Enragés

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The Enraged Ones (French: Les Enragés) were a small number of firebrands known for defending the lower class and expressing the demands of the radical sans-culottes during the French Revolution.[1] They played an active role in the May 31-June 2, 1793 Paris uprisings that forced the expulsion of the Girondins from the National Convention, allowing the Montagnards to assume full control.[2]

The Enragés became associated with this term for their angry rhetoric appealing to the Convention to take more measures that would benefit the poor. Jacques Roux, Jean Varlet, Théophile Leclerc, and Claire Lacombe, the primary leaders of the Enragés, were strident critics of the Convention for failing to carry out the promises of the Revolution.[3]

The Enragés were not a unified party. Rather, the individual figureheads that comprised the group identified as the Enragés worked for their own objectives, and evidence of cooperation is inconclusive.[4] As individual political personalities, the Enragés were cynical to the point of anarchism, suspicious of most political organizations and individuals, and they resisted ties to others.[5] The leaders did not see themselves as part of a shared movement, and Roux even called for Varlet’s arrest.[6] The notion of the Enragés as a cohesive group was perpetuated by the Jacobins as they lumped their critics Leclerc and Roux into one group.[7]

1 Primary demands

In 1793, Jacques Roux delivered a speech at the National Convention known as the “Manifesto of the Enragés” that represents the essential demands of the group. He asserted that freedom and equality were thus far “vain phantoms” because the rich had profited from the Revolution at the expense of the poor. To remedy this, he proposed measures for price controls, arguing “Those goods necessary to all should be delivered at a price accessible to all.” He also called for strict punishments against actors engaged in speculation and monopoly. He demanded the Convention take severe action to repress counterrevolutionary activity, promising to “show them [enemies] those immortal pikes that overthrew the Bastille.” Lastly, he accused the Convention of ruining the finances of the state and encouraged the exclusive use of the assignats to stabilize finances.[8]

2 Formation of the Enrages

The Enrages formed in response to the Jacobin’s reluctance to restrain the capitalist bourgeoisie. Many Parisians feared that the National Convention protected merchants and shop-keepers at the expense of the sans-culottes. The Enrages, though not a cohesive body, offered the working poor a platform to express their dissent. This provoked outrage and criticism throughout Paris. Some went as far as to accuse the Convention of protecting the merchant elite’s interests at the expense of the sans-culottes. Further attempts for the Enrages to communicate their position were denied by the Convention. Determined to be heard they responded with revolt. They plundered the homes and businesses of the merchant elite, employing direct action to meet their needs. The Enrages are noted for using legal and extra-legal means to achieve their ends.[9]

The Enrages were compromised of members within the National Convention and the sans-culottes. They illuminated the internal and external war the sans-culottes battled. They complained that the National Convention ordered men to fight on the battlefield, without providing for the widows and orphans remaining in France. They emphasized the unavailability of basic necessities, particularly bread. In his, Manifesto of the Enrages, Jacques Roux colorfully expressed this sentiment to the National Convention. He stated, “Is it necessary that the widows of those who died for the cause of freedom pay, at the price of gold, for the cotton they need to wipe away their tears, for the milk and the honey that serves for their children?”[10]

They accused the “merchant aristocracy” of with-holding access to goods and supplies to intentionally drive up prices. Roux, demanded that the Convention impose
capital punishment upon unethical merchants, who used speculation, monopolies, and hoarding to increase their personal profits at the expense of the poor. The Enrages labeled price-gouging as “counter-revolutionary” and treason. This sentiment extended to those who sympathized with the recently executed King Louis XVI. They felt that those who sympathized with the monarchy would also sympathize with those who hoarded goods. It is not surprising that many within the Enrages actively worked against the Girondin faction, and indeed they contributed to the demise of the moderate Girondins, who had fought to spare the King. Those who adhered to the ideologies presented in the Manifesto of the Enrages, wished to emphasize to the Convention that tyranny was not just the product of monarchy, and that injustice and oppression did not end with the execution of the King. In their view, oppression existed whenever one stratum of society sought to monopolize the majority of resources, while simultaneous preventing others from gaining access to those same resources. In their view the pursuit of resources was acceptable, but the act of limiting access to resources was punishable by death.

The Enrages called on the Convention to restrict commerce that it might not “consist of ruining, rendering hopeless, or starving citizens.” While the Enrages occasionally worked within political structures, their primary objective was achieving social and economic reform. They were a direct action group, attempting to meet the immediate needs of the working poor.

3 Women in the Enrages

Jean-Francois Varlet, understood the enormous influence women possessed, particularly within the French Revolution. Varlet, formed the Enrages by provoking and motivating working poor women and organizing them into a semi-cohesive, mobile unit. The Enrages often appointed women as speakers to represent the movement in the Convention. Revolutionary, proto-feminists, held vital positions within the Enrages, including Pauline Leon and Claire Lacombe. The proto-feminists of the French Revolution are credited with inspiring feminist movements in the Nineteenth Century.

