

AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
PEOPLE OF ENGLAND
BY M. RABAUT DE ST. ESTIENNE,
LATE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF FRANCE.

[new page]

AN
ADDRESS, &c.

BRAVE Englishmen! free people! justly proud of your liberties, we are now mutually arming and ready, to enter upon hostilities, which we equally detest. What intrigues have seduced us? By what fatality are we led, that we should spend our blood in the disputes and contests of a few interested individuals? Is it just that the unfeeling rancour of the despots of mankind should be gratified for ever? Nations are commonly averse to war, unless the individuals, urged on by an epidemical frenzy, reciprocally detest each other. We are far removed from such madness. We esteem you, we honour you. It is your duty to esteem and honour us in return; and bound at least by our commercial interests, by our situation, by reciprocal hospitality, let us no longer view each other with rancour; nor wish for war: It is the enemies of the revolution who are desirous to plunge us into that calamity, that our liberties may be overthrown. It is not a war of nations, but a war of cabinets, that is projecting. It does not spring from animosities on either side. It originates in low ministerial intrigue.

People! merchants! tradesmen! you who compose society. It is for you to baffle these baneful contrivances. It is our business to second your efforts. The enemies of our constitution wish for war: We detest it. What! must the blood of one hundred thousand men be spilt to satisfy them. [(4)] The blood is ours, let us prevent its being sacrificed to their interests. What stupidity! shall the human species, like a flock of sheep, be driven headlong to slaughter, to gladden the festivity and increase the joys and detestable orgies of their governors?

If the three nations, who are ready to cover the seas with their ships, could gain any thing by war, even in this case, such desire must be comprehended under other national follies? but, in fact, nothing can be more fatal to either of the three nations. It cannot be profitable to the French, who have so much need of tranquility to recover them. It cannot be advantageous to the Spaniards, who ought above all things to prevent the thread which connects their European and American dominions from being broken, and who run the risk of so many other disasters. It cannot be advantageous even to you --- Englishmen! And seeing I have spoken with freedom even of our own situation, I will take the same liberty with yours.

Your situation is indeed brilliant, and your riches immense. But beware! perhaps you are arrived at that point of prosperity, which bounds the ambition of nations and individuals. On the other hand, your debts are vast and you may learn from our example, that there is a time when you must have a reckoning with yourselves; you will be better able to enter into this

reckoning in a state of opulence and tranquility, than in times of commotion, when all calculations are deranged, all minds are in doubt and difficulty. Never had you a more favourable opportunity; you are rich, and may enjoy if you please, the blessings of peace; no power in the world is able to disturb your repose. Your commercial advantages will shield you from every attack, and preserve to you a long and decided superiority. What can you wish for more, Englishmen? [(5)] A LONG AND UNINTERRUPTED PEACE. The wise merchant who has acquired an ample fortune, sits down to enjoy his possessions in tranquillity, and exposes himself no more to hazards which may involve him in ruin and distress. Your commercial establishments cover both hemispheres, and are far from being exhausted. You are nevertheless in quest of unknown deserts, remote countries, and new discoveries. Under the shade of a solid peace, your ships traverse the seas with perfect freedom, and your genius opens to them new passages; your progress was great before any European nation had begun their operations: you have thus the important advantages of time, and the lights of experience. The principal attention of France ought to be directed to agriculture. But if one day she should be your rival in commerce, is it a necessary consequence that rivals should be enemies? Does not the world afford inexhaustible resources to industry and effort, which can never be dried up, so long as the wants and fancies of men exist?

Reflect what the pursuit of your ancient system of politics hath cost you. Consider what you may gain by the adoption of a pacific system. What treasures have you not squandered in Germany and the north! What succours and subsidies have you not contributed to the house of Austria! What losses have you not sustained? What sacrifices have you not been compelled to make from a desire of rivalling us! What commotions have you not given birth to! What treasures have you not expended in preparing armaments! What intrigues have you not been warped by, to preserve the balance of power in Europe, and to support crowns whom you despise! How often have you spent the worth of a branch of commerce, before you have obtained it! You have often purchased the neutrality of one [(6)] cabinet by the force of gold, while your debts were in the mean while increasing, and, the only secret you seem to possess to render them supportable, is, by constantly adding to the mass.

A permanent system of peace will relieve you from taxes, the shame and burden of which, you cannot much longer dissemble. It will relieve you from troubles which no pecuniary sacrifices can heal, and of ministerial intrigues unworthy of your generosity. --- Above all, it will save you fifty millions which your MARINE costs you. It will prevent the necessity of those extraordinary efforts you made in a war of at least ten years continuance, and the impolicy and danger of hazarding your credit and existence, as a nation, which a signal defeat might effect.

ENGLISHMEN! believe a friend to human nature, believe the wise men of your nation who inform you. It is time for you to change your system. A conquering people ought to have done. Great efforts accelerate a fall. You have too long pursued an erroneous system. The island of Albion is unequal to the burden of supporting two hemispheres. A war betwixt you and us will be fatal to France, I confess. It is however as much for the cause of human nature as my country that I am afflicted. But remember this will not be a war of cannons, ships, and guineas, but a war of men. The contest will not

be for sugar and indigo, but for the liberties of a people worthy of your esteem. What speculations can you make upon the event of a war so uncertain? With how much more may we reckon. What, though the little interests which formerly alarmed our trifling existence be endangered, enthusiasts in the cause of liberty, we know the length those transports will carry us, from what we have already experienced. [(7)]

We imagined that the rapidity of our revolution would lead to one more gradual in favour of the rest of the human species; but if it should be convulsive, Europe will be shaken to its foundation. People! let kings indulge their fears and alarms. It is not for you to be made the instruments of their vengeance. Let reason conquer prejudice and superstition: her motions are slow but firm. Do not seek to oppose her suggestions. You are now about to go to war with your best friend. Consider before you proceed! you will deplore the consequences of your conquest when it will be too late to remedy the evil. Our eyes are opened. We have reflected on our past existence, and we observe with shame, that till now we have never been guided by the true political virtues, JUSTICE AND VIRTUE. We have dared to embrace in our wishes the whole human race. We have been ardent in our desires for peace, and our first resolution has been to renounce the vain ambition of conquests. This is our declaration. Four millions of armed citizens have sworn neither to seek nor fear a war!

ENGLISHMEN! we desire to live in peace with all nations. Abandon then the frivolous pretext of a quarrel about NOOTKA [^{see note 7}]. What avail these inhospitable deserts? Think of rendering your existence durable, and do not strain the springs of your government if you do not wish to destroy it. Peace is our mutual interest, and peace may be preserved by our union. Let England and the several branches of the house of Bourbon form one common alliance. Let the Mediterranean be defended from the encroachments of those ambitious powers, who wish to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the weaker, and whose politics is to swallow up and govern all the other states of Europe. Let the object of this alliance be to [(8)] confine every potentate within proper limits. Thus by compelling them to be just, they will be more the objects of affection among their subjects. Let the peace thus established between the three crowns secure the peace of the continent. By these means will the true balance of power be fixed, which hitherto we have in vain been in quest of. Thus a peace, will be obtained, wished for by the people, and which the cabinets of ministers and the authorised spies of courts have never found. Let us at last spare the blood of human kind. Let us aggrandize ourselves by population, by arts and by industry, industry, by those calm acquisitions, which produce much, though they cost little. Infants in calculation, we have known no object hitherto, but to sacrifice men for the acquisition of territory. Let us now preserve our citizens, for we have no need of countries. If you persist in a desire for additional territories, your navigators will make new discoveries, and future Raleighs and Cooks will make conquests of which you will not have reason to be ashamed. Does the Levant attract you? Trade to the Levant! we will be your allies though your rivals. The desires of Europe are not so exorbitant as not to be satisfied by the other three parts of the globe. Is it not of infinite importance both to you and us, that the balance power in Europe should be in your hands and in ours, for the happiness of Europe, and to maintain an eternal peace. Whatever cabinets may pretend, true

politics consist in justice. It is time that virtue should extend its empire over men. Free people! it is our duty to give the first example.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
J. P. RABAUT DE ST. ETIENNE

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To a generous people, the friends of liberty, and consequently of truth. I have once already presumed to address its language. I am going to do so again, you are worthy to hear it. --- In whatever colours the French Revolution may have been represented to you, and whatever you may have been led to think of the momentary disorganisation of powers in the stormy transition from one state of things to another, and the transient disorder of our finances amidst an immense liquidation, greater than has ever before been made by any people, and the highly exaggerated faults of a constitution established amidst the conflict of the most violent passions, and the excesses resulting from a two years war between the general welfare and private inter- [(4)] rests, you cannot be mistaken in the prominent features which have characterised this astonishing Revolution. The French are determined to be free, under the empire of the Laws, executed by their King* [* This was written before the flight of the King, which was on the 21st of June. T.]; this is our internal constitution.--- Nevertheless, placed as we are in the centre of Europe, and connected by a variety of interests and of relations with all its communities, it became us to take in the remoter consideration of the aspect which our political constitution would bear towards our neighbours, and towards all the nations of the peopled globe.

