

FRANCO VENTURI
R. BURR LITCHFIELD

The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1776-1789, Part II

*Republican Patriotism and the Empires
of the East*



PRINCETON LEGACY LIBRARY

The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1776–1789

II: REPUBLICAN PATRIOTISM
AND THE EMPIRES OF THE EAST

FRANCO VENTURI

The End
of the Old Regime
in Europe,
1776–1789



*II. Republican Patriotism
and the Empires of the East*

Translated by
R. Burr Litchfield

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Princeton, New Jersey

Copyright © 1991 by Princeton University Press
Translated from Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore. IV. La caduta dell'Antico Regime (1776–1789)* 2. *Il patriottismo repubblicano e gli imperi dell'Est*. Copyright © 1984
Giulio Einaudi editore, Turin

Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, Oxford

All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
(Revised for volume 2)

Venturi, Franco.

The end of the Old Regime in Europe, 1776–1789.
Translation of: *La caduta dell'Antico Regime, 1776–1789*.

Contents: 1. The great states of the west—

2. Republican patriotism and the empires of the east

1 Europe—History—1648–1789. I. Title.

D289.V4613 1991 940.2'53 90–8050

ISBN 0-691-03156-8 (v. 1 : alk. paper)

ISBN 0-691-03157-6 (v. 2 : alk. paper)

This book has been composed in Linotron Baskerville

Princeton University Press books are printed on acid-free paper,
and meet the guidelines for permanence and durability of the
Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the
Council on Library Resources

Printed in the United States of America by Princeton University Press,
Princeton, New Jersey

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Contents

CHAPTER VI	<i>“Ubi Libertas, Ibi Patria”: The Genevan Revolution of 1782</i>	459
CHAPTER VII	<i>The Revolution of the United Provinces</i>	497
CHAPTER VIII	<i>The “Grand Project” of Joseph II: The Revolts of Transylvania, Belgium, and Hungary</i>	605
CHAPTER IX	<i>Despotism, Reforms, and Liberty in Russia, Turkey, Sweden, and Poland</i>	764
CHAPTER X	<i>Toward the Revolution in France</i>	948
	Index	1017

The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1776–1789

II: REPUBLICAN PATRIOTISM
AND THE EMPIRES OF THE EAST

VI



“Ubi Libertas, Ibi Patria”: The Genevan Revolution of 1782

“THE POLITICAL DISSENSIONS THAT HAVE APPEARED FOR ABOUT THE last fifteen years in the Republic of Geneva continue to disturb this little state,” one read in the Florentine *Notizie del mondo* in the summer of 1780.¹ The conflicts that seemed quieted after long disputes through the fragile compromise of 1770 reemerged among patricians (or constitutionals and negatives), citizens (or *representants*), and *natifs*, who were also originally from Geneva, but were almost entirely deprived of political rights.² Nor did these occupy the lowest level of the Genevan social pyramid: there were also the “*habitants*” (workers and peasants who had been naturalized), “the helots of the Republic,” as Mallet Du Pan wrote.³ At the beginning of 1781 the danger of a civil war and French intervention seemed imminent. The negatives organized “squadrons armed with swords and pistols.” “The whole city is aroused, either in squadrons or in clubs, to await this event, and at the same time it is ready for anything. . . . A citizen has killed a *natif*.” Even if a conflict was avoided at the time, all were persuaded that things would not end “without an even bloodier

¹ *Notizie del mondo*, no. 57, 15 July 1780, p. 455 (Lausanne, 15 June). *L'esprit des gazettes*, which began to be published in Belgium in 1780, said that this news came from the *Gazette anglo-française et américaine* and that it had been taken up in the gazette of Utrecht, no. 14, 8 July 1780. It was even found in the *Nouvelles de divers endroits* of Leiden, no. 52, 30 June 1780, “Extrait d’une lettre de Lausanne du 15 Juin.” This was an example, as one sees, of the rebounding of news from one corner of Europe to another that was typical of gazettes at this time.

² Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1768–1776*, pp. 340ff.

³ Jacques Mallet Du Pan, “Genève: De la dernière révolution de cette république. Réflexions générales sur cet événement et sur ses suites,” in *Annales politiques, civiles et littéraires. Ouvrage périodique pour servir de suite aux Annales de M. Linguet*, vol. 4, no. 25, 30 August 1782, p. 17.

scene.”⁴ One month later “the negatives (that is, gentlemen who oppose the measures of the people sitting in the council) . . . had assembled a lot of men of every condition, but the *representants* (that is, citizens of the place), who had not fallen asleep, frustrated their plans by taking control of the artillery at midnight.”⁵ French pressure became more and more threatening. The very existence of the republic was at stake: “This unfortunate land finds itself under impending danger of losing its freedom.”⁶

The world situation was too charged with preoccupations for the internal conflicts of this minuscule state not to arouse sometimes a sense of impatience and even derision. The gazettes were full of news about the war just begun between Great Britain and Holland, about the siege of Gibraltar, and about developments in the American Revolution. In this great drama, what part was “the little republic of Geneva” going to play? It was making “a great noise in the world of politics,” it was said in Paris, “as if it wanted to distract the attention of Europe, which was entirely fixed on a great tragedy being acted out, by providing a diversion with its vain and ridiculous controversies.”⁷

But still, it was not difficult to guess, even from only reading the sparse news appearing in the gazettes, that something important and alive was at the root of the conflicts tearing Geneva to pieces and of the resolution emerging there not to be crushed by the politics of Louis XVI and his minister Vergennes. “To maintain the constitution of this republic” meant making one’s own original contribution in the search for liberty that was breaking out everywhere in these years. “It is hoped now more than ever,” a correspondent of the Florentine *Notizie del mondo* concluded, “that the party of *representants*, and the people, will prevail, and that liberty will be preserved.”⁸

Geneva found itself at the highest point in its extraordinary eighteenth-century development. The republic was experiencing a boom in economic development. The industries of clock making, printing, and

⁴ *Notizie del mondo*, no. 6, 20 January 1781, p. 46 (Geneva, 5 January). This communication is also found in *La gazetta di Milano*, no. 5, 31 January 1781 (Geneva, 5 January).

⁵ *Notizie del mondo*, no. 15, 20 February 1781, p. 119 (Milan, 14 February). The Venetian gazette *Notizie del mondo* also echoed these events in a communication from Geneva: “The disturbances that have saddened our city in the space of several days, and have armed Genevan against Genevan, have finally ended. This city was on the point of being totally destroyed, and all would have been put to fire and sword if the citizen *representants* had not gained control of City Hall as well as of the doors of the Arsenal” (*Notizie del mondo* [V.], no. 20, 10 March 1781, p. 155, “Dalle ultime lettere di Ginevra”).

⁶ *Notizie del mondo*, no. 18, 3 March 1781, p. 143 (Geneva, 19 February).

⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 20, 10 March 1781, p. 158 (Paris, 23 February).

⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 22, 17 March 1781, p. 175, “Estratto d’una lettera di Ginevra del di 22 dello scorso.”

textiles, as well as finance, were in full expansion.⁹ Throughout its fabric Genevan society was in need of reform. To constitutional disputes had been added disputes about changes to be made in civil and penal law. The negatives had sharply opposed the decision to "draw up a law code" to supplant the antiquated juridical traditions of the republic.¹⁰ The citizens presented themselves more and more as partisans of significant reforms not only in governmental organization, but in all of civil society.

François d'Ivernois, a young publisher and a political writer (he was born in 1757), made himself, with great energy and ability, the spokesman for the *representants* in confronting what in his eyes was the central problem of the Genevan situation, the ever present peril of the republic's degeneration into oligarchy.¹¹ The "unfortunate Rousseau" had been its victim. It was now necessary to take up his battle again, to affirm the principle of the "perfect equality" of all members of the republic. "The rich," those who defined themselves as patricians and behaved in their social relations with their compatriots in an exclusive manner, almost as if they were German nobles, had acted and continued to act against this egalitarian idea. But still, equality had solid bases in Geneva. "It is the city of the world where there is perhaps the greatest number of honest, simple, virtuous, and educated men." As for liberty, Genevans were "perhaps the only people in the universe who are truly free." Why should it be surprising that the "revolutions" of Geneva were "famous" and attracted everyone's attention?

Republican pride pushed d'Ivernois to proclaim himself the defender of his country from the threat of France, which became more and more openly the supporter of the patricians and thus an increasingly serious obstacle to internal reform in Geneva.¹² Vergennes, Louis XVI's minister of foreign affairs, was rather surprised and annoyed when confronted with this insistent and intelligent advocate of the Genevan bourgeois citizenry. It was a strange encounter, but one indicative of the crossroads France found before itself. "No, the defender of American liberty would not dare touch our own," d'Ivernois was heard to have said.¹³ How could one imagine him not remaining at the height of the principles he appealed to when aligning himself with the Ameri-

⁹ Paul Guichonnet, ed., *Histoire de Genève* (Toulouse: Privat, 1974), pp. 230ff. (The sections on economics are by Anne-Marie Piuze.)

¹⁰ *Notizie del mondo*, no. 57, 15 July 1780, p. 455 (Lausanne, 15 June).

¹¹ See Otto Karmin, "Sir Francis d'Ivernois, 1757-1842. Sa vie, son oeuvre et son temps," in *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire* (Geneva, 1920). This work is a true mine of information for the history not only of Geneva, but of Europe as a whole in the passage between the two centuries.

¹² François d'Ivernois, *Lettre d'un citoyen de Genève à M. ****, Geneva, 1 November 1779, pp. 3, 28.

can “insurgents”? Nor could one imagine that he was in some way heedless, or fearful of what might happen in Geneva. Was it possible that he believed Switzerland, France, and all of Europe would be shaken one day? “You will never be persuaded,” he wrote to the French minister, “that the peace of the universe depends on crushing a handful of free and virtuous citizens, whose only aim is to live in happy obscurity.” He clearly wanted to calm Vergennes, but also to remind him once again that it was precisely he who had “aided America to reach the harbor of independence.”¹³ Geneva, as d’Ivernois meanwhile explained to Madame de Polignac, had the right to follow its own political logic, to grow on the basis of its own egalitarian principles. “The laws of Geneva have established the most perfect political equality; they admit neither nobles nor non-nobles and recognize nothing hereditary except the ability to aspire to everything.” To be sure, riches had changed that initial point of departure. “Industry soon led to an inequality of fortunes: from that moment the rich aspired to dominate, considered public employment as an exclusive patrimony, and defended their authority at different times, when they had acquired it, with the advantages always procured by opulence. There, Madam, is the source of the political dissensions that have sometimes divided and still divide us.”¹⁴ This was thus both a political and a social struggle, which d’Ivernois insisted should be fought within the unbreachable limits of republican tradition. It was necessary to stop “the progress of aristocracies.” Had this not been done recently by the “citizens of the State of Massachusetts Bay”? It was not a question, at any event, of opening the way for “extreme democracy,” or for “anarchy,” both regimes associated with “unemployed, ignorant, and superstitious peoples” and not adapted to a society, like that of Geneva, that was “tranquil, industrious, and commercial.”¹⁵

Thus this was a republic without a hierarchy of social groups or “estates” (no nobility, clergy, or Third Estate born of “feudal division”), based on the “sovereign will” of the “Conseil Général and enlightened by the advice of the Petit and Grand Conseil,” which recognized the “invisible government of political clubs” without fully defining it, and that was based not on force, but instead “on the solid ground of confi-

¹³ Id., *Lettres et mémoires*, n.p., n.d., p. 60. The letter has the dateline Dijon, 3 November 1780.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 3. Letter addressed to Gabrielle de Polastron, Duchesse de Polignac.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 54, 62ff. There is an echo of the *Lettres* in the *Memorie encyclopediche*, no. 17, May 1781, pp. 132ff. Ristori, after having summarized it concludes: “These letters are written with force and energy. Republics know how to inspire their citizens with love of country and this sentiment is expressed by them with so much enthusiasm and liveliness that they are eloquent without ever having studied the rules of rhetoric.”

dence."¹⁶ Its constitution found its basic motivation in the "removability" of officeholders, that is, in the mechanism for changing governors. Without this, the development of an oligarchy was inevitable. "How had Lucca, Ragusa, Hamburg, and the greater part of the Imperial cities prevented the betrayal of their senates? It was by making them renewable bodies. How did England delay the progress of the cancer of corruption that devours it? It was through the renewal of its Parliament. Finally, how did Venice satisfy the ambition of its nobles and keep public control over its odious aristocracy? It was through the continual change of officeholders."¹⁷

But still, even in Geneva, this mobility, although necessary, was insufficient. Other means had to be adopted to establish new relations between governors and citizens, two groups that now were so distinct and distant as to make one think of the existence of "two separate peoples," both dominated by the "wounds of pride." The "prejudice of rank" and "family pride" required correction through a deep reform in public education. How could one prevent the rich from continuing to educate their heirs privately? "Republican life is no other than a continuation of public education."¹⁸ At the same time it was necessary to remake civil and criminal legislation so as to ensure the individual rights of citizens. "The legislation of Geneva gives rights only to citizens assembled in political bodies and does practically nothing to protect isolated individuals." This was one of the principal roots of unrest. The "lack of individual liberty" was "one of the prime sources of the agitation of Geneva."¹⁹ What De Lolme had written about England, and what the United States of America was accomplishing in matters of penal legislation, could, or rather should, serve as an example. Thus Beccaria was right in demanding publicity of trials. And along with him Montesquieu, Brissot de Warville, and Blackstone should be listened to and followed.

This was a vast program that was soon destined to shipwreck on the resumed struggles between negatives and *representants*, while the pressure of the *natifs* continued to grow. In 1770 the two parties holding political power, in different ways, united against the *natifs* and defeated and exiled them. In the "taking to arms" on 8 April 1782 the *natifs* ended up on the side of the citizen *representants*. The negatives, isolated, succumbed to the insurrection, were dispossessed, and some were ar-

¹⁶ François d'Ivernois, *Offrande à la liberté et à la paix par un citoyen de Genève, ou Idées de conciliation adressées à Mr. J.-A. de Luc en réfutation du Mémoire qu'il remit le 21 aoust 1781 à monsieur le comte de Vergennes* (Geneva, 1781), pp. 6, 8, 20, 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 55ff., Geneva, 15 October 1781.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 77ff., 80, 87.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 105.

rested. In the following months the right of citizenship was granted to 460 *natifs*.²⁰ Even on this occasion, as had happened in all preceding Genevan revolutions, legal forms were respected, and the renewal of the councils was accomplished from within.²¹

As in 1770, but now more clearly, the course of events was influenced by the guaranteeing powers, particularly the will of France to protect the Genevan patricians and, through them, exercise an influence over the republic that was sufficiently strong to seem a kind of annexation. For some time Vergennes had decided on armed intervention. Among the Swiss cantons that France approached, Zurich refused to participate, but Berne accepted, fearful of the influence that the Ge-

²⁰ See *Notizie del mondo* [V.], no. 41, 22 May 1782, p. 323 (Milan, 18 May).

