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Louis Hinckner, *Citoyens-combattants à Paris, 1848-1851*. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2008. 350 pp. Illustrations, footnotes and "Récapitulatif des 385 dossiers individuels." 24 €. (pb). ISBN 978-2-7574-0030-2.

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From March 1848 for the first time all adult males had a direct vote and were full citizens. *Citoyens-combattants à Paris, 1848-1851* focuses on those author Louis Hinckner defines as *citoyens combattants*, individuals for whom the suffrage was new and who participated in the February revolution and the June Days 1848, and who opposed the coup d'état of 2 December 1851. Hinckner explores how taking up arms against established regimes impacted on these newly enfranchised citizens of the Second Republic and how governments responded to subsequent pleas by former insurgents and their families for recognition of their contributions and for compensation. Until now, because they published little, these *citoyens combattants* have rarely been more than statistics in studies such as those of Gossez, Tilly and Traugott. [1]

Hinckner follows a trail of judicial evidence that historians in France, Britain and elsewhere are finding a fruitful source of information on those who, either through poverty or lack of education, or both, were unlikely to leave any record of their views. The lengthy interrogations of those arrested prove invaluable. The judicial records contain a great detail of information, yet historians, mostly intent on a generalised statistical result, have bi-passed the rich details they include on individual motivations. Even more fruitful for this study of the motivations both of *combattants* and the official world are applications for clemency, recompense and pensions made by individuals and their families. Particularly revealing is the wealth of correspondence launched by the law of 30<sup>th</sup> July 1881, which provided compensation and pensions for those arrested after the coup d'état of 2 December 1851. It was envisaged as a general amnesty to provide closure for all the nineteenth-century revolutionary events, including the June days. Hinckner's approach is biographical and thematic. Refreshingly, he has no time for 'discourse,' nor for universalist assumptions. His generalisations are cautiously and meticulously put together from empirical evidence. He allows the individual combatants to speak for themselves, sometimes at length.

Part One asks what it meant to be both an insurgent and a citizen, how insurgents explained their part in revolutions, how they tried to equate taking up arms with citizenship and how their families were affected by their activities. Those seeking compensation or recognition of their patriotic participation, for instance in the February revolution, found themselves caught up in a plethora of bureaucratic terminology, for which many were not educated. In addition to letters justifying their activities, sometimes written in formulaic terms by a professional letter-writer, a mass of corroborative statements from witnesses certifying their role, their good character etc, expressed in the correct bureaucratic terms, were all demanded by eager officials. Where possible the applicant noted his own connections with officialdom and his support for the regime.

Those who participated in the February Revolution were regarded as legitimate combatants, patriotic republicans united in the replacement of an illegitimate monarchy. Hincker notes how many were

recompensed for their role in February. In contrast, those involved in the June Days and in resistance to the coup of 1851 were unrelentingly judged 'illegitimate' participants, whatever they claimed. Most had some association with radical social reform, which was never acceptable to those subsequently in power, even in the Third Republic. The tone of letters written by those caught up in the June Days was thus very different and far more defensive than those giving an account of February. Those arrested after the June Days rarely expressed support for radical social reform, but identified themselves as victims of events over which they had no control and, for good measure, as a result of which they sustained terrible, usually long lasting, injuries. Only a lurid account of physical suffering could try to wipe out the fact that a man had been a June insurgent. Individuals had far more to say about the dreadful consequences for them and their family than about their actual involvement in a revolutionary happening. Revolutionary events virtually disappear in these appeals.

Officers in the National Guard and worker delegates to the Luxembourg Assembly of 1848 struggled in vain to explain how they came to be on the 'illegal' side of barricades in June. They claimed they had been trying to keep order and look after their men. It was to no avail. Even in 1881 the fact of taking up arms against the regime in June 1848 or December 1851 nullified any claim of the individual to legitimate citizenship. They remained rebels. The same judgement of 'illegitimate' combatant befell the next group analysed, the smaller number of worker delegates to the Luxembourg Commission, who were brought together under Louis Blanc's chairmanship to inform the Provisional government about the economic crisis. Seven-hundred thirty workers were elected to this unique but short lived consultative body, some of whom participated in the June Days. Hincker is particularly interested in the contrast between how participants viewed their role and how insurgency was defined by the official world. Even in 1881, there was no closure for those regarded as former radical social reformers or *démoc-socs*. Given the Paris Commune in 1871, and the rather conservative complexion of the Third Republic, Hincker should have been less surprised at the unwillingness of later republicans to forgive those who had fought against the republican regime of June 1848.

Part Two analyses the role of different individuals, grouped as National guardsmen, worker representatives and writers and politicians by reconstructing the biographies of participants. In some cases this is facilitated by their own publications, for instance those of Léon and Antonio Watrison, in others by the letters written by prisoners begging for release. Habitually such prisoners volubly denied or renounced their earlier revolutionary stance. A striking exception was Jean-Pierre Hibruit, a former hat maker, and convinced social republican, who took part in both the February revolution and the June Days. Although he was imprisoned on Belle-Île, Hibruit stuck by his radical convictions, denying the legality of the Second Empire, even though this meant he had no chance of release.

