-revolution.

It is a day of celebration for good Parisians to finally possess their king. His presence is going to promptly change the face of things for the better; the poor will no longer starve to death.

Marat never lost sight, however, of Louis as a king and his sus-

\[7\] Ibid., 16 September 1789, p. 62-63.

\[8\] Ibid., 18 September 1789, p. 79.

\[9\] Ibid., 20 (should be 22) December 1789, p. 460.

\[10\] Ibid., 7 October 1789, p. 233.
ceptibility to the influence of his ministers. "This happiness," he continued, "will soon evaporate like a dream if we do not secure the stay of the royal family among us, until the constitution is completely consecrated." The king's refusal to reestablish his bodyguard brought an enthusiastic response.

This burst of virtue, justice, and benevolence on the part of the monarch is a new claim for his love of the French. A just and virtuous king is the most worthy of works of the creator; the most beautiful gift that heaven gives the nation.

Beyond the call for moral leadership the actual responsibilities Marat expected from the monarchy were not clearly defined in L'Ami du Peuple. However in Project de Constitution Marat had called upon the monarch to be the "protector of the people" while the legislative branch was the protector of the people's civil rights. Marat's vision of the monarch as the "protector of the people" is strange in light of his mistrust of the monarchy because one would think a protector would need to be trustworthy. But that Marat did see Louis as such a protector stands out clearly in L'Ami du Peuple. The king had the makings of the perfect monarch since his presence would end starvation in Paris. He was not involved in government corruption.

Despite Marat's fears of the monarchy aspiring to despotism, he would give the executive branch two important duties: the exe-

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11 Ibid., 7 October 1789, p. 233.
12 Ibid., 20 (should be 22) December 1789, p. 640.
cution of the laws and the responsibility for the defense of the country. The execution of the laws apparently would be restricted to moral influence since Marat criticized the monarchy's hold over government bureaucracy; he criticized any power that the Assembly gave the king during the Revolution. One example of such monarchial influence was the Royal Sanction, the act by which the king would promulgate the decrees of the legislature. Discussion on the Royal Sanction took up many meetings of the Constituent Assembly. It voted a compromise on 11 September 1789 which gave the king a suspensive veto. The suspensive veto empowered the king to veto legislation for two assembly sessions or four years.

In a free Monarchy, the Royal Sanction is only an act of submission by which the Prince pledges to respect the law. It is therefore superfluous that he sanction each law individually since he swore by his oath to respect them all.

Marat opposed the suspensive veto because he felt it slowed the work of the Revolution. The king should hold no legislative power. The suspensive veto was an unnecessary compromise with an obsolete law.

... granting the Prince the power to suspend the enforcement of an urgent or capital law allows him to oppose the perfecting of the constitution, and to save the State in a moment of crisis; it provides him an ever-present pretext to foment differences, to excite troubles and to kindle civil wars.

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The king had supposedly pledged his support of a constitutional
government at the royal séance of 23 June 1789. He was now beholden
to the legislature. Marat argued that giving him the suspensive veto
would allow him executive and legislative power which he would then
use against the Revolution. Marat was concerned that he would manu­
ufacture a crisis and then veto a law on the pretext of "saving the
state."

An executive function which traditionally rested with the
monarch was the arbitration of foreign affairs and Marat did give
the king this power in his Project de Constitution, although he re­
jected it later. In Marat's ideal state, the monarch received the
power to make war and peace, to make treaties, to name and receive
ambassadors, and to protect commerce. The monarch could also name
his own councilors provided that they were "worthy," in Marat's
opinion, of the appointment. Though the monarch was accountable to
the legislative branch at all times, his power over foreign policy
was practically absolute.

As military operations, enterprises, and
political negotiations have need of the most
profound secrecy to succeed, the ministers
ought to have carte blanche in order to
successfully formulate and conduct them;
only ministers must render account when (the
actions) are consummated. Each minister
will be personally responsible for enter­
prises which he does against the laws.\(^\text{16}\)

Marat soon realized that requiring accountability after the fact was
going to be unacceptable in practical situations.

\(^{16}\) Marat, Project de Constitution, p. 34.
When the Assembly voted war powers to the king on 22 May 1790, during the Nootka Sound incident, Marat immediately published his denunciation even though the powers voted corresponded roughly to the provisions in his own plan in *Project de Constitution*. He made no mention of his earlier plan when condemning the Assembly's action. He believed the Assembly's plan contained the seeds of the Revolution's destruction. He attacked the ten decrees point by point. The Assembly had voted to retain the right to decree war but restricted this power by requiring a formal proposal by the king and his subsequent sanction. The Assembly also gave the king the right to initiate war if circumstances required it but the king was bound to notify the legislature immediately upon outbreak of hostilities. Although Marat had accepted this principle in his *Project de Constitution* he now considered it a farce and responded indignantly:

> The day has come when the nation, instructed of its rights, feels it ought to give to the crown the right to make war and peace, a right which the prince was never to use except to the unhappiness of the people.  