²¹ The Florentine *Notizie del mondo* described the insurrection "of the bourgeois of the city of Geneva" in detail (no. 35, 30 April 1782, p. 278 [Milan, 24 April], "Copia di lettera in data de' 10 Aprile 1782 inviataci dalle vicinanze di Ginevra") and then attempted to clarify the significance of these events for readers. It was said the conflict was among "citizens, bourgeois, *natifs*, and *representants*." The insurrection was born of the union of citizens and *natifs* and was directed against the aristocratic party (no. 38, 11 May 1782, p. 302 [Milan, 4 May]). The Venetian *Notizie del mondo* also expanded with news from Geneva. The citizens' representatives, it was said on 1 May, "occupy the chief positions and aim cannon at the gates." "Our situation is very sad. God bend to our assistance. Our streets are filled with a great number of dead, citizens not less than soldiers" (no. 35, 1 May 1782, p. 273 [Milan, 27 April]). Two issues later it was emphasized that the information provided was intended to be impartial and not to take the part of factions in the struggle. It was added nonetheless that "all letters sent from Geneva take the side of the insurgent citizens, imputing to the aristocratic system, too obstinately and unwisely supported by some members of the Small Council, the sad effects that keep this small republic in agitation." The chief problem—it was said farther on—was the pretensions of the *natifs*. "The partisans of the aristocracy, known with the title of negatives, have done everything to win them over by promising them the right of citizenship and employing other means scorned by equity and honor: money, banquets, clothes, caresses. . . . The citizen representatives, convinced . . . that their party would be ruined, saw themselves obliged to make to the *natifs* even more advantageous offers. Thus the *natifs* have in a certain sense been put up for auction and have become the prize of the biggest offer and last buyer" (no. 37, 8 May 1782, p. 294 [Milan, 1 May]). On 11 May this gazette referred to the "new laws that are to govern the republic." "With the establishment of democratic government all discord will cease instantly because the neighboring powers will not lend an ear to the protests of the negatives. Otherwise the city is always closed and the people have not set their hostages free" (no. 38, 11 May 1782, p. 303 [Paris, 26 April]). A few days later there was news of the creation of a Council of Security in which all powers were concentrated (the relevant decree, voted 692 to 19, was reported in its entirety). "Once arms were laid down it was hoped that peace and tranquillity, of which we have been deprived for some time, would be restored" (no. 40, 18 May 1782, p. 318 [Paris, 3 May]). The most recent and best examination of these events is found in Jean-Daniel Candaux, "La révolution genevoise de 1782: Un état de la question," in vol. 7, ed. Roland Mortier and Hervé Hasquin, of *L'Europe et les révolutions* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université, 1980), pp. 77ff. There is ample documentation on the preparation and realization of the Franco-Sardo-Bernese intervention in Turin, AS, Sez. 1, Genève, catégorie 19^e, paquets 1 and 2.

nevan revolution could have on the territory of Vaud, under its control.²² With some caution and reserve, the kingdom of Sardinia also aligned itself with the politics of France. With every day that passed it became more evident—as was stated in a communication from Geneva published in the gazette of Venice—that “the manner in which our neighbors have begun to view our recent revolution . . . does not seem very favorable to the democratic party.”²³ Prussia, England, and the United Provinces, in which the new Genevan government might have had some hope, remained immobile. In vain the English minister at Turin, John Mount Stuart, the third son of the Earl of Bute, who from his youth had been in contact with the Italian world, attempted to aid the Genevans in some way.²⁴

At the end of June, French, Piedmontese, and Bernese troops appeared before the city, demanding its surrender, the restoration of the prerevolutionary regime, the liberation of the imprisoned patricians, and the arrest of the leaders of the insurrection.²⁵

²² An intelligent and a disparaging letter on the politics of Berne was written in Geneva on 28 May 1782 by Count Agostino Carli Rubbi, the son of Gianrinaldo: “The canton of Berne, whose government is an oligarchy under the guise of a municipal aristocracy, has as a principle of internal policy to favor only the agricultural population, to subject and crush the intermediary body between the high bourgeoisie and the peasants . . . it does not favor in any way the class of manufacturers and workers,” and thus it was an enemy of Geneva and of the “active laboring crowd” that dominated it. This text, of notable interest throughout, is in Turin, AS, Sez. 1, Genève, catégorie 195, paquet 1.

²³ *Notizie del mondo* [V.], no. 41, 22 May 1782, p. 322 (Milan, 18 May).

²⁴ Karmin, “Sir Francis d'Ivernois,” pp. 91ff. Shelburne's arrival to power led to the Genevans' hope for a moment that Great Britain would intervene in their favor: “Shelburne . . . was known for having wanted to engage his country to defend the liberty of Corsica and not to attack that of the Americans; thus Geneva seemed to have a claim on him” (François d'Ivernois, *Tableau historique et politique des deux dernières révolutions de Genève*, par *** [London, 1789], vol. 2, p. 188). The same d'Ivernois appealed on 10 June 1782 in Geneva to Lord Willoughby Bertie, Earl of Abington, who had been a supporter of Wilkes and belonged to the Rockingham party, calling him the “friend of liberty and justice, and protector of the oppressed . . .” and entreating him to “rise to the fate of a small state of interest to thinking men which is on the point of becoming the victim of those tyrannical maxims which you combat in England with so much wisdom, energy, and glory.” Abington wrote back to him on 20 June, expressing “the regret felt in that country for his inability to address the enemies of the human race with his usual tone of authority” (*Courier de l'Europe*, no. 4, 12 July 1782, p. 28 [London, 12 July]). Shortly after, the Earl of Abington intervened energetically in the affairs of Ireland (no. 9, 30 July 1782, p. 70).

²⁵ Here is what was written in the *Courier de l'Europe*, no. 1, 2 July 1782, p. 1 (Geneva, 8 June): “A courier, who arrived from Turin has told us of the approach of 3 or 4 thousand men, troops of the king of Sardinia. The marine regiment is already in Carouge; it will be followed by 16 companies of grenadiers from the elite regiment of Savoy, dragoons, and the whole campaign legion. Count de La Marmora, the former extraordinary ambassador to the court of Versailles and Viceroy of Sardinia, currently a lieutenant general of cavalry and grand master of the king's household, who is in command, is charged

The people were for resistance. The fact that three powers were attacking Geneva raised its citizens' pride and enthusiasm. They intended to make known clearly that they did not at all resemble the "common people" of Lyon or Paris, whom a squadron of gendarmes could bring to their knees "when they attempt sedition." The gates were manned, hostages were treated more harshly, the fortifications were repaired. "Women, children, and men of all ages and conditions restored the parapets dismantled during a peace that was thought perpetual. The multitude enthusiastically shifted soil that might be used as a tomb for them and their liberty." "Stores of arms were distributed in all quarters of the city, munitions that were to have aged in their storehouses for centuries were brought out, and artillery was dragged up onto the ramparts." "One must keep before one's eyes the distressing picture of a people of artisans, impoverished by idleness, sustained by fanaticism, gay amid the greatest perils, without care for their fate or that of their families, employed all day admiring the cannon and works, or in incessant military exercises, taking on a warlike enthusiasm for heroism, drunk with militancy. . . ."²⁶ Not only artisans, but also peasants showed themselves full of spirit and initiative. "The peasants of the district of Pency (a village of the republic)" entered "armed into the houses of the constitutionals," that is, the patricians. "These immediately demanded protection from the Marquis de Jaucourt [the commandant of the French troops], who gave it to them. The troops dispersed some of the peasants and disarmed the rest." Within the walls of the city it was believed that an assault by the enemy was imminent. "The general alarm was sounded and

with the pacification plan, which will be imposed by acceptance or by force. . . ." The *Gazetta universale*, no. 46, 8 June 1782, pp. 371ff. (Milan, 1 June), published an "Estratto d'una lettera d'un ufficiale del re di Sardegna in data del dì 24 maggio 1782 da Carouge, relativa alla spedizione di truppe fattasi contro la città di Ginevra," where one read: "The Genevans seem to have lost their heads . . . [they are] fanatics sure of victory; otherwise they do not have one piece of artillery in their battery; citizens stand guard; the gates are guarded by a number of sentinels, some with guns, others with pikes or with bayonets. This poor city arouses pity: many shops are closed for lack of workers, who are in the militia; the negatives stay in their houses to avoid the insults of *natifs* among the common people, whose heads have been heated by the representatives. These give forth a murky silence that announces their fear of the arms of the troops of the various powers." There was even the hope of a bloodless solution for the crisis, "although seeing even youths and women employ themselves with the cannon and works on the fortifications makes one fear that spirits have been so heated and animated by the representatives as to bring on the city's total loss."

²⁶ Mallet Du Pan, "Genève: De la dernière révolution," vol. 4, no. 26, 15 September 1780, pp. 92ff. The gazette of Venice said the people of Geneva were "determined to defend themselves to the last." "Such are the consequences of a burning enthusiasm for liberty, as noble in its beginnings as it is sometimes deadly in its effects" (*Notizie del mondo* [V.J., no. 44, 1 June 1782, p. 347 [Milan, 29 May]).

the city gates were closed."²⁷ The spirit of the populace was remarked everywhere, by all observers.

But the leaders were divided. D'Ivernois was for resistance at any cost. He gave the example of Saguntum in antiquity. Others, however, argued that it was impossible to oppose such a strong force. They proposed abandoning the city and seeking another fatherland. Their model was Messenia rather than Saguntum. Still others, among whom were several pastors, advised resignation before such an unequal fight. The news that arrived in Italy reflected this diffused state of uncertainty. The preparations of the Piedmontese, "intended doubtlessly to frighten the representatives or popular party," were not without effect.²⁸ "According to all news received from Geneva, the insurgents and the leaders they have chosen are beginning to sing a recantation."²⁹ As the days passed, the gazette of Venice, from which these words are taken, grew more and more clearly favorable to the negatives and the aristocratic tradition.³⁰

Meanwhile, in the besieged city, destiny accomplished itself. In the decisive vote of the special commission named to decide on war or peace, fifty-seven members voted for capitulation and forty against. There was no lack of accusations against the leaders for having intentionally seized power so as to be able to surrender and thus avoid ruin and massacre. Pierre Moulto, the friend of Rousseau, who was deeply shaken by the tragic events he witnessed, was convinced that this was the case. The salvation of Geneva seemed to him truly a miracle. But how cruel it was to have to accept it! The point of rejecting a useless defense had been reached, which would have "immortalized and undone" Genevans. "They had undertaken it solemnly, before all of Europe; they had declared that free men may be defeated and not submit; and after such language the only resource for a courageous and an honorable people is to perish." Still, the responsibility had been not the people's, but rather the leaders'. "The leaders have set the people against one another. . . . Two or three times, the assembled clubs decided on the need to defend the city, and the dismayed leaders seemed to give in with joy to this resolution; they even saw that it was useless to consult

²⁷ *Courier de l'Europe*, no. 5, 16 July 1782, p. 33, (Geneva, 22 June).

²⁸ *Notizie del mondo* [V.], no. 45, 5 June 1782, p. 360 (Geneva, 25 May).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 53, 3 July 1782, p. 424 (Milan, 23 June).

³⁰ At this point the "memoir of Mr. de Luc sent to the Comte de Vergennes," one of the principal documents in the revival of the patricians, was published in its entirety (*ibid.*, no. 48, 15 June 1782, pp. 179ff. [Milan, 22 June]), as well as, some days later, the *Relazione della congiura contro il governo e il magistrato di Ginevra degli 8 d'aprile*, a violently reactionary document (*ibid.*, no. 55, 10 July 1782, pp. 25ff. [Geneva, 18 June], which continues in the following issues).

the people further, that they would always have the same answer. Consequently, the proposal was made to form an elite committee composed of a twentieth part of the nation, which was authorized to take any resolutions that circumstances required. The proposition was accepted without question; it was thought to be a wise defense measure." And the commission produced "a kind of plurality of votes to surrender." There remained only for the people to express their anger and desperation in the most varied forms. "Some turned their arms against themselves, others misprized them and threw them away; the greater number ran after the leaders, to wash away the shame imposed on them with their blood; almost all swore to abandon a fatherland that seemed already to reproach them and fled with their wives and children. The roads were full of unhappy fugitives and echoed with their groans and cries. . . . Crushed with shame and sorrow, they seemed to want to hide from all nature; no spectacle has ever moved me as much."³¹

Entreaties followed everywhere. "See what has come of all the effort, preparations, and the representatives' threats in Geneva to bury themselves under the ruins and ashes of their homeland," wrote the Florentine *Notizie del mondo*. "It is true that some say: what could they do against three powers? We will not answer that they should have died, because it would be mad to do so for a verbal dispute, but it would have been better not to have made so many protestations they were not prepared to uphold."³²

Nonetheless, the days, months, and years that followed the capitulation demonstrated that it truly had not been only a "verbal dispute." The operation of the occupation itself revealed telling elements in the difficult relationship between monarchies and republics at the end of the old regime. The vivacity of the continuing dispute about what had happened in Geneva in 1782 underlined the importance of the ideas of equality, liberty, and reform that found a temporary but vivid expression in these events. Then the diaspora of this revolution's elite showed what and how much political and intellectual energy the leaders obliged to abandon their fatherland possessed.¹

At the beginning of June, when the threat to Geneva was approaching, rumors spread of a project to partition the republic between France and Sardinia. "If that happens," one reads in a communication from

³¹ "Lettre de M. Moulou sur la dernière révolution de Genève," in *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique* par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister, etc. Notices, notes, table générale par Maurice Tourneux (Paris: Garnier, 1880), vol. 13, pp. 173ff.

³² *Notizie del mondo*, no. 60, 27 July 1782, p. 479 (Geneva, 6 July).

¹ They are listed in Karmin, "Sir Francis d'Ivernois," p. 97 n. 31.

Milan in the Florentine *Notizie del mondo*, "politicians will be able to admire the strange caprice of things in this world, since in less than 12 years France and its influence will have subjected three republics in our continent to monarchical control, that is, Corsica, Sweden, and Geneva, and will have created thirteen new ones in the New World."² However, as was soon seen, the French monarchy did not intend to eliminate the Genevan republic, but only to control it from inside, through its patricians, as it had done in the past with Strasbourg, Berne, Genova, and other city-states along its frontiers. It was to ward off this danger that d'Ivernois attempted to act through diplomatic initiatives and a book that came out precisely in 1782: *Tableau historique et politique des révolutions de Genève dans le dix-huitième siècle*. He dedicated it—paradoxical though this may seem—"to his Most Christian Majesty Louis XVI, King of France and Navarre." He openly defended the independence and republicanism of his city and admitted that "the citizens of Geneva" had become, "through a strange metamorphosis, a people of enthusiasts." But why should the king of France be displeased with "the virtues of republics"? Whatever could have induced him "to reduce to despair the inhabitants of a city distinguished by its prosperity and honored by citizens who aspire to nothing other than to make it a school for educated, useful, and virtuous men"?³ This was a supreme effort to salvage a co-existence between monarchs and republics, between large centralized states and small free cities, which had lasted for centuries, but now, as the earlier example of Geneva showed, had become more difficult and precarious.

More intense relations with the kingdom of Sardinia, despite its hostility, also led to a kind of balance in the situation that had emerged in recent decades in Geneva, Savoy, and Piedmont. It was above all Mallet Du Pan who noted to what extent these lands were becoming more closely united and complementary. "Of all its neighbors, none is more closely tied to the fate of the Republic or more attached to its happiness than Savoy. These are two sisters set against each other by a change of masters, but closely linked by all kinds of bonds. The Savoyard and the Genevan have the same blood; once they were the same nation." The character of Genevans had changed with the volume of immigration, but without ever losing "their original character, frank, good, simple, free from the strong passions that characterize the Savoyard." Nourish-

² *Notizie del mondo*, no. 48, 15 June 1782, p. 383 (Milan, 9 June). The formula that defined French policy seemed to derive from *Le politique hollandais*, vol. 3, no. 68, 27 May 1782, p. 250.

³ François d'Ivernois, *Tableau historique et politique des révolutions de Genève dans le dix-huitième siècle* (Geneva, 1782), pp. ix, xviii.

ment continued to come to Geneva from Savoy. A commercial city in an agrarian region, it had become again "the capital of that part of Savoy, as it once was." "Without the presence of Geneva, these lands would remain in a state of nature without outlet or exchange for their surplus. . . . Calvin's Rome is that poor body's natural pulmonary vein through which it shares its abundance." "The decline of Geneva would be a thermometer of the indigence of Savoy." And in fact Savoyards were so tied to Geneva that during the days when the city seemed menaced by foreign arms "Savoyards wept along the roads, sharing the mourning of the Republic like its own children. They deplored those frightful days, which evoked only an unfeeling curiosity among other peoples."⁴ The birth, at the gates of Geneva, of an exemplary small Piedmontese city, Carouge (now part of Geneva), came to symbolize this monarchical-republican symbiosis (and through the tolerance existing at Carouge, even a Catholic-Protestant one).⁵

Thanks to the energy and capacity of Filippo Francesco Ferrero della Marmora, the commander of the Sardinian forces, not even the crisis of 1782 disturbed this relationship. Even he was struck by the "fanaticism" of the people of Geneva, the fruit, as he saw it, of the "demagogic regime that has weighed on the Republic for the last 19 years," and he disliked the "language of low tracts" that he heard from the mouths of "citizen delegates from the different clubs of the bourgeoisie." Like Vergennes and the old minister Maurepas, it was impossible for him to keep out of his mind the continued threat of a kind of resurrection of Jean Jacques Rousseau.⁶ He also, like the French, declared he was in favor "of a mixed government, an administration prudently balancing between aristocracy and democracy, as in past centuries."⁷ He

⁴ Mallet Du Pan, "Genève: De la dernière révolution," vol. 4, no. 26, 15 September 1782, pp. 88ff.

