

The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution: The Middle Years

Michael L. Kennedy



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In 1982 Princeton University Press published the widely acclaimed first volume of Michael Kennedy's trilogy on the Jacobin movement. When it is completed, this work will be not only the first general history of the provincial Jacobin clubs to appear in half a century but also the most thorough treatment of the subject. Volume 2, spanning the period from the opening of the Legislative Assembly on October 1, 1791, to a decisive coup that occurred in Paris on June 2, 1793, is based on archival research in Paris and in nearly seventy French departments, as well as on hundreds of published sources. The book covers the years when the politics of the Revolution took a radical turn that led to the split between the Girondins and Montagnards.

The book is divided into six parts. The first section charts fluctuations in the activity of the network of 1,500 clubs and analyzes changes in their membership. The second focuses on the "subsistances" and monetary crises, and on issues such as land reform and public education; the third, on the great debate over peace or war in the early Legislative Assembly and the contributions of the societies to the war effort after hostilities commenced. In the fourth section the author reviews the newspapers that the clubs read and published and chronicles the growth of anticlericalism. Section five details the rise of opposition to Louis XVI, and the sixth section deals with the Girondin-Montagnard feud. The book concludes with an essay on the sources of club history in the departments, intended to serve as a guide for future researchers.



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