Apart from the enlightening details mined from interrogations and pleas for clemency, the most striking feature of this book is a biographical chart of 385 insurgent citizens, detailing their role in all the main revolutionary events, whether they were injured, arrested, tried, convicted, transported and ultimately received a pension. Hinckner refined his initial list to focus on the 159 who took part in at least three revolutionary events. The biggest common group in the list is the vast majority who were arrested and tried after the June days. Surprisingly, very few were subsequently imprisoned. The list includes only seven women. About half were Parisian working men, a third were middle class. Only sixty-eight appear in Maitron's *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français*. Only twenty nine were politically active in an organised way, for instance as members of a club, while a mere ten were worker delegates in the Luxembourg assembly. Twenty-eight were elected officers in the National Guard.

What did barricade insurrection mean to the insurgents? Most of those who sought compensation in 1881 for their arrest after the June days or the 1851 coup defined themselves as 'victims' and martyrs for a just cause. Wives described ruined lives, loss of income and urgent need of reparation. What former insurgents stressed, especially when seeking a pension, were their family duties and responsibilities. The house painter, Alfred Daridan, was unusual in asserting that on 2 December 1851, he took up arms

to defend the republic. When explaining why they constructed barricades, most did not mention politics, but the need to defend their immediate neighbourhood and within it their families and associates. Gosselin, an educated man and a stamp merchant, was a National Guard officer in the rue Saint-Jacques during the June days. He and his witnesses spoke not of insurrection, but stressed his obligations to his men and desire to maintain order in his neighbourhood. He was still condemned to ten years incarceration. Roger Gould, writing on the Commune, stressed the importance of neighbourhood loyalties, although Robert Tombs and David Shafer, in their studies of the Commune, touched on this notion with less conviction.<sup>[2]</sup> The details related here reinforce the notion of barricades, used for the first time in 1830, as quintessentially defining revolution as an intensely localised and defensive experience.

The notion of the *soldat citoyen* is crucial to Hinckner's analysis. The concept began with the 1789 Revolution and was gradually watered down for the next century. It was urgently expressed in 1789 in the formation of the National Guard and the *levée en masse*, the call on all adult males to go the defence of the beleaguered nation in August 1792. It was further extended in the *armée révolutionnaire* in 1793-4. These armed citizens were called together by the state to defend France principally against external enemies. However, the enthusiasm of various revolutionary governments for too democratic a definition of the armed citizen was ambivalent; there was a fine line between the 'virtuous citizen' and the 'suspect.' The 1830 revolution revived the concept of the armed citizen. The National Guard, dissolved by Charles X, dug out their weapons to replace the Bourbon with the Orleanist regime and were 'decorated' for their contribution, as they were again in February 1848, on both occasions fighting against fellow French in the regular army. However on both occasions the armed citizen was a man of some substance and property.

February 1848 broadened the parameters of the *soldat citoyen*, by redefining citizenship as democratic in two new ways; the right of all adult males to bear arms as well as the right to vote. For the first time the National Guard was fully democratised, with participation open to all adult males, replacing the elitist Orleanist organisation. The notion of an armed civil society emerged. Within the twelve central *arrondissements* of Paris, the Guard grew from 56,751 in January 1848 to 237,000 in June. For a time citizenship was closely linked to Guard membership. However a series of demonstrations, culminating in the June Days, convinced the wealthy elite that the mass availability of weapons was more threatening (to them) than universal suffrage. The notion of the armed citizen was abandoned forthwith. Hinckner stresses that herein lay the real significance of the June Days, that the citizen no longer had the right to bear arms. Citizenship was subsequently limited to the right to vote. After the June Days only the military could legitimately carry weapons and be considered *soldats citoyens*. To reinforce this restriction, the concept of *délit politique*, closely associated with armed insurrection, was invented, with punishment defined as deportation or transportation. It was no longer possible to be a legitimate citizen and take up arms against those in power. Revolution was henceforth to be expunged from the public space. Those who were educated, who would have been considered *capacités* before 1848, such as the writers and politicians, Léon and Antonio Watrison, were punished even for defending the abstract notion of the right to carry arms.

In the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71, the National Guard was briefly allowed to bear arms because the nation was again facing an external threat. The subsequent Paris Commune, when the Guard rebelled against the Thiers' government, led to the permanent dissolution of the Guard, but this final rejection of the armed citizen is beyond the scope of this volume. It would be interesting to ask how many of the June and December *citoyen combattants* became Communards. Herein perhaps lies another book. Hinckner briefly suggests that the Resistance movements in the Second World War might be investigated as a revival of the *soldat citoyen*. This volume will offer specialists and research students a rich panoply of detail and thought-provoking new insights into some *démoc-socs*, individuals who were ill-served by later republicans. At last we do not need to rely on a handful of workers, notably Nadaud, Truquin and company, to gain some insight into how working people fared in the Second Republic. It is

reassuring to have such a piece of detailed research in print. Two tiny quibbles: why no index, and why such flimsy binding that my copy lies in fragments? An abbreviated translation, perhaps on the web, including the testimony of the *citoyens-combattants* themselves, would be valuable for advanced undergraduate and masters' level history courses.

#### NOTES

[1] R. Gossez, *Les Ouvriers de Paris: L'organisation, 1848-1851* (Paris: Société d'histoire de la Révolution de 1848, 1967), 3 vols.; C. Tilly & L. Lees, "Le peuple de Juin 1848," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (1974), pp. 1061-1091; and M. Traugott, *Armies of the Poor. Determinants of Working-Class Participation in the Parisian Insurrection of June 1848* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[2] R. V. Gould, *Insurgent Identities. Class Community & Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996); D. Shafer, *The Paris Commune* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); and R. Tombs, *The Paris Commune 1871* (New York: Longmans, 1999).

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