⁵ See André Corboz, *Invention de Carouge: 1772-1792* (Lausanne: Payot, 1968); and Luciano Tamburini, "Carouge 'città inventata,'" in *Civiltà del Piemonte: Studi in onore di Renzo Gandolfo nel suo settantacinquesimo compleanno* (Turin: Centro studi piemontesi, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 195ff. See what was written in the *Notizie del mondo*, no. 67, 21 August 1781, p. 534 (Turin, 12 August): "After His Majesty declared Carouge (near Geneva) capital of a province of that name, he ordered that all inhabitants of the city be exempt from taxation and that all goods manufactured in that place pass freely without toll through the Duchy of Savoy. . . . The advantageous situation of the said city of Carouge, the healthy air it breathes, the good order established there, the mildness of its government, all contribute to grant the prayers of its inhabitants, both Catholics and Protestants."

⁶ "Wouldn't [the Genevans] be delighted to have more Jean Jacques and be the center of the world for the third time in half a century?" said Maurepas, according to d'Ivernois's report in *Tableau historique et politique des deux dernières révolutions*, vol. 1, p. 203.

⁷ Mario degli Alberti, "Una campagna incruenta sotto Vittorio Amedeo III," extract from *Rassegna contemporanea*, year 4, no. 9 (Rome: Cooperativa tipografia Manuzio, 1911),

did not hesitate to take what he considered to be indispensable measures, including threats of hanging the "Sardinian subjects" living in Geneva who had "cooperated in the defense of that place."⁸ But he was convinced that he was in a position to obtain his objective, that is, the restoration of the traditional regime in Geneva, by profiting from the uncertainty and errors of his adversaries, and without spilling a drop of blood. As he approached Geneva he stated in a public declaration: "We pledge to enforce the most exact discipline, and employ our forces only to procure public tranquillity. We otherwise declare that His Majesty has no intention of threatening the liberty and independence of the Republic."⁹ "Firm without being haughty, simply and with dignity, he united a popularity of manners with an elevation of spirit and character, the mien of a courtier with the frankness of a knight. He showed a touching interest in the fate of Geneva . . . he won over opinion artlessly. If anyone deserved to reign over the passions of a people, it was this respectable delegate of the Court of Sardinia."¹⁰ The words of Mallet Du Pan describe Count della Marmora for us as he entered Geneva "without drums, without pomp, like the pacifier of a city in mourning."¹¹ Or, as d'Ivernois wrote more emphatically, "the entry of the Piedmontese, led by Count de La Marmora, was modest: This old man consoled weeping women and stumbling men he encountered on the way, and showed himself like a father, an agent of peace."¹²

The drama of Geneva seemed to dissolve in this atmosphere of humanity and compassion. But the consequences of the revolution and restoration continued to weigh on the republic, which became less independent, without allies and supporters, and with a closed and fearful governing class, while its more audacious and enterprising citizens were forced into exile. How could one not continue to ask the meaning of recent events, and why the revolution had been defeated? This was the central problem of the essay Mallet Du Pan published in two install-

particularly pp. 13ff.: "Precis de ce qui s'est passé à Genève du 29 juin au 2 juillet 1782," and pp. 4ff.

⁸ Emile Rivoire, *Bibliographie historique de Genève au XVIII^e siècle* (Geneva: Jullien; Paris: Picard, 1897), p. 393 n. 2462.

⁹ A copy of this manifesto is at Turin, B. reale, Mss Misc. 66, f. 37.

¹⁰ Mallet Du Pan, "Genève: De la dernière révolution," vol. 4, no. 26, 15 September 1780, p. 99.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 123. See, by the same author, a sheet entitled *Lettre de monsieur **, à monsieur V**[ernes]*, of 29 June 1782, which refers to an encounter of Mallet Du Pan with General della Marmora, "in all the effusion of grief. He shared it like one of our fellow citizens, he awaited it. . . ." "What he said would make our clubs fall to their knees if they could have heard it" (pp. 1, 3). This sheet, together with many others, is at Turin, AS, Sez. 1, Genève, catégorie 19^e, paquet 1.

¹² D'Ivernois, *Tableau historique et politique des deux dernières révolutions*, vol. 2, p. 147n.

ments in his *Annales*, which I have already cited and which was soon after collected in a volume destined for many reeditions and reprints.¹³ The old constitutional equilibrium of the republic—he was convinced—had already changed in 1780, when both the negatives and the *representants* had begun to attempt to satisfy the needs of the *natifs* and *habitants*. “The lure of patronage inflamed the ambitions of all orders.” The rise of new groups led to “unrestrained corruption,” a relaxation of the laws of the republic, decadence in morals, and a loss of any respect for government or humanity.¹⁴ This had led to the revolution of 1782. To be sure, the triumph of one faction over another was a usual occurrence in republics of the past, for example, in those “of Greece and Italy,” as well as in almost all states “fallen into anarchy.” What set Geneva apart was “virtue’s boasting of unworthy passions, which is an exercise of despotism over opinion requiring the consent of reason and equity to monstrous acts, applauding them as a sacred duty, priding oneself on wisdom while lamenting its folly, evoking humanity with hands stained with blood, praising the fatherland while tearing it apart, and citing the rights of men while injuring the freedom of individuals.”¹⁵ The origins of this kind of political outburst and exaltation of virtue (which in a later guise make us think of the French Revolution) lay, according to Mallet Du Pan, in the ideological atmosphere prevalent in Geneva, saturated with an immense quantity of published works circulating in the hands of all. The political press dampened critical abilities and provided ideal justification even for what was not justifiable. “The honest citizen who has felt his heart beat and his mind tremble in the silence of his lodgings at the spectacle of daily events, regains his courage and composure by sipping the poisoned milk of the press.” The young were particularly influenced, nourished as they were with the errors of Raynal, Rousseau, and Montesquieu.¹⁶ The ones truly responsible for these developments were writers such as Price and Raynal “and other enthusiasts thoughtlessly called defenders of the people, when they are its poisoners.” Their “incendiary sophisms” were the true enemies of liberty. “Twenty happy nations have bound themselves in chains seeking government without abuses, and none has found it.”¹⁷ Geneva demonstrated anew how liberty was lost every time one tried to enlarge it. “We were sated with

¹³ The *Annales* had not a small success. There were many pirated reeditions. He himself wrote, at the beginning of issue 25, that he intended to recognize only his own edition and “the Italian translation made in Florence.”

¹⁴ Mallet Du Pan, “Genève: De la dernière révolution,” vol. 4, no. 25, 30 August 1782, pp. 21ff.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 41ff.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 26, pp. 125ff.

liberty. The recent troubles were a kind of indigestion of it." Republican liberty, the natural product of tradition, was ruined and extinguished when efforts were made to adjust, enlarge, and reform it.¹⁸

The *Tableau historique* by François d'Ivernois, by contrast, in its two successive versions of 1782 and 1789, took up the defense of those who had wanted and carried out the revolution of 1782.¹⁹ He also argued that there had been a state of deep corruption and a strong "current of luxury and incredulity" since 1770. The same had occurred in France in this period. But in the second country the example of America had contributed to creating a different atmosphere. Even in Geneva, despite everything, a solid and broad political culture had emerged. Mallet, the historian of Denmark, and De Lolme, the student of the English constitution, were the best examples. Necker had shown France what republican virtue could do and had given "public spirit and credit to that monarchy in distress."²⁰ There had thus been solid roots to the attempt in 1782 to enlarge the base of the republic, while still making it rest on solid constitutional foundations and not give in to tumultuous democratic forms.²¹

The work entitled *Précis historique de la dernière révolution de Genève et en particulier de la réforme que le souverain de cette république a faite dans les conseils inférieurs*, which was published during the brief period when the

¹⁸ Mallet Du Pan wrote a delightful journalistic piece at this point to compare "royal festivals" and "republican festivals," the first exemplified by the celebrations for the birth of the Dauphin and the second by a reception offered in Venice for the grand duke of all Russia. He admired the reserve and spontaneous discipline of the people of Venice, naturally respectful of republican magistracies, and emphasized instead the forced, militaristic, and violent character of the relationship existing in France between authority and the people, even when it was a matter, as in this case, of a festival organized by a humane and reformist king (*Annales*, vol. 3, 30 January 1782, pp. 118ff). Another Genevan as well, Samuel Romilly, was taken short by the artificial and organized character of the Parisian festivities for the birth of the Dauphin. "Who would have thought that a people so famous for their fond attachment to their kings would have needed such an order." It had been truly an effort to induce "an oppressed and discontented people to act for a moment the part of a happy and grateful people" (*Memoirs of the life of Sir Samuel Romilly*, vol. 1, p. 180).

¹⁹ See Karmin, "Sir Francis d'Ivernois," pp. 187ff. The first version of this book was censored by the Genevan government when it became known that "several copies had been seized close to Annecy where peasants were peddling them in the nearby mountains" (*ibid.*, p. 111).

²⁰ D'Ivernois, *Tableau historique et politique des deux dernières révolutions*, vol. 1, pp. 149ff.

²¹ The accusation of wanting to establish a democracy founded on the "absolute sovereignty" of the General Council sounded continually in reactionary polemics in the days of the revolution. "Are not the principles those of Rousseau's *Contrat social*, a book that serves these days as a rule for the faith of Geneva?" we read in the *Pièces relatives aux troubles actuels de Genève* (n.p., n.d. [30 May 1782]), pp. 8ff.

revolution was in progress, was more immediate and impassioned.²² It is curious to note that this book was translated into Italian and published in Florence at the beginning of 1783.²³ Geneva, it affirmed, had every right to defend itself as an "independent and sovereign" state. The "controversies that agitated it" were an "inseparable" part of "that spirit of liberty from which it derives its fame." To understand what was happening in the "little republic" it was necessary to return to the beginning of the century, when the long dispute had begun between those who intended to maintain liberty and those who "placed under their feet all the principles of republican government."²⁴

In Geneva there is no patriciate, and distinctions between nobles and plebs are not recognized, but the inequality of riches—a necessary result of the resources of this city—has from the beginning of this century tended to alter the constitution. The laws that establish political equality and the customs that make it respected have required close vigilance from the citizenry to avoid the ascent of a league of the rich, a powerful clique whose control extends naturally over those entrusted with the management of public affairs and that is all the more dangerous because citizens occupied daily in commerce and the arts, from which they derive their livelihood, have often opened the way for it.

An "imperfect legislation, which this clique has never wanted to improve," made resistance to "the undertakings of executive power" difficult. Customary law favored those in power. The Council of Twenty-five gained increasing authority over the General Assembly, "made up of all citizens and bourgeois 25 years of age."²⁵ When, in 1777, it was finally decided to "work seriously on a general law code," the "resistance of the negatives" became more and more obstinate, transforming them into a true and proper "cabal."²⁶ The *natifs* and *habitants* went into action and this provoked the negatives' reaction. It would not have been difficult to awaken discontent in those downtrodden by "the weight of in-

²² *Précis historique de la dernière révolution de Genève et en particulier de la réforme que le souverain de cette république a faite dans les conseils inférieurs* (n.p., n.d.; the *Post scriptum* is dated Geneva, 28 April 1782). There are two editions of this work, one in 8^{vo} with 48 pp., and the other in 4^{to} with 12 pp. There are examples of both at Turin, AS, Sez. 1, Genève, catégorie 19^e, paquet 2.

²³ *Istoria ragionata dell'ultima rivoluzione di Ginevra. 1782*. Si vende a Firenze da Antonio Bonajuti, da Luigi Carlieri e da Antonio Benucci (n.d.). It was announced by the *Notizie del mondo*, no. 13, 15 February 1783, p. 104, "Avviso." It was mentioned in the *Novelle letterarie*, no. 14, 4 April 1783, col. 109, and called "commendable for the authentic documents contained in it. As history it shows some partiality for one of the two parties." This *Istoria* is reprinted in the Florentine periodical *L'osservatore*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 208ff.

²⁴ *Istoria*, pp. 3ff.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5ff.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

equality." If these had been won over it would have been possible to carry out the "internal revolution" they desired.²⁷ Already in 1781 citizens had been obliged to arm themselves against "the aristocratic party for their legitimate defense."²⁸ "The most enlightened *natifs*" had finally understood that they were being deceived. It was they who started the revolt in 1782, along with "many citizens with whom they interacted and were tied with all sorts of bonds" who could not help but join the struggle against the aristocratic party. All efforts to quiet the tumult were useless. "The desperation of those who had first taken to arms, and the darkness of the night, threatened a much more murderous crisis than in fact occurred." The insurgents "advanced without leaders and without knowing which enemies they were to attack."²⁹ The "reform of the councils" and the vindication of "basic rights" became the common password of all enemies of the patricians. The "unanimous opinion of the clubs" was to give all power to the "General Council, the sovereign of the republic."³⁰ "The citizens of Geneva were thus constrained, against their will, to reform an administration that had lost public confidence." There was no alternative. There was no hope that the aristocratic party would change its mind. "It is necessary in a government of this kind either to dominate the people or for the people to recover their rights. This produces a terrible but inescapable dilemma." "Government requires either force or confidence: the second is the way of free states, the first is their tomb." New legislation would appear to "finally pacify" *natifs* and *habitants*, "solidifying their bonds into a firm brotherhood." "Finally there would be an effort to reform criminal jurisprudence, to perfect public education, and to maintain good morals, the only way to cure the ills of the country." The new administrators "will be neither the tyrants nor the slaves of the people, but will understand that their fate is inseparable from the people's, and that good and evil are necessarily linked."³¹ Those intending to judge the Genevan revolution should not limit themselves to trying to measure "the greater or lesser degree of aristocracy in its government," or its more or less democratic character. "Who does not know," the work concluded, referring to a political theory in which the imprint of François d'Ivernois can be recognized, "that in a state where the people are educated and accustomed to a certain degree of freedom, the more appearance there is of democracy, the less substance it has; the more the people seem to be powerful, the less mis-

²⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 70, 77ff.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 85ff.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 100ff.

trustful they are of administration, and the more authority they give it. The seeds of all of Geneva's ills are in the lack of coherence in the different classes of individuals it contains, and especially the independence of magistrates. The only remedy is a government that inspires confidence, and the experience of the centuries confirms that governments based on confidence are the most powerful." It was necessary to return in thought "to the first period of the Genevan republic," when "it was happy and peaceful under a government that was legally democratic, but actually in substance aristocratic." The state of "confidence" that "the revolution will restore in Geneva . . . [is] unmistakable: only a few members of the administration have changed, but the laws, the ancient maxims, the fundamental constitution, will be more respected in Geneva than ever, and this revolution will give some of its magistrates a confidence possessed by none of their predecessors."³² Consent implied control. The new Genevan government would rest on this basis; not on democratic extremes, but on a renewal of republican tradition, and on a renewed contact with all levels of the population. Not the apparent strength of the people, but the confidence these give to their own governors would be its underlying strength. To be sure, these affirmations were written with full awareness of the requirements and pretensions of the guaranteeing powers: France, Berne, and Savoy. But this was not the only question. The logic of the struggle against the aristocratic party had produced a new interpretation of the republican constitution, a new relationship between democracy and liberty.

When this text appeared in Italian, in Florence, the experience begun in April 1782 was already concluded. It remained only for the Tuscan editors to add an appendix to narrate the events that led to the occupation of Geneva by foreign troops. Even this was taken from a French text, which was reasonably moderate and objective and could not help but conclude that "despite the best intentions of the plenipotentiaries of the mediating powers . . . the compilers of the new code [the new constitution] have not avoided depriving the people of various privileges they once enjoyed, so that many, rather than submit to this tyranny, have chosen to abandon their fatherland and roam as foreign exiles in Hungary, Austria, the Swiss Cantons, and Ireland."³³

³² Ibid., pp. 108ff. In his *Offrande à la liberté et à la paix*, pp. 22ff., d'Ivernois had demanded for Geneva "a kind of democracy of rights, from which would inevitably develop an aristocracy in fact, that is to say, a government less controlled because issued directly from the nation, which would know its dependency without feeling it, a government that would succeed in everything it undertook because it would never act without knowing the will of the masses, or after having enlightened them. . . ." Geneva would never be happy until "a wiser generation, instructed by our faults and misfortunes, will have founded the government on the firm basis of *confidence*."

