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Bette W. Oliver, *Orphans on the Earth: Girondin Fugitives from the Terror, 1793-1794*. Lanham, Md. and Plymouth, U.K.: Lexington Books, 2009. ix + 129 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, and index. \$60 (cl). ISBN 978-0-7391-2731-5.

Review by Kenneth Margerison, Texas State University-San Marcos.

Of the twenty-nine Girondin deputies who were proscribed by the National Convention on 2 June 1793, four—François-Nicolas-Léonard Buzot, Jérôme Pétion, Charles Barbaroux, and Jean-Baptiste Louvet—wrote memoirs in which they described their experiences in the months following their proscription. Although the memoirs have been utilized by historians of the Girondins and the Federalist Revolt, many of the details of the fugitive existence led by these men have remained obscure. Relying primarily on the manuscript and published versions of these memoirs, Bette Oliver's purpose is to fill this lacuna in the historical record. She supplements these sources with Barbaroux's correspondence and the papers and correspondence of Madame Roland. The body of her study centers on the details of the deputies' flight from Paris after their proscription, the nature of the lives these men led as fugitives from the revolutionary authorities, and the bitter hostility they expressed toward their Montagnard opponents and the Parisian sans-culottes whom they blamed for perverting the revolution. While recognizing the limitations of memoirs as historical sources, Oliver argues that events "can be given new life through the voices of those who were there, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the period" (p. 2).

As background to the flight and fugitive existence of the four deputies, Oliver begins with an account of the political attitudes, activities, and relationships of the Girondins. She follows the well-trod path established by previous historians with a description of the political association of individuals later called Girondins in the salon of Madame Roland. Oliver recounts the well-known history of the growing rift between the Girondins and their political opponents, the Montagnards, that emerged during the Legislative Assembly and rapidly intensified with the overthrow of the monarchy in August 1792, the outbreak of the September Massacres, and the trial of Louis XVI. The author mines her sources to demonstrate the growing personal hostility between Robespierre and the Girondin deputies, and she offers a brief description of the deputies' proscription by the Convention in June 1793.

However, Oliver's principal interest lies in chronicling the lives of Buzot, Pétion, Barbaroux, and Louvet after their proscription by the Convention, an aspect of the revolution to which historians have paid little attention. She does not completely ignore the political aspects of the Girondins' activities after 2 June as she provides an account of the gathering of expelled deputies in Caen, where the local political authorities voted to organize an armed force to go to Paris. However, she is considerably more interested in examining the precise means by which the deputies escaped arrest by the revolutionary government. Thus the manner in which Pétion hid himself in the houses of his friends until he was able

to slip out of Paris receives almost as much attention as the deputies' political activity in the Department of the Calvados. Likewise, the author provides a detailed description of how some of the Girondins who gathered at Caen had managed to reach Quimper in Brittany, obtain passage on a ship, and sail to Bordeaux. Interspersed in this account are the details of the letters that Buzot received from his imprisoned lover, Madame Roland, and the marriage of Louvet to the recently divorced Lodoiska Cholet.

The memoirs reveal the anxiety, hardships, dangers, and fear of betrayal that characterized the lives of these fugitives from revolutionary justice. For instance, the plan to sail to Bordeaux had rested on the assurance of Marguerite Elie Guadet, one of the proscribed deputies, that refuge could be found in the home of his father-in-law, but this plan failed when local inhabitants alerted the authorities to their presence. Finally, hidden in the home of Guadet's sister-in-law, Thérèse Bouquey, in St. Emilion, the fugitives spent their days hidden in the depths of a nearby stone quarry, emerging only after dark when they partook of their one daily meal. Their psychological state suffered when Madame Bouquey informed them of the October 1793 executions of their fellow Girondins in Paris. Buzot was further devastated by the news of the death of his lover, Madame Roland. Louvet, driven by his desire to be reunited with his new wife, risked returning to Paris and ultimately escaped with Lodoiska to Switzerland. Using an anonymous memoir presumed to have been written by a sympathetic priest, Oliver concludes her study with a detailed description of the discovery, arrest, and execution of Guadet, Jean-Baptiste Salle, and the members of Guadet's family who had hidden them; the suicides of Pétion and Buzot; and the failed suicide and execution of Barbaroux.

Oliver clearly has a general audience in mind for her book. Relying as she does on a limited source base which reveals events only from the perspective of the fugitives and Madame Roland, she is primarily interested in describing the considerable drama, suffering, and tragedy experienced by the Girondin fugitives. Given the intended audience, such a perspective may be entirely legitimate. However, Oliver's penchant for allowing the sources to speak for themselves rather than using them to support a historical narrative does not really serve the interest of the general reader. For example one has difficulty making sense of the rather tortured chronology Barbaroux employed in his description of the events of 1792, which Oliver presents in precisely the order provided in the memoir. In other chapters, most particularly those focusing on Buzot and Louvet, the account is little more than a gloss on the memoirs of each man. Offering more of a chronicle of events than a historical analysis of the last days of these men's lives, the author makes little attempt to explore the meaning behind Buzot's extensive ranting against the Montagnards and the Parisian sans-culottes or Barbaroux's continuing conflict with the municipal authorities in Marseille. Even the fugitives' suicidal compulsion in the face of revolutionary justice receives no explanation or comment.

*Orphans on the Earth*, in sum, is not fully satisfying. Its strength lies in providing a detailed account of the flight, clandestine existence, and deaths of the Girondin fugitives. However, the author's methodology and the scope of the study will prove disappointing to historians. The narrative, so closely wedded to the structure of the memoirs themselves, may prove less inviting to the general reader than a more independently developed account drawing upon the most interesting aspects of the memoirs.

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