If the principles of our constitution would not have applied to our exterior policy, they must have been false principles. The rules of true policy, as those of found morals, are universal. Rights between nations are exactly similar to rights between individuals. What one man owes to another, one nation owes to other nations, and when, in the declaration of the Rights of Man, we taught every Frenchman his rights and his duties, France was taught at the same time what were *her* rights and duties with respect to all other nations.

It was impossible to mistake in founding our constitution on the firm basis of eternal [(5)] justice. From such principles has spontaneously flowed the declaration which we have made of not undertaking any war in the spirit of conquest. Was it possible for us to omit placing in the number of our laws, that of respecting the property of nations, who had placed such powerful barriers about the property of each individual? Could *we* who had proscribed

from society, every the slightest shadow of injustice, authorise between nations that systematic rapine called conquest ? Hitherto the nations of the earth had been misled under the long-established influence of errors, and it became one of those which had been most exhausted by the fever of ambition, to be the first to recover from it, and to renounce these deliberate outrages. Very incomplete would our regeneration have been, if we had still retained within our bosom, that germ of destruction to all societies, that principle big with their common ruin, that it is lawful to invade the property of our neighbour. That government is perfidious which places in the number of national virtues acts of violence towards other nations; it corrupts the citizen by giving vice a footing in his breast; for that man is not far from practising injustice towards individuals, [(6)] who thinks it glorious, or even who believes it permitted to practise it towards nations.

I am ready to allow that this is not the manner in which most potentates have hitherto thought. Accustomed to regard the countries whose government they administered as domains which became their property, or at least which it was their business to appropriate, the lust of avarice has become with them the lust of ambition, and the sordid desire of accumulating has produced the rage for conquest. This moral malady, known by the name of cupidity, which, in a private person, is the source of petty and obscure iniquities, becomes in a King a solemn and splendid injustice; he causes his people to take their share in it, he intoxicates his subjects with the noxious vapour which has thrown himself into delirium, he inspires them with the most absurd pride, that of shewing themselves ferocious and mischievous; individually, he corrupts and vitiates those hearts which were formed by nature with principles of rectitude and justice; and, as his avarice cannot be gratified but at the expence of their blood, he fees [i.e. "engages"; see note 5] them in the madness of infatuation, proud of slaughtering and of being slaughtered, to increase the possessions of a single man. [(7)]

Such are not the reasonings of a free nation; and when this nation has regenerated itself through a sentiment of indignation and hatred to the injustice which it has experienced, Justice presides at its constitution, and seats itself on the national throne. Such is the impulse by which we have been inspired, when, after the long tyranny of a despotism which had rendered us the contempt of all Europe, we have at length broken our chains, and awaked from our long torpor. Wearied out with acts of injustice, it was most natural that we should promise to be just; indignant at our long servitude, that we should enter into the engagement of respecting the rights of communities; professing, with enthusiasm, the political equality of men, that we should adopt, in our moral creed, the political dogma of the equality of nations; and, respecting in our fellow-citizens the seal of a common nature, that we should extend this sentiment to all men and to all people.

But if on the one hand we are drawn nearer to other nations by our respect for their rights, they on the other hand are drawn nearer to us by a sentiment of esteem, and I may add, perhaps, of gratitude. A great nation constituting itself upon the principles of equity and good faith is doubtless a new [(8)] spectacle upon the earth; it excites no terror; it inspires confidence. It is with nations, as with individuals; the brave man esteems the brave, a tacit alliance is in like manner formed between nations who are inspired with the love of justice, and they are insensibly drawn together by

the sympathies of a mutual esteem. When Europe began to emerge from barbarism, when kings had armies, and people arts, there was established between states a political equilibrium, which it was the interest of Europe to preserve, and which every power in Europe had an interest in breaking; but we have been taught by experience, that if Europe by this means has been preserved from foreign invasions, it has been but the more exposed to intestine commotions, so that war has become our habitual state, and peace is nothing but a truce. Alliances have proved illusory; treaties have been perfidious; each of the great powers has by turns occupied, and by turns quitted, the bloody throne on which it has seated itself; and each of them has lowered and weakened itself by those methods precisely, by which it has endeavoured to aggrandize and to raise itself. Reason and sound policy were then in their infancy, for from this very equilibrium arise motives to violate it; the principle of it is [(9)] mistrust. To invite nations reciprocally to watch over one another is to sow a seed of mutual war, and division; and to found them upon jealousy, is to justify and to increase that jealousy. From hence has arisen that rage of preponderance which has cost such torrents of blood; those eternal wars, the malady of European cabinets. Ministers have fomented them, either to render themselves necessary, or to give themselves a false air of superiority; and every great nation has produced a king tormented with the fury of conquests. I do not dwell upon this most obvious truth, that the people have been the victims of those ambitious projects. What is to kings the blood of their people? and if men will be stupid enough to cut one another's throats for a crowned head, where is my mission for teaching them wisdom ?

But to a free and enlightened nation it may be said, that the times are ripe for adopting a different maxim. Not distrust, but confidence, ought to be the basis of a political system. Nations cannot be made happy by dividing them constitutionally, but in uniting them by a common alliance. The alliance of the Greek states rendered them invincible; they were ruined by the jealousy of the political equilibrium. The Swiss Cantons were en- [(10)] mies whilst they were held in equilibrium by the influence of two religions; if they had not united themselves in one federal state, they would have existed no longer; and it is the circumstance of their being the *United States*, which will make the prosperity of North America. Europe, whatever may be said to the contrary, is one large republic, bound together by a community of various interests; there exists in it all the elements out of which may be composed a general alliance, and its position upon the globe naturally calls upon us for such a union; in like manner, as the Germanic league is bound together by a common language and a common jurisprudence; and, as it was incumbent upon North America to unite itself from the same system. Nature herself, when she traced upon the globe certain leading divisions, dictated the political system of the States enclosed by these divisions. Against Nature it is in vain to struggle; we find ourselves obliged to confine ourselves again within the great enclosures which she has marked out. Thus China is formed into a single empire, of which Nature has designed the outlines; thus the States of Africa are laid out both in its grand configuration, and in the inferior divisions which it encloses. Thus is divided America, whilst its islands, par- [(11)] celled out to different potentates, like the fractions of an account, like the small weights in the balance, have been distributed without forecast and without system. Lastly, the Colonies

are points insulated on the globe, the prey of force or industry, and which detach themselves from the seat of empire, when they are increased to that degree, as to be greater than the trunk.

Europe, fatigued it may be with her eternal wars, which have not even contributed to the grandeur of the greater part of her kings, has now a natural tendency to put an end to them. She becomes at length weary of sacrificing the flower of her youth, in order to seize upon some villages, which at a peace must be mutually restored --- of contracting immense debts for an unproductive war, and of being ruined in reality, for the sake of conquering in speculation. Ridiculous at least is the spectacle of these European nations who, without enmity, without passions, without quarrel, and often without any determinate object, pour out immense armies which destroy one another in cold blood, and which, at the end of a series of campaigns, retire from the conflict exhausted and impoverished. Experience will set these follies in their true light. Subjects, and perhaps Kings also, will [(12)] be brought to comprehend that they will all be happier, and even more powerful, when they shall cultivate each the objects of his own industry, and that the profit is surer of cultivating without interruption, than of slaughtering at certain periods the tenth part of their people, and of ruining them twice or thrice in a century.

Englishmen, those great maxims apply even to you. You are indeed insulated with regard to the rest of Europe. It has been remarked, that you owe to your situation in the midst of the seas, both the peculiar character by which you are distinguished, and your passion for liberty, and that constitution which is the result of both. Your situation has given you the dominion of the ocean, where you are at home, in your own element. Nay, it may be said, that your geographical scission, has enabled you to form a system to yourselves, within the political system of Europe, so that your vessels have attached the continent to your island, without having your island chained to the continent. Being, by this means, at the same time commercial and warlike, you have invented wars of commerce, which could not be suitable to any but yourselves, but which to you, cannot be suit - [(13)] able always. Every nation has means of aggrandizement peculiar to itself, but which, when continued in too long, necessarily accelerate its fall. It is by this intemperance in the pursuit of their several systems, that so many nations have been ruined. Ambitious nations may be compared to those corporate bodies who, after having raised themselves to power by a judicious conduct, persist in following their ancient maxims when every thing around them is changed. They chose them through a fortunate predilection, they are induced to continue in them by pride, by obstinacy, by habit, and the remembrance of success. They fall, and can scarcely believe their fate.

