

= Louis Antoine de Saint @-@ Just =

Louis Antoine Léon de Saint @-@ Just (French pronunciation : ? [s? ? ?yst] ; 25 August 1767 ? 28 July 1794) was a military and political leader during the French Revolution . The youngest of the deputies elected to the National Convention in 1792 , Saint @-@ Just rose quickly in their ranks and became a major leader of the government of the French First Republic . He spearheaded the movement to execute King Louis XVI and later drafted the radical French Constitution of 1793 .

He became a close friend of Maximilien Robespierre , and served with him as one of the commissioners of the powerful Committee of Public Safety . Dispatched as a commissar to the army during its rocky start in the French Revolutionary Wars , Saint @-@ Just imposed severe discipline , and he was credited by many for the army 's subsequent revival at the front . Back in Paris , he supervised the consolidation of Robespierre 's power through a ruthless and bloody program of intimidation . In his relatively brief time on the historical stage , he became the enduring public face of the Reign of Terror and was dubbed the " Angel of Death " by later writers . Saint @-@ Just organized the arrests and prosecutions of many of the most famous figures of the Revolution .

Saint @-@ Just was arrested in the violent episode of 9 Thermidor and executed the next day with Robespierre and their allies . In many histories of the Revolution , their deaths at the guillotine mark the end of the Reign of Terror .

= = Early life = =

Louis Antoine de Saint @-@ Just was born at Decize in the former Nivernais province of central France . He was the eldest child of Louis Jean de Saint @-@ Just de Richebourg (1716 ? 1777) , a retired French cavalry officer , knight of the Order of Saint Louis , and of the 20 @-@ years younger Marie @-@ Anne Robinot (1736 ? 1811) , the daughter of a notary . He had two younger sisters , born in 1768 and 1769 . The family later moved north and in 1776 settled in the village of Blérancourt in the former Picardy province , establishing themselves as a countryside noble family living out of the rents from their land . A year after the move , Louis Antoine 's father died leaving his mother with the three children . She saved diligently for her only son 's education , and in 1779 he was sent to the Oratorian school at Soissons . After a promising start , Saint @-@ Just acquired a reputation as a troublemaker , augmented by infamous stories (almost certainly apocryphal) of how he led a students ' rebellion and tried to burn down the school . Nonetheless , he earned his graduation in 1786 .

His restive nature , however , did not diminish . As a young man , Saint @-@ Just was " wild , handsome , [and] transgressive " . Well @-@ connected and popular , he showed a special affection toward a young woman of Blérancourt , Thérèse Gellé . She was the daughter of another wealthy notary , a powerful and autocratic figure in the town ; he was still an undistinguished adolescent . He is said to have proposed marriage to her ; she is said to have desired it . Though no hard evidence exists regarding their relationship , official records show that on 25 July 1786 , Thérèse was married to Emmanuel Thorin , the scion of a prominent local family . Saint @-@ Just was out of town and unaware of the event , and tradition portrays him as brokenhearted . Whatever his true state , it is known that a few weeks after the marriage he abruptly left home for Paris ? without an announcement , but not without gathering up a pair of pistols and a good quantity of his mother 's silver . His venture turned short when his mother had him seized by police and sent to a reformatory (maison de correction) where he stayed from September 1786 to March 1787 . Chastened , Saint @-@ Just attempted to begin anew : he enrolled as a student at the School of Law , Reims University . After a year , however , he drifted away from law school and returned to his mother 's home in Blérancourt penniless , without any occupational prospects .

= = = Organt = = =

At a young age Saint @-@ Just had shown a fascination with literature , and during his stay at the reformatory he used his time to begin writing a lengthy poem . He published it anonymously more

than two years later , in May 1789 , at the very outbreak of the Revolution . The 21 