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FRENCH AFFAIRS.

SPEECH of Citizen SIEYES, President of the EXECUTIVE DIRECTORY, on the celebration of the anniversary of August 30.

DAY of justice and glory, which the destinies of France selected for establishing national independence on the ruins of the throne. I salute thee in the name of all the French! On the 10th of August royalty was overturned in France: It will never again rise. Such is the oath which you engraved on the walls of this palace at the moment even when you expelled the last of the tyrants. Thus disappeared that long succession of despots, whose yoke was become insupportable, who styled themselves the delegates of heaven, to oppress with more security the earth; who considered France as their patrimony, the French as their subjects, the laws the expression of their will; and whose hereditary influence had familiarized us with this ridiculous language that perhaps, even at present, it does not strike our ears with sufficient astonishment. In this last struggle, there remained to royalty as defenders, the audacity and baseness of a corrupted court, perfidy, insolence, and the deceitful aid of servitude. It had for adversaries, courage, determined resolution, the enthusiasm of infant liberty, and the generous virtues it inspires. The combat could not be of long duration; the victory could not be doubtful. But along with royalty it was impossible to annihilate in one day, all the interests it had associated, all the institutions which were too much indented with it. In republican France, royalty retained them both friends and avengers. The one did not even disguise their efforts to revive it, founding their hopes on I know not what fraternity of thrones, and the most intimate alliance between the throne and the altar; they armed around us a part of Europe; they re-kindled in the midst of us the torch of fanaticism. The other, more perfidious, noisy declaimers against royalty, but the secret and not less implacable enemies of those who had destroyed it, adopted every kind of language, engaged in every madness, and indulged in every excess, with the double hope of avenging the throne on its real destroyers, and of making it be regretted even by those who had most applauded its fall. Thus the republic was constantly the butt of direct aggressions, and of indirect attacks equally formidable. Citizens, it is not deviating from the spirit of this festival to tell you the means employed by your representatives and your magistrates to triumph over so many obstacles, and to unite by these means your patriotism with their efforts. This is always continuing to strike royalty! This is continuing, in some measure, to complete the victory of the 10th of August. To the open enterprises of royalty, the republic opposed without relaxation the whole of the national forces; it opposed merciless laws against the defectors of their country; severe measures against all the communes agitated by royalism; indefatigable vigilance to detect intrigues and the manoeuvres of those who dared to speak of its return. And those who at this moment should deny either these means, or the republican spirit of those who directed them, can be only madmen or men void of faith. To indirect aggressions might have been opposed repressive measures: they are authorized by the laws and the constitution: But because your magistrates are strong republicans, because they know that in this class of aggressors there are Frenchmen hurried away even by their love for the republic, and it would be with inconsolable regret that they would find themselves reduced to the necessity of showing themselves severe towards those who might serve the cause of liberty, they wish rather to reclaim them by pressing and fraternal advice: for they cannot abandon the hope of bringing back to the real interests of the public, men whose actions may have appeared doubtful, but whose intentions have remained pure. It is to these, therefore, that we address ourselves, to point out to them the small number of false patriots by whom they are agitated and tormented, and who fill their minds with the most absurd ideas, and their hearts with extravagant or criminal hopes. The present circumstances impose this on me as a duty. I am now going to discharge it. Citizens, whoever these men may be, whom I persist in believing to be few in number, foreigners or natives, paid by the enemy, or obeying the impulse of their own passions, desiring the speedy return of royalty, or preferring the reign of that terror so justly abhorred by the French, I shall say—shall exclaim—Beware of considering as republicans those who have seen in the overthrow of the throne, not the means of establishing a new government desired by the nation, but the right of overturning at all times every thing that may be an obstacle to their private ambition. Those who believe that to establish is always base, to destroy always a glory; who being inveterate enemies to every thing that is order, or which has the appearance of order, wish to govern by noise, and not by the

laws, who would tear to pieces with their own hands the government they have themselves formed, because a government, were it their own work, could never accomplish according to their satisfaction, all the plans of their ambition, all the dreams of their madness. No, these are not republicans! Those who cannot resolve to forgive the oldest and most incorruptible friends of liberty; who insult them even in proportion to the confidence with which they are honored by the nation, or the services they have performed. Conquerors of the 23d Thermidor, Aug. to you to whom the congratulations of this day are addressed; you yourselves have not been able to elude. These calumniators attack every one who has acquired a name; they wish to tarnish every glory. Those are not republicans, whose servile souls cannot conceive that the founders of liberty and the republic are republicans; who, repeating the delirious insults of the same court which the 10th of August reversed, and which they avenge since they become its imitators, still endeavor to impute to them as the object of their secret wishes. I know not what phantom of a king, led round in turns to all those whom they wish to destroy, frantic detractors or hypocrites, who, shutting their eyes against all evidence, persist to be ignorant that the men above all most frequently attacked by this absurd accusation, have, a thousand times and at the very beginning of the revolution, manifested their ardent desire, that the man, whom I will not even name, had always remained, he and his agents, in the ranks of the enemies, instead of carrying uneasiness, mistrust and danger into ours. No, they are not republicans; those, who, thro' their demagogic language, suffer to appear the shameful prediction which they retain for royal superstitions, and seem at every moment to tell you that since a king was attacked, they may with more justice attack the magistrates of the people. No! those men are not republicans, who can perform no other part but that of collecting, inflaming and exciting discontents against the established order; those men who in former times thought it necessary and proper to punish with death all those who had dared venture not to be content; those men who would consider peace as an evil, who would regret victory, who calculate upon our disasters, as the means of increasing their influence; those men who repose their hopes upon internal distraction, enjoy no happiness but in animosities. They denounce with audacity before the multitude, but shrink back when they are called upon to sign the denunciation. Thirsting for vengeance, they exclaim against the salutary delays which the law prescribes both to save innocence, and to tend with more certainty to reach the guilty. These men are not republicans, who by the frantic violence of their provocations strike dismay to the hearts of the sober citizens, who dry up the sources of public wealth, give a mortal wound to public credit, annihilate commerce, and paralyze all industry. Who incessantly speak of our calamities, and yet at their caprice increase the number of the wretched; call themselves the friends of the people, and only exasperate instead of serving them; influence each other against the foreign enemy, firmly determined, however, not to expose themselves in the combat.