There are bounds to aggrandisement. To no being in nature is it given to increase always; therefore the efforts of every political body, when arrived at a certain pitch of grandeur, ought to be directed solely to the maintaining itself in that position. To this acme you are perhaps already arrived, for I dare not insinuate that you have overpast it. Think within yourselves, whether the base of your three kingdoms can support a more lofty edifice; consider whether there are not bounds to the preserving vast possessions at a distance; and whether executive force and [(14)] vigilance have not likewise their limits; calculate the utmost stretch of your resources, and see

whether you are not liable to break the spring, by pushing it farther than it will fairly go. Consider, lastly, to what point a great national debt may be increased if it is never to be liquidated, and what dangers a state incurs, if it is obliged to liquidate with loss of credit, and at an unfavourable moment.

It is with reserve, that I touch upon this delicate topic, both because a stranger cannot flatter himself with being perfectly master of your political resources, and because probity requires that the credit of a nation, as well as that of an individual, should be respected. But, considering your nation as a friendly power, I cannot think without alarm of the immensity of your debt; that you have no means of making it fit easy but by increasing it; that your resources are contingent, and the produce of your funds returned from distant climates: that your territorial basis, the only true and solid one, is not answerable to the immensity of your engagements, and that the state of your national accounts, always put off, always thrown back upon the uncertainties of some future period, will certainly [(15)] expose your posterity to violent convulsions, if not to utter ruin.

Examine now, at your leisure, what has been the cost of all your wars; and of your continual subsidies to so many powers, and of your secret service money shuffled from hand to hand under the guilty cover of intrigue, and of the sacrifices made to your conquests, and the support of an enormous marine, and of preparations so immense, and frequently so unnecessary; and you may then calculate, whether it is not practicable to follow a more economical and more politic system; whether you cannot at length make up your accounts and discharge your debts gradually and without effort.

The political situation of France presents to you the means, and affords you the opportunity. This nation, formerly your rival, becomes henceforward your friend. She is resolved upon attacking no one; she founds her resources chiefly upon agriculture; from which she for a long time drew a happy subsistence, and which is favoured by her position and by her soil. The basis of her industry is within herself; it is a fruitful mine which cannot easily be exhausted. Lastly, her constitution gives security for the continuance of those principles which have a ten- [(16)] dency to secure her internal prosperity; that prosperity which is with regard to a state, what self-enjoyment is to an individual.

France, then, cannot but be at peace with you, unless, tempted by a mad ambition, you step forward to disturb her tranquility; and are resolved to try unnecessarily, what seven-and-twenty millions of freemen are capable of, when they are invaded in their own homes. But peace with her is certainly your interest; for not to mention the molestation you might receive from the ever-active enmity of neighbours such as we now are, from which in your turn you might be endangered, there are many reasons for your adopting the maxim of one of your greatest politicians: "Peace with France, and war with all the world!" Our treaties, and the course of our commercial intercourse, have hitherto been advantageous to you, and your wisdom will be to retain them. We shall no longer be injured by the rivalry of our commercial plans, or should we run together the career of industry, we shall experience the emulation of contending talents, instead of the conflict of opposing arms.

It concerns your wisdom to observe, that the political system of Europe has undergone a change. At its eastern frontier, among a people long time

immersed in barbarism, are [(17)] forming mighty powers, whose ambition ought to awaken the attention of the West. No longer satisfied with continental dominion, they aspire to naval importance: they have a right to it, and it certainly is not in our principles to establish any exclusive rights over the ocean; but it is incumbent upon us, to consider how far their ambitious views may one day extend, and to foresee the time, when the united East shall conspire against the West. And since Europe is not yet ripe for laying aside that political ballance, which acts as a restraint upon the ambitious, the maritime powers cannot but be interested in preventing those convulsions, which, through the great continental powers, they may be exposed to. It is the ardent hope of the French, that a time will come, in which all nations, entertaining the same political opinions, shall cement their agreement by mutual intercourse; and when treaties of peace shall no longer cover the embers of war. Those great families, which are called nations, will at length be convinced, that they ought to be animated by a reciprocal confidence; from hence they will proceed to common alliance, and the great European federation appears no chimerical event to those who are able to look into futurity. There is no absurdity in foreseeing the [(18)] consequences which must result from the principles established by the French nation; from the civil equality of men, which leads to the political equality of nations, and which serves to connect different nations in the universe, as well as citizens in the state. The different political combinations between nations are not exhausted, any more than the different forms of government; every thing has not been said by Aristotle and Montesquieu, and if they had investigated all the past, they cannot have foreseen the future. War can never be the natural state of the human race; it is its state of childhood and imperfection. Clans of people, forsaking the forests, have established themselves in towns, they have introduced there their jealousies, their animosities, and their feuds, and thus their code of laws has long stood on the basis of mutual hatred, and the right of the strongest; and their treaties have been signed with blood. This is still the state of Europe, in which the descendants of the Cimbri, the Teutones, the Franks, the Saracens, and the Romans, have left long traces of their former quarrels, and introduced duelling between nations as well as between individuals. All this shews the marks of an imperfect civilization, *manent adhuc vestigia ruris* [i.e. "traces of our rustic past"; ^{see note 6}]. We may expect the time when the human race, arrived at its maturity, shall make [(19)] use of its reason to recognize its true interests; we may presume, that when this simple truth has once been discovered, namely, that the constitution of every people ought to be founded upon justice, and a respectful attention to the rights of others, no intercourse, no connections but what are peaceful and virtuous, can possibly take place between them; and this great truth I venture to affirm, *France* has been the first to discover; we have consecrated it in our code, we announce, we promulgate it, we offer it to the universe as a pledge of our sincerity, we make it the basis of our legislation. It is impossible that this great truth, professed and propagated by a great nation, in a language universally known, should not spread its influence over all Europe, and from thence over the whole globe.

The eighteenth century is characterised by such strongly marked features, as clearly denote one of those periods in the moral life of the world, in which the human race takes a spring and hastens to perfection.

Philosophy had declared that pacific doctrine, which had raised against her to many enemies. But this doctrine, though it had made its way into men's understandings, had not yet warmed their hearts, it was in a manner lost; because, though spread far and [(20)] wide, it was by no means scattered evenly. By degrees, however, the fermentation it produced penetrated the bulk of a great nation, and this renovating principle has given rise to the reformation of mankind. We have seen private interests, impatient of the opposition they met with from the general interest, rising up against it with indignant rage; and, whilst beholding this wide theatre, we cannot but be struck with the fight of all kinds of superstition, tyranny and corruption, entering into a conspiracy, in order to destroy sacred truth; but truth guided by liberty has conquered, conquered however only with the view of establishing that lasting peace, which is founded on the broad basis of equality. The talk of completing this glorious work may now be safely left to time. Reason will surely, though imperceptibly, establish the empire of truth. The convulsions occasioned by the mighty struggle, it has been our lot to experience; but great will be our comfort, if thereby we enable the rest of the world to obtain the blessing without undergoing the shock. A nation full of impetuosity, and more enlightened than was suspected, could not bear to be confined to that slowly progressive motion, which has so often impeded the advancement of reason. Eager to enjoy [(21)] the prize, so soon as they caught a glimpse of it, they rushed on to seize it with haste impatient of restraint. The patriotic assembly of their representatives, were well acquainted with the dispositions of those whom they were to direct; nor did they chuse to rely on futurity, or to intrust the fate of France to the chance of events, that might easily revive the despotism of long established abuses. This is what Liberty panted for, a wide extensive field, wherein to breathe, move and act; nor was seven and twenty millions of men too large a number to restore to the whole human race the rights of freedom. But if in the midst of the most violent storms, and like the Jerusalem of Nehemiah, where those who builded, *every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon* --- our constitution has been erected; its defects, which wholly relate to its internal construction, will easily be amended by our successors.

With respect to our external connections, it presents on all sides an ingenuous undisguised policy, thrown open, like the hall in which we hold our deliberations, to all the inhabitants of the globe. Such, Britons, such is the nation which desires to maintain peace with all, and to see peace enjoyed by all. Had [(22)] we spoken sooner, our professions would have appeared suspicious; and when, calumny, abetting the cause of trembling despots, represented us to Europe like factious wretches, who sought nothing but to pull down, a sense of our own dignity required our taking no pains to undeceive Europe. Now our constitution is on the point of being finished, great events have torn asunder the veil which concealed us from every eye; and three millions of armed men declare, with a firm tone that commands respect, the will of the whole nation. This nation of warriors solemnly swear to all other nations, that they will, be just towards all. We wish, (this is their language to every other state) we covet no other conquest than that of your hearts, and we trust we shall ere long obtain your friendship; and, if there exists a nation whom we ourselves esteemed, even whilst we still were under the blind influence of those irrational

prejudices that have been called national antipathies; if these men are our neighbours; if this neighbourhood urges them to be, not our natural enemies, but our natural allies; if the love of freedom give both to them and to us the same sentiments tastes and feelings; if peace between them and us will secure to both nations peace with the whole [(23)] world; if all the States of Europe are gradually to be drawn within this grand, this universal federation --- why then do we delay a single moment? Humanity calls upon us to join in bringing back peace upon earth: let us not refuse to obey the generous invitation.