The Assembly also provided that the legislature could cease hostilities for any reason, especially if the war was discovered to have been started by ministers, an action to be considered a crime of lèse-nation. If the Assembly consented to the war, it was to remain in session until peace. Although these provisions showed the deputies' general distrust of the ministers, Marat scoffed at what

he felt was the Assembly's abdication of the justly earned right of sovereignty. Marat pointed out that meeting throughout the war would do little good if the Assembly was powerless to stop hostilities. Theoretically the Assembly could stop a war. But Marat foresaw the quite obvious complication, that once war had begun it was already too late to go back.

Will we therefore demand peace on our knees (after war has started)? No, without a doubt! But soon national pride will permeate the government and, as always, it will be joined by a popular sentiment of indignation against the arrogance, the injustice, and the insolence of the enemy; the war will continue therefore with ferocity. Thus, before the legislator has investigated if it is worth going to war, the nation will already be too involved to withdraw; it will in this way be forced, by the need of its own defense, to continue a war which had been created by the ambitious views of the cabinet, and in the hopes of consumating (the country's) ruin.  

Marat continued, after May 1790, to criticize the other powers given the king, but he never questioned the necessity of retaining the monarchy. Stripping the monarchy of its two major functions — executive and arbitration of foreign affairs — did not make the monarchy obsolete. Its existence remained justified by historical precedence. This unquestioned acceptance of the monarchy reinforces the idea that Marat conceived of its role as one of a source of moral guidance rather than as a functioning office. He remained loyal to Louis until June 1791, echoing the sympathy that he had shown throughout the Revolution and believing that Louis' ministers, not Louis

18 Ibid., 26 May 1790, pp. 776-77.
himself, would be his ruin.

Louis lost Marat's complete support after the royal family's unsuccessful attempt to flee the country in June 1791. Marat had kept a strict vigilance on Louis' presence in Paris. The king's flight to Varennes was an act of rebellion that deprived him of all rights to the throne. However Marat did not call for the abolition of the monarchy or even the outlawing of the Bourbons. He expected the Dauphin to succeed his father and called for a worthy regent. 19

Once Louis XVI had betrayed his country Marat forgot all the sympathy and affection he had once had toward a man bound, he had previously felt, by circumstance.

He gave false witness and acknowledgment of the goodness of the nation and accepted the dignities which the nation had deigned to invest on him. He solemnly declared his firm resolution to uphold the constitution and said that it would honor him to charge his ministers to defend it in foreign courts. He accepted the title of "restorer of liberty" with outward pride but plotted endlessly to destroy that very liberty. He audaciously proceeded against the sovereignty of the people, against the exercise of the legislative power of the deputies of the people, and against the rights of the citizens . . . He barbarously schemed to put the nation under the yoke and bring death and desolation to all the kingdom. After all of his plotting, what man is so shameless that he would still dare to justify his actions? These many acts reflect hypocrisy, deceit, and cruelty, and have placed Louis XVI in the class of the horrible tyrants. 20

Speaking for France, Marat pronounced, "The indignant nation has with-

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19 Ibid., 25 June 1791, p. 4014.

20 Ibid., 25 June 1791, p. 4013.
drawn its confidence in Louis XVI and declares him unworthy to rule.  

This harsh judgement of Louis reflected the months of bitter anticipation that reached a climax with Louis' attempted flight. Rumors of royalist plans to help the royal family escape France had circulated in Paris. Parisians knew only that the royal family had been gone from the palace from the morning of 21 June to the evening of the 22nd. The 22 June issue of L'Ami du Peuple warned of the threat of war and massacre which would result from the king's flight. Louis was about to march on Paris with Europe at his back. Only a leader with full powers to suppress counter-revolution could save the Revolution.

A tribune, a military tribune, or you are lost without recourse. Up to the present I have tried to save you by doing all which was in human power. If you neglect this salutary advice, the only advice I have left to give you, I have nothing more to say to you, and I take leave of you forever. In a few days Louis XVI will retake the throne of a despot, by an 'illegal' decree from the Assembly, and will treat you as rebels if you do not go yourselves before the yoke. He will advance toward your walls at the head of the fugitives [émigrés]. All the malcontents and Austrian legions will block your escape . . . Several more days of indecision and there will no longer be time to leave your lethargy. Death will suprise you in the arms of sleep.

