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THE ATTITUDE OF THE JOURNAL DES HOMMES LIBRES TOWARDS THE BABOUVISTS

During the Directory the *Journal des hommes libres de tous les pays* was a major spokesman for the republicans and its pages reflect the difficulties that the Babouvist Conspiracy created for them. Although the newspaper gave a sympathetic hearing to Babouvist ideas, it was aware that the conspiracy weakened the republican movement and favored the royalists and the moderates. One discovers in the columns of the *Journal* the interests, goals, and strategy of the Jacobins rather than merely the programs and rationale of the "unregenerated terrorists" of the Extreme Left. Accordingly, this newspaper is an important source on the problems and the objectives of French republicans from 1795 to 1800. After a brief description of the editorial staff and the circulation of the daily, this article will deal with its attitude towards the Babouvists and its major tendencies during the First Directory, the phase of this regime which ended with the *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor Year V (September 4, 1797).¹

Its founders were René Vatar and Charles Duval, both natives of Rennes. Vatar, of a famous family of publishers, printed the newspaper and was responsible for its content.² He also published an influential Rennes-based daily from 1789 to 1795 and he managed the printing-shop of the Committee of Public Safety from January 1794 to April 1795. At the end of November 1799, he sold the *Journal* to the minister of police Joseph Fouché.³ Arrested in 1801 for alleged participation

¹ See my thesis "The *Journal des hommes libres de tous les pays*, 1792-1800" (University of Chicago, 1969), which will be published by Mouton Publishers, The Hague. The quotes at the Bibliothèque Nationale of the ten volumes of this newspaper are 4°Lc²732-739 and 8°Lc²357. Unless otherwise indicated, the newspaper quoted is the *Journal*.

² See Vatar's short note, V, No 177, 5 Floréal Year IV, p. 772; and also his "A mes concitoyens", *La Lumière*, VIII, No 6, 16 Frimaire Year VII, pp. 27-28, and "A mes concitoyens", *Journal des républicains*, IX, No 15, 16 Frimaire Year VIII, p. 60.

³ Pierre L. Roederer, *Oeuvres* (8 vols, Paris, 1853-59), III, pp. 373-374, assumed that the government owned the newspaper, but that Fouché managed it. See

in the rue Saint-Nicaise Plot against the First Consul, Vatar was deported to Guyana where he died in 1837. Duval, of a family of petty robe nobility, was the major editor until December 1795. In March 1796 he gave up his managerial and editorial functions and after April 1796 the newspaper no longer carried any of his writings.¹ Duval sat in the national legislature from September 1791 to May 1798. Afterwards, he occupied various positions in government, the last one as senior clerk in the administration of indirect taxes from 1804 to 1814. He died in exile in Belgium in 1829.²

The other important editors were Joseph Lavallée, Marquis de Bois-Robert; Pierre-Antoine, Marquis d'Antonelle; Prince Charles C. de Hesse-Rheinfels-Rothenburg, also known as General Marat; and Jean-Claude Méhée de la Touche. Lavallée, of a family of petty robe nobility of Normandy, wrote until the fall of Maximilien Robespierre the column dealing with diplomatic and military affairs.³ He was a minor and prolific writer before as well as during the Revolution and the Empire. After the Terror he edited several pro-government newspapers and literary and scientific journals. During the Empire he also headed one of the administrative divisions of the Legion of Honor. He died in exile in London in 1816. Antonelle, of a rich family of the nobility of Southeastern France, was the main editor of the *Journal* from December 1795 to the end of 1796 and again from June

also the note-book of the historian Charles Vatel at the Bibliothèque Municipale of Versailles, and René de Livois, *Histoire de la presse française* (2 vols, Lausanne, 1965), I, p. 158.

¹ "Aux rédacteurs du Journal des hommes libres", V, No 142, 30 Ventôse Year IV, pp. 571-572; Duval's letter to L'Ami des lois, "Paris", *ibid.*, No 203, 1 Prairial, p. 818; and "Les rédacteurs du Journal des hommes libres aux rédacteurs des Nouvelles politiques", *ibid.*, No 314, 27 Fructidor, p. 1277. Léonard Gallois, *Histoire des journaux et des journalistes de la Révolution française* (2 vols, Paris, 1845-46), I, p. 174; A. Kuscinski, *Dictionnaire des Conventionnels* (Paris, 1919), pp. 236-237; Jean Dautry, "Les démocrates pauvres avant et après le coup d'état du 18 Fructidor an V", in: *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, XXII (1950), pp. 141-151; Walter Markov, "Babeuf, le Babouvisme et les intellectuels allemands (1796-1797)", in: *Babeuf et les problèmes du Babouvisme* (Paris, 1963), p. 190; and Claude Mazauric, *Babeuf et la conspiration pour l'égalité* (Paris, 1962), p. 123; they all insist that Duval was the author of the *Journal* during the Babouvist Affair.

² See my "Charles-François Duval, Journaliste et Homme d'État (1750-1829)", in: *Annales de Bretagne*, LXXIX (1972), pp. 417-424.

³ Lavallée's answer to the Lyon journalist J. L. Fain, *Le Républicain*, I, No 141, March 22, 1793, pp. 609-610, and No 241, June 30, 1793, p. 1036. Only two authors have been aware so far of Lavallée's role: A. Liéby, "La presse révolutionnaire et la censure théâtrale sous la Terreur", in: *La Révolution française*, XLV (1903), p. 509, n. 2, and Charles Vatel, *Charlotte de Corday et les Girondins* (4 vols, Paris, 1864-72), III, p. 529, the last author assuming that Lavallée's collaboration began in 1795.

to November 1799.¹ He was mayor of Arles in 1790-1791, a member of the Legislative Assembly in 1791-1792, and a juror of the Revolutionary Tribunal in Paris until his arrest in November 1793 (he was released on the Ninth of Thermidor). In 1798 and 1799 he was elected to the Council of Five Hundred, but his elections were annulled. He was arrested after the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire Year VIII (November 9, 1799) and placed under surveillance. He resided in Italy in 1801-1804 and then returned to Arles, where he died in 1817.