Paris, June 18, 1791
J. P. RABAUT.

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DE
LA NATION FRANÇOISE.

A PARIS,
Chez DESENNE, Imprimeur-Libraire, au Palais
Royal, n^{os}. 1 & 2.
1791.

[3]

ADRESSE
AUX ANGLAIS;

*Par un REPRÉSENTANT de la Nation
Françoise.*

PEUPLE généreux, ami de la liberté, & par conséquent de la vérité, j'ai déjà osé vous la dire une fois; je vais vous parler encore son langage; vous êtes digne de l'entendre.

De quelque manière que l'on vous ait peint la révolution françoise, & la désorganisation momentanée des pouvoirs dans le passage orageux d'un état de choses à un autre, & le trouble instantané de nos finances dans la plus immense liquidation qui ait jamais été faite par un peuple, & les défauts excessivement exagérés d'une constitution établie au milieu du choc des passions les plus violentes, & les excès qui ont résulté de la guerre de deux ans entre l'intérêt général & les intérêts particuliers; vous n'avez pu méconnoître le grand caractère qui a marqué cette étonnante révolution. Les François veulent être libres, sous l'empire de la loi exécutée par leur roi: c'est notre constitution intérieure.

Placés cependant au centre de l'Europe, & liés avec toutes les nations par une foule de relations & d'intérêts, nous n'avons pu manquer de considérer de loin quelle seroit notre constitution politique, relativement à nos voisins & à tous les peuples du globe.

[4] Les principes de notre constitution auroient absolument faux, s'ils n'avoient pu s'appliquer en même temps à notre politique extérieure. Il n'y en a qu'une, comme il n'y a qu'une morale. Les droits entre les nations sont les mêmes que les droits entre les individus. Ce qu'un homme doit à un autre, une nation le doit aux autres nations; & lorsque, dans la déclaration des droits des hommes, nous avons appris à chaque François les droits & les devoirs, nous avons enseigné à la France ce qu'elle avoit de droits & de devoirs vis-à-vis de tous les autres peuples.

On ne pouvoit faillir en établissant la constitution sur la base éternelle de la justice. C'est de ces principes qu'a découlé naturellement, & sans effort, la déclaration que nous avons faite de n'entreprendre aucune guerre dans un esprit de conquête. Pouvions-nous ne pas placer au nombre de nos lois, celle de respecter les propriétés des nations, nous qui avons élevé de si

puissantes barrières autour des propriétés de chaque individu? Pouvions-nous autoriser le brigandage national, appelé *conquête*, nous qui proscrivions de la société la plus légère ombre d'injustice? De longues erreurs avoient jusqu'ici abusé les nations, & l'une de celles qui avoient été le plus fatiguées de la maladie conquérante, devoit être des premières à revenir de cette froide fureur. Notre régénération auroit été incomplète, si nous eussions gardé dans notre sein, le germe destructeur de toute société, ce principe qui est à toutes perdues, *que l'on peut attenter à la propriété de ses voisins*. Ce gouvernement est perfide, qui met au nombre des vertus nationales la violence envers les autres peuples; il corrompt les citoyens, en logeant le vice dans leur cœur, car on est bien pressé d'être injuste avec les individus, quand on croit qu'il est beau; quand on croit seulement qu'il est permis de l'être avec les nations.

Ce n'est pas ainsi, j'en conviens, que divers potentats ont pensé jusqu'aujourd'hui. Accoutumés à regarder les pays qu'ils gouvernoient comme un domaine qui leur étoit propre, ou qu'ils devoient au moins s'approprier, la passion d'acquérir est devenue chez eux la maladie de conquérir. Cette maladie morale, connue sous le nom de cupidité, & qui n'est, chez un simple citoyen, qu'une source d'injustices obscures, devient, dans un roi, une éclatante & solennelle iniquité: il la fait partager à son peuple; il enivre ses sujets de la vapeur funeste qui l'a mis lui-même en délire; il les enflé de l'orgueil le plus faux, celui de se montrer féroces & méchants; il vicie, il corrompt individuellement chacun de ces cœurs que la nature avoit faits droits & justes; & son avarice ne pouvant être satisfaite qu'aux dépens de leur propre sang, il voit ces insensés se glorifier, ou égorges, ou d'être égorges, pour accroître les possessions d'un seul homme.

Une nation libre ne raisonne pas de cette manière; lorsque cette nation se régénère par le sentiment de l'indignation & par la haine des injustices qu'elle a éprouvées, c'est la justice qui vient présider à sa constitution, & qui s'assied sur le trône national. Tel est le mouvement qui nous a inspirés, lorsqu'après de si longs règnes d'un despotisme qui nous avoit rendus l'objet du mépris de l'Europe, nous avons brisé nos fers & que nous nous sommes réveillés d'un trop long assoupissement. Il falloit bien que, fatigués de l'injustice, nous nous promissions d'être justes; qu'indignés de notre longue servitude, nous prissions l'engagement de respecter les droits des peuples; que passionnés pour l'égalité politique [6] des hommes, notre foi morale, adoptât le dogme politique de l'égalité des nations; que, respectant le sceau de l'humanité dans nos semblables, nous étendissions ce sentiment à tous les hommes & à tous les peuples.

Mais si nous nous rapprochons de toutes les nations par notre respect pour leurs droits, elles ne peuvent manquer de se rapprocher de nous par le sentiment de l'estime, & peut-être de la reconnaissance. Sans doute c'est un spectacle nouveau sur la terre que celui d'une grande nation qui se constitue sur les principes de la bonne foi & de l'équité; elle n'inspire aucune crainte, elle fait naître la confiance. Il en est des nations comme des individus. L'homme de cœur estime toujours son pareil; il se forme de même entre les peuples qui aiment la justice, une tacite alliance; & je ne sais quel respect réciproque les invite à se rapprocher.

Lorsque l'Europe a commencé à sortir de la barbarie, quand les rois ont eu des armées, & que les peuples ont eu des arts, il s'est établi entre les États un équilibre politique que l'Europe avoit intérêt à conserver, & que chaque

puissance avoit intérêt de rompre. Mais l'expérience nous a appris, que l'Europe a été garantie par-là d'invasions étrangères, elle n'a éprouvé que plus de guerres intestines; en sorte que la guerre est devenue notre état habituel, & que la paix n'est qu'une treve. Les alliances ont été illusoires, les traités ont été perfides; chaque grande puissance a occupé, elle a quitté à son tour le trône sanglant où elle s'étoit assise, & chacune d'elles a mis à s'affaiblir & à descendre, tous les moyens qu'elle avoit jugés propres à agrandir & à monter.

C'étoit l'enfance de la raison de la politique; [7] car l'équilibre même donne des motifs à le rompre. La méfiance en est le principe. Inviter les peuples à se surveiller réciproquement, c'est semer entre eux un germe de division & de guerre; & les constituer sur la jalousie; c'est la justifier & l'accroître. De là sont venues cette fureur de prépondérance qui a coûté tant de sang, ces guerres éternelles, maladie des cabinets Européens. Les ministres les ont fait naître, ou pour se rendre nécessaires, ou pour se donner un faux air de supériorité; & chaque grande puissance a produit un roi tourmenté de la fureur des conquêtes. Je ne m'appuie point sur cette vérité si commune, que les peuples ont été les victimes de ces ambitions. Q'importe aux rois le sang des peuples? Et si les hommes sont assez stupides pour s'égorger en furieux pour un mortel couronné, où est ma mission pour les rendre sages?

Mais on peut dire à une nation éclairée & libre, que le temps est venu d'adopter une autre maxime. Ce n'est pas la méfiance qui doit être la base d'une système politique, c'est la confiance. Ce n'est pas en divisant conditionnellement les nations qu'on peut les rendre heureuses; c'est en les unissant par une alliance commune. L'alliance des Etats grecs les rendit invincibles, la jalousie de l'équilibre politique les perdit. Tant que deux religions ont mis les Suisses en équilibre, ils ont été ennemis: s'ils ne se fussent pas réunis en un seul état fédéré, les Suisses n'existeroient plus; & ce qui fera la prospérité de l'Amérique septentrionale, c'est de s'appeler les États-Unis. L'Europe, quoi qu'on en puisse dire, est une grande république liée par plusieurs intérêts communs; elle a tous élémens dont peut se composer une alliance générale; & sa position sur le globe l'appelle naturellement à se réunir, comme la ligue germanique est liée par une même langue & un même droit public, comme l'Amérique septentrionale devoit s'unir pour le même système. La nature, en traçant sur le globe certaines grandes divisions, a dicté les systèmes politiques des États que ces divisions renferment. C'est en vain que nous voulons lutter contre elle; nous sommes obligés de rentrer dans les grandes enceintes qu'elle a tracées. Ainsi, la Chine c'est formée en un seul empire, dont la nature avoit dessiné les contours. Ainsi, les Etats de l'Afrique sont formés d'après sa grande configuration, & sur les divisions inférieures qu'elle renferme. Ainsi s'est divisée l'Amérique, tandis que ses isles, partagées aux puissances comme les appoints d'un calcul, comme les menus poids dans la balance, ont été distribuées sans prévoyance & sans principes. Les colonies enfin sont des points isolés sur le globe, dont s'emparent ou la force ou l'industrie, & qui se détachant de la métropole quand elles sont accrues au point d'être plus grosses que le tronc.