4 Key leaders

Jacques Roux

Jacques Roux, a Roman Catholic priest was the leader of the Enrages. Roux supported the common people and the Republic. He participated in peasant movements and endorsed the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, to which he swore an oath on January 16, 1791. Roux claimed “I am ready to give every last drop of my blood to a Revolution that has already altered the fate of the human race by making men equal among themselves as they are all for all eternity before God.” Roux saw violence as a key to the Revolution’s success. In fact, when Louis XVI was executed, it was Roux who led him to the scaffold.

Jean Varlet

Jean Varlet, another leader of the Enragés, played a leading role in the fall of the monarchy. When Louis XVI attempted to flee Paris, Jean Varlet circulated petitions in the National Assembly and spoke against the king. On August 10, 1792, the Legislative Assembly suspended the king and called for the election of a National Convention. Afterwards, Varlet became a deputy in the new Convention. Even as a member of this representative government, Varlet mistrusted representation and was in favor of direct universal suffrage, which could bind representatives and recall elected legislators. He sought to prevent the wealthy from expanding their profits at the expense of the poor and called for the nationalization of all profits obtained through monopoly and hoarding.

Théophile Leclerc

In 1790, Théophile Leclerc, joined the first battalion of Morbihan volunteers and remained a member until February 1792. He gained recognition in Paris through a speech attacking Louis XVI to the Jacobins. After moving to Lyons, he joined the Central Club and married Pauline Léon, a revolutionary woman. He approved of radical violence like the other Enrages, calling for the execution of expelled Girondins after the June 2 insurrection.

Claire Lacombe

In 1793, the actress Claire Lacombe, another individual associated with the Enragés, founded the Society of Revolutionary Republicans. This group was outraged by high costs of living, the lack of necessities, and awful living conditions. Lacombe was known for violent rhetoric and action. On May 26, 1793, Lacombe nearly beat to death a Girondin woman, Théroigne de Méricourt, with a whip on the benches of the Convention. She may have killed her if Marat had not intervened.

5 Other groups

To the left of the Montagnards, the Enragés were fought against by Maximilien de Robespierre and reemerged as the group of Hébertistes. Their ideas were taken up and developed by Babeuf and his associates. Another group styling itself les enrages emerged in France in 1968 among students at Nanterre University. They were heavily influenced by the Situationists and would go on to be one of the leading groups in the May 1968 French insurrection.
6 References


7 Further reading


8 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

8.1 Text


8.2 Images

8.3 Content license

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Lynsey Hope meets three women medically enraged by their partners’ sounds. I need to leave the room when my husband eats.

MENTAL health worker Sarah Drage, 31, lives with husband Reece, 33, a nuclear power station worker, and their daughters, Esme, eight, and Sienna, five, in New Romney, Kent. The jury is out on whether it is a genetic condition and research continues to see if it is caused by an auditory or neurological problem in the brain. It is often misunderstood or not taken seriously. “People think those who have it just don’t like the sound or are rude or oversensitive. In the opening scenes, the three women represent three roles that women often play. Willie is the mother, pregnant with sad knowledge, an earth goddess who drifts across the desert landscape in a world of her own. Millie is a chirpy consumerette who studies the women’s magazines, "coordinates" her wardrobe by wearing yellows and whites, plans her meals by the time it takes to prepare them, and obsessively shares recipes. Pinky arrives in the movie unformed and childlike; she blows bubbles into her Coke through the straw, she impishly walks in step behind the twins who work at the Three Women in Heaven.

Three women die together in an accident and go to heaven. When they get there, St. Peter says, "We only have one rule here in heaven: don’t step on the ducks!" So they enter heaven, and sure enough, there are ducks all over the place. It is almost impossible not to step on a duck, and although they try their best to avoid them, the first woman accidentally steps on one. Along comes St. Peter with the ugliest man she ever saw. St. Peter chains them together and says, "Your punishment for stepping on a duck is to spend eternity chained to this ugly man! The women, by all appearances, had taken it upon themselves to clean up graffiti on a building in the city following multiple nights of large-scale rioting. Advertisement - story continues below. Sadly, they were berated for doing so, and accused of exercising “white privilege.” In a viral Twitter video, the ladies are seen scrubbing the letters BLM from the Lafayette Building, a federal office building in our nation’s capital, when they were confronted. Not a great way to use your white privilege, ladies," the enraged woman said as she berated the women. "That’s disgusting. The woman has since disappeared from social media following her display of contempt for these good citizens, who apparently were guilty in her eyes of helping preserve a National Historic Landmark. A woman whose family member fenced off her property to keep her neighbor’s children out took to Reddit’s Am I the A* to share what happened. The 26-year-old moved into a home with a pool after inheriting some money from a family member. Her new neighbor told her that the old homeowners would let her kids Brad, Chad and Lea swim in the pool. "Cue the children abusing the privilege all summer.”