³³ Ibid., p. 137.

Brissot de Warville, the future Girondist, who better than others was able to interpret the ferment of revolt and the Genevan artisans' will to resist, made an effort in 1782 to compare the recent experience of Geneva with ideas from beyond the ocean and the European republican tradition. He pretended to be an American so as to better attack those, such as Mallet Du Pan, who from disappointment with the revolution had fallen back on a defense of the patricians. To be sure, he said, the situation was particularly difficult for the Genevan republicans, left as they were without allies, financial support, or military aid. Besides the French and Sardinians they were assaulted by the Bernese, the Swiss who were descendants of William Tell and did not recoil but rather seemed happy with the idea "of destroying a republic."³⁴ Geneva was not able to find its Washington. But the true reason for the defeat was to be sought elsewhere. "It is sad to admit that one cannot defend liberty with the habits of our modern population." Without the will to sacrifice, no resistance was possible. The "happiness" of a republican was quite different from that of a monarchist. "For the first what is needed is an agreeable life, pleasure, luxury. . . . Life for a republican, his entire being, is liberty, independence, and the right to have no other master than the law. 'Bread and water'—a young Genevan said to me—but freedom." ³⁵ Nor was this only a matter of custom and life-style; institutions also had to reflect and interpret the spirit of a republican people. Like Rousseau, whom he cited at length, Brissot looked above all to "political clubs," to those spontaneous organizations, deeply rooted in the social life of Geneva, whose suppression in 1782, surely not by chance, the occupying powers requested and obtained. "It was here that all questions arising from the events of the day were discussed in a brotherly way; here the anxious observer spied out all the acts of the magistrate; here these were denounced by the voice of the patriot; here all the interests were freely discussed." In short, clubs were organs adapted for the control of administration and social life. They were living gazettes in a city that, among many other kinds of publications, it might be added, did not know this form of journalism. They were more effective and important than English clubs, where often. Brissot said, one abandoned oneself to sport and "political gossip." Nor could they be compared with the imitations of English clubs that had recently become diffused in France,

³⁴ Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, *Le philadelphien à Genève ou Lettres d'un américain sur la dernière révolution de Genève, sa constitution nouvelle, l'émigration en Irlande etc., pour servir de tableau politique de Genève jusqu'en 1782*. (Dublin, 1783). On the circumstances that induced Brissot to write and publish it, see *Mémoires de Brissot*, vol. 2, pp. 120ff. The author sent his work to Jefferson on 26 December 1786, writing to him: "Please accept the example of a work I wrote in support of the Genevans three years ago and that will give you some idea of their affairs" (*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 10, p. 637).

³⁵ Brissot de Warville, *Le philadelphien à Genève*, pp. 85, 101.

or, it was well understood, to “Italian *conversazioni*.” “No, they were none of these. The Genevan club was the asylum of liberty and information; each citizen became enlightened about the state of his country.” It was precisely the “clubs” that had permitted the Genevan republic to avoid the kind of “disordered assemblies” often criticized in democracies. It was they that formulated the program of the revolution. “The protest against the Senate and the Council had been decided in the clubs before it was in the General Assembly. The negatives could see the clubs only as dangerous schools where hatred of the aristocracy was continually preached.”³⁶ They had a deep influence on society. As soon as young men were married they stopped courting women and were admitted to the clubs. There were some two hundred of them in the republic. “This is the most secure basis of liberty, the most secure barrier against the ambition of magistrates.”³⁷

It was not surprising, Brissot added, that Mallet Du Pan did everything possible to negate and eliminate the popular clubs. Where had this Genevan writer found his political ideas? From the justification Linguet had made of despotism. Here, precisely, was the origin of the theory that led to the defeat of the Genevan republic. Force justified everything. It was folly to resist. “Patience is the only remedy, and servitude the only state for which nature has predestined nearly all men. . . . It is folly to struggle against her decrees.” This was a system in which “Brutus are madmen, to use the terms of M. Mallet, philosophers are poisoners, and republicans are raving and need to be bled.”³⁸ Mallet Du Pan had derived from this a justification for foreign intervention. Had

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 102ff.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 138. The political and social atmosphere of Geneva during the siege by the guaranteeing powers was stamped on the soul of Brissot. There were no fights, no killings, no disorders “in the long period of that popular dictatorship” (*Mémoires de Brissot*, vol. 2, p. 124). Important information about this “popular dictatorship,” about the twelve “political clubs,” the twenty-four “commissioners” chosen by them, the ten who made up the effective government, the “committee of safety,” the “editorial committee,” all elements that cannot help but make one think of the French Revolution, is to be found in Josef Feldmann, *Die Genfer Emigranten von 1782–83: Ihre Koloniegriindungen und ihre politischen und wirtschaftlichen Leistungen während der Revolutionsepoche* (Zurich: J. Weiss, 1952), pp. 10ff. Of considerable interest is the *Mémoire de M. l’avocat Prevost sur l’abus des cercles à Genève*, of August 1782, where the life of these organizations are minutely described (one of the principal clubs was called the “Equality Club”), and where there is an attack on the “*cyclomanie*” of Genevans. The author is convinced of the need to uproot this “*imperium in imperio*” (Turin, AS, Sez. 1, *Genève*, catégorie 19^e, paquet 2). In the same bundle of papers are numerous other documents on the clubs and the means the occupying forces took to suppress them. See, for example, the “*Idées sur la question agitée dans le public s’il convient de supprimer les cercles ordinaires de société proposée aux illustres seigneurs plénipotentiaires*,” by Jean Adam Serre, bourgeois, where, among other suggestions, was one to prevent them from “discussing affairs of state.”

³⁸ Brissot de Warville, *Le philadelphien à Genève*, pp. 121ff.

it not already occurred in Poland, in Sweden, in the United Provinces? "If that apology for force," Brissot concluded, "had issued from the pen of a Frenchman, I would not be surprised, for these are the principles of monarchy and the bases of that nation, but for a republican to show himself an apostle of force, and for a Genevan to applaud and encourage the destroyers of his liberty over the ruins of his nation! This phenomenon is inconceivable to me."³⁹ The logic of Mallet Du Pan was not that of liberty, but rather of economic interests, the exploitation and conquest typical of monarchical states. Even the many economic and financial relations between Geneva and Savoy did not constitute a justification for Piedmontese intervention. Precisely the opposite was true. The liberty Geneva enjoyed permitted and guaranteed an intense economic activity from which even the kingdom of Sardinia profited.

And how could Mallet Du Pan permit himself to attack writers like Price or Raynal? "America has written their axioms of liberty in characters of blood. The governments of Europe have sanctioned them, if not by entirely changing their method of rule, at least by improving the lot of their peoples. May this happy change become universal!"⁴⁰ Those reforms being accomplished in Europe were due to the example and ideas of the American Revolution, and to writers like Price and Raynal, who inspired and sustained them. Even in Geneva it was indispensable to resume that reform of penal laws that had been planned in the years before the last revolution, which d'Ivernois—as Brissot did not fail to recall—had supported with great vigor in his *Offrande à la liberté et à la paix*. Efforts to make a new law code had ceased. Nonetheless, Geneva was a place particularly favorable to such reform. "Manufactures and commerce have created a prodigious amount of wealth in Geneva; all live easily there. The workers are well paid and numerous. One does not see confidence men, thieves, or assassins." In the last fifteen years there had been only one murder, and it seemed that this was due to jealousy. "The rarity of crimes is entirely the result of education, manners, and public opinion."⁴¹ Now, with the defeat of the revolution, and with foreign occupation, there was serious danger of a deterioration in morals. French officers spread corruption. They had fought for liberty in America, but their life was far from being modeled on republican virtue. Under their influence the clubs were being replaced by cafés and spectacles, "where idleness relaxes, or rather is abased and corrupted, under monarchical governments."⁴²

The philosophes continually risked ruin through contact with soci-

³⁹ Ibid., p. 124.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 121.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 141ff.

⁴² Ibid., p. 138.

ety, Brissot de Warville concluded in another book that was published in the same year as the Genevan revolution. The example of republics was not sufficient to restore the strength of the "true philosophes." The republican model was not enough. "I have known many modern republicans; they were good patriots but poor philosophers; they lament the evils of their country but do not have the strength to submit to the laws of destiny. Because three quarters of the human race is destined for slavery and the system of oppression spreads and will finally swallow up republics, it is clear that republican patriotism is almost always folly when it does not have the upper hand. Tyrants crush patriots and barely touch philosophers."⁴³ This was a bitter reflection on a society that apparently was always able to dampen efforts to maintain islands of freedom. Linguet's gloomy vision reemerged through experiences of continual defeat and an inability to check the expansion of despotism. Only the individual, the philosophe, was in a position to save himself, by disappearing into the crowds of great cities or into untamed nature. "The child of liberty and independence loves great cities, or solitude."⁴⁴

This was exactly the opposite of what Rousseau had said about his fatherland, Geneva, where all knew one another, generation after generation, and were concerned about one another. This republican vision was replaced in the mind of Brissot, as in many of his generation, with the ideal of a modern country, founded on freedom of thought and of the press, capable of assuring the philosopher not only his own independence, but also tranquillity, his right not to be taken up entirely by political duty (which is precisely republican virtue). "In republics there are always greater or lesser storms; spirits are more or less agitated. There is an ambitious struggle to raise themselves up at the expense of the constitution, while the mass of citizens is continually engaged in resisting them. From this is born continual disputes. There is continual talk, publishing, and discussion about the constitution, lesser issues, and small events. This focuses everyone's attention on these particular issues. All else is forgotten. Politics becomes the first and the only science. Patriotism becomes the only virtue." Writers concern themselves only with the "particular truths of the state where they live." "General truths" are neglected, "because they are distant from or indifferent to the constitution." England and Geneva were two examples of a similar situation. Politics dominated in both countries. "Thus the sciences are less advanced in England than they should be, and they are practically nonexistent in Geneva." Philosophy and patriotism had ended up in con-

⁴³ Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, *De la vérité ou Méditations sur les moyens de parvenir à la vérité dans toutes les connoissances humaines* (Neuchâtel, Paris, and Lyon: Desauges, Belin, Grabit et Rosset, 1782), p. 232n.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

flict. "Patriotism leads one to detest the philosophic spirit." "I have known a Genevan of great merit who attributed the destruction of his country in 1782 to an enthusiasm for philosophy, whose progress has frightened all monarchs and created unrest in all minds. A good patriot would enchain the rest of the world so long as Geneva remained free, whereas philosophy's aim is to spread liberty throughout the universe."⁴⁵ Thus the republican spirit could be doubly harmful, by limiting itself to constitutional problems and by resigning itself to renouncing the freedom of others in order to maintain its own.

If Brissot thus sought to squeeze out the last drops of the bitter and difficult experience he drew from Geneva, others were less disposed to give such an importance to developments on the shores of Lake Lemman. Linguet, barely released from the Bastille, cast a glance of commiseration toward the small republic, dedicating a gallant piece to it in his *Annales*.

The catastrophe of Geneva should have inspired small pity. This political insect did not harm anyone: such an imperceptible, brilliant, light republic, weak as a butterfly and perhaps as rapacious, absorbing its sustenance wherever an opportunity arose, without doing great damage, had a right to universal sympathy. It would undoubtedly have rejoiced if at the moment that decided its fate its leaders had shown themselves worthy of the enthusiasm they should have known how to inspire, if, after having imitated the language of the people of Rome, when risen up against the pride and obdurateness of the patricians, they had shown a noble firmness.⁴⁶

"Twaddle," Brissot called these words of Linguet, while still conceding that the celebrated publicist redeemed himself by inserting into the following number of the *Annales* "a long letter on the true causes of the troubles in Geneva," thus demonstrating that he was "the only periodical writer who had the courage to give space in his journal to the unhappy representatives."⁴⁷ Otherwise, from his first article, Linguet emphasized that the problem of Geneva was still very much present in the European debate on revolutions and republics. Who could guarantee that a fate similar to the one that had descended on this little state might not also strike the "Batavian confederation"?⁴⁸

In Holland, in the spring of 1782, precisely at the same time as the events in Geneva, probably the most interesting debate these events aroused in Europe took shape. *Le politique hollandais*, the vivacious

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 256ff.

⁴⁶ *Annales politiques, civiles et littéraires du dix-huitième siècle*, par M. Linguet, vol. 11 (1784), p. 231.

⁴⁷ Brissot de Warville, *Le philadelphen à Genève*, p. 141.

⁴⁸ *Annales*, vol. 11 (1784), p. 252.

weekly started a year earlier by Antoine-Marie Cerisier, a Frenchman, which did much to spread the ideas of the nascent patriotic movement of the United Provinces, published a long letter in the issue of 6 May with the headline "On the Constitution and Troubles of the Republic of Geneva."¹ "I did not know," wrote the sender, addressing himself to Cerisier (who may also have been the true author of the letter), "that you were practically our compatriot [he was born in Châtillon-lès-Dombes, not far from Geneva]. I know that you must be a fellow citizen of all true republicans."² The republican spirit found its roots in the common past of the two cities of Geneva and Utrecht, when both had been governed by bishops. Their histories had followed routes that were sometimes parallel, sometimes divergent. Utrecht, like a large part of the United Provinces, had fallen under the power of a stadholder and a citizen aristocracy. "The people of the cities, the bourgeois, do not have the least authority either in the administration of public affairs or in the nomination of administrators." In Geneva the foundations of liberty had been established by Calvin, "ardent genius, fierce spirit," always ready to intervene in the affairs of the city. Genevans owed their "civil and political constitution" to him. It was necessary to admit this: "There are times when freedom has to be established by a kind of despotism." This "Picard, son of a cooper of Noyon," had been the man needed in a period of continual threats and menacing perils. Then, with the passage of decades, the tension lessened. The general councils, the base of the Genevan constitution, proved to be exhausted. Due to a "long lethargy" the rights of citizens were usurped and forgotten.³ In other republican states a similar evolution had ended by depriving the people of civil liberty itself—as had happened in Venice—or of political liberty—as was the case in the United Provinces, where the stadholder and the aristocracy, despite their continual disagreements, made any authentic participation of citizens in public life impossible. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Geneva had begun to reconquer its own rights. The intervention of Jean Jacques Rousseau had been decisive in this revival. There was no lack of "popular uprisings."⁴ The correspondent then reported literally, without citing the source, the ideas and expressions of François d'Ivernois. "There are no patricians in Geneva: there is even less the odious distinction between nobles and non-nobles,

¹ The scarce information about Cerisier is collected by Robert Favre in the article dedicated to him in the *Dictionnaire des journalistes*, ed. Jean Sgard (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 1976), p. 81.

² *Le politique hollandais*, no. 65, 6 May 1782, p. 202.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 204ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 67, 25 May 1782, pp. 225ff.

but the inequality of fortunes, a necessary result of industry, tends continually to undermine the constitution. The laws that establish political equality and the manners that make it respected have required the constant vigilance of citizens to resist the rise of a league of the rich."⁵ Detaching himself from the text I cited earlier, he then said that in order to ensure the ascendancy of "merit" and "talents" over riches and accumulated or inherited wealth it was not necessary to follow the example of Sparta or have recourse "to the commonwealth that maintained the republic of Lycurgus for seven hundred years." "It was enough to arrange things so that the administration was aristocratic, or in the hands of a few, and the sovereignty democratic, that is to say, that all the authority of administrators depended on the people." American models and the urgings of English radicals, which tended to make elections for representative assemblies more frequent, completed this program for reform of the political legislation of Geneva, which found its basis in popular sovereignty and the distinction between legislative and executive power.⁶

The threat of foreign intervention, meanwhile, came to cast a shadow over these discussions. Not only the monarchies of France and Sardinia were drawn up against Geneva, but also the republics of Zurich and Berne. "What example do they give the universe by arming themselves against the liberty of their brothers and friends!" Despite some precautions and invitations to the "negatives" (the patricians) to support their aims in the pages of the journal, if they wished, Cerisier began a lively campaign in defense of the rights of Genevans to change their constitution, and against any intervention by the surrounding powers. Cerisier was irritated particularly by the *Courier du Bas-Rhin*, the gazette that Jean Manzoni, a Piedmontese by birth and for many years the chief journalist of Prussia, published in Cleves.⁷ Far from protesting against the crime with which Geneva was threatened, he wrote that he did not see "in the actual disposition of Genevans that spirit, that pride, that enthusiasm for liberty, which produced the heroic, but unhappy defenses of Saguntum, Harlem, and Barcelona." This was precisely the contrary, Cerisier wrote, of what "a sensitive heart" would conclude from reading the documents with which the besieged explained their conduct and launched their general appeal.⁸

⁵ Ibid., no. 68, 27 May 1782, p. 247.