L'Europe, fatiguée peut-être de ses éternelles guerres, qui n'ont même pas servi à la grandeur de la plupart de des rois, a maintenant une tendance naturelle à les finir. On se lasse à la fin d'immoler la fleur de ses hommes,

pour s'emparer de quelques villages qu'on est obligé de rendre à la paix; de contracter des dettes immenses, pour une guerre qui ne produit rien, & de se ruiner en effet pour conquérir en espérance. C'est un spectacle au moins ridicule, que celui de ces nations européennes, qui, sans haine, sans querelle, sans passions, & souvent sans objet, vomissent des armées immenses qui se détruisent de sang froid, & qui, au bout de plusieurs années, se retirent du combat épuisées & pauvres. L'expérience sera justice de ces folies. Les [9] peuples, & peut-être aussi les rois, comprendront tous qu'ils seront plus heureux & même plus puissans, quand ils cultiveront chacun leur industrie particulière, & que le calcul est plus sûr de cultiver sans interruption, que d'égorger périodiquement la dixième partie de son peuple, & de le ruiner deux ou trois fois dans un siècle.

C'est même pour vous, peuple anglois, que sont faites ces grandes maximes. A la vérité, vous êtes isolés du reste de l'Europe. On a observé que votre situation au sein des mers a valu ce caractère particulier qui vous distingue, votre passion pour la liberté, & la constitution qui en a été le fruit. C'est elle qui vous fait régner sur l'Océan, votre domicile naturel. Mais on peut dire encore que, dans ce système politique de l'Europe, votre scission géographique vous a permis de vous former un système particulier; en sorte que vos vaisseaux ont attaché le continent à votre île, sans que le continent ait pu jamais vous enchaîner à lui. C'est par-là que, commerçans & guerriers à la fois, vous avez inventé les guerres de commerce, qui ne pouvoient convenir qu'à vous, mais qui ne devoient pas vous convenir toujours. Tout peuple a des moyens particuliers dont il compose son agrandissement, & qui, lorsqu'il continue d'en user trop longtemps, accélèrent nécessairement sa chute. C'est par cette exagération de leurs systèmes particuliers que tant de peuples ont péri. Les nations ambitieuses peuvent être comparées à ces corporations qui, après s'être élevées, par une conduite habile, à une très-grande puissance, suivent toujours leurs anciennes maximes, lorsqu'autour tout d'elles est changé. Un choix heureux les leur fit prendre; l'orgueil, l'opiniâtreté, l'habitude, & le souvenir des succès les leur font [10] garder; elles tombent, & ne peuvent pas croire à leur chute.

Il est des bornes à l'agrandissement. Il n'est donné à aucun être dans la nature de croître toujours. C'est donc à se maintenir que doit aspirer tout corps politique, lorsqu'il est parvenu à la grandeur qui lui convient. Peut-être êtes-vous arrivés à ce point de grandeur; car je n'ose dire que vous l'avez dépassé. Jugez vous-mêmes si la base des trois royaumes peut supporter un plus haut édifice. Voyez encore jusqu'où peut aller la puissance humaine, pour conserver au loin de vastes possessions, & s'il n'est pas des bornes aussi dans l'exécution & la vigilance. Calculez jusqu'à quel point peut être tendu le ressort de votre puissance, & si, en le forçant encore, vous ne vous exposez pas à le rompre. Voyez enfin jusqu'où peut être portée une grande dette nationale, si jamais elle

ne doit être liquidée, & à quels chocs s'expose un Etat, lorsqu'il est forcé de liquider en discrédit, & dans un moment peu opportun.

Je touche avec ménagement cet objet délicat, soit parce qu'un étranger ne peut pas se flatter de connoître parfaitement vos ressources politiques, soit parce que la probité m'ordonne de respecter le crédit d'une nation, comme on respecte celui d'un individu. Mais je vous regarde comme un peuple ami; & je ne puis penser, sans frayeur, que votre dette est

immense; que vous ne la soulager qu'en l'accroissant; que vos ressources sont éventuelles, & vos rentrées de fonds disposées dans des climats lointains; que votre base territoriale, la seule vraie & solide, ne répond pas à l'immensité de vos engagements; & que votre bilan national, toujours renvoyé, toujours livré aux hasards de l'avenir, exposera sûrement votre postérité à des convulsions violentes, s'il n'entraîne pas sa ruine.

[11] Vous pouvez examiner ce que vous ont coûté toutes vos guerres, & vos subsides à tant de puissances, & vos dépenses secrètes distribuées à l'intrigue par l'intrigue, & les sacrifices faits aux conquêtes, & l'entretien d'une marine exagérée, & tant de vastes & souvent inutiles préparatifs; & vous pouvez calculer s'il n'y auroit pas maintenant un système plus économique & plus politique à suivre; si enfin vous ne pourriez pas compter avec vous-même, & vous liquider insensiblement & sans efforts.

La situation politique de la France vous en offre le moyen & l'occasion. Cette nation, jadis votre rivale, va devenir votre amie. Elle ne veut faire de guerre à personne. Elle est fondée principalement sur le système agricole, qui fit quelque temps son bonheur, & qui convient à sa position & à son sol. Sa base industrielle est en elle-même, & cette mine féconde ne peut être de long-temps épuisée. Sa constitution enfin assure la longue durée des principes qui doivent fonder sa prospérité intérieure, cette prospérité qui est pour un Etat, ce qu'est, pour un homme de bien, la jouissance de soi-même.

La France est donc nécessairement en paix avec vous, à moins qu'une folle ambition ne vous porte à troubler son repos, & à tenter, sans motifs, de quoi sont capables vingt-sept millions d'hommes libres, & qu'on vient inquiéter chez eux. Mais votre intérêt est d'être en paix avec elle. Car, outre que l'inimitié active de voisins, tels que nous sommes aujourd'hui, pourroit vous donner, à son tour, des inquiétudes, plusieurs raisons doivent vous faire adopter ce mot d'un de vos plus grands politiques: *La paix avec la France, & la guerre avec tout le monde*. Nos traités & nos rapports commerciaux sont jusqu'ici à votre avantage, & vous [12] devez le garder long-temps. Nos rivalités commerçantes n'auront plus le même objet; ou, si nous courons la même carrière industrielle, ce sera l'émulation du plus habile, & non la guerre du plus fort.

Observez cependant que le système politique de l'Europe est changé. Vers l'Orient, si long temps barbare, se forment de grandes puissances, dont l'ambition doit réveiller l'attention de l'Occident. Déjà elles ne se bornent plus à être des puissances continentales, & elles aspirent à la jouissance des mers. Elle leur est due sans doute, & il n'est pas dans nos principes d'établir sur l'Océan des privilèges exclusifs. Mais nous devons pourtant considérer ce que leur ambition pourroit, un jour, entreprendre & prévoir le moment où l'Orient réuni conspireroit contre l'Occident. Et puisque l'Europe ne peut se passer encore de cet équilibre politique qui sert de frein aux ambitieux, les puissances océaniques sont intéressées à prévenir les convulsions que pourroient leur préparer de grandes puissances continentales.

