

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

Dodge like a Vendéean

July 30, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

If the neighbouring states had taken advantage of these intestine troubles, France must inevitably have sunk under such a complication of misery. Equally fatal would have proved her ill-success in the immense requisitions of men which were demanded from each province. But in this they succeeded. Each village, city, and borough was to furnish a prescribed number of men according to their population, every person between the age of sixteen and twenty-five being subject to this law; and the smallest hamlet provided ten men. In such an extended and populous kingdom as France, it is easy to judge what numbers of soldiers were thus put in motion by the Convention through these means, if we say 1,800,000, it will not be an exaggeration. But for the first three months of this ordinance opposition was almost universally made, and on the prescribed day, when every parish ought to have drawn lots, the Convention received intimation in general from each department that they judged it unprofitable to carry the ordinance into effect. But the Convention at last fell upon a plan more successful, by giving orders that the drawing of lots in each parish should be on different days, when by an arrangement, and continual movement of the military force, and by the most compulsive measures, this edict was carried into effect throughout the kingdom, with the exception of a part of Anjou and of Poitou, where being armed they defended themselves against this edict by the famous league of La Vendee.

The ancient province of Anjou is separated by the Loire, a very considerable river which loses its name at Paimboeuf, at a distance of ten leagues from Nantes, where it discharges itself into the sea. That part to the north of the river, or Upper Anjou, was in a state of insurrection, and Lower Anjou would have risen also, but the local situation did not favour such enterprise. In consequence, the ruling power in the department of Maine et Loire had sufficient authority easily to prevent the assemblies of the people who wished to meet to resist the edict. However, there was a very considerable meeting at about three leagues from my residence. It was in the district of Segre, a little town on the confines of Brittany, that about three thousand villagers and others assembled, and were proceeding to the town, but were checked by three pieces of cannon which were in the town, and proved its preservation as well as that of the officers. This ill-armed, and as badly-appointed, troop then turned towards Le Lion d'Angers, a small city in the neighbourhood, where an engagement took place which proved pretty obstinate. But the Patriots having had time to collect some additional troops, by their help this mob was put to flight, with the loss of many killed and wounded. Among them were three domestics of my brother-in-law, the Chevalier de la Grandiere, whose cook was killed, his valet de chambre and gardener being wounded. In consequence, the department issued an order for investing the house of my brother-in-law, under the idea that his servants, who appeared to be the leaders of this body of men, could not have been there but by the orders of their master. He was therefore seized that night, and with my sister taken to Le Lion d'Angers at three leagues distance, from whence on the succeeding day they were conveyed, with irons on their hands and feet, to the prison of Angers, the capital of Anjou, where were held the sittings of the primary assembly of Maine et Loire. Three months did they remain in that prison, by which time the royalist army had become so formidable as to lay siege to Angers.

On the succeeding day I learnt this new source of inquietude, which filled my mind with bitter reflections for the fate of my unfortunate sister and brother-in-law.

The affair of Le Lion d'Angers only served to increase the cruelty of the Patriots, and the ordinance for the levy of men in Upper Anjou was carried into effect with every possible rigour. At this time I had with me my two sons, one of the age of fourteen, the other just entered into his sixteenth year. Of course the latter came within the age prescribed by the edict, and, though absent, I was obliged to draw for him, and my unlucky fate drew the black billet. At the instant this did not occasion to me so much uneasiness, because I meant to avail myself of the edict by which it was permitted to any one to

be released on laying down the sum of 1500 livres, which was supposed adequate to finding a substitute properly equipped. I therefore took the proper steps on this occasion, but they proved useless. The department refused to accede to the decree in my favour, and I had the grief of seeing my son depart for the frontiers, of whom I have never since heard any account. "Ah! unhappy father," said I to myself, "when will thy misfortunes end? Already two of thy sons are snatched from and in a manner lost to thee." Alas, little did I think that at the time I was thus complaining I was only at the beginning of my afflictions.

At this time there remained with me my son aged fourteen, and three daughters of the ages of eighteen, sixteen, and twelve. This was my situation at the end of the year 1792, when the Patriots were taking the most insufferable and cruel means to deter the country people from thinking of any meetings, carrying their malice to such an extent that on the smallest rumour of insurrection — which in many instances was spread by themselves — they fired on the innocent labourer while at his daily occupation.

— *Memoirs of the Count de Cartrie* (publ. 1906) [[source](https://archive.org/stream/cu31924024325890#page/n111/mode/2up)
(<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924024325890#page/n111/mode/2up>)]

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One thought on “Dodge like a Vendéean”

1. Marxoktonos says:

August 2, 2018 at 2:13 pm

Unrelated to this post, but could you do an article explaining how cities work in a Feudal standpoint?

Are they small merchant republics of their own?

I have been able to follow your thought as it pertains to rural life, but I am baffled as to how Seigneurism could work in a city.

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