Marat's fears were confirmed. Louis was restored to the French throne. The revolutionaries were not ready to dispose of the king

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21Ibid., 25 June 1791, p. 4014.
22Ibid., 22 June 1791, p. 3983.
for several reasons. They had ignored the Duc d'Orleans parade through the streets of Paris on 21 June.\textsuperscript{23} They feared not only the reaction of the people if Louis should be dethroned, but the reaction of other European governments. Louis' safety and position on the throne were the only guarantee against foreign invasion.\textsuperscript{24} Marat, the idealist, saw the problem in terms of the king's betrayal of France.

The attack on the Tuileries on 10 August 1792 gave new impetus to Marat's virulent attacks against the Capets. \textit{L'Ami du Peuple} was not published regularly during this time. Issues jumped from 22 July to 7 August, to 13 August, to 16 August. Marat's activities during this time are unclear. His next issue, 25 September, came out as \textit{Journal of the Republic of France}. Gottschalk attributes the newspaper's erratic publication to Marat's hesitant acceptance of the Republic. Marat still believed France needed the monarchy but he was willing to support the Republic.

An important catalyst to the events of August was the Brunswick Manifesto. In his issue of 7 August, Marat denied the authenticity of the threat by the foreign powers to destroy Paris if the king was harmed. He believed that members of the Assembly secretly collaborated with Louis to test the mood of Parisians. He considered the attack on the Tuileries a defensive move by the revolutionaries against threatened action by the king.

\textsuperscript{23} Thompson, \textit{The French Revolution}, p. 236.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 233.
Marat helped stir anti-monarchial feelings by hurling virulent epitaphs against Louis. Louis became an "eternal enemy of the people."\textsuperscript{25}

You have only shown yourself to this day as an insolent despot and depraver, a hypocritical prince, traitor and machinator, a crafty and corrupt king, an atrocious tyrant .... \textsuperscript{26}

In Marat's mind the attack on the Tuileries was plot by Louis to disturb the calm in Paris by inciting the crowd to attack the palace which would allow Louis to counterattack and "kill all the patriots in the capital."\textsuperscript{27} It was the attempt to create a crisis that Marat had been waiting for. In reality the attack on the Tuileries had been planned by revolutionaries two months in advance and was only awaiting the right moment. It would be hard to believe Marat did not realize this. During the attack the national guard declared for the revolutionaries and the king's Swiss guards, who were seriously short of ammunition, defended an empty palace which the royal family had abandoned before the attack began.\textsuperscript{28}

With the establishment of the Republic caution still echoed through Marat's journal. Yes, despotism had been destroyed but its supporters had not yet given up. One could not trust those who, out

\textsuperscript{25} Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 7 August 1792, p. 5477.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 7 August 1792, p. 5479.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 16 August 1792, p. 5489.
\textsuperscript{28} Thompson, The French Revolution, p. 314.
of fear, became patriots overnight. For this reason Marat did not support the king's suspension from the throne because of fear his ministers would become too powerful in his place.  

The discovery of the iron chest, 20 November 1792, proving Louis' complicity with counter-revolutionaries both in France and outside the country, made his position in the French government untenable for Marat and the National Convention. Fearful of civil war, invasion, and the possible destruction of evidence by the Brissotins (moderate revolutionaries), Marat saw the necessity of resolving the issue immediately and decisively. In this instance the National Convention reached the same conclusion and Louis was tried for treason in December.

Marat's reactions to the trial and execution were consistent with his political writings. The popularly-elected legislature held sovereign power to decide all issues affecting the state. Marat supported the Jacobin contention that the National Convention was competent to try Louis. Demands by the more moderate Brissotins that primary assemblies be called to survey popular opinion made a joke of popular sovereignty according to Marat.  Such elections could only confuse the people and delay National Convention proceedings. Delay was one thing the revolutionaries could not afford.

To prevent delay Marat believed the crimes against Louis should be restricted to those most easily proven: treason and

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29 Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, 13 August 1792, p. 5485.
30 Ibid., 10 January 1793, p. 6304.
his role in the 10 August attack on the Tuileries. Throughout December, Louis' crimes were the major topic in Marat's journal.

Louis is guilty of crimes which have revolted all France and which have brought about an overturning of the monarchy, and provoked a new order of things. These crimes are so notorious, so blatant, so obvious, that if the Convention were to question the king's guilt, it would only show itself to be an illegal gathering and the people of Paris and the [fédérés] would be rebels worthy only of death.