Un temps viendra, & c'est l'espérance des François, où tous les peuples, réunis, se rapprocheront les uns des autres par les opinions politiques, pour s'accorder dans leur conduite, & où les alliances & les traités de paix ne seront plus des traités de guerre. Ces grandes familles, que l'on appelle des nations, seront à la fin convaincues qu'une confiance réciproque doit les

animer. De ce point heureux, elles arriveront à une commune alliance; & la grande fédération européenne n'est pas une chimere aux yeux de ceux qui savent lire il dans l'avenir. Il n'est pas absurde de prévoir les conséquences qui doivent résulter des principes établis par la nation françoise, de cette égalité civile des hommes qui conclut à l'égalité politique des nations, & qui rapproche les [13] peuples dans l'univers, compte elle réunit les citoyens dans la république. Toutes les combinaisons politiques entre les nations ne sont pas épuisées; elles ne le sont pas plus que les diverses formes de gouvernement. Aristote & Montesquieu n'ont pas tout dit; & quand ils ont exposé tout ce qui fut, ils n'ont pas prévu tout ce qui pourroit être. La guerre, quoi qu'on en dise, n'est pas l'état naturel de l'espece humaine; c'est son état d'enfance & d'imperfection. Après que des peuplades, récemment sorties des forêts & s'établissant dans des cités, ont porté leurs animosités, leurs jalousies & leur rudesse, leu droit public reste long-temps fondé sur la haine & sur le droit du plus fort, & leurs traités sont signés avec du sang. Telle est encore l'Europe, où les descendants des Cimbres, des Teutons, des Francs & des Arabes & des Romains, ont laissé de longues traces de leurs anciennes querelles, & fondé le duel entre les nations comme entre les individus. Ce n'est-là qu'une demi-civilisation: *manent adhuc vestigia ruris*. Il faut bien que l'espece humaine, parvenue à sa maturité, arrive à cette époque de la raison, dont tout l'effet se réduit à mieux connoître ses intérêts. Peut-être a-t-on droit de penser que lorsqu'une fois on a découvert cette vérité simple, que la constitution de chaque peuple doit être fondée sur la justice & sur le respect envers tous les autres, il ne peut s'établir entre eux tous que de pacifiques & vertueuses relations: & j'ose le dire, c'est une vérité que les François ont découverte; ils l'ont consacrée dans leur code, ils l'annoncent, ils la promulguent, ils la présentent à l'univers comme un gage de leur bonne foi, ils en font la base de leur droit public. Il est impossible que cette vérité professée & propagée par un grand peuple, & [14] dans une langue connue de tous, ne répande son influence sur l'Europe entière, & que de là elle ne s'étende insensiblement sur tout le globe.

Le dix-huitieme siecle est marqué par de si grands caracteres, qu'on ne peut y méconnoître une de ces époques morales de la nature, ou l'espece humaine double le pas, pour arriver à la perfection. La philosophie avoit annoncé sa doctrine, pacifique, qui lui avoit suscité un si grand nombre d'ennemis. Mais cette doctrine, semée dans les têtes, n'avoit pas encore enflammé les cœurs; elle étoit perdue en quelque maniere, parce qu'elle étoit répandue & disséminée sur des points isolés. Une grande fermentation s'est établie chez un grand peuple, & dans ce levain régénérateur s'est préparée la réformation de l'espece humaine. Nous avons vu les intérêts particuliers, irrités de cette guerre qui leur étoit déclarée par l'intérêt général, se soulever avec fureur; & c'est un spectacle remarquable sans doute sur une scène aussi vaste que celui de toutes les superstitions, de toutes les tyrannies, de tous les abus, se liguant de concert pour égorger la vérité. Elle a vaincu, guidée par la liberté; mais elle n'a vaincu que pour établir la paix, fondée sur l'égalité réciproque.

Maintenant laissons au temps le soin d'achever son ouvrage. La raison établira insensiblement son empire. Les convulsions ont été pour nous; ce nous est une consolation de les avoir toutes éprouvées, si nous pouvons les épargner à l'univers. Un peuple impétueux, & plus éclairé qu'on ne pensoit,

ne pouvoit se soumettre à cette marche graduelle dans laquelle la raison a si souvent été arrêtée, obscurcie, éclipsée. Impatient de jouir, il a vu le but, & il s'y est précipité. La mémorable assemblée de ses représentans a connu la nation qu'elle guidoit; elle n'a [15] pas voulu se reposer sur l'avenir, ni confier au hasard des événemens & à la tyrannie ressuscitée des abus, les destinées de la France. C'est ce qu'il falloit à la liberté; il lui falloit une vaste & grande existence, & ce n'étoit pas trop de vingt-sept-millions d'hommes pour rendre ses droits à l'humanité tout entière.

Mais si notre constitution fut fondée au milieu des plus violens orages, & comme la Jérusalem de Néhémie, où l'ouvrier travailloit, l'épée dans une main & le marteau dans l'autre, ses imperfections, dont les rapports sont purement internes, seront facilement réparées par nos successeurs. Nous offrons toujours, dans nos relations extérieures, une politique pure, franche & ouverte, comme la salle de nos délibérations est ouverte à tous les habitans du monde. Tel est, peuple anglais, la nation qui veut la paix de toutes, & avec toutes. Si elle eût parlé plutôt, on auroit suspecté son langage; & lorsque la calomnie, venant au secours des tyrannies alarmées, nous présentoit à l'Europe comme des factieux qui ne savoient qu'entasser des ruines; il étoit de notre dignité de laisser l'Europe dans son erreur. Maintenant notre constitution va être achevée, de grands événemens ont déchiré le voile qui nous cachait à tous les yeux, & trois millions d'hommes armés annoncent, d'une manière imposante, la volonté nationale. C'est ce peuple armé qui proteste à tous qu'il veut être juste envers tous. Il ne veut conquérir des nations que leur estime; le temps approche où il aura leur amitié & s'il est un peuple que nous ayons estimé nous mêmes au sein de l'erreur de je ne sais quelles haines nationales; si ce peuple est notre voisin; si ce voisinage en fait, non pas un ennemi naturel, mais un allié naturel; si l'amour de la liberté leur donne à l'un & à l'autre des pensées des goûts communs; si la [16] paix entre eux leur vaut la paix avec tout le monde; si l'Europe doit être entraînée un jour dans cette grande & universelle fédération, que tardons-nous? L'humanité nous invite à ramener la paix sur la terre, ne résistons pas à sa voix.

J.P. RABAUT.

Paris, 18 juin 1791

De l'Imprimerie de DESENNE, rue Royale, n°. 25.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

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Note 1: About the author of these pamphlets.

The author, Jean Paul Rabaut Saint-Etienne (1743-1793), was a reformed pastor and "député de l'Aube" during the French revolution. He should not be confused with his father, Paul Rabaut (1718-1794), who was also a pastor, as were both his younger brothers, Jacques Antoine Rabaut-Pomier (1744-1820), "député du Gard", and Pierre Antoine Rabaut-Dupuis (1746-1808), also known as Rabaut le jeune, also "député du Gard".

Three "internet" sources on J.P. Rabaut in English are reproduced below:

a. from the 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.22, p.766:

Jean-Paul Rabaut Saint-Etienne (1743 - December 5, 1793), French revolutionist, was born at Nîmes, the son of Paul Rabaut (q.v.), the additional surname of Saint-Etienne being assumed from a small property near Nîmes. Like his father, he became a pastor, and distinguished himself by his zeal for his co-religionists, working energetically to obtain the recognition of the civil rights which had been granted to them by Louis XVI in 1788. Having gained a great reputation by his *Histoire primitive de la Grèce*, he was elected deputy to the States General in 1789 by the third estate of the bailliage of Nîmes. In the Constituent Assembly he worked on the framing of the constitution, spoke against the establishment of the republic, which he considered ridiculous, and voted for the suspensive veto, as likely to strengthen the position of the crown. In the Convention he sat among the Girondists, opposed the trial of Louis XVI, was a member of the commission of twelve, and was proscribed with his party. He remained in hiding for some time, but was ultimately discovered and guillotined. See JA Dartique, *Rabaut St-Etienne à l'Assemblée Constituante* (Paris, 1903); and A Lods, "Correspondance de Rabaut St-Etienne" in *La Révolution française* (1898), "L'arrestation de Rabaut St Etienne" in *La Révolution française* for 1903 (cf. the same review for 1901), and "Les débuts de Rabaut St-Etienne aux Etats Généraux et à la Convention" in the *Bulletin historique de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* (1901), also an *Essai sur la vie de Rabaut Saint-Etienne* (1893) separately published. An edition of the *Oeuvres de Rabaut Saint-Etienne* (2 vols., 1826) contains a notice by Collin de Plancy.

b. from Oleg Schultz's database "dedicated to the study of historical offices and important positions in state, international, political, religious and other organizations and societies"; www.archontology.org; © 1999-2007 by Archontology.org; updated 29 March 2006:



Jean-Paul Rabaut, dit Rabaut Saint-Étienne

b. 14 Nov 1743, Nîmes, Gard
d. 5 Dec 1793, Paris

Title: Président de l'Assemblée nationale (President of the National Assembly)