Shall it then be, that because they repeat with more noise the real emotions of our common indignation against the dilapidators and traitors, that they hope to impose upon you? But have not the people, in their daily experience learnt, that it is not the men who speak the loudest, who are the most free from reproach? That many denounce only that they may not be denounced; and whom shall they persuade that those who govern do not feel a civic grief much more sincere, much more profound than themselves, at the afflicting spectacle of the injuries done to our country; at the moment too when they are called upon to find a remedy? Have they given a greater guarantee of their morality and their civism? Do they enjoy a purer reputation? Are they more austere in their manners, more of citizens? And if their indignation be real, instead of these clamours which are only addressed to the passions, and will protect the criminal, because they involve them with the innocent, why do they not wish to assist the useful operation of the laws, in multiplying, in augmenting the researches, in collecting the proofs, and in fine, in enlightening the magistrates? But why should I hesitate to speak it boldly, their object unquestionably, is not justice? What they wish is to mislead the public, by exciting distrust; to overwhelm men's minds with confusion and dismay; to drive the people of France to despair; to gain possession of all authority in the convulsion; in a word, to govern at every expence. Frenchmen, you well know how they govern! The Executive Directory knows all the enemies who are conspiring against the republic. In the midst of these agitators, who in truth are but few in number, but who seem to multiply their force

by their own noise, they do not lose sight of that other class of royalists, distinguished by an incurable phrensy, fighting for the return of a master, recalling him with their utmost vows, their utmost efforts; justly including among the number of their auxiliaries all, of whatever description they may be, who at present threaten the constitution and the government. They declare that they will be equally inflexible against all the enemies of the constitution; that, superior to danger, calm amidst the storm, they will combat all the public foes, undaunted and unceasing: Not, however, by playing off the one against the other, for this is the game is cruel and unworthy of republicans, but by equally repressing them all by those powerful means with which the constitution of the 3d year has armed them, and that immense majority of citizens, who are firmly determined to support it—to yield obedience to law alone, and at every moment to rally round the guardian authorities.

Vive la republique.

TRUE LIBERTY.

MANY truths fall into the mind, as many good seeds fall into the ground and lie there without sprouting. Take an example. The power of the people, when it is abused, is not liberty, and is sure, like all other power, to be abused, when it is left uncontrolled.

If then, the facts assumed by the Jacobins, were as true as they are false, if the French people were as much the authors of the public measures, as they are the victims of them, still the very nature of those measures would prove that true liberty is wanting: that the supreme power is not controlled, and that it is abused. Uncontrolled power is tyranny, and it would be hard to tell why tyranny should be amiable, because nobody knows who is the tyrant, because it is every body's folly or prejudice, or rage that acts, and nobody's sense or virtue that restrains. In such cases the mass of the people only seem to play the sovereign. They are in fact, not agents, but instruments. Their power is their physical force which destroys, if it obeys, their own blind impulse, and enslaves, if that impulse be imparted or directed by demagogues. Liberty is a treasure that requires keepers, and regular government is as necessary to its security as locks and watchmen to the stores on the long wharf. If the convicts of Castle Island, should happen to be the watchmen, or should be the directors of the banks, what would be the security of the goods and treasure? French security.

The power of the people of France, admitting they have it, might augment our abhorrence of them, by shewing that their dispositions are as bad as their proceedings, and that the crimes of the rulers are the crimes of the nation; but surely no republican is bound to consider it as his affair, or the cause of France as our cause. The difference between our republicanism and that of the French, would still be the whole difference between liberty and tyranny. All forms of government are susceptible of tyranny. Why should we love French tyranny better than Prussian? They are both, though not alike, supported by the sword. The Dey of Algiers, and the Divan of Constantinople, soften the terrors of their despotism by mingling with it the influence of superstition, thus rendering it less odious and more lasting. Let it be conceded to the declaimers upon liberty and equality, that the despotism in these governments is the proper object of our hatred. Let them in return admit, that the degree of liberty enjoyed in others (and all the European governments have some) is the proper object of our affectionate attachment.—Confessedly England has the most, next to France. This the Jacobins cannot very well deny.—If they will not admire and love the English government, as the English themselves do with passion, and, as in strict consistency with their pretended principles, the Jacobins ought to do, at least they ought to forbear to hold up the cause of France as the cause of American republicanism. The success of French tyranny is not our cause. Any other tyranny as much deserves our good will.

But the idea of popular liberty, being long kept out of the clutches of upstart tyrants and demagogues, is incorrect and contrary to experience. We see liberty in France as its worst enemies would wish to see it, busy to make itself odious and defenceless. The main-spring of the French government has been moved by fewer hands, and the people have less to do with it, since the king was dethroned than before. Barras is now more a king than Louis was. He will not be king so long, but he will have a successor. The next great villain in Franco, is the heir apparent.

Such a state of things exists in France, as renders liberty impossible. It would be easier to govern Algiers by a town meeting.—It is a slander of our liberty, to say, that our chance depends on their good success.—So far from it, their failure will shew that the securities