The execution of the king had become a goal of Marat's revolution. The steps he took reaching this decision can be seen clearly. In 1789, Louis was the benevolent prince at the mercy of his councilors while the institution was suspect. In 1791, Louis lost Marat's support because he attempted to flee the country. As can be seen by his calls for a regent, Marat continued to accept the institution. He hesitantly accepted the Republic in September 1792 with a seemingly defeatist attitude, "It is the will of the Revolution, so be it." He supported the National Convention as the legislature of the Republic and retilted his newspaper in honor of the new government. It is difficult to judge if Marat completely denied the need for the institution of the monarchy even at the time of Louis' trial. His wholehearted support of the motion to execute Louis can be traced to the contempt he had felt for him since June

31 Ibid., 14 December 1792, p. 6140, 17 December 1792, p. 6160; 18 December 1792, p. 6166.
32 Ibid., 17 December 1792, p. 6161; 27 December 1792, p. 6231.
1791. Whether Marat decided the monarchy was too much a part of the ancien régime to be accepted into the new order is questionable. The only strong evidence to support this idea is that he did not call for a regent during the trial.
The Revolution was to "dry up the source of unhappiness of the State," which Marat defined as "idleness, vice, debauchery," and assorted aristocrats and ministers. It was to bring union, abundance, and peace." Marat considered the Revolution a moral crusade for a state in which the virtuous would govern, the poor would be fed, and citizens would reject selfishness in favor of an "ordered life, health, and joy." His idealism was just as pronounced in his last issues as in the first. He maintained his stalwart belief in the virtuous state throughout four years of revolution. His idealism led him to frustration because of what he felt was the unhurried pace of the Revolution. In his haste to get things done quickly, he confused issues with personalities, human weakness with counter-revolution.

His impulsiveness can be seen in his calls for radical action which would bring radical change. "All is lawful to wake the people

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2 Ibid., n.d. (prospectus), p. 4-5.

3 Ibid., 14 June 1790, p. 932.
from their fatal lethargy.⁴ But Marat's "all" contained a qualification, namely that he felt the action was necessary. For this reason it was impossible to please him. If the Constituent Assembly took actions with which Marat did not agree, it was in danger of becoming an "illegal gathering."⁵ Throughout the Revolution Marat made theoretical demands that he would not accept in practice. His most notable change of heart was his rejection of the Assembly's May 1790 law giving war powers to the king although the plan was similar to an earlier plan of his own. He called for tribunals to vanquish counter-revolution yet he regarded with suspicion any person or any group who assumed power.

Four years of revolution ended some of Marat's indecisiveness toward the monarchy. It killed Marat's love for Louis XVI but his feeling toward the institution of the monarchy is not as clear. Before the Revolution, Marat considered the monarchy a necessary tradition in French government. His affection for Louis might have been based on his emotional attachment to this tradition. However, he always suspected the power of the king and spoke out against royal prerogatives whenever possible. His fear of monarchical power seems to have been behind his hatred of Louis' ministers. Throughout the Revolution the ministers stood for the evil of the royal office which left Louis free of guilt. But the turbulence of the Revolution changed his perspective. After his attempted escape from France in June 1791, Louis became, for Marat, that "hypocritical prince . . .

⁴Ibid., 6 August 1790, p. 1343.
⁵Ibid., 17 December 1792, p. 6140.
and atrocious tyrant, and he called for a regent. With the 10 August revolution, following the Assembly's lead, Marat seems to have become a republican. He certainly seemed to enjoy the fight for Louis' execution.

Marat's attitude toward the aristocrats was similar to his attitude toward the monarchy. They were harmless children until they began fighting back to preserve that society which Marat was trying to destroy.

Marat did an about-face regarding his hopes for the poor. In his *Project de Constitution* he could not conceive of circumstances which would cause change at the roots of French society. Marat's later utopian expectations for the Revolution reflected the unsettling of French society which occurred with the calling of the Estates-General.

Marat dedicated his newspaper to following the course of the Revolution and reporting the activities of the successive assemblies. In reality Marat was trying to instruct the French people on the proper attitudes for citizens of the virtuous state. He believed that the people as citizens should govern themselves. But his acceptance of this principle was based on his belief that the citizens would always elect representatives worthy of respect. He continued throughout the Revolution to identify citizenship with virtue. The acceptable attributes of the citizen were "light and reason."

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His inability to transform the French into virtuous citizens did not destroy his belief that a virtuous legislature could be elected. Despite his continual charges of negligence and treason against those in the Assembly, the Assembly remained commissioned with the task of writing a constitution which would secure the Revolution.
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VITA

Susan Marie Hoffman