Term: 15 Mar 1790 - 27 Mar 1790

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| Chronology: | 15 Mar 1790, election as president proclaimed by the National Assembly, session of the Assembly, Salle du Manège, Paris; assumed the chair immediately upon the proclamation of election [1, vol. XII, p. 169] |
| | 27 Mar 1790, expiration of term; successor elected and proclaimed [1, vol. XII, p. 380], [2] |
| Names/titles: | Also spelled: Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, Rabaut (Rabaud) de Saint-Étienne |
| | Président de la Convention nationale (President of the National Convention) [24 Jan 1793 - 7 Feb 1793] (see details) |
| Biography: | Son of a Protestant minister and elder brother of Jacques-Antoine Rabaut, dit Rabaut-Pommier, deputy of the Convention nationale (National Convention) [see Comité de salut public]; was educated at the Lausanne seminary (1763-1765); ordained priest (11 Nov 1764); served as a Protestant minister near Toulouse and at Nîmes; moved to Paris (1785), where contributed to recognition of civil status of the Protestants (1787); gained a great reputation by publishing <i>Lettres sur l'histoire primitive de la Grèce</i> ; was elected (27 Mar 1789) as a representative of the Third Estate of Nîmes and Beaucaire to the États-Généraux (Estates-General); served as a deputy of the Assemblée nationale (National Assembly) (1789-1791); was elected a member of the committee for drafting the Constitution; elected President of the National Assembly (15 Mar 1790 - 27 Mar 1790), causing fervent protests among the nobles and Roman Catholic clergy; demanded equal rights for the Protestants; edited <i>Chronique de Paris</i> and <i>Moniteur universel</i> , published <i>Feuille villageoise</i> ; was elected (16 Sep 1791) administrator of the département of Gard, but remained in Paris; was elected to the National Convention (1792-1793) as a deputy for the département of Aube; voted for an appeal to the people and detention at the trial of King Louis XVI; called for delay of the king's execution; served as a member of the Commission des Douze (Commission of Twelve) to ensure security of the Girondin-dominated Convention (appointed 21 May 1793, resigned 28 May 1793); as an adherent of the Girondins, was put on the list of the deputies subject to arrest (2 Jun 1793) and went into hiding in Versailles and Paris; decreed out of law (28 Jul 1793), arrested and guillotined (5 Dec 1793). Biography source: [3] |
| Election results: | Candidate Votes (15 Mar 1790) Jean-Paul Rabaut, dit Rabaut Saint-Étienne absolute majority in second round Election result source: [1, vol. XII, p. 169] |
| Sources and notes: | [1] Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860: recueil complet des débats législatifs et politiques des Chambres françaises. Première série, 1787 à 1799 (Paris: 1868-1913, 1966-) [2] Rabaut chaired the beginning of the session of 28 Mar 1790 and passed the presidency to baron de Menou [1, vol. XII, p. 380]. [3] Dictionnaire des parlementaires français: depuis le 1er mai 1789 jusqu'au 1er mai 1889, ed. by Adolphe Robert, Edgar Bourloton, Gaston Cougny (Paris: Bourloton, 1889-1891). |
| Image: | Gravure by G. Fiesinger after a portrait by J. Guérin. |

c. A bibliography of J.P. Rabaut, taken from the article [in German] on Rabaut by dr. Hans-Otto Binder, lecturer-retired: "Akademischer Oberrat im Ruhestand" in the Department of Modern History, University of Tübingen, Germany, in the online edition of the Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon, Vol.7 (1994) cols.1150-1153; see www.bautz.de.

- works
- Discours prononcé en province le 12 juin 1770 à l'occasion du mariage de Monsieur le Dauphin, 1770
- Triomphe de l'Intolérance, ou Anecdotes de la vie d'Ambroise Borély, mort à Londres, âgé de 103 ans, recueillis par W.Jesterman. Ouvrage traduit de l'anglais et trouvé parmi les papiers de M. de Voltaire, 1779; 2. Auflage unter dem Titel Le vieux Cévenol, ou Anecdotes de la vie d'Ambroise Borély, 1784 (auch als: Justice et nécessité d'assurer en France un état légal aux protestants, Augsburg l'an du rappel, 1785)
- Lettre sur la vie et les écrits de M.Court de Gebelin, adressée au Musée de Paris, 1784
- Lettres à M.Bailly sur l'histoire primitive de la Grèce, 1787
- Avis important sur le ministère et sur l'assemblée prochaine des Etats généraux, 1788
- A la nation française sur les vices de son gouvernement, sur la nécessité d'établir une constitution et sur la composition des Etats-Généraux, 1788
- Considérations sur les intérêts du tiers État, adressées au peuple des provinces, par un propriétaire foncier, 1788
- Question de droit public: doit on recueillir les voix, dans les Etats-Généraux, par ordre ou par têtes de délibérans? 1789
- Almanach historique de la Revolution française, 1791, spätere Auflagen unter dem Titel: Précis historique de la révolution française. Assemblée constituante, suivi de Réflexions politiques sur les circonstances
- Adresse aux Anglais, par un représentant de la nation française, 1791
- Lettre de Rabaut-St-Étienne, membre de la Convention nationale, aux citoyens du departement du Gard; suivie de son Précis sur la Commission des Douze, 1793
- Louis Fuzier, Cinq lettres inédites de Rabaut Saint-Etienne, in: BSHPF 58 (1909) 443-447
- François Rouvière, Quatre lettres inédites de Rabaut Saint-Etienne, in: BSHPF 34 (1885), 214-227
- Pierre Grosclaude, Malesherbes et Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, une correspondance inédite, in: BSHPF 106 (1960), 1-16
- Übers.: In der Nationalversammlung zu Paris geäußerte Meynung über...folgenden Vorschlag: dass niemand...in seiner Religionsausübung gestört werden dürfe, 1790
- selected works:
- Oeuvres de R.-Saint-Étienne, 6 vol. 1820-1826
- Oeuvres de Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, précédées d'une notice sur sa vie par Jacques-Auguste-Simon Collin de Plancy 2 vol. 1826
- Discours et opinions de Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, suivis de ses deux derniers écrits, et précédés d'une notice sur sa vie par François-Antoine Boissy d'Anglas, 2 vol. 1827
- literature:
- Charles Dardier, Rabaut Saint-Etienne, sa première enfance et son Éducation, in: Revue chrétienne 1886, II, 116-134
- Armand Lods, Rabaut de Saint-Etienne. Sa mise lors la loi - son arrestation - sa mort, in: BSHPF 42 (1893) 510-541 *
- Charles Read, Lafayette, Washington et les protestants de France, in: BSHPF 42 (1893), 225-241

J.-Albert Dartigue, Rabaut de Saint-Etienne à l'Assemblée Constituante de 1789, 1903

Georges Diény, Essai sur la prédication de Rabaut Saint-Etienne d'après la collection de ses sermons manuscrits, 1907

Martin Göhring, Rabaut Ein Kämpfer an der Wende zweier Epochen, 1935

M. Sonenscher, Notes sur la famille de Rabaut Saint-Etienne, in: BSHPF 121 (1975) 370-374

Jean-Pierre Donnadieu, Rabaut-Saint-Etienne et la rédaction des cahiers de doléances, in: Les Rabaut. Du désert à la Révolution, 1988, 83-101 [Colloque Nîmes 25-03-1987]

Anne-Marie Duport, Rabaut-Saint-Etienne girondins?, in: Ebenda 103-118;

André Dupont, Rabaut-Saint-Étienne 1743-1793. Un protestant défenseur de la liberté religieuse, 1946, Nouvelle Édition complétée, 1989

Anne-Marie Duport-Anzas, L'image de la Révolution française chez Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, in: L'image de la Révolution française. Actes du Congrès mondial pour le bicentenaire 1989, hrsg. von Michel Vovelle Bd. 2., 1990, 1033-1043

* BSHPF Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français, Paris

Note 2: About "An Address to the people of England".

a. known copies of "An Address to the people of England".

No copies are known of the French original of "An Address to the people of England". The ESTC of the British Library lists 4 copies in the UK, 1 in Ireland and 4 in the United States. The ESTC incorrectly identifies this pamphlet of 8 pages as [another?] translations of "Adresse aux Anglois" of 16 pages. The Hollis catalog of Harvard University indicates a copy of "An Address to the people of England" in the Houghton Library as "Boston? 1791?". The University of Cambridge library indicates 3 copies of "An Address to the people of England [...] 8 p. 8vo" in 2 [convolut] volumes, with note: "Cf. Martin & Walter, 28518 / A translation of Jean-Paul Rabaut Saint-Étienne's 'Adresse aux Anglois, par un représentant de la nation françoise which was first published in Paris in 1791". No copies of "An Address to the people of England" are known in Dutch Libraries. No digital reproductions were found of "Address to the English Nation" and of "Adresse aux Anglois". On the Internet, Thomson Gale has recently created (limited) access to the electronic reproduction of the microfilm of the copy of "An Address to the people of England" in the Cambridge University Library.

b. the publisher of "An Address to the people of England" is unknown.

c. the translator of "An Address to the people of England" is unknown.

d. the date of publication of "An Address to the people of England".

The date of publication of "An Address to the people of England" may be guessed from the reference in its title to the author as the "late president of the national Assembly of France". This probably indicates his presidency of the National Assembly from 15-27 March, 1790, since in his text he mentions the threat of war posed by "Nootka". The Nootka Sound controversy erupted in May 1790, reached its peak in October, and ended in November 1790. It seems unlikely that "late" should point to Rabault's "recent death" on December 5th, 1793, since the threat of an Anglo-French war had by then become a reality, following the French declaration of war of February 1st, 1793.