Hesse, of a German princely family, wrote on diplomatic and military affairs from October 1798 to November 1799.² He made a career in the French Army during the Old Regime and the Revolution, until his arrest in October 1793. Released in January 1795 and soon pensioned off, he became a journalist. In 1799 he was one of the main personalities in the neo-Jacobin *Club du Manège*. Because of his association with radical republicans, he was arrested after the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire and again after the rue Saint-Nicaise Plot. He was kept in jail til 1806, when he went to Switzerland and Germany where he died in 1821. Méhée, the son of a famous surgeon of Meaux, became the manager and the main editor of the *Journal* after its purchase by Fouché.³ A journalist in Poland til 1791, he was the assistant secretary of the Paris Commune after the insurrection of August 10, 1792. During the Thermidorian Reaction he wrote many anti-Robespierre pamphlets under the pen-name of Féthésémi and began again a career in journalism. In November 1795 he was first appointed general secretary of the Ministry of War and then head of one of the sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After the *coup*

¹ Until the arrest of the Babouvists, the *Journal* carried 4 letters and 48 articles by Antonelle, almost all after December 13, 1795; during the Babouvin Affair, 65 articles and 10 letters of his, nearly all before the end of 1796. He signed his articles "L'hermite des environs de Paris" as of July 16, 1796, writing 51 of them before the middle of August 1796, 3 in December 1796 and January 1797, and 7 in April and May 1797. In 1798 the *Journal* and its continuations carried only 2 of his articles. In 1799, according to his letter to the *Chronique universelle*, reprinted IX, No 34, 4 Thermidor Year VII, p. 143, he wrote many of the editorials, but without signing them. From September 5 to November 9, 1799, he signed his articles "Bonnefoi", according to the clue he provided in *L'Ennemi des oppresseurs*, IX, No 30, 11 Vendémiaire Year VIII, pp. 118-120.

² His first article is in the *Correspondance des représentants*, of 1 Brumaire Year VII.

³ Méhée's role was first mentioned by Roederer, op. cit., III, pp. 372-373, and most historians followed suit. See Livois, op. cit., I, p. 158; Albert Vandal, *L'avènement de Bonaparte* (2 vols, Paris, 1903-07), I, pp. 463-464; Antoine Périvier, *Napoléon journaliste* (Paris, 1918), p. 344; and Louis Madelin, *Fouché 1759-1820* (2 vols, Paris, 1901), I, p. 277. The *Journal* acknowledged his role X, No 49, 25 Nivôse Year VIII, pp. 195-196, and in "Avis important", ibid., No 50, 26 Nivôse.

d'état of 18 Fructidor he was appointed general secretary of the department of Rhin-et-Moselle. Méhée's career during the Consulate and the Empire was less successful, even though it is during this period that he became notorious as a government spy. He died in France in 1827.

Under its various titles the *Journal* was published almost without interruption from November 2, 1792, to September 3, 1800. Except for its voluntary suspension between December 8, 1798, and June 19, 1799, the newspaper failed to appear only thirty days in nearly eight years of publication. It was entitled *Le Républicain, Journal des hommes libres de tous les pays* until June 12, 1793, when the subtitle became the main entry in the title. After the suppression on April 12, 1798, its continuations were all harassed and forced to adopt new titles. It reappeared as the *Journal des hommes libres de tous les pays* from June 19 to September 3, 1799, and again from November 28, 1799, to September 3, 1800. It was a beneficiary of government aid to the press, under the form of subscriptions, only from May 24, 1793, to January 13, 1795.¹ One of the rare republican dailies published several years without government aid, the *Journal* probably had a circulation of 7,500 in March-April 1794; 3,000 to 4,000 in February 1795; 2,200 to 2,500 in June 1796; and around 1,000 in May 1797.² However, the size of the circulation of a newspaper of the revolutionary period does not accurately measure its influence, since most people did not purchase newspapers or even read, but obtained them second-hand or heard them read.³

Its circulation was restricted to a small readership.⁴ During the

¹ III, No 115, 25 Nivôse Year III, pp. 481, n. 1. The only useful records are those left by Colonel Bouchotte, the minister of war till March 21, 1794. See Archives Nationales (hereafter cited as AN), AF 10, plaq. 66, pièces 15 and 29, and F⁷ 4436^A, plaq. 4, p. 166. See also Auguste Herlaut, *Le Colonel Bouchotte, ministre de la guerre en l'an II* (2 vols, Paris, 1946), II, pp. 93-100. Earlier estimates were erroneous. See Albert Mathiez, "La presse subventionnée en l'an II", in: *Annales révolutionnaires*, X (1918), pp. 112-113; and J. M. Thompson, *Robespierre* (2 vols, Oxford, 1935), II, p. 86.

² These estimates are based on the subscriptions purchased by the government and on evaluations made by contemporaries. See Roederer, op. cit., VI, pp. 44 and 293, and Alphonse Aulard, *Paris pendant la Réaction thermidorienne et le Directoire* (5 vols, Paris, 1898-1902), III, p. 260.

³ Albert Mathiez, *Le Directoire du 11 Brumaire an IV au 18 Fructidor an V*, ed. Jacques Godechot (Paris, 1934), pp. 144-145; Albert Soboul, "L'audience des Lumières sous la Révolution. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les classes populaires", in: *Utopies et institutions au XVIII^e siècle. Le Pragmatisme des Lumières*, ed. Pierre Francastel (Paris, 1963), pp. 289-303.

⁴ I have dealt in detail with the readership of the *Journal* in an article that will appear in the *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, "Le tirage du *Journal des hommes libres de tous les pays*, 1792-1800".

period of the Babouvist Affair, deputies and civil servants accounted for 21.2 percent of its public; the Army 18.4 percent, the professions 19.4 percent, businessmen and entrepreneurs only 0.8 percent, political prisoners 14 percent, and former employees of the revolutionary regime 9.2 percent. The remaining readers cannot be identified. It is clear, nevertheless, that except for a few petty bureaucrats and soldiers, the popular classes were barely represented among the audience of the newspaper, probably because of the relatively high cost of subscriptions and the high level of illiteracy among the popular classes.¹ The geographical distribution of its readership was just as narrow. None of the available patterns for the assessment of this distribution is fully satisfying. If Professor Richard Bienvenue's division of France in 1793-1794 into areas of relative calm, civil war, minor disturbances, and threatened by war is used, it appears that the areas of relative calm supplied over 50 percent of the readers (33 percent in Paris alone), while the regions of civil war during the Terror (and particularly the departments of Bouches-du-Rhône and Var) accounted for over 31 percent of the readership. About 17 percent of the copies of the newspaper went to rural communities, most of them north of the Loire valley and in areas earlier affected by civil war. Only 45 departments, still over 50 percent of the total, were represented, more than half being in areas earlier relatively calm or threatened by war. It is probable that the small size, or the insecurity, of the republican population outside the big cities, and especially Paris and the area around it, affected negatively the circulation of the *Journal*.²

The Babouvist Affair is the most important internal event in France during the First Directory and a major episode in the annals of Jacobinism. The politics of Vatar's daily during this period can be accurately evaluated when its attitude toward the Babouvists is

¹ There was very little difference between the readership of a Jacobin newspaper and that of a royalist one. See my article "The circulation of the French press during the French Revolution: The case of R. F. Lebois' *L'Ami du peuple* and the royalist *Gazette française*", in: English Historical Review, LXXXVII (1972), pp. 100-105.