⁶ *Le politique hollandais*, no. 68, 27 May 1782, pp. 247ff.

⁷ See Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, vol. 2, *La chiesa e la repubblica dentro i loro limiti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976, pp. 280ff.), and the article "Manzoni, Jean," in *Dictionnaire des journalistes*, pp. 256ff.

⁸ *Le politique hollandais*, no. 73, 1 July 1782, p. 333.

In fact, many turned a deaf ear in those days to the voices that came from Geneva, even those from whom a different response might be expected. The famous Abbé Raynal was one example. A few issues later a "Lettre d'un citoyen de Genève" was addressed to him. It began by evoking a famous ghost: "At the first moment of danger threatening his fatherland, far from imitating those citizens who basely deserted it, without mentioning those who summoned foreigners to its walls, Jean Jacques would have rushed to its assistance, if not with his fragile and weak arm at least with his eloquence, which was virile and energetic up to his last days. Alas! He was no longer there." Where would someone who could take his place be found? "In that fatal crisis I cast my eyes around me, throughout Europe, and I saw only the sublime Raynal able to replace him." An appeal was thus made inviting him "to come and play the role his talents assured him in a small state ruled by its people." But no response was received. The silence was undoubtedly due to the letter's not having reached its destination. "It may have fallen into the hands of those who have sworn to ruin our resurgent liberty, for fear, they say, of its becoming a school of revolt for neighboring countries, since one knows that the French and the people of Berne like to have order and subordination, *chez eux*." This was truly a pity because Raynal's place should have been in Geneva. "You who, amid despotic and other tyrannical propensities, were able to brave prejudices and sacrifice personal interest on the altar of humanity; you will find among us the sweetest recompense for great and sensitive souls. The theater is worthy of such an actor." Geneva had done no more than put Raynal's ideas into practice. "You would have had the satisfaction of seeing your principles and ideas realized." "You would have had a platform for your harangues." The citizens of Geneva needed a "virile eloquence." There alone men were still nurtured with the words of "Demosthenes, Junius, Rousseau, Raynal." Raynal could be a modern Calvin in the Genevan revolution. "Jean Calvin, who like you was one of the leading writers of his age, like you was a fugitive from the ministerial acts of the Roman cult, came to live among us. From this place, as from the fecund breast of a flaming star, he launched those lightning bolts that soon enlightened all of Europe. He caused a happy revolution in the mind and prepared the true principles of morality and religion." "Only you could occupy the same place and aspire to the same glory. Calvin created the bases of our political constitution; you would have given the last touches to them. The empire of religious dogmas is finished; Geneva could have ruled that of politics."

This was a politics different from "pure democracy," where, as in Athens, the "assembly of the people" recognized no limits to its power and magistrates had no authority whatsoever. "It must be confessed that

such a government is a continual source of storms and internal struggles." The Genevans had not wanted this. "We would like," he said, taking up again the formula that François d'Ivernois circulated, "the government to be popular and the administration aristocratic, that is to say, magistrates would be replaceable officers of the sovereignty residing in the General Council, or the assembly of all citizens and bourgeois." This was a constitution based on the maxim that "the people are not good at governing but are excellent in choosing their administrators."

The people were by no means the "blind monster" they were usually depicted, desiring only to "be led by force along a road of happiness they do not know." In reality "arbitrary government" was a much worse evil than anarchy. This last at least "sometimes gives energy to the spirit, and one often sees amid the most terrible confusion emerge the most admirable order and sublime legislation." Arbitrary government, on the other hand, was an incurable evil. "A general numbness seizes the hearts of citizens and stifles the least spark of patriotism." The very taste for liberty died in the souls of men thus debased. There was no lack of "cold and enslaved spirits" capable of ironies "about these great truths." But in Geneva these truths were rooted "in the hearts of the greater part of my compatriots." When they became aware that all resistance against the superior armies of the besiegers was impossible, "rage and despair appeared on their faces; many officers broke their swords in the clubs; more than three hundred brave citizens threw their weapons into the river; mute consternation, on the entry of the mediating troops, amply displayed the general situation." The "sterile preparations" had culminated, to be sure, in "impotent fury." When confronted with the impossibility of resistance, there remained nothing other than to abandon oneself to "frightful scenes" and "cruel delirium."

The patricians, however, who had requested foreign intervention, did not abandon themselves to self-deception. Theirs was anything but "a complete triumph." "The majority of good patriots fled the odious occupation with hasty steps; they deserted in droves: those who thought they had arranged for peace soon saw that they had created a sad desert." The patricians realized that to please the occupying powers they would have to make "the enslavement of Geneva worse than that of absolute monarchies or pure aristocracies." The Piedmontese could not help but consider their entry within the city walls as a reversal of the defeat they had suffered two centuries earlier, when their plot to seize control of Geneva had failed. "Ghosts still moan around our walls the sad outcome of that treacherous plot. Unhappy Allobroges, you are avenged. Your descendants have just made a triumphant entry within those same walls, with every splendor of military pomp." Thus Genevan patriots would not find a refuge in Piedmont. "Are you going to seek

asylum with your old enemy, the sad guardian of the mountains who reigns over a land where the word *liberty* is not even known?" Nor would France, where the monarchy had transformed any sense of liberty into state power, be able to offer them a better refuge. "Are you going to the home of those powerful neighbors where the pomp of the throne has reduced *liberty* to no more than the name for a nation?" The Swiss cantons provided no better assurances. "Are you going to the home of your former friends and confederates who do not fear to betray your cause by lending their cohorts to your oppressors?" Other lands of Europe, forgetting the ties that bound them to Geneva, had "through their inaction tacitly seconded these enemies."

Only one hope remained. "In this crucial moment," he said, turning to the "illustrious orator of the rights of liberty," to the "sublime Raynal," "your lessons reveal one remaining resource. In another hemisphere there is a land that your enchanting pen has depicted with the most seductive colors. It has always been a refuge for peoples fleeing oppression. The sword of tyranny has just been broken to pieces there. Liberty sits on the throne, man obeys nothing but the laws; these have only faithful spokesmen because they depend absolutely on the people, who are eternally vigilant." "We will take our fatherland to America. What a sight it will be to see Genevans abandon a city that France has reduced to slavery and go to populate a land that she has made free."⁹

The *Courier du Bas-Rhin* began a violent polemic against this letter, and against the position the *Politique hollandais* assumed in general with regard to the Genevan revolution. Responding point by point, Cerisier filled his whole issue of 12 August 1782 with a "Dialogue" with Manzoni—with "the German-Allobroge journalist" and "citizen of Savoy," as he called him in memory of his political ties with Frederick II and his Piedmontese origin.¹⁰ Why should he have declined to publish the letter of an "ardent Genevan democrat," inspired "by the character and politics of the fiery republicans of that party"? And why should he not appeal to Raynal? "Is it so ridiculous to appeal to philosophers known for their democratic principles to assist a city desirous of realizing them within its walls?" Manzoni had ridiculed this idea. The philosophes, he had written, "are not as foolish as you think; they express, in truth, robust maxims fit to open the eyes of peoples to the ugliness and weight of the chains they are made to carry; but when the fuse is lit and the

⁹ Ibid., no. 76, 22 July 1782, "Lettre d'un citoyen de Genève à Thomas Guillaume Raynal, auteur de l'*Histoire philosophique et politique des Européens dans les deux Indes*," pp. 377ff.

¹⁰ Ibid., no. 79, 12 August 1782, "Dialogue entre le *Courier du Bas-Rhin* et *Le politique hollandais*," pp. 2ff.

bomb thrown, my philosophers disappear and step prudently aside while the people experiment with their philosophic maxims at their own risk and expense. In insurrections against established authority, whether this is legitimate or a usurpation, one sees priests mixed in the crowds, but one never encounters a philosopher supporting the principles taught in his writings with the point of a bayonet, or a sword. Satisfied with having peacefully given out precepts, such gentlemen do not rush to make examples of themselves." Ten years before, in the introduction to his version of Pilati's *Riforma d'Italia*, Manzoni had already shown skepticism about the capacity of the philosophes to truly influence the destiny of peoples. Such seekers for truth risked remaining useless. As long as nothing changed, it was useless to remove the veils from political and social mysteries.¹¹ Now his skepticism had changed to cynicism. It was useless to appeal to the philosophes, not because they could do nothing, but because they were too vile to act.

But there existed, Cerisier answered him, philosophes whose conduct was not in disharmony with their principles. Like the ardent republican author of the "Lettre," he too was convinced that there were "philosophers capable of joining theory and practice." He naturally first invoked Rousseau, a "patriot . . . whose philosophical pride scorned all ways in which his talents could open to him the way to success." Had not Raynal done something similar when he went into exile so as not to deny his work? "From the moment his soul was exalted by pride in the philosophical principles he spread in his writings, he threw off the veil that the tyranny of social conventions had forced upon him, and he voluntarily abandoned all the pleasures of his country so as not to lower his pride by disavowing an act that could only honor him." This had rightly attracted the attention of a Genevan, who was convinced that Raynal had demonstrated "a particular ardor for seeing his principles realized in a small state near France." Nor was he the first philosophe to act in such a way. "Without citing Lycurgus, Socrates, Phocion, Thrasybulus, the two Brutuses, Cato, and many other ancients who risked their lives or perished defending the liberty of their fatherlands, modern history gives many similar examples." "France provides us with Coligny, England with Sidney, Holland with Grotius, Barneveldt, etc.; modern history is not lacking in philosophical warriors. One can also count a Frederick and a Washington." Nor could one forget that Decius, Sidney, Hampden, Coligny, and many others had not had even "the hope of surviving their heroic self-sacrifice."¹² This was truly a strange list, which in effect showed the absence of participation by philosophes in the na-

¹¹ See Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, 2, pp. 280ff.

¹² *Le politique hollandais*, no. 79, 12 August 1782, p. 3.

scent patriotic movements and the struggles for liberty that were beginning to be fought out in places like Geneva and Holland during the eighties. For this reason polemicists and journalists such as d'Ivernois and Cerisier appeared in the forefront. But, Manzoni ironically inquired, why had Cerisier not left Amsterdam? The author of the "Lettre" should not only have appealed to the ghost of Rousseau, or to Raynal. "In fact, at the first invitation, that author should have flown to the midst of the Genevans to support them with his eloquence against the arguments of foreign troops, as long as one did not do him the injury of imagining his principles to be contradictory, or that he was not willing to follow precept with example. After having attempted, vainly at this point, to raise the Dutch against the horrible stadholderate that he detests, this author undoubtedly has nothing more pressing to do than go and die as a free and virtuous man, with the free and virtuous citizens of Geneva."¹³ To this ad hominem argument Cerisier replied by explaining his own politics in Holland, and his battle against the stadholder. As a rejoinder, Manzoni pointed out that the court of Frederick II had welcomed Raynal when he was obliged to leave France. He had not sought out a "speakers' platform" but the heaping table of a great king and his brother Prince Henry. He would have laughed loudly if a delegation of artisans, of sword makers from Geneva, had arrived "to invite him to come to address makers of turnspits who had dreamed up the insane project of defending themselves against three great powers." "The author of the *Histoire philosophique* would undoubtedly have responded wisely that it was not necessary to take everything literally, and that he had no place in this business." To this Cerisier replied that Manzoni's habit of insulting Genevan artisans by calling them repeatedly "makers of turnspits" was disgusting. No less outrageous was the idea that Raynal was a man incapable of living in accordance with his principles. Raynal would have made quite a different speech, he said, to the hypothetical delegation from Geneva: "Some traits born from a vivid and philanthropic imagination have given you a too high opinion of me. One might delineate the talents of a diplomat or man of state; but it is rarely given to the same man to know how to put them into practice; I have never had the occasion to exercise this delicate art; I might err in practice. Old, infirm, a stranger, I would never win your confidence. Deliberate with them, join wisdom with courage, and if you see no hope of defending yourself against a superior attack, flee an odious domination, go and seek freedom in a more fortunate climate."¹⁴ This imaginary discourse and unsolicited excuse revealed, without intending, the

¹³ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 6ff.

whole weakness of Raynal and the fragility of his position as a writer in an epoch when from America, Geneva, and Holland the need for a new relationship between politics and philosophy had begun to appear. Manzoni's cynicism had touched a sensitive and painful point. One saw this a few years later, when Raynal became one of the first to take a position against the French Revolution.

The cold and sharp view of Manzoni also tried to emphasize the difficulties and contradictions of the political ideas that had animated Geneva during the revolution. "In truth, the Genevans did not know either what they wanted or what they were doing, as events have shown. A popular government that was not popular, magistrates who were not magistrates, who would be removable at the whim of the first artisan who, not knowing how to make good turnspits, gave himself over to the fantasy of governing the state. . . ." Many classical authors, Cerisier responded, had proposed and defended a similar government. "They propose a popular government where magistrates would be removable, not at the whim or capricious will of an ambitious people, but on certain terms and according to fixed statutes." This was a government quite different from one where "the people govern and control their administrators arbitrarily." Thinkers such as Plato, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, Montesquieu, Mably, Rousseau, and Raynal had admired such a constitution. Nor was the author of the "Lettre" wrong in holding that despotism was always ruinous, while good and free governments could arise out of anarchy. "If you ask at present what anarchy has created, he responds: the Helvetic confederation, the Belgian republic, the government of England, the American confederation, and so on."¹⁵ Under the word *anarchy*, as one sees, emerged the idea of freedom born from modern revolutions. Vile, in this light, seemed the deprecating position taken by Manzoni, who continued to oppose such "false and interested reasonings" and proposed "to continue to amuse myself, when the pleasure takes me, at the expense of impostors who lead on so many fools." One should not consider men, but rather their ideas, he told Cerisier. If philosophers were not at the level of their ideas, it did not mean that they were wrong. "Because poor thinkers misrepresent a great truth: is that a reason to ridicule it? Truth does not become falsehood from the pen of an awkward writer." And why attack precisely those writers who, contrary to what generally happens, did not readily praise princes, dukes, or any court? The leaders of the Genevan revolution had not been ambitious men thirsty for power. They could be accused of imprudence, but not of lack of patriotism. The contradictions Manzoni had followed during his journalistic career, from the time when he "espoused the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 10ff.

party of persons tied to ruling houses," not least those attached to the house of Savoy, were quite different. A note was sounded that the Piedmontese journalist could not accept. "Insolent and libelous declaimer," he responded to Cerisier. "You dare calumniate before all of Europe one of the most mild, the most wise, and the most moderate governments that have ever existed." He declared himself proud to be born "at the foot of these rocks, of these mountains," "under a government where, I admit, one does not babble as much as in *Geneva, Holland, and Philadelphia* about *liberty* but instead truly enjoys there the precious good of which proud republicans pursue and embrace only the shadow." How could one reproach Piedmont for having intervened, along with others, "to bring peace to some mischief makers who were about to cut each other's throats"? To this Cerisier responded that it was right to consider the king of Sardinia as "the father and legislator of his people." The work of this enlightened sovereign could and should be appreciated. But it was necessary to take into consideration that the Genevans' point of view might be quite different. "An ardent republican of Geneva, seeing the troops of this prince enter his fatherland in triumph to affirm a domination odious to him, would naturally break out with invectives against this neighbor, long considered a natural enemy." The author of the "Lettre" contented himself with calling him "the sad guardian of the mountains." "Is this a phrase at which a crowned head should take offense? Is it a derogatory insult to sovereign dignity to say that a prince guards mountains sadly?" Still, no one could deny the fact that in Piedmont political liberty was entirely lacking. Raynal was perfectly right when he held that the government even of a just and enlightened despot must be considered anything but happy. "The German-Allobroge journalist" was the master of considering Piedmont "the finest government under which a human being could have the honor of being born."¹⁶ For his own part, Cerisier would continue to look to Geneva and to America for his models.