Note 3: about "Address to the English nation".

a. known copies of "Address to the English nation"

The "Bibliothèque nationale de France" (BnF) in Paris holds 3 copies of the French original of "Address to the English nation" of 23 pages: "Adresse aux Anglois par un représentant de la nation française". These are annotated: "Paris: Desenne, 1791; 16 pp.; 18 juin; Sur la nécessité de maintenir la paix entre les deux Puissances. - Signé: J. P. Rabaut". The BnF does not possess a copy of the English translation. The English Short Title Catalogue of the British Library correctly identifies "Address to the English nation" as the translation of "Adresse aux Anglois", and lists 3 copies of "Address to the English Nation" in the UK and 7 in North America. There are no known copies of "Adresse aux Anglois" in English language libraries. No copies are known in Dutch Libraries of either "Address to the English nation" or "Adresse aux Anglois". No digital reproductions were found of "Address to the English Nation" and of "Adresse aux Anglois".

b. the publisher of "Address to the English nation".

The publisher of "Address to the English nation", Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), was a well known London bookseller of baptist origin. During some 50 years in the booktrade, he published some 2.000 titles, assisted by a single employee in his bookshop. He was a known patron of many dissenting, rational, radical, unitarianist, republican, abolitionist, revolutionary or otherwise controversial authors: those who were not outright convinced that England's "established" church & monarchy & aristocracy & democracy & wealth comprized all that ought to be wished. Well known political and scientific authors like Blake, Price, Priestley, Franklin, Paine, Wollstonecraft, Godwin and Malthus, poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge and Cowper, and otherwise controversial tales like Stedman's "Expedition to Surinam, being the narrative of a five years' expedition against the revolted negroes of Surinam". Among the many translation he commissioned were Condorcet's "Vie de Turgot" of 1786: "The Life of M. Turgot, Comptroller General of the Finances of France, in the Years 1774, 1775, and 1776. With an appendix", London, 1787; Condorcet's "Esquisse" of 1794: "Outlines of an historical view of the progress of the human mind", London, 1795; and Necker's "De l'importance de la morale et des opinions

religieuses" of 1788: "Of the importance of religious opinions", London, 1788 (translated by Mary Wollstonecraft).

c. the translator of "Address to the English nation".

The translator of "An Address to the people of England" is unknown. The pamphlet was not mentioned in the survey of the Johnson publishing affairs by Helen Braithwaite, *Romanticism, publishing and dissent: Joseph Johnson and the cause of liberty*, Basingstoke & New York, 2003.

Note 4: reviews of "Address to the English nation".

While no review is known of "An Address to the people of England", two reviews of "Address to the English nation" have been identified:

a. the very short "review" in the *Gentleman's magazine*, Vol. 61 part II (1791), p.1212:

236. Address to the English Nation. Translated from the French of J. P. Rabaut de St. Etienne". While some of the French reformers bully us as if we were a people of straw (see M. Dupont's speech in the National Assembly, Vol. LX. p.1119); others think us worth inviting to imitate their example. Not so thought our countryman Mr. Day, and yet he wished for a reform (See p.938).

The reference to "Mr. Day" is to the review of "An account of the life and writings of Thomas Day, Esq. By James Keir, Esq. 8vo" on page 938 of volume 61. The monthly *Gentleman's magazine*, the archetype of English literary magazines, was published in London from 1731 until 1907. It provided its readers with a "Britain-focused miscellany of information about people, places and events, including news summaries, parliamentary reports, biographies and obituary notices, poems, essays, and a register of current publications", mostly taken from other sources [see www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej]. This unsigned review of "Address to the English nation" has been attributed to the magazine's leading reviewer, Richard Gough, by James M. Kuist, *The Nichols File of the Gentleman's Magazine: Attributions of Authorship and Other Documentation in Editorial Papers at the Folger Library*, Madison [Wisconsin], 1982, p.82.

b. the more generous review in the September 1791 edition of the *Analytical Review*:

ARTICLE XXXIX. Address to the English Nation. Translated from the French of J. P. Rabaut de St. Etienne. 8vo. 23 p. Price is. Johnson. 1791.

This is a spirited, manly, and rational address; but from the signs of the times, we have cause to fear that deeply rooted prejudices are not yet done away. John Bull has hitherto argued with a high hand, and we have not now any reason to suppose that he will calmly weigh arguments that place Frenchmen on a level with Englishmen. -- And to speak of wars as a remnant of barbarism, is, in other words, to insult the English flag, and depress that national pride which leads an ignorant mechanic to give the sweat of his brow to support armaments that pamper placemen, -- all for the good of old England! With what contempt, in fact, would Englishmen, whose education has raised / them far above the

class alluded to, spurn such sentiments as the following, whilst the sailor, fighting for the sake of fighting, would exclaim, that it was all a hum. p.11.

'Europe, fatigued it may be with her eternal wars, which have not even contributed to the grandeur of the greater part of her kings, has now a natural tendency to put an end to them. She becomes at length weary of sacrificing the flower of her youth, in order to seize upon some villages, which at a peace must be mutually restored -- of contracting immense debts for an unproductive war, and of being ruined in reality, for the sake of conquering in speculation. Ridiculous at least is the spectacle of these European nations, who, without enmity, without passions, without quarrel, and often without any determinate object, pour out immense armies which destroy one another in cold blood, and which, at the end of a series of campaigns, retire from the conflict exhausted and impoverished. Experience will set these follies in their true light. Subjects, and perhaps kings also, will be brought to comprehend that they will all be happier, and even more powerful, when they shall cultivate each the objects of his own industry, and that the profit is surer of cultivating without interruption, than of slaughtering at certain periods the tenth part of their people, and of ruining them twice or thrice in a century.

'Englishmen, these great maxims apply even to you. You are indeed insulated with regard to the rest of Europe. It has been remarked, that you owe to your situation in the midst of the seas, both the peculiar character by which you are distinguished, and your passion for liberty, and that constitution which is the result of both. /

[discusses the nature of Britain's commercial empire and warns against over-reaching]

Consider, lastly, to what point a great national debt may be increased if it is never to be liquidated, and what dangers a state incurs, if it is obliged to liquidate with loss of credit, and at an unfavourable moment.'

We have seldom seen a translation so faithful and at the same time so elegant as the present.

M. /

The monthly *Analytical Review* was a literary magazine published by Joseph Johnson from 1788 until 1799. This review might have been written by Mary Wollstonecraft, who contributed over 400 reviews to the *Analytical Review* between 1788 and 1797, and often signed here reviews with the initial "M". [see Janet Todd, Marilyn Butler & Emma Rees-Mogg (eds.), *The works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, London, 1989, vol.7, p.394-395].

Note 5: he fees [i.e. "engages"].

According to the 1973 edition of *The shorter Oxford English dictionary on historical principles*, p.735: "Fee v. Middle English. [...] 3. To engage for a fee; *Scotch* to hire (servants, etc.); in bad sense, to bribe ME".

Note 6: *manent adhuc vestigia ruris* [i.e. "traces of our rustic past"].

Probably after Vergilius [according to the Italian criminologist Giovanni Carmignani, *Una lezione accademica sulla pena di morte*, Pisa 1836, p.31, n.34: "dire della nostra età con Virgilio: "Antiqui adhuc manent vestigia ruris"] or Horatius [*Epistulae*, Boek 2, I,160: "manent vestigia ruris"]; also quoted by David Hume in his Essay "Of civil liberty" (1758), arguing [according to www.constitution.org] that a "certain amount is needed for

civic virtue and the well-being of the state", and [according to James Fieser, in "The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy"] that "arts and sciences flourish under absolute governments, but commerce flourishes more in free governments [...] Free governments tend to degenerate because of excessive debts and taxes"; David Hume, "Of civil liberty" [i.e. the second edition of his "Of Liberty and Despotism" of 1741; www.constitution.org]: "If we consider the state of the sciences and polite arts in our own country, HORACE'S observation, with regard to the ROMANS, may, in a great measure, be applied to the BRITISH. --- *Sed in longum tamen aevum, manserunt, hodieque manent vestigia ruris.*"; translated as "yet for many a year lived on, and still live on, traces of our rustic past." by H. Rushton Fairclough [*Horace. Satires, epistles and Ars poetica*, London, 1926].

Note 7: Nootka.

Nootka Controversy: the 1789-1791 British-Spanish controversy over an incident in the Nootka sound on the pacific coast of Canada. British belligerence over the Spanish claim of sovereignty over the western shores of North-America threatened to throw Europ into a general war, since France would have become involved on the Spanish side by the 1761 Family Compact [*Pacte de famille*] with the other "Bourbon" kings of Spain, Naples and Parma. The crisis ended in november 1790 when Spain gave in; a final "on the spot" Nootka conference in 1792 to settle the limits of Spanish colonization produced no results. See Howard V. Evans, "The Nootka Sound Controversy in Anglo-French Diplomacy - 1790", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 46, No. 4. (Dec., 1974), pp.609-640.

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