² Richard Bienvenue, The Ninth of Thermidor: The Fall of Robespierre (New York, 1968), p. 65. An unsigned article in II, No 10, 10 Nivôse Year II, pp. 38-40, claimed that only aristocrats, popular societies in the departments, some patriots in rural areas, village priests, and in general people too far from Paris to be good republicans, purchased newspapers, while in Paris they were hardly read even in government circles and among the militants. By September 1798 the situation had even deteriorated if one is to believe the commissioner of the government in the Seine department, who claimed that the Jacobin press was not to be feared since it was without any influence. See Aulard, op. cit., V, p. 166.

considered within the framework of problems confronting the republicans. The Babouvist Conspiracy was organized in the early months of 1796 by a coalition of equalitarians and former terrorists aroused to action by the magnitude of the economic and financial crisis, the Catholic and aristocratic resurgence, and the desire to avenge the persecution of the Jacobins since the fall of Robespierre.¹ The Executive Directory itself could not be blamed for the repression of the Jacobins and the terrorist personnel, and the dismantling of the institutions of the Terror during the Thermidorian Reaction. However, radical republicans were upset by the failure of the government to reward their support in the fall of 1795 (especially at the time of the royalist-inspired insurrection of 13 Vendémiaire) with measures that would correct the economic and political crisis and restore to the Jacobins some of their earlier political power. The development of the Babouvist Affair, from the arrest of the Babouvists to the end of their trial, coincided with the height of the financial and economic crisis (culminating in the demonetization of all paper currency in February 1797), the resurgence of the royalists (who dominated the two legislative councils after their electoral victory of April 1797), but also military success (particularly in Italy, where Napoleon Bonaparte imposed on Austria the preliminaries of Leoben in April 1797).

Until the end of the first week of December 1795, the *Journal* remained hostile to Gracchus Babeuf.² Like the rest of the republican press, it reacted strongly to his praise of the Robespierrist Mountain and his denunciation of the Thermidorians as gravediggers of democracy.³ Duval charged that he was a royalist *agent provocateur* promoting the type of insurrection that had failed twice in the spring of 1795.⁴ Babeuf countered with a violent denunciation of all republican leaders and men of letters, except for Antonelle, directing his strongest criticism at Duval.⁵ The turning point in the attitude of Vatar's

¹ Georges Lefebvre, *Le Directoire* (Paris, 1946), pp. 25-27; Albert Mathiez, *La France sous le Directoire* (Paris, 1929), pp. 64-66 and 83; and Mazauric, op. cit., p. 130.

² The Prospectus of the *Tribun du peuple* was reproduced V, No 7, 14 Brumaire Year IV, p. 28, and the way in which it was transmitted to the *Journal* is explained No 10, 17 Brumaire, pp. 39-40.

³ Mathiez, *La France*, pp. 72-73; Gérard Walter, *Babeuf, 1760-1797, et la Conjuration des Égaux* (Paris, 1937), p. 117; Marcel Dunan, *Histoire intérieure du Directoire* (Paris, 1953), p. 55; and Armando Saitta, "Autour de la Conjuration de Babeuf. Discussion sur le communisme (1796)", in: *Babeuf (1760-1797)*. Buonarroti (1761-1837). Pour le deuxième centenaire de leur naissance

(Nancy, 1961), pp. 77-80.

⁴ V, No 10, 17 Brumaire Year IV, pp. 39-40.

⁵ Mathiez, *Le Directoire*, pp. 170-171; and Maurice Dommangeot ed., *Pages choisies de Babeuf* (Paris, 1935), p. 246. Mazauric, op. cit., p. 211, claims that

daily coincided with the order on December 5, 1795, for the arrest of Babeuf and René Lebois, the editor of the radical *L'Ami du peuple*, and with the dismissal on December 9 of Antonelle from the government-sponsored *Bulletin officiel*.¹ Antonelle became the main editor of the *Journal* and steered it closer to the Babouvists, despite the misgivings that he expressed earlier about the ideas of Babeuf.²

In February 1796, scared by the growth of extremism on the Left, the Executive Directory initiated a selective repression of the Jacobins and the democrats and further alienated the *Journal* from the government.³ The newspaper protested the arrest of Babeuf's wife, for selling an issue of the *Tribun du peuple* critical of private property, and the closing of the neo-Jacobin Panthéon Club, allegedly to deprive the poor of their political education.⁴ It printed statements by Babeuf, Félix Lepeletier (one of its minor editors), Antonelle, and Filippo Buonarroti, denying that they played an important role in the Panthéon Club and that they were plotting and advocating a dictatorship.⁵ Duval apologized for his role in the overthrow of Robespierre, while Antonelle praised the now subversive Montagnard Constitution of 1793.⁶ At the same time, however, the *Journal*, like the moderate republicans, warned against popular disorders and another confron-

the Equals had courteous relations with Duval, but that a break took place between them.

¹ AN, AF III* fol. 58, AF III 335, dos. 1448, and F¹⁸ 21, dos. Seine, pièce XLVIII (Orateur plébéien). See also Aulard, op. cit., II, p. 500, n. 1, and A. Debidour, Recueil des actes du Directoire exécutif (4 vols, Paris, 1910-17), I, pp. 212-213.

² Saitta, op. cit., pp. 77-80; Walter, op. cit., p. 177; and Claude Mazauric, "Babeuf, Buonarroti et les problèmes du Babouvisme. Etat actuel des recherches", in: Babeuf et les problèmes du Babouvisme, pp. 296-297.