His polemic with Manzoni continued in this insistent tone: "That fox thinks himself glorious for coming from a land of marmots of the Alps," always ready to prefer a land governed by "a despot whose wink could destroy him like the least of his subjects" to lands where "administrators of the people" were "restrained by the law."¹⁷ Piedmont remained for Cerisier a typical example of the deleterious effects of despotism. "A center of oppression, superstition, and misery,"¹⁸ he called it, taking up the words of Doctor John Moore, whose travels in Italy were published

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 11ff.

¹⁷ Ibid., no. 81, 26 August 1782, pp. 46ff.

¹⁸ Ibid., no. 91, 4 November 1782, p. 208; see no. 93, 18 November 1782, p. 293.

in London in 1781 and were soon translated into German and French. Geneva remained for Cerisier instead a vivid light that had appeared for a moment in a stormy landscape of struggles between despotism and liberty, between the great absolutistic monarchies and governments that sought both to preserve and to renew the free legacy of the past.

The horizon was dark at the end of 1782. The gazette of Venice, in a correspondence from The Hague, sensed it was closing in on Europe as a whole. "Geneva, once so flourishing, offers only the horrible image of a desert. . . . Poland! unhappy Poland, your misfortunes should have taught us. . . . England, having reached the height of greatness, is oppressed by its own weight and loses half its power. . . . The seven United Provinces seem threatened by an even more blustering and terrible ruin."¹⁹ Through this Europe moved the few, but active, Genevans who had chosen exile or had been driven out by the occupying powers. The echoes of what they did and said resounded widely. In Neuchâtel and Constance, in Paris, in Great Britain, and even in America, they were active in editorial, commercial, and political undertakings. Grouped around Mirabeau, or isolated in distant lands, they prepared to play parts of first importance in world developments in the age of the French Revolution. It is enough to think of Etienne Clavière in France, of Jean-Louis Gallatin in the United States of America, or even of the Viesseux family, which planted its first roots in Italy at that time. The Genevan diaspora became one of the most active cosmopolitan elements of the last years of the century.²⁰

Immediately after the revolution of 1782 an episode, which struck contemporaries, involved a group of exiles, led by François d'Ivernois, who attempted, following the example from antiquity of the citizens of Messenia, to found a New Geneva in Ireland. It was talked of at length in all the gazettes, even the Italian ones. In November one read in the Florentine *Notizie del mondo* that, "Mr. d'Ivernois, former bookseller of Geneva, has presented himself to the parliament of Dublin to receive license for some hundreds of his compatriots, who being discontented with their government plan to establish residence in Ireland. Not only was this proposition accepted immediately by the parliament, but to demonstrate with what pleasure such industrious citizens were received in that kingdom, the sum of 50 thousand pounds sterling was set aside to distribute 50 to each of them for the cost of their voyage."²¹ Great

¹⁹ *Notizie del mondo* [V], no. 99, 11 December 1782, p. 791 (The Hague, n.d.).

²⁰ See, for example, Benetruy, *L'atelier de Mirabeau*.

²¹ *Notizie del mondo*, no. 90, 9 November 1782, p. 720 (London, 18 October). On the efforts of the Genevan colony in Ireland see Karmin, "Sir Francis d'Ivernois," pp. 113ff. There is ample material in the *Courier de l'Europe*, nos. 38 and 39, on 13, 16, and 23 May

was "the enthusiasm for liberty" shown by the new colonists, and loud was the solidarity of the "Dublin volunteers," the armed groups of Irish patriots, who formally undertook to "receive these emigrants as brothers and friends."²² Their difficulties, it is true, soon increased. It was anything but easy to create a new city in a land in such an uproar as Ireland, where there was serious peasant unrest even in the lands where the Genevans planned to settle. Funds were lacking, and the support of the Irish parliament was not enough. In February 1783 some of the "New Genevans" turned toward America.²³ The destiny of Genevan emigration was not colonization, but rather insertion into the political elites of the New and Old Worlds.

The contact between Geneva and Ireland nonetheless aroused great interest and vast hopes. A similar need for freedom seemed to emerge from the difficult experiences of the two lands, which were so different but nonetheless found themselves together in the general movement for reforms in these years. Mirabeau warmed with enthusiasm before this prospect: "It would be useless to disguise that Ireland is becoming the freest and most desirable place for men who know the price of liberty," he wrote to Vergennes on 4 October 1782. "The Genevans will find there the spirit of political equality they wanted to preserve in their fatherland; they will find a united people, associated, armed, and disciplined, that will guarantee their liberties as their own; they will find the broad rights which that confederation has obtained from Great Britain for the commerce of Ireland, taxes so moderate as to be practically nothing, no excises; commodities at a very favorable price for the working class, no guilds, no system of controls, no police oppression. They will find a parliament whose independence is solemnly recognized." Nor did he fail to remind the French minister that "the Genevans who are humiliated at this time are the part of their nation most esteemed by Europe as a whole," and that the blame for the misfortunes of Geneva was to be attributed to the "Machiavellianism" of the patricians, the neg-

1783, pp. 301, 306, and 325 (Lausanne, 20 and 29 March, and London, 31 May). On the role of Shelburne, become Marquis of Landsdowne, in welcoming and supporting the Genevan refugees, see Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 103ff. On the echoes in Geneva of this attempt and the effort of the patricians to impede the exodus of artisans, above all clock makers, see the detailed "Mémoire de M. Tronchin de Genève par lui remis a M. le comte de Scarnafis," of October 1783: Turin, AS, Sez. 1, Genève, catégorie 19^e, paquet 3, no. 1.

²² *Notizie del mondo* [V.], no. 42, 24 May 1783 (London, 2 May).

²³ *Ibid.*, no. 21, 12 March 1783 (London, 21 February); and no. 29, 9 April 1783 (Paris, 27 March).

atives.²⁴ There was no other way, Mirabeau concluded, to avoid more and continued emigration than to withdraw the occupying troops, "in which the citizen of Geneva, accustomed to other ideas, to other customs, sees only the instruments of tyranny, destined to violate his thoughts to the bottom of his soul."²⁵ In his view a rapid return home of the emigrés was indispensable. But even this, like a New Geneva, was a utopia.

If the attempt of François d'Ivernois was unsuccessful, his activity as a publicist continued to have great value. Just as he had initiated the polemic that began with the revolution of 1782, it was also he who concluded it and drew from it the most mature conclusions. His *Tableau historique et politique des révolutions de Genève* was translated and published in London and Dublin. On the frontispiece of both editions was a fine picture of an urn with the motto *Ubi libertas, ibi patria* (Where there is liberty, there is my native land), which could not have expressed better the experience of Genevans, "reduced to a dreadful alternative—to renounce their country or their liberty."²⁶ "This volume was published during the siege of Geneva, that is to say some weeks before it received the death-wound by which it was threatened and which it still endeavoured to avert." It was now time to explore more deeply and illustrate the circumstances that had led "to the crime of the subjection of Geneva."²⁷ The history of the republic was a great drama, even if the scene was small. "The more limited the theatre on which the passions are displayed, the better we discover the spring of the human heart; the fewer the actors brought forward on the scene, the easier we can penetrate into the causes of public prosperity." There it was possible "to trace the spirit of liberty, step by step, amidst the assaults it has ever been fated to sustain from the prejudices of ignorance and the efforts of ambition."²⁸ Only political and constitutional history could explain "the real causes of the late revolution in Geneva." He took his motto from the historian Jean-Pierre Béranger: *Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum* (Admire the wonders of inconsequential things).²⁹ Already in their te-

²⁴ *Mémoires biographiques, littéraires et politiques de Mirabeau écrits par lui-même, par son père, son oncle et son fils adoptif*, 2d ed. (Paris: Jules Chapellet, 1841), pp. 119, 125.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

²⁶ *An historical and political view of the constitution and revolutions of Geneva in the eighteenth century*, written originally in French by Francis d'Ivernois Esq. LL. D., late citizen of Geneva and translated by John Farell, A.M. (Dublin: W. Wilson, 1784). The dedication, to David Latouche, was datelined Dublin, May 1784.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxix.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxx. On J.-P. Béranger, see Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1768-1776*, p. 349 n. 35.

nacious resistance against the Dukes of Savoy, the Genevans were "animated by the powerful incentive of constitutional freedom."³⁰ For centuries they had preserved this seed of liberty. Some of the means they adopted toward this end, like the secret ballot, had been recently "the subject of debate in one of the freest states of Europe, and the one best situated for the preservation of liberty, provided it knows how to esteem and truly enjoy it." But would England, to which the allusion was clearly directed, be capable of adopting this instrument of liberty? The secret ballot was appropriate to a democracy like Geneva, but would it be acceptable in a mixed government? In Geneva, and even in Sweden, it had been demonstrated to be a necessary means, but an insufficient one. It could succeed only in a true and an authentic democracy, based on civil and political equality—in America, for example. Elsewhere, when "symptoms of venality" were evident, it became "a sure but disagreeable remedy." It was adopted in Sweden in 1765 and to some extent had slowed the decline of freedom there. In Geneva the situation was different: the blow against liberty was dealt from the outside, precisely because the internal means for destroying it, venality and corruption, had proved insufficient.³¹ What had happened in Geneva thus confirmed and emphasized what English radicals and American revolutionaries held. These were perfectly correct in defending the need to establish a rapid turnover in the legislative assemblies of all countries.³²

To the broad resonance that Genevan ideas continued to have was counterposed a Parisian propaganda intended to persuade everyone of the respect the occupying powers showed for the rights and traditions of the republic. "The revolution that has taken place in Geneva," we read in the gazette of Venice, "has made almost all the foreign powers believe that this little republic is now enchained by despotism. In the greater part of Europe it was said that Geneva was the victim of aristocracy, that individual and civil liberties had fled the asylum they had found within these walls in other times, and that finally, by trusting the fanatical partisans of democratic government, Geneva was lost." These were nonetheless calumnies and exaggerations. Liberty was "surely greater in Geneva than in Ireland, and perhaps more secure." The edict of pacification had established a "mixed constitution." The rights of citizens were safeguarded. "Our criminal trials, like those of neighboring lands, are somewhat similar to those of France. . . . Any torture either

³⁰ *An historical and political view*, p. 3n.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31ff.n.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 59n. In the *Supplément au Journal de Paris*, 11 October 1790, p. 1, a good review of d'Ivernois's *Tableau* concluded: "The history of these revolutions offers such striking parallels with ours that the *Tableau* is indispensable to all good patriots."

before or after sentencing is abolished."³³ The "natifs" enjoy the "same rights as 'citizens' with regard to individual liberty. . . . 'Peasants' are also treated as 'citizens.'" "Do you think the spirit of equality is not better established in Geneva, where all families are equal in the eyes of the law, than in Ireland, where about 150 peers possess a hereditary dignity that makes them superior to their fellow citizens at birth?" Did not the "incredible prosperity" it had gained for the republic perhaps demonstrate how well suited to Geneva was the constitution under which it now lives? "Taxes weigh almost entirely on the well-to-do." The "public storehouses assist the poor." "Without spending a sou everyone can learn to read, write, and draw, and to study learned languages, philosophy, mathematics, theology, and law."³⁴

In reality, as observers soon had to confess, the occupation had far from resolved the problems of the republic. It was enough for the economic situation to become more difficult for the old wounds to reopen. "Citizens and nobles are in continual disaccord among themselves and seek to dominate one another. Recently a rich merchant, having suffered some insult from a noble for simply having dared to say to him 'we are transformed into so many slaves and have lost the honorable title of citizens through your tyranny,' was sentenced to have his head publicly cut off." It was false news, but it still reflected a tense and difficult situation that, as a Florentine gazette remarked, led Geneva more and more "to lose the chief object of its greatness, that is, the huge wealth it gained in times of peace."³⁵ At the beginning of 1789, one read in the *Gazzetta universale*, "the ferment suppressed violently in 1782 by the op-

³³ *Notizie del mondo* [V.], no. 48, 14 June 1783 (Paris, 27 May). The edict of pacification had been published in no. 101, 18 December 1782, p. 811 (Geneva, 20 November).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 49, 18 June 1783 (Paris, 3 June). A copy of the edict of pacification, of 13 November 1782, is in the Biblioteca Reale at Turin, with the call number E. 17(25). It is a book of VIII-220 pages, which touches on the most diverse aspects of social life. "Our work," one reads on p. iii, "should demonstrate to the republic that in ensuring the stability of the state constitution and in affirming the authority of government, we have at the same time procured to those who are not members all liberty and influence compatible with good order and peace, and that, in whatever part of the world inhabitants of Geneva and its territory go to live, they will not be recompensed for what they lost in leaving their country." An ample documentation on the different phases of preparation of this edict of pacification, the activity regarding it in Versailles, Turin, and Berne, and the suggestions that came from Genevans themselves is to be found at Turin, AS, Sez. 1, *Genève*, catégorie 19^e, paquets 1ff.

³⁵ *Notizie del mondo*, no. 72, 7 September 1784, p. 616 (Paris, 31 August). A series of notices on the precarious situation of public order in those years, on thefts, vandalism, and so on, is to be found at Turin, AS, Sez. 1, *Genève*, catégorie 19^e, paquet 3, no. 10. See also what one reads in the gazette of Venice at the beginning of 1785, where it is told how "a hidden fire burns under the cinders and might cause some outbreak." "The discontented," it added, "hung the portrait of one of the chief magistrates on the gallows one

pressive intervention of the French court, directed at that time by the Count of Vergennes, by the court of Savoy, and by the canton of Berne, has finally erupted, after seven years of calamity and discontent.”³⁶ Aristocratic power was again cut down. This time misery had not a small part in the uprising. Attacks on bakers were not lacking.³⁷ A strange apparition symbolized for a moment this new flame of the many eighteenth-century revolutions of Geneva: “A man singularly dressed, who called himself the *spirit of Rousseau*, appeared for three days in the streets of Geneva, declaiming in loud tones the most republican pieces of that famous philosopher.”³⁸

night. Despite orders to take it down, no one wanted to carry out the commission, and appeal had to be made to the hangman. The difficulties of the magistrate in getting himself obeyed resulted in the picture's remaining an object of public derision for 24 hours.”

³⁶ *Gazetta universale*, no. 22, 17 March 1789, p. 173 (Geneva, 18 February). There is much documentation about this at Turin, AS, Sez. 1, *Genève*, catégorie 19^e, paquet 4, no. 7.

³⁷ On the causes and possible remedies of the scarcity of food, see the “Mémoire du Conseil de la république de Genève pour le rétablissement du commerce libre des grains entre la Savoye et Genève,” 20 October 1786: Turin, AS, Sez. 1, *Genève*, catégorie 19^e, paquet 3, no. 9. There is a series of documents on this problem in the following year as well.

³⁸ *Gazetta universale*, no. 22, 17 March 1789, p. 174 (Geneva, 18 February). On this “resort to arms,” described in detail in the Florentine gazette, see Karmin, “Sir Francis d’Ivernois,” pp. 175ff.

VII



The Revolution of the United Provinces

DURING THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES, HOLLAND WAS AN INDISPENSABLE center for the diffusion of enlightened ideas. Books and works that could not be printed in Paris were published in Amsterdam. Rousseau and d'Holbach saw their principal works appear there. The diffusion of Raynal's works began there. At the same time Dutch gazettes, due to their timeliness and richness, were circulated everywhere. Soon, to be sure, the competition increased, and books and journals in French multiplied in the world of the Rhine and Switzerland, in Bouillon, Maas-tricht, Yverdon, Neuchâtel, Lausanne, and Geneva. But Holland remained the chief center of production of all that could not appear in the territory of the French monarchy. There is no doubt that the cause of this success was the freedom of the press that continued to exist in Holland, while a more and more restrictive regime emerged in Paris during the last years of Louis XV. Admiration and envy surrounded the liberty of the United Provinces. Diderot used his eloquence to attempt to explain which and how many costs censorship imposed on the French economy. Dutch booksellers became rich, he said, while French ones perished.¹

But still, Holland, even in the eyes of Diderot, did not acquire the role of a model at this time, in the sixties. The tolerance that reigned there was useful, even indispensable, but at a practical, commercial, and economic rather than at a political and theoretical level. Whereas freedom of the press in England was viewed with growing interest and admiration, in Holland it remained only a kind of safety valve for the philosophes. The relatively small echo that enlightened ideas sounded in

¹ Jacques Proust, "Pour servir à une édition de la 'Lettre sur le commerce de la librairie,'" *Diderot Studies*, no. 3 (1961): 321ff. See Denis Diderot, "Lettre sur le commerce de la librairie," in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Maurice Tourneux (Paris: Garnier, 1876), vol. 18, pp. 61ff., and id., *Sur la liberté de la presse*. Texte établi, présenté et annoté par Jacques Proust (Paris: Editions sociales, 1964).

the United Provinces seemed to confirm this instrumental role of the book trade in Amsterdam. The Dutch printed the most daring books, but they did not discuss, or even less, translate them. Their products were often intended for export. Political and commercial freedom co-existed in Holland, without as yet awakening a strong ferment for renewal and reform.

