Laura Daniela Brinez

Newspaper Article #1 – King’s Right to Veto

9/17/2018

Kings Granted Power

The essence of a revolution is its power to prevail.

Jean-Sylvain Bailly

The revolution has been successful; at least for now. Nothing was left to say after the offer of the tricolor cockade to the king. The problem we are now confronted with, is how to proceed, as a united nation, when conflicting ideologies from both conservatives and republicans struggle for dominance over the path France should take. As mayor of Paris, I plead you to acknowledge the facts, and remain open to new ideas that reflect the wishes of all French men and women; our nation has been pounded by misfortune and the government is in rupture. The optimal way to approach this situation, according to my knowledge, would be to remove those particular aspects that are generating chaos, but not suppressing the whole scenario. We have a magnificent past, that was delegated to us and that has brought us to where we are now; attempting to reject it, is in fact, making an attempt to reject ourselves and all what we have believed in for so long . After all, if we meditate it for a minute, we are but a treasury of our foregoing situations;
it is thus, as our identity was built and with it the French pride.

Said this, the figure of the king should not be thrown aside, nor overthrown, but rather it should be adapted to our current predicament and credo. This, indubitably, should be done through the general will of the people of France, since the National Assembly preaches popular representation but in practice, could use more participation from the populace. The National Assembly, as well, has been enforcing with all its influence, measures to amend the wrongs that have led this country to its decay, but these measures were passed before they were even debated and put into consideration of everyone. This time, we must account for the facts, to then come up with efficient solutions, which will finally lead us to execute them. But you might wonder, the facts I am invoking, and this are that most members of the National Assembly are not yet correspondent to rule: most are lawyers, philosophers, and artisans, none nobles; we need a figure of government that has the experience, culture and tradition to govern sovereignly. Remember, we must resemble our past and find value in it, if we plan to evolve and be reborn as a democratic nation, with established principles. In the words of Marcus Tullius Cicero, [Roman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome) statesman, orator, lawyer and philosopher, who served as [consul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_consul) in the year 63 BC: “To remain ignorant of things that happened before you were born is to remain a child. What is human life worth unless it is incorporated into the lives of one’s ancestors and set in a historical context?” As a final point, we must remark that the National Assembly has taken the power of the government upon itself and left little to be debated.

The National Assembly, for which I’ve been postulated to represent, honorable in its attempt to fix this fractured nation, does not have within its hands the significant experience and sufficient knowledge to execute governmental actions that will build a unified, strong and progressive French Nation. I suggest then, we continue to have a monarchical figure in behalf of this very reason. Do not hesitate to misunderstand my intent, however, I do wish for the king to hold the power of a suspensive veto and to have the authority to appoint ministers. This power will be undoubtedly checked by the National Assembly so that the General Will of the people, that is our main concern, is not solely in the hands of the monarch. To clearly illustrate my previous idea, the suspensive veto of the king will not be absolute: once a legislation is vetoed by the king, it will be postponed, imposing a prudent delay, so it may be reconsidered by the National Assembly, unless three votes approve the legislation. In that sense, the King still holds power to influence the people, and yet not enough power to impose a tyranny. Edmund Burke, recognized the absence of government-qualified people in his letter known as the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: “… the general composition was of obscure provincial advocates, of stewards of petty local jurisdictions, country attorneys, notaries, and the whole train of the ministers of municipal litigation, the fomenters and conductors of the petty war of village vexation” (p. 151). Although Burke is skilled to generalize and even agile to share his pessimistic assumptions about the National Assembly, one thing is true: the National Assembly was a spontaneous formation that was formed in a situation of emergency and chaos. This in fact suggests that, the monarchy should pervade, at least in one portion, to guide us through turbulent times where the knowledge of a governing and hereditary entity is necessary, without trespassing the limits and following a political system that truly reflect the wishes of all: a constitutional monarchy.

We cannot forget our past and we must therefore recognize the culture. This culture holds its roots since even before this country was conceived; all the things that make France French, are of significant importance to the nation. And my dear fellows, one of the aspects of the French culture, is the monarchy itself. The monarchical institution is deeply rooted into our past, and cutting it off would be unwise, leading us to anarchy and civil war. In a figurative way, if we destroy de Monarchy, we will be destroying France. When the revolution began, we were too tempted to think that destroying the old and beginning a new regime would instantly solve all of our problems; we were completly wrong. Hunger prevails, economic collapse is still present and power feuds predominate. To explain myself better, it is a fool’s errand to destroy anything he finds bothersome; a virtuous man, however, examines the structure and considers what components require repair, change, or removal. This is our job as the National Assembly, especially as Feuillants who believe that France must preserve the gains of the revolution, without falling into a pandemonium; to analyze the components of our past and see which are best suited for these contemporary times in order to succeed as a revolution and as a nation. This is why I consider it wise to hold on to the figure of a knowledgeable king, whom I’ve known for several years and believe in him as a good and fair ruler. Masses rarely ever idolize a group of people as their saviors: it’s easier to look up to a single role man and emblem. The king working under a fair constitution could provide this very image of a hero we are all desperate to find. A wise and virtuous monarch will appease rash decisions and will also be the face of a prosperous country. By this means, Keeping Louis XVI in this position will not only provide an archetype for the people, but it will also suggest to foreign countries that France has not collapsed under the revolution.

The ultimate sovereignty of the people, regardless of the Kings’ veto, should be encouraged because the National Assembly has become dangerously similar to a tyranny. After the events of June 1789, the National Assembly was quick to take power into its own hands in the defense of the people; this power, nonetheless, was unchecked by any form of government or control entity. Although it would be great to think that a single institution will be incorruptible and just, a nation must always tread cautiously and steer away from utopian philosophies. As of now, a select group are hording the sovereign power; a clear contradiction to the already passed segment of the constitution which states: “Sovereignty is one, indivisible, inalienable, and imprescriptible: It belongs to the nation: no section of the people nor any individual can attribute to himself the exercise thereof” (p. 139). We are fools if we believe that the National Assembly is intrinsically representative of all forms of society. The position of kingship is one of the only roles that has been refined over time to please the masses and abide by the “General Will” as coined by our very own Rousseau.

To conclude, and with special focus on my French citizens, I am convinced that you are the ultimate sovereign of the nation. Only with the combined wisdom of us all, will we ever bring this blood-bathed revolution to an end. I implore you yet again to consider these facts when considering whether the king should have the power of a suspensive veto: the National Assembly has had no previous experience in the ruling of a nation, our past has made us who we are and sending it to oblivion would be imprudent. The National Assembly has unchecked power that should be moderated with a wise and virtuous ruler that best represents the general will of the French Nation.

Works Cited:

Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791. From Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790.

Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791. Constitution of 1791.

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.).

The Social Contract. Jean-Jacques Rousseau.