³ "Des variations du gouvernement et de leur influence nécessaire sur les conspirations, troubles, mouvement et chute de l'esprit public", VII, No 2, 2 Prairial Year V, pp. 7-8, and supplement, pp. 9-12.

⁴ "Paris", V, No 114, 2 Ventôse Year IV, p. 460; "Un mot simple sur l'arrêté du directoire ...", by Antonelle, ibid., No 125, 13 Ventôse, p. 504; "Mon troisième mot sur la fermeture des réunions civiques", by Antonelle, issues of 22 and 23 Ventôse; see also No 182, 10 Floréal, p. 732, and No 184, 12 Floréal, p. 740.

⁵ V, No 124, 12 Ventôse Year IV, pp. 498-500; No 125, 13 Ventôse, p. 504; No 128, 17 Ventôse, p. 511; and No 139, 27 Ventôse, pp. 559-560. Lepeletier published 3 articles and 2 letters in the *Journal* before the arrest of the Babouvists and 2 articles afterwards, and before May 19, 1796.

⁶ See, in particular, Duval's introduction to a letter, V, No 115, 3 Ventôse Year IV, p. 462; "Paris", by Lepeletier, No 119, 7 Ventôse, p. 479; Duval's answer to the attacks in the *Gardien de la Constitution*, No 144, 2 Germinal, pp. 579-580; No 151, 9 Germinal, pp. 607-608; No 155, 13 Germinal, p. 623; No 169, 27 Germinal, p. 678; and No 145, 3 Germinal, pp. 583-584.

tation between Jacobins and the government.¹ It accused the authorities of seeking a pretext to resume its repression of the Jacobins, but it also encouraged its readers to expect the government eventually to side with the Jacobins, out of fear of the royalists.²

By the end of April 1796, Antonelle and Lepeletier were members of the secret Directory of Public Safety of the conspiracy.³ Whether or not the other editors of the newspaper were aware of their activities and tried to lull the authorities into a feeling of false security, the politics of the *Journal* contributed to public indifference toward the Babouvists.

On May 6, 1796, the Executive Directory ordered the arrest of the Babouvists, but many (including Antonelle and Lepeletier) escaped the police. Shortly afterward, on May 15 and 19, 1796, the government ordered Vatar's arrest. The warrants were never implemented, but his printing-shop was placed under seals from May 19 to June 21 and the newspaper was unable to appear on May 23, 24, and 25, and to use the post office until June 21, 1796.⁴ Vatar claimed that this "espèce de disgrâce" had been motivated by the desire of the Executive Directory to damage, if not destroy, the *Journal* and his other publishing ventures.⁵ In fact, the authorities had for months accumulated a file on Vatar and his daily, that the Babouvists allegedly reprinted in the departments and distributed in the armies.⁶ In addition, his name was on the list of subscribers to the *Tribun du peuple*.⁷

At first, the *Journal* denied the existence of a conspiracy, but eventually it merely denied that Babeuf ever had the popular support and the means of execution necessary for a successful plot.⁸ It con-

¹ "Paris", V, No 169, 27 Germinal Year IV, p. 678; and No 171, 29 Germinal, p. 686. See also Mathiez, *La France*, p. 88.

² V, No 30, 7 Frimaire Year IV, pp. 119-120; "Reims", *ibid.*, No 111, 20 Pluviôse, p. 448; and "Paris", *ibid.*, No 174, 2 Floréal, pp. 699-700.

³ Saitta, op. cit., pp. 77-78, believes that Antonelle drew away from the conspiracy. For the classical interpretation of Antonelle's role, see Buonarroti, *Conspiration pour l'égalité*, dite de Babeuf (2 vols, Paris, 1957), I, p. 99.

⁴ AN, AF III* 3, fol. 110 and 118, AF III 610, dos. 4268, pièces 27 and 28, F⁷ 7148, dos. 4010 (3 Prairial police report), F⁷ 7148, dos. B² 4010 (Vatar), and F⁷ 4276. See also "Avis aux abonnés", V, No 206, 7 Prairial Year IV, p. 827, and Debidour, op. cit., II, p. 383.

⁵ V, No 206, 7 Prairial Year IV, p. 830; and "Paris", *ibid.*, No 209, 10 Prairial, p. 842.

⁶ See the report by the Bureau d'esprit public for the period 24 Brumaire - 22 Pluviôse Year IV, AN, F⁷ 3448; and individual dossiers of departments, such as that of Charente Inférieure, in F¹⁸ 14, pièce CXXVI. In the same archives, see F⁷ 4276, pièce 37, relative to the distribution of the *Journal* in the Army of the Coast of Brest.

⁷ He was No 223 on the list, according to AN, F⁷ 4278, pièces 37 and 38.

⁸ "Paris", V, No 199, 27 Floréal Year IV, pp. 799-800; *id.*, *ibid.*, by Vatar,

sidered the Babouvist "Plan of Insurrection" and "Address to the Twelve Arrondissements" mere writings that Babeuf intended for publication in the *Tribun du peuple*. However, the *Journal* admitted that they were plans of an ideal conspiracy that the sight of popular misery and the evolution toward aristocracy had inspired to the leader of the plot.¹ The skepticism of the newspaper resulted to some extent from the scarcity of information about the conspiracy, except in the government and the moderate and royalist press. The extent of this dependence for news on hostile sources is revealed by the publication in the *Journal* of the assertion first published in the government-backed *Rédacteur*, that some of the Babouvists, such as François N. Poultier, the editor of the moderate *L'Ami des lois* favored an orderly change in government policy; while others, such as Babeuf, wanted to liquidate all the legislators and Directors; others, still, were royalists; and, finally, some were government agents.²

The *Journal* feared that the Executive Directory would overreact against the democrats and under-rate the royalist threat, thus allowing the repression of the Extreme Left to degenerate into an attack on all republicans.³ Accordingly, it was less concerned by the arrest of the Babouvists than that of the Jacobin legislator Jean-Baptiste Drouet.⁴ Antonelle, anxious now to differentiate himself from the Robespierrist and the Babouvists, reminded the public that he had spent five months in jail during the Terror and he eulogized the executed Dantonists "Basire, Hérault-Séchelles, Philippeaux, Camille, l'infortuné Camille [Desmoulins], et ce généreux Danton".⁵ The editors of Vatar's newspaper urged republicans to ignore the appeals of disorder seekers like

No 213, 13 Prairial, p. 854; and "Sur la conjuration du 22 Floréal ...", *ibid.*, No 248, 19 Messidor, supplement, pp. 1004-1006.