But this immobility, which seemed to weigh on Holland as much as it did on the other famous patrician republic, Venice, in reality concealed a deep transformation. In the course of a decade, in the sixties and seventies, a link was established between the republican traditions of Holland and the political problems emerging everywhere in Europe during the first crisis of the old regime. A reinterpretation of history, of the past of Holland, was at the center of this discussion, as it was in the Republic of St. Mark. The age-old question of the powers of the stadholder reemerged in the United Provinces and insinuated itself into the general debate about monarchies and republics. The revolution beyond the ocean and the formation of the United States of America called attention to problems of federal organization, of which the United Provinces was an old and still present model. The economic crisis of Holland also attracted the attention of European observers. Local publicists and economists, such as Elie Luzac, sought to respond to the more and more insistent questions raised everywhere about the future of a commerce and finance that for centuries had been at the center of the economic life of Europe and the world. In the general debate on the mercantilist system that dominated the last decades of the eighteenth century the United Provinces were an example of fundamental importance, where old experience and the new ideas of economists were actively intertwined. Like other ancient patrician republics (it is enough to think of Geneva and Venice), Holland showed a great tenacity in the defense of its archaic traditions, and also a great capacity to absorb and spread new and daring ideas. The patriotic movement of the eighties was a fruit of this double tendency, which both revealed forms surviving from the past and pressed forward toward new ideas affirmed by the radical movements of the British world, in Europe as in America. Thus Holland, which for many decades had been a kind of emporium for modern political ideas, became an active participant in the revolts and contradictions of the decisive crisis of the old regime.²

² See above all I. Leonard Leeb, *The Ideological Origins of the Batavian Revolution: History and Politics in the Dutch Republic, 1747-1800* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973). There is a skillful and lively exposition in Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), which perhaps emphasizes more than it should elements of continuity between the years of the patriotic movement

One of the first men of the Enlightenment to turn to the United Provinces in the hope of finding political materials useful for an assertion of modern liberty was the Abbé Coyer, the indefatigable publicist who at the end of the fifties had begun the debate on the *noblesse commerçante*, on the rights and duties, that is, of nobles in the commercial and manufacturing life of France. He had continued to criticize any form of privilege and inactivity in a series of works. He turned now, in 1769, toward Holland. Some years earlier, in 1764, he had gone on a long tour of Italy with his soul divided between admiration for vestiges of the past and anguished awareness of the weight of tradition in the peninsula. "Its foreign commerce, which was so flourishing under the banner of the Venetians, the Genoese, the Florentines, and the Pisans, is nothing now, and its manufactures languish." Certainly the economic situation had improved since the peace of 1748.¹ But roads, improvements, and enterprise were lacking everywhere. Everywhere there was misery and begging. Politically, Italy had shown a tendency, a long-term impulse, to govern itself through republics. History demonstrated this. The oppression of the barbarians had hardly waned when "Venice, Siena, Pisa, Lucca, and Florence hastened, as much as possible, to recover their liberty."² Rome, Sicily, Genova, even San Marino and Ragusa, had taken the same route. So deeply rooted was the "republican taste" of Italy that it continually reappeared, even in the eighteenth century. The Sicilians had not failed to rebel against their Viceroy. "The people of Naples, at the slightest discontent, evoke the shadow of the Masaniello." The people of Trastevere were a continual threat for the papal government. Modern Italians were not warriors, "if one excepts the subjects of the king of Sardinia." But they showed themselves capable of fighting whenever their liberty was at stake. "Republican spirit is worth an army." Was this not proved by the Genoese in 1746?³ And had not Cor-

and those of the French Revolution. For a synthetic view, see the masterly work by Ernest Heinrich Kossmann, "The Crisis of the Dutch State, 1786–1813: Nationalism, Federalism, Unitarism," in *Britain and the Netherlands*, vol. 4: *Metropolis, Dominion, and Province*, ed. J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), pp. 156ff., and id., *The Low Countries, 1780–1940* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). Always important is Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, vol. 1, pp. 321ff., ch. 11: "Democrats and Aristocrats, Dutch, Belgian, and Swiss."

¹ Gabriel-François Coyer, *Voyages d'Italie et de Hollande* (Paris: Duchesne, 1775), vol. 2, p. 161.

² Ibid., p. 167.

³ Ibid., pp. 170ff. Curious, even if legendary, are the episodes the Abbé Coyer narrates of the revolt of 1746. The people fought but were deeply persuaded that the nobles should continue to dominate. What was needed was a "reform of abuses."

sica recently shown the value of aspiring "to depend only on themselves"? Thus "from age to age" the "general penchant of Italy for republican government" reemerged.⁴ For this reason it was better that it remained divided into many small states, Coyer concluded. United in the hands of a single ruler, it would soon feel the temptation to start out anew on the path of conquest. Otherwise the character of Italians was not at all quarrelsome. A republican spirit and a mildness of customs seemed curiously united there, just as religious devotion seemed joined with a general spirit of tolerance. Censorship was less heavy than it was generally reputed to be. "One finds printed in Italy, in Venice, Milan, Lucca, and Florence, translations of French and English works that are prohibited in lands that could hardly claim to be more Catholic, along with daring Italian works. . . . It is astonishing that books sold only under the counter in Paris can be bought indiscriminately in the bookstores of Rome."⁵ It was not surprising that "Muratori, Maffei, Metastasio, Beccaria, and others" had restored to modern Italy the road "to genius and taste."⁶

The Abbé Coyer thus found a capacity for self-renewal in the republican spirit and tradition of civic tolerance in Italy at the time of his visit. This was more a lesson in humanity than an example of political and economic initiative. Traveling a few years later to the Low Countries he was convinced that he was visiting a land entirely lacking in art and beauty but capable of furnishing useful models for economic and political behavior. The Dutch, he wrote, "because they have lived under the flag of liberty, occupied in commerce, which is their principal activity, have left the glory of imitating Athens and Rome in the fine arts to other nations."⁷ (As one sees, a traveler like the Abbé Coyer, in 1769, paid no attention to what for us is great Dutch art.) "Thus what should I look for?" "Prodigies in the useful arts, commerce, and good government."⁸ He knew well that this was not a democratic regime, as many held. "The first bourgeois formed in each town a kind of aristocracy, and when these were united into the Estates General they became a great aristocracy." The government by regents was severe. "Assassins are broken on the wheel, hangings and decapitations take place for the smallest crimes, torture is used in some cases."⁹ Only for deserters did the Dutch show a certain lenience. The police was particularly attentive

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 190ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 219ff.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

to thieves. "Proverbially one can go day or night through the streets of Amsterdam with one's hat filled with ducats without the least fear, and if there is a theft it is very difficult for the thief to escape." "If a thief demands your purse, it is just as well to give it over: he will not be able to take it far. It is enough to cry out and the authorities will exercise justice." At night "bourgeois companies" kept guard. "As for pickpockets, the people themselves often bring them to justice. They throw them into a canal, retrieve them, and dry them out with cudgel blows." Otherwise public order was generally good, perhaps because of "a certain well-being diffused everywhere. People do not think of stealing when they are not pursued by want."¹⁰

Like its society, the Dutch economy also appeared solidly on its traditional bases: finishing industries, loans of capital, the large merchant fleet. Nor did Coyer forget that Holland did not trade only in different kinds of merchandise. "It also trades in the spirit of nations. Its bookstores have a flourishing commerce, and the more some nations impede the press, the happier this is."¹¹ During his stay in The Hague, the relationship between the stadholder and the Estates General appeared to be stable. Barneveldt and de Witt were now shadows in the past. Life in the great university of Leiden was calm, and Coyer was attracted above all by the research in natural history. "Science in that university is based only on experiment. There are no hypotheses, no systems, and the professors say they have faith only in their eyes, rather than eyes of faith."¹² Nor was the spirit different in the other great university of the United Provinces, that of Utrecht.

This was a hasty view of Holland still fixed in its great traditions. Everything recalled a past that continued daily. "If the Dutch should forget the price of liberty, all their public monuments would make them remember it. The pictures, the statues, the tombs, the inscriptions, all eulogize those who fought for it. Even the coins in circulation put liberty beside religion, with the legend: *hac nitimur, hanc tuemur* [on this we depend, this we defend]." In conclusion: "A philosophic voyager who seeks a free land where no one suffers ills beyond those inseparable from humanity, should travel to Holland."¹³

A single incident led the Abbé Coyer to compare for a moment the Dutch tradition of liberty with the ferments of rebellion that were becoming diffused in Europe in those years. During his stay in Amster-

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 243ff.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 255.

¹² Ibid., p. 275.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 294ff.

dam, to his not little surprise, he happened to encounter "a celebrated personage who has fought two campaigns against the forces of France." The presence of Pasquale Paoli in Holland, along the way that led him to exile in Great Britain, aroused much curiosity. "The inn where he lodged was never empty, and there were crowds in the street." The figure of the Corsican general was anything but imposing. "Paoli has neither a heroic figure nor manner: he does not even seem Italian. Without being tall, he has broad shoulders, a light complexion, blond hair, a sweet and modest expression." He excused himself to a sailor who had to wait long hours to speak to him. This man was heard to answer: "I am content to have seen the man who wanted to make Corsicans as free as I am." Public honors were not given him, "but he was feted by all the chief people. Thus the prince stadholder himself entertained him in his court at Loo."¹

In reality, the contacts of Paoli with Holland were much more significant than the popular and official manifestations might lead us to believe. The Dutch gazettes spoke much of him and followed his voyage to Utrecht, Amsterdam, Harlem, and Leiden. On 25 August 1769 the gazette of Utrecht announced his arrival in Holland, after a long pilgrimage through the German states along the Rhine.² He arrived incognito, with Count Gentili, a secretary, and the Hanoverian Count Groot-haus. In every city that he passed he made a particular tour not only of the streets and palaces, but also of the manufactures and fortresses. Having arrived in Amsterdam he said he was impressed with the "welcome given him by a happy people that enjoys the rich fruits of liberty acquired at a high price, and undisturbed peace."³ In the following days the "beruchte heer Paoli," the "celebrated Paoli," was followed by journalists in his movements through the city.⁴ At the beginning of September he was received by the stadholder "with much respect, and a table of 22 persons, and Paoli was seated at his right." The dinner finished, they admired together pictures and works of art in the castle.⁵ Even in Leiden, on 6 September, he encountered "respect for his person and sympathy for Corsica." After Harlem he went to the villa of Peter Burman, the celebrated scholar, poet, and student of Greek, and met the English ambassador.⁶

These notices passed to the European gazettes and were widely dif-

¹ Ibid., pp. 255ff.

² *Utrechtse Courant*, no. 102, 25 August 1769 (Frankfurt, 20 August, and Amsterdam, 23 August).

³ Ibid., no. 103, 28 August 1769 (Utrecht, 27 August).

⁴ Ibid., no. 104, 30 August 1769 (Amsterdam, 5 August).

⁵ Ibid., no. 106, 4 September 1769 (Amsterdam, 2 September).

⁶ Ibid., no. 108, 8 September 1769 (The Hague and Amsterdam, 6 September).

fused. Particular attention was given in the *Notizie del mondo*, the Florentine biweekly that had always shown great interest for everything regarding the affairs of Corsica. In a communication from The Hague on 10 September the travels of Paoli were reported in detail.

It is learned that he has left Amsterdam . . . to come to this city; he stopped in Harlem to see the famous church, where the singular organ of the same was played for him. Then he went to visit different handsome parts of the city, after which he went to the villa of the most erudite gentleman Peter Burman, professor of history, eloquence, and Greek language in the Academy of Amsterdam, with whom he remained in conversation for some hours. Finally the said general arrived here about midnight. The day before yesterday he had the honor of meeting the Prince Stadholder and the Field Marshal Duke of Brunswick. He dined with Count Gentili and other gentlemen at the residence of the extraordinary ambassador from Great Britain. He continued to receive many visits and diverted himself by observing the rarities of our place and its surroundings. Madame Carron, famous in France and Holland for painting portraits, has recently painted one of General Paoli, which is such a good likeness that it is being engraved on copper and prints will be sent to any who commission them from this excellent painter.⁷

Paoli was received with particular cordiality in the villa of Professor Burman, near Santhorst, midway between The Hague and Leiden.⁸ This was the center of Dutch intellectual life in these years. As Mirabeau would later recall in his appeal to the Batavians, a group of men and women had worked for liberty there beginning in the sixties, "long before it was a question of *patriotism*." Together they had kept alive the memory of Barneveldt and Grotius. "They had formed a kind of brotherhood of admirers of these great men and partisans of their system."⁹ The vision of free Greece in antiquity, and admiration for the great Romans of the past, colored their passion for liberty with neoclassical hues. Echoes arriving from Paris gave a greater polemic intensity to their nascent patriotism. In 1767 the Encyclopedist Marmontel had dared to affirm that the soul of Belisarius, like that of Marcus Aurelius and Cato, had certainly been saved by merciful God. This proposition elicited full agreement in every corner of Europe of the Enlightenment. The Sor-

⁷ *Notizie del mondo*, no 77, 26 September 1769, p. 631 (The Hague, 10 September). The portrait of Paoli by Madame Carron, a French painter residing in Holland, etched by Jakobus Houbraken, is mentioned in Thieme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. 6 (1912), p. 30.

⁸ *Utrechtse Courant*, no 109, 11 September 1769 (The Hague, 9 September). See Jan Hartog, *Uit de dagen der patriotten* (Amsterdam: P. N. Van Kampen and Zoon, n.d.), pp. 23ff.

⁹ Honoré de Mirabeau, *Aux Bataves sur le stadhoudérat* (n.p., 1788), "Notes et pièces justificatives," p. 6.

bonne, however, openly condemned the “impiety of Belisarius.” The faculty of theology in Paris was echoed by the most narrow-minded and conservative group of Protestant theologians in the United Provinces. The pastor of Rotterdam, Peter Hofstede, even took the opportunity to list and attack the vices and sins of the most famous pagans, speaking, among other things, of the pederasty of Socrates and declaring all of them unworthy of salvation. However, Socrates was vigorously defended by the remonstrant preacher C. Nozeman. The polemic expanded to Switzerland and Germany. In 1772 the *Neue Apologie des Sokrates*, by J. A. Eberhard, was published in Leipzig, which drew up the balance sheet of this dispute born as a defense of moral autonomy against any kind of regimentation or religious compulsion.¹⁰

It was left to one of the most learned poetesses of the group, Elisabeth Bekker Wolff, to express the ethical and political credo the friends of Peter Burman shared better than anyone else. Mirabeau remembered with admiration this “piece of verse, written with the ease and facility that characterize her works, to which she gave the title *De Santhorstsche geloofsbelijdenis*, that is, *Confession of Faith at Santhorst*.”¹¹ A republican spirit and polemics against Calvinist orthodoxy came together in this as in other works of the embattled writer.¹² Her contacts with the Parisian Enlightenment even led her to translate Diderot’s *Fils naturel*.

In 1769 she wrote a poem in which she imagined Dutch liberty turning to virtue and offering it the image of the great Paoli.¹³ As a motto she chose the verses of Pope:

Look next on Greatness; say where Greatness lies?
Where? but among the Heroes and the Wise.

She pictured Paoli surrounded by the great military figures of the past, from the famous Dutch admiral Ruyter to the British Marlborough, from Prince Eugene of Savoy to Turenne and Frederick of Prussia, and, turning to the virtue that gave laws to Holland, she presented the Corsican general “so precious to us, and whose only aim was to vindicate the rights of oppressed Corsica,” to “liberate his own country and give it peace.” No ambition had put a sword in his hand, but rather warlike virtue. His great soul was superior to ambition. For this as well Batavian youth admired him, and saw him

¹⁰ See Böhm, *Sokrates*, pp. 154ff.

¹¹ Mirabeau, *Aux Bataves*, p. 6.

¹² Leeb, *The Ideological Origins of the Batavian Revolution*, pp. 102ff.

¹³ Elisabeth Bekker Wolff, *De Nederlandsche Vryheid aan de Deugd. Haar het Beeld des Grooten Pascal Paoli aanbiedende* (Te Hoorn: T. Tjallingius, 1770). It is reprinted in the numerous later collections of her poetry.

Als d'Eer der Corsen, en de Schrik der Genuëezen.

As the honor of Corsicans, and terror of the Genoese.

In a second poem Elisabeth Bekker Wolff saluted "the Corsican general Pascal Paoli" in the name of "Dutch liberty."¹⁴ As a "father of the people" she compared him to William the Silent. The Corsican general was "a terror to the French," as the great man of Orange, "so beloved in the Low Countries," was to the Spanish. Paoli had called his compatriots to the defense of the island and at the same time had acted as a philosopher by introducing sciences and arts into his country and working for the well-being of the nation. "Avarice and laziness will be banished, for too long they have been almost a religion, and the same will be done for useless luxury." In the future virtue would dominate, the harbinger of a happiness from which Europe as a whole would benefit. In a final salute the poetess invoked the blessing of providence on the "precious life of the hero," who was now about to leave Holland, and also on distant Corsica.

At the same time as these verses, a *Welcome to Pasquale Paoli, great defender of Corsican liberty, on his arrival in Holland* was published.¹⁵ It consisted of eight pages signed H, and I have not succeeded in discovering the author. It called Paoli "Oracle of the Batavians, example for the British, hope and good omen for nobles, model for free citizens, sorrow for the Genoese, terror for the frivolous Gauls."¹⁶ It concluded with a historical comparison between the liberation of Holland and that of the Corsicans. Paoli had made Van der Werf live again, who had offered his blood "for the just cause, for the miserable citizen regaining liberty. Then that was the work of Van der Werf, now it is the work of Paoli."

The chief and most significant poem in this Dutch glorification of the Corsican general was by Peter Burman, in Latin, entitled *In victoriam Gallorum invisam de Pascalo Paullo, magno libertatis corsicanae defensore, proditorum perficia relatam*. This hymn took its inspiration from ancient Corsica and retold the sad history of a land that was forever oppressed by invaders: Phoenecians, Romans, Goths, Saracens, Genoese, Pisans. "Corsica, beset with countless suitors, / yet with undaunted neck throws off the chains. / Always in love with unharmed virginity, / you refused to become the spoil of foreign brigands, / as an

¹⁴ "De Nederlandsche Vryheid aan der corsen generaal Pascal Paoli." It is reprinted in her collection of lyrics *Lier-veld en mengelzangen* (Te Hoorn: T. Tjallingius, 1772), pp. 41ff.

¹⁵ *Welkomstgroet aen Pascal Paoli, groot voorstander der corsische vrijheid, bij zijne aenkomste in Holland* (Leyden: C. van Hoogeveen, 1769).

¹⁶ "Vragbaek des Bataviers! En voorbeeld voor den Brit! Der Eed'len hoop en wensch! der vrijen burg'ren wit! Der Genneezen spijt! Den schrik der wuste Gallen."

untamed horse refuses the harsh bit." Taking up a theme that we find in all discussion of the Corsican revolution, Burman underlined the presence on the island of an important nobility.¹⁷ "And you can boast of the Colonna as patron deities, / and raise your Ornani to the stars. / Fame made a Gaffori equal to the immortal examples of Rome / and does not let him be obscured by night; / a Gaffori, who bravely dared prefer his country / even to the marriage bed, and the marriage bed's dear pledges. / Bright is the virtue of the Gaffori, famous the virtue of the Ceccaldi, / and the house of Rivarola is splendid." It was a nobility in which Paoli found refuge, like the sun among the stars. Love for liberty and fatherland intertwined in this aristocracy, sending Pasquale's father first to exile, in Naples, so as to push him forward in the great task of liberating his land from the Genoese and French

ne Liguri aut Gallo Corsica praeda foret

so that Corsica would not be prey to Ligurian or Gaul.

At the same time Pasquale Paoli transformed the agrarian and commercial life of the country and reformed its laws. For his island he was what Solon, Numa, Minos, Lycurgus, or Peter the Great of Russia had been for their cities.

Quaque olim indomitos emolliit arte Ruthenos
Maxima regnantum gloria, primus honos,
PASCALUS hac Corsos, faciles dum rexit habenas,
Adsidua duxit sedutitate feros.

With skill once used to tame the indomitable Ruthenes (Russians)
Great glory of rulers, foremost in honor,
PASQUALI, the easy reins in hand,
led the fierce Corsicans.

For fifteen years Paoli had been able to act, until "conspirators" there united against him: "Genoese and Gallic fury." But Genova, odious for the injustice of government, and France, eager for loot, would not have been able to win without the betrayal of some of the Corsicans themselves. News of his struggles and defeats had arrived even in Holland.

Nuper enim adtonitas Batavum percussit ut aures
Fama gravis, cladis nuntia, PAULLE, tuae.

Recently struck the astonished ears of Batavians
The sad report, the news of your death, PAOLI.

¹⁷ See Franco Venturi, "Pasquale Paoli e la rivoluzione di Corsica," *R. stor. ital.*, year 86, fasc. 1 (March 1974): 8ff.

The blow had been the same, for Dutch and Corsicans

Publica communi Libertas vulnere plangit
Saucia et atrata pallida veste sedet.

Public liberty injured by a common wound
Sits smitten and pale in her mourning dress.

The Dutch also had been treated as rebels in the past, but they had succeeded, "by their indomitable virtue," in breaking the yoke of Philip II. Now the Gauls boasted of their triumph

regia jam Corsis nectere vincla parans

already preparing royal chains for Corsicans,

but the honor remained that of Pasquale Paoli:

. . . aeterno . . . decorabit honore
Fama. . .

Fame will decorate him with eternal honor.

Still he had to abandon Corsica under the weight of defeat. Now his fatherland was distant.

Non tibi castaneas molles, neque dulcia poma
Proferet e facili terra benigna sinu.
Non tibi mella thymo croceave educta rubenti,
Condet odoratis fertilis ora favis,
Sed quae de buxis et amaris edita taxis
Stipant Cyrneae munera mellis apes.
Tintaque de succis, quos dant Medeides herbae
Sanguineam sistent pocula tetra sitim.

Not for you will soft chestnuts, or sweet apples
Be offered from the easy lap of earth.
Not for you will yellow honey from the ruddy thyme,
Be stored up in fragrant combs on the fertile shore,
But rather what from boxwood and bitter yew
Corsican bees press together.
Stained by the juices given by Medea's herbs,
Horrid cups will bloodily quench your thirst.

Whatever happened, the betrayal into which Paoli fell

Aeternum in fastis Corsicae crimen erit.

Will forever be a crime in the annals of Corsica.

Addressing himself to those who had abandoned Paoli, Burman stamped them as

Turpiter offici immemores

Shamefully forgetful of duty

and accused them, saying

Tam bene susceptum destituistis opus
Regalique jugo famularia colla dedistis.

You have abandoned a task well begun
and submitted your servile necks to the royal yoke.

Images from the past crowded in to condemn those who had subjected themselves to the Gauls.

“The liberty loving Batavian and the pugnacious Briton” remained at the side of Paoli in the struggle against the king and the tyrants. And he felt near him the ancient heroes Camillus, Brutus, and Cato.

Nomina si veterum Stygiis revocentur ab umbris,
Elysium et possint linquere, PAULLE, nemus;
Invictus Gallos pro libertate Camillus
Tarpeja tecum pellere rupe velit.
Ejicere aut reges, dirum aut mactare tyrannum,
Gauderent socia Brutus uterque manu.
Et Cato communi tecum nece mallet obire,
Quam dominos volvi Caesaris ante pedes.

If the ancients were recalled from the Stygian shades,
PAOLI, and could leave Elysium;
For liberty, the invincible Camillus would with you
Throw the Gauls from the Tarpeian rock.
Whether to drive out kings or slaughter the dread tyrant,
Both Brutuses would rejoice to join hands with you.
And Cato would rather meet death with you,
Than have lords grovel at Caesar's feet.

Turning to Paoli, Burman addressed to him his final invocation:

Immortalis eris: nullo est debilis aevo,
Quaecumque ex meritis gloria parta venit.
Numen eris populis: nam liberatis amorem
Postera sub PAULI nomine secla colent.

You will be immortal: never perishable
Is the glory that arises from deeds of merit.
You will be a divine spirit to humanity: for love of liberty
Will in future under PAOLI's name be venerated.¹⁸

¹⁸ The poem of Burman carried the indication: Lugduni Batavorum, Apud Cornelium van Hooegeveen, June 1769.

Through the classical images, a new reality emerged. Ancient rhetoric cloaked the modern patriotism of Batavians and Corsicans. Theirs was a struggle for liberty, of republican inspiration, directed against monarchies, which still seemed the strongest in Europe, but to whom the future did not belong. The Corsica of Pasquale Paoli made itself the symbol of the first crisis of the old regime, and around it collected the passions and hopes that accompanied the great reversal at the end of the century. The Dutch would have a significant part in this final crisis. The patriotic party of the eighties developed the ideas of Burman and the group at Santhorst in a democratic sense, becoming openly philo-French and philo-American, and ended by falling, in 1787, under the blows of Prussian intervention. The long flame of Batavian patriotism, nourished twenty years before by the example of Pasquale Paoli, seemed for a moment to go out under the weight of the most typical of absolute monarchies, but then soon reignited.

Burman's poem was turned into Dutch with a brief introduction, in which it was said how difficult it was to translate such "beautiful verses." "No vain hope of praise has made us undertake this translation. No, it has been the desire to express our veneration for the Corsican protagonist of liberty." "You Netherlands, see in the example of the courageous Pascal what it is to resist oppression. Learn your duty to your ancestors, who like national divinities conquered happiness and liberty by sacrificing their possessions and their blood. . . . Read, learn, without pausing over the translation. To translate Burman, one must be a Burman."

A last glance back toward the Corsican revolution before the departure of Paoli for England was taken by another Dutch poet, whom we can perhaps identify as the same Burman, in an anonymous poem published in 1769 and entitled *Pascal Paoli's Afscheid aen Corsica, bij zijn vertrek naer Livorno* (Pasquale Paoli's farewell to Corsica, and his departure for Livorno): "Unhappy Corsica . . . sees its defender ready for departure. Oh island! Your glory has been exposed to fate and disaster, cradle of so many courageous heroes. . . . You were accustomed to withstanding the terror of the enemy, their adulations and deceptions." "Once again farewell, my joy, my life."¹⁹

At the same time, in the most important journal published in Amsterdam, a version of the well-known pages that James Boswell had dedicated to Paoli in his voyage to Corsica appeared. In another issue of the same periodical was an essay, "The Principal Developments and Revo-

¹⁹ It was published in Leiden in 1769 by Cornelis van Hoogveen.

lutions of the Island of Corsica.”²⁰ Frequent talk of Paoli in the gazettes, as well as news of Corsica, continued. Only when he arrived in London did his image in Holland begin to change. In a communication from London of 10 October the *Utrechtse Courant* noted that he would soon be affiliated with the court of St. James and that he had accepted money from George III, arousing the “discontent of the most ardent supporters of liberty by his refusal to visit their idol Wilkes in prison.”²¹ Such polemics only partly obscured the contribution the stay of Paoli in the United Provinces brought to ideas and passions at the end of the sixties, when he was seen for a moment to incarnate the ideal of a *defensor libertatis*.

A “philosophic voyager” of particular significance, namely Diderot himself, had the occasion in 1774 to observe Holland slowly passing from memories of the past to a more modern patriotism. The United Provinces were for him above all a way station in his voyage to Russia. He did not seek solutions there for the social and political problems that impassioned him. The personality of Catherine and the numerous possibilities for Russia seemed to open much greater horizons before him. But his disappointment in St. Petersburg and the difficulties he had in making his voice heard by the empress, even after he left Russia, made him more and more attentive to what Holland had to offer, above all through the liberty that appeared in a thousand forms around him in Amsterdam and in the other places he visited in the United Provinces. His *Voyage*, like almost all his works of this period, remained unpublished, a hidden sign of a tendency and an almost secret possibility of his thought. For a moment he was interested in and seemed to be pleased with the republican tradition of Holland, forcing himself to know it at closer hand, intending to make an assessment of it and collaborate in transforming it into a nascent patriotic movement. All this remained, however, a dialogue with himself. Few were able to look at his pages. Even fewer were his interpreters.

He much admired the freedom of the press that he felt vibrate around him. He abstained, however, from profiting from it to make public his most personal and problematic works. From the presses of Dutch booksellers had appeared many pages by Voltaire, d’Holbach, Rousseau, and Helvétius. The temptation to let himself be carried along by this current must have been strong. But Diderot gave in only on one occasion. His *Entretien d’un philosophe avec la maréchale de **** was pub-

²⁰ *Nieuwe vaderlandsche letter-oefeningen, warr in de boeken en schriften*, pt. 2 (1769), pp. 26ff., 414ff.

²¹ *Utrechtse Courant*, no. 125, 18 October 1769 (London, 10 October).

lished in Holland, presented as an Italian text attributed to the Tuscan poet Tommaso Crudeli.¹ And for a moment he thought it was finally possible to publish freely that truly "philosophical" encyclopedia that he had dreamed of all his life and had hoped for a moment to be able to compile under the aegis of Catherine II. His experience in Russia liberated him from that illusion. For a moment he hoped to put himself at the head of the new generation of scientists and of daring and discussed writers, like Marat, and resume his life as an Encyclopedist with them.² Soon he discarded even this project. Holland was for him momentarily a return to youth. Then he quickly enclosed himself again in his more personal work, in the hidden masterpieces of his maturity.

He had a single encounter with Dutch culture, itself reserved and difficult, which was nonetheless revealing both of his personal convictions and of the dilemmas that were opening before the United Provinces. Through the Russian ambassador's wife, Princess Golicyn, the famous noblewoman Adelaide Amalia von Schmettau, who aroused much admiration in the minds of writers and philosophes, not least of them Diderot, he met François Hemsterhuis, the most original Dutch thinker of those years.³ In him the tradition of antiquarians and classical philologists changed into a Greek cult, a vision of Hellenic perfection. In 1740 François's father, Tiberius, had been appointed professor of Dutch and Greek history at Leiden. As in the group around Burman, among the sages of Santhorst, for him too the republican tradition and the classical world, the history of his own country and that of Greece, had developed together. One generation later, in the years of his son François, a division began to accomplish itself. Historians, jurists, and politicians began to look to the sixteenth-century struggles of Holland in their search for a new patriotism. Artists and philosophers looked to Hellas, to the new classicism, in search of inner peace and an enlightened and a refined spiritual enjoyment.⁴ Princess Golicyn, daughter of the famous General

¹ Denis Diderot, *Correspondance*, ed. Georges Roth and Jean Varloot (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1968), vol. 14, p. 158.

² Ibid., p. 51. The young Marat was in Holland to publish his work *De l'homme*, which appeared in Amsterdam in 1775. The year before he became a Freemason in The Hague.

³ Henri L. Brugmans, "Diderot, le Voyage de Hollande," in *Connaissance de l'étranger Mélanges offerts à la mémoire de Jean-Marie Carré* (Paris: Didier, 1964), pp. 151ff.; Heinz Moenke-Meyer, *François Hemsterhuis* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), p. 14; and Rosa Stafforini, "Hemsterhuis e i filosofi," in *Bollettino di storia della filosofia*. Università degli studi di Lecce, vol. 6 (1978), pp. 305ff.

⁴ The neoclassical rediscovery of Hellas was associated in the mind of Hemsterhuis with what he had heard of the Russian naval expedition into the Archipelago, in 1770 and the following years. His small treatise *Aristée ou de la divinité*, of 1779, was presented as a "manuscript found, presumably on the island of Andros, at the time of the Russian expedition into the Archipelago. The Greek text is very corrupt." Likewise his work *Simon*