¹ "Paris", and note a, V, No 198, 26 Floréal Year IV, pp. 795-796.

² See the introduction to the "Plan of Insurrection", V, No 208, 9 Prairial Year IV, pp. 835-836; and No 211, 12 Prairial, pp. 849-850.

³ "Paris", V, No 204, 2 Prairial Year IV, p. 822; *id.*, *ibid.*, No 205, 6 Prairial, p. 825; *id.*, *ibid.*, by Vatar, No 212, 13 Prairial, p. 854; and *id.*, *ibid.*, by Antonelle, No 274, 17 Thermidor, p. 1118. See also Mathiez, *La France*, pp. 97-98, and *Le Directoire*, p. 224; and Gabriel Deville, *Thermidor & Directoire (1794-1799)* [*Histoire Socialiste (1789-1900)*, ed. Jean Jaurès] (Paris, n.d.), p. 322.

⁴ Its campaign corresponded to that of Jean L. Tallien at the Council of Five Hundred against the lifting of Drouet's parliamentary immunity on June 9, 1796. See Mathiez, *La France*, pp. 98-99. Drouet defended himself in the May 19 and August 21 and 26 issues of the *Journal*. Articles in his defense appeared also in the issues of June 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29, and François Lamarque's defense of Drouet in the legislature was published on July 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17.

⁵ "A l'homme qu'on en jugera digne (suite)", V, No 203, 1 Prairial Year IV, pp. 817-818; and the continuation of the same, No 205, 3 Prairial, pp. 824-825 and n. 1.

Babeuf, to support the government, and to wait patiently until the royalists themselves provided the occasion, with another 13 Vendémiaire insurrection, for the return to truly republican policies.¹ They reminded the readers of the fate of the Montagnard legislators who uselessly lost their lives in the spring of 1795 because of their support of an insurrection doomed to failure.²

It is likely that the readers were confused by the position adopted by the *Journal*. Most conservative newspapers accused it of supplying the democrats with their arguments and their slogans.³ The government considered it an asylum for terrorists and anarchists.⁴ According to the royalist *L'Eclair*, however, it was a government publication.⁵ Babeuf himself was very critical of the moderate attitude of the *Journal* and even of Antonelle.⁶ In any event, the pleas of Vatar's daily were not heard, for on September 7, 1796, the Babouvists attacked the Camp of Grenelle. The newspaper blamed the police, and then the royalists, for this absurd incident, that it characterized as a plot to discredit the Jacobins and the democrats on the eve of the trial of the Babouvists and to alienate the Executive Directory from the workers and "prolétaires," the "foule ignorante, aveugle, qui à la docilité du besoin, joint l'entêtement de la misère", who got involved out of love of equality and hatred of the rich.⁷

Throughout the trial, which ended on May 27, 1797, the *Journal* provided a platform to the Babouvists and echoed their arguments.⁸

¹ V, No 201, 29 Floréal Year IV, pp. 805-806; "Paris", *ibid.*, No 226, 27 Prairial, p. 914; and "Avis au peuple", *ibid.*, No 299, 12 Fructidor, p. 1218.

² "Réflexions d'un républicain sur le mois de Prairial de l'an III", by P.F.T[issot], V, No 228, 29 Prairial Year IV, pp. 921-922.

³ "Sur la prétendue conspiration du 22 Floréal", by Antonelle, supplement to VI, No 104, 29 Nivôse Year V, pp. 419-420. See also Aulard, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 202 and 203.

⁴ Aulard, *op. cit.*, III, p. 186; see also Adolphe Schmidt ed., *Tableaux de la Révolution française publiés sur les papiers inédits du département et de la police de Paris* (3 vols, Leipzig, 1867-70), III, p. 194.

⁵ Aulard, *op. cit.*, III, p. 260.

⁶ See Albert Soboul, "Une lettre de Babeuf à Hésine (16 décembre 1796)", and R. Bouis, "A propos d'une lettre de Babeuf à Hésine", in: *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, XXXV (1963), pp. 79-84 and 94-98.

⁷ "Paris", V, No 312, 25 Fructidor Year IV, pp. 1269-1270; "Nouveaux détails ...", *ibid.*, No 313, 26 Fructidor, p. 1273; No 315, 28 Fructidor, pp. 1281-1282; "Sur les commissions politiques", *ibid.*, No 325, 4 Vendémiaire Year V, p. 1322; VI, No 6, 21 Vendémiaire Year V, p. 24; "Détails précieux sur quelques condamnés ...", *ibid.*, No 7, 22 Vendémiaire, pp. 27-28; and "Analyse de la protestation motivée ...", *ibid.*, No 13, 28 Vendémiaire, pp. 51-52.

⁸ VI, No 142, 7 Ventôse Year V, pp. 577-578; the comments following the text of Charles Germain's defense, No 146, 11 Ventôse, p. 595; "Haute Cour", *ibid.*, No 149, 14 Ventôse, pp. 608-609; and No 151, 16 Ventôse, p. 620. According to

Babeuf presented himself as a wronged idealist, persecuted for his controversial views.¹ The editors maintained to the end that:

“Nous n'avons jamais nié l'existence d'un plan ou projet de conspiration; mais que nous n'avions pas cru, que nous croyons encore, que Babeuf n'eut jamais de moyens proportionnels aux succès de ses rêves monstrueux; tels furent nos expressions.”²

In their estimate, the conspiracy was a fable dreamed up by a warped imagination.³ They praised the defendants, sympathized with the Babouvists who had escaped the police, and severely criticized the procedure followed at the trial. On March 1, 1797, they wrote:

“L'accuseur Vieillard s'est montré non en juge, mais en bourreau, mais en persécuteur à gages; il a été vraiment révoltant. Ce n'est point la colère, c'est la rage [...]. Ne pouvant trouver dans les pièces les preuves qui puissent établir la réalité des moyens qui devaient rendre la conspiration possible, il a rappelé, sous les couleurs les plus hideuses, les différentes phases de la révolution.”⁴

The *Journal* was very pleased with the verdict of the Vendôme High Court. It did not expect this court to be as lenient as those which had dealt with the neo-royalists arrested in January 1797. The Thermidorian repression of the Jacobins and popular disorders was still too recent for the editors to have any illusions. Still, because of the growing awareness of the increasing royalist threat, Vatar and his collaborators hoped that the verdict would reflect the desire of the authorities to appease all republicans.⁵ In fact, in the end, the High Court acknowledged that it lacked proof of the existence of an actual conspiracy and it exonerated or freed almost all the defendants.⁶ The

Mazauric, op. cit., p. 211, only René Lebois's *L'Ami du peuple* defended the Babouvists, the other newspapers criticizing the miscarriage of justice of which they were the victims.

¹ Maurice Dommanget, “Le système de défense des babouvistes au procès de Vendôme”, in: *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, XXXIX (1967), pp. 255-258.

² “Paris”, V, No 214, 15 Prairial Year IV, p. 862.

³ “Sur la prétendue conspiration du 22 Floréal ...”, by Antonelle, VI, No 104, 29 Ventôse Year V, pp. 417-420.

⁴ VI, No 145, 10 Ventôse Year V, p. 590.

⁵ “Haute Cour”, VII, No 4, 4 Prairial Year V, p. 19.

⁶ VII, No 9, 9 Prairial Year V, p. 44. See also the issues of 3 and 16 Floréal Year V of the *Moniteur universel* (*Réimpression*) (32 vols, Paris, 1858-70), XXVIII, pp. 666 and 584; Buonarroti, op. cit., II, p. 20; Mazauric, op. cit., p. 215; and Charles Nodier, *Souvenirs de la Révolution et de l'Empire* (new ed. in 2 vols, Paris, 1872), II, pp. 292-293.

Journal praised the verdict even while bewailing the necessary execution of Babeuf and Darthé, for “il fallait du sang républicain pour arroser, comme à toutes les époques, l’olivier de la paix”.¹

The considerable amount of writings by and about the Babouvists carried by the *Journal* explains why contemporaries, and many historians since, have tended to identify Vatar’s newspaper with the Babouvist cause.² This daily was very critical of the government throughout the Directory, and devoted to the preservation of the republican form of government and the political, social, and judicial gains made in the course of the Revolution. However, it is erroneous to assume from its concern for the Babouvists that the *Journal* was their spokesman.³ It sympathized with them, but it did not subscribe to all the aspects of their program and political philosophy, and particularly to their determination to overthrow the Directory Regime.

During the Thermidorian Reaction, the *Journal* had warned that the attacks against the Jacobins, the terrorists, and the revolutionary institutions would benefit the royalists.⁴ It blamed the popular insurrections of Germinal and Prairial in the spring of 1795 on royalist plotters, whose goal it was to divide the republicans, induce a greater

¹ VII, No 9, 9 Prairial Year V, p. 44.

² Before the suppression of the conspiracy, the *Journal* carried 3 articles and 2 letters by Lepeletier; letters by General Parrein, Buonarroti (March 3, 1796), Charles Germain (May 1, 1796), and Babeuf (March 2, 1796). Before the trial at Vendôme, in addition to the articles and letters by Lepeletier and Drouet, and about the latter, it carried 2 letters by Babeuf (May 22 and June 12, 1796) and his interrogation by Judge André Gérard (June 17-25, 1796); articles and letters, by Germain (see especially the issues of November 6, 1796, and March 6, 1797), Darthé (see particularly the issues of December 9 and 10, 1796, and March 12, 1797), Jaumé, Adjutant-General Jorry, M. G. A. Vadier, and General Parrein. It also carried the declaration of the Babouvists accused of attacking the camp of Grenelle (October 10 and 13, 1796) and those on trial at Vendôme (April 6, 1797), as well as lengthy coverage of the trial of the attackers of the camp of Grenelle (September 22, 28, 29, and October 10, 1796) and the trial at Vendôme (there were 55 Haute Cour columns from October 19, 1796, to May 19, 1797). After the trial, it published several letters and articles by Jorry; it described the transfer of the Babouvists to Cherbourg (21 Prairial Year VI); it organized a collection of funds to provide aid to the widow and the children of Babeuf (“Note des éditeurs”, VII, No 14, 14 Prairial Year V, p. 65; No 24, 24 Germinal, p. 105; and “Paris”, ibid., No 326, 22 Germinal Year VI, p. 1346); and it pleaded for the reprieve of the imprisoned Babouvists (see the issues of 26 Pluviôse and 2, 11, and 26 Ventôse Year VIII).

³ This is the thesis of Saitta, op. cit., pp. 79-82; Mazauric, op. cit., pp. 139-140; and J. Suratteau, “Les Babouvistes, le péril rouge et le Directoire (1796-1798)”, in: Babeuf et les problèmes du Babouvisme, p. 152.

⁴ “Convention”, II, No 235, 25 Thermidor Year II, p. 949; “Paris”, ibid., No 245, 5 Fructidor, p. 992; and id., ibid., No 252, 12 Fructidor, p. 1022.

repression of the Jacobins, and improve the conditions of the aristocratic and Catholic resurgence. It demanded the reactivation of the terrorist legislation against *émigré* priests and counter-revolutionists in general.¹ Just as the republicans had feared, the Babouivist Affair favored the resurgence of the royalists, who took advantage of the attention that the authorities and the conservatives devoted to the Extreme Left to get through the legislature effective anti-Jacobin measures.² This was particularly the case of the law of September 7, 1796, eliminating 30,000 former agents of the revolutionary government from the lists of persons eligible for appointive or elective offices. Accordingly, the warnings of Vatar's daily against the royalist and Catholic threat increased during the Babouivist Affair.³ The royalist victory at the elections of 1797 eventually convinced all republicans of the urgency of the matter and contributed to soften the attacks against the Extreme Left at the same time that it made such staunch republicans as the editors of the *Journal* willing to sacrifice the Babouvists for the sake of republican unity.

The fear of this newspaper of royalism was increased by its realization that political instability had allowed the military to assume a major role in the political life and the administration of the country.⁴ It was concerned lest some military leaders would take advantage of their positions to organize the reestablishment of a monarchical form of government.⁵ This fear was to a large degree aroused by the behavior of the military in conquered lands, and especially in Italy.⁶ After

¹ "Paris", III, No 62, 2 Frimaire Year III, p. 266; "Paris", by L. L., ibid., No 237, 27 Floréal, p. 973; "Chapitre des contradictions", by L. L., ibid., No 239, 29 Floréal, p. 982; "Paris", IV, No 16, 1 Messidor Year III, p. 64; "Réflexions d'un républicain sur les prêtres appelés réfractaires et constitutionnels ...", ibid., No 23, 8 Messidor, pp. 91-92; "Paris", ibid., No 27, 22 Messidor, p. 147; No 73, 28 Thermidor, p. 291; and "Paris", No 76, 1 Fructidor, p. 300.

² Mathiez, *Le Directoire*, p. 224; and Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 40.

³ "Paris", V, No 204, 2 Prairial Year IV, p. 822; "Paris", by Vatar, ibid., No 212, 13 Prairial, p. 854; "Conspiration par les prêtres contre la république", ibid., No 253, 24 Messidor, p. 1026; "Paris", by Antonelle, ibid., No 274, 17 Thermidor, p. 1118; VI, No 35, 20 Brumaire Year V, p. 79; "Echantillon du républicanisme des ministres du culte catholique", VII, No 8, 8 Prairial Year V, p. 37; and the articles by Antonelle in the issues of 8, 17, and 19 Nivôse and 1 Pluviôse Year IV. See also Deville, op. cit., V, p. 322.

⁴ V, No 142, 30 Ventôse Year IV, p. 511; and "Quelques réflexions sur la pente de notre gouvernement à devenir un gouvernement militaire", by P. F. Tissot, ibid., No 320, 3rd Day SC, pp. 1301-1302. See also Lefebvre, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

⁵ "Paris", VI, No 98, 23 Nivôse Year V, p. 392; No 110, 5 Pluviôse, p. 443; VII, No 78, 18 Thermidor Year V, pp. 302 and 304; No 83, 23 Thermidor, p. 344; and No 86, 26 Thermidor, pp. 354-355.

⁶ V, No 213, 14 Prairial Year IV, pp. 855-856; No 216, 17 Prairial, p. 862; No 240, 11 Messidor, p. 969; No 314, 27 Fructidor, p. 1277; No 323, 2 Vendémiaire

the Babouvist Affair, Vatar and his collaborators would become more concerned with the trend toward greater power of the executive branch of the government and repeated use of *coups d'état* to insure the survival of the regime.¹ They feared that "à force de sauver la République on finirait par la tuer".² These fears were increased by their awareness of the division of the republican camp, against which they pleaded during the Thermidorian Reaction and the Babouvist Affair.³ They warned that the alternative was that the persecution of the Robespierrist and the Babouvists, "les plus marquants de ceux qui exercèrent des fonctions publiques, ou provoquèrent la révolution de cette époque", would degenerate into a persecution of all republicans.⁴

Finally, the *Journal* realized that the economic and financial crisis that followed the end of the Terror had alienated the popular classes from the republican leaders and even the regime.⁵ Until the spring of 1795, while making demagogic appeals for the support of the 24 million poor against the 1 million rich, it had shown little real concern for the effect of the crisis upon the popular classes, even supporting the repeal of the economic legislation of the Terror.⁶ It reversed

Year V, p. 1312; and VI, No 57, 12 Frimaire Year V, p. 228. The impact of the French on the political life of the territories they occupied and the inter-relationship between French developments and the developments in these territories is dealt at length in Jacques Godechot, *La Grande Nation* (2 vols, Paris, 1956), and Robert R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution* (2 vols, Princeton, 1959 and 1964).

¹ See the extract of the speech by the legislator Pierre Briot in *L'Ennemi des oppresseurs*, IX, No 21, 2 Vendémiaire Year VIII, pp. 83-84; No 22, 4 Vendémiaire, pp. 87-88; and "Propension du pouvoir à tout envahir, nécessité de résister à ses entreprises", by Raisson, Fournier, and Lefebvre, *Journal des hommes*, IX, No 4, 8 Brumaire Year VIII, pp. 14-16.

² VII, No 128, 3 Vendémiaire Year VI, p. 538; No 193, 8 Frimaire, p. 804; and "Paris", ibid., No 319, 14 Germinal, pp. 1317-1318.

³ "Convention", II, No 235, 25 Thermidor Year II, p. 949; "Paris", III, No 190, 10 Germinal Year III, p. 786; No 192, 12 Germinal, p. 794; V, No 144, 2 Germinal Year IV, pp. 579-580; No 151, 9 Germinal, pp. 607-608; No 155, 13 Germinal, p. 623; No 169, 27 Germinal, p. 678; and No 201, 29 Floréal, pp. 805-806.

⁴ "Sur les dangers publics", VI, No 59, 14 Frimaire Year V, pp. 235-236; and "Paris", ibid., No 109, 4 Pluviôse, pp. 439-440.

⁵ "Club des Jacobins", III, No 44, 14 Brumaire Year III, p. 179; "A bas les brigands et les buveurs de sang! . . .", by Aigoin, commissioner at the National Treasury, ibid., No 66, 6 Frimaire, pp. 278-280; V, No 10, 17 Brumaire Year IV, pp. 39-40; "Sur la situation du Midi . . .", ibid., No 244, 15 Messidor, p. 984; "Encore un mouvement des haillons", VI, No 104, 29 Nivôse Year V, pp. 415-416; and No 105, 30 Nivôse, p. 424.

⁶ "Club des Jacobins", III, No 18, 18 Vendémiaire Year III, pp. 70-71; id., ibid., No 20, 20 Vendémiaire, p. 80; id., ibid., No 22, 22 Vendémiaire, p. 88;

its position in 1795 under the impact of the intensification of the economic crisis and popular disorders.¹ In the winter and the spring of 1796, under the influence of Antonelle, it even defended the terrorist legislation and absolute economic equality.² However, there never was complete identification between the economic and social views of the radical Left and those of the *Journal*, whose concern for the welfare of the popular classes was predicated upon the assumption that their support was necessary to the survival of the regime and the Jacobins.³

The essential contribution of the *Journal* to the struggle against the royalists was its campaign against popular violence and in support of the government. During the Thermidorian Reaction, it had warned the patriots against allowing themselves to become exasperated against the authorities.⁴ It pointed out that each popular insurrection weakened the regime and, accordingly, that violence was in essence counter-revolutionary.⁵ During the Babouvist Affair, it warned that popular insurrection was doomed to fail because the popular classes were without weapons and leaders.⁶ It urged republicans to ignore the apostles of violence and to listen to the wise advocates of law and

No 84, 24 Frimaire, pp. 363-364; "Paris", ibid., No 182, 2 Germinal, p. 750; and "Paris", IV, No 32, 17 Messidor Year III, p. 128. See also the issue of 23 Vendémiaire Year III of the *Moniteur universel* (Réimpression), XXII, pp. 213-214.

¹ III, No 230, 20 Floréal Year III, p. 946; No 239, 29 Floréal, p. 981, n. 1; "Paris", IV, No 27, 12 Messidor Year III, pp. 107-108; comments signed P.N. on an "Avis", ibid., No 64, 19 Thermidor, p. 286; "Les véritables agitateurs", by L. L., ibid., No 241, 12 Messidor Year IV, p. 973; and No 70, 25 Thermidor, p. 310.

² "Cinquième arrestation ...", V, No 65, 12 Nivôse Year IV, pp. 259-260; "Un mot sur l'égalité ...", ibid., No 70, 17 Nivôse, p. 280; "Réflexions à l'ordre du mouvement", ibid., No 87, 5 Pluviôse, pp. 347-348; No 106, 24 Pluviôse, ip. 426-427; "Aux rédacteurs de l'*Ami des lois*", ibid., No 140, 28 Ventôse, pp. 563-564; "Réponse à la lettre imprimée dans le numéro 140", ibid., No 144, 2 Germinal, pp. 579-580; and "Sur la véritable conjuration sur l'abus des mots ...", ibid., No 273, 16 Thermidor, pp. 1113-1114. Was Antonelle a communist? Some historians think so. See Maurice Dommangeat, "Tempérament et formation de Babeuf", in: *Babeuf et les problèmes du Babouvinisme*, p. 20, and Mazauric, op. cit., pp. 139-140. Others, such as Mathiez, *La France*, p. 95, and Saitta, op. cit., pp. 77-79, deny it. Mazauric himself admits in *Babeuf et les problèmes du Babouvinisme*, pp. 296-297, that Antonelle had his doubts about Communism.

³ V, No 121, 9 Ventôse Year IV, pp. 487-488; "Paris", ibid., No 245, 16 Messidor, pp. 989-990; and VI, No 76, 1 Nivôse Year V, p. 303. See also Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 31, and Dunan, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴ III, No 69, 9 Frimaire Year III, pp. 291-292.

⁵ III, No 122, 2 Pluviôse Year III, pp. 509-510; the editorial signed "Un philosophe ami de l'humanité et des principes du bonheur social", ibid., No 200, 20 Germinal, pp. 827-828; and "Paris", ibid., No 208, 28 Germinal, p. 858.

⁶ "Paris", V, No 169, 27 Germinal Year IV, p. 678; and No 171, 29 Germinal, p. 686.

order.¹ It admonished republicans to wait patiently until the royalists themselves provided the opportunity for a drastic change in the politics of the Executive Directory.² It repeatedly warned that disorders would further divide the republicans and provide the pretext for their persecution.³

At the height of the Thermidorian Reaction and during the Babouivist Affair, the *Journal* defended the government against the charge that it was an instrument of the royalists.⁴ At the same time, however, it was very critical of the policy of the government and some of its agents. It blamed the Director Lazare Carnot, the minister of police Charles Cochon, and the police for the attacks on the Jacobins and the exaggerated attention given by the authorities to the Babouivist Affair.⁵ The *Journal* was violently opposed to the Executive Directory during only two brief periods, in the fall of 1798 (after the government had muzzled political opposition from the Left and the Right and domesticated the legislative councils) and in the fall of 1799 (after the government and the Right majority of the councils renewed their attacks against the republican Left).

The *Journal* provided a forum for the discussion of Babeuf's ideas, but it was critical of his goals and his tactics. It did not support the goals of the Babouvists to establish a social-democratic republic, similar to that envisioned during the Terror by some of the Robespierrist, or even an equalitarian state. It was not won over by tactics that made of them political adventurers and even *agents provocateurs*.

¹ "Paris", V, No 226, 27 Prairial Year IV, p. 914.

² "Avis au peuple", V, No 299, 12 Fructidor Year IV, p. 1218.

³ "Club des Jacobins", II, No 224, 14 Thermidor Year II, p. 904; "Paris", V, No 174, 2 Floréal Year IV, pp. 699-700; id., ibid., No 205, 6 Prairial, p. 825; "Avis au peuple", ibid., No 299, 12 Fructidor, p. 1218; "Paris", VI, No 101, 26 Nivôse Year V, p. 404; "Du mouvement, de ses causes et de ses conséquences", ibid., No 220, 25 Floréal, pp. 916-918; "D'une soi disant grande conspiration terroriste", VII, No 189, 4 Frimaire Year VI, p. 787. See also the issue of 3 Prairial Year V of the *Moniteur universel* (Réimpression), XXVIII, p. 708; Mathiez, *La France*, pp. 97-98, and *Le Directoire*, p. 224; and Walter, op. cit., p. 253.

⁴ III, No 113, 23 Nivôse Year III, p. 474; "Paris", ibid., No 40, 20 Pluviôse, p. 582; comments on the decree expulsing Marat's remains from the Panthéon in "Convention", ibid., No 141, 21 Pluviôse, p. 585; "Paris", ibid., No 165, 15 Ventôse, p. 681; "Avis au peuple", V, No 299, 12 Fructidor Year IV, p. 1218; and "Sur la politique et le ministre Cochon", VI, No 33, 18 Brumaire Year V, pp. 131-132.

⁵ "De la mission de Bénézech", VI, No 119, 14 Pluviôse Year V, p. 482; No 138, 3 Ventôse, p. 560; No 189, 24 Germinal, p. 593; "Des variations ...", loc. cit. (see above, p. 234, n. 3); VII, No 13, 13 Prairial Year V, pp. 61-62; No 21, 21 Prairial, p. 94; and No 22, 22 Prairial, p. 102. See also Mathiez, *La France*, p. 116.

It was obviously in the interest of the Executive Directory to insure the continued existence of a newspaper which could have a moderating influence on the Jacobins and the democrats. Thus the relatively unimpeded publication of the *Journal* until the spring of 1798, despite its constant and sometimes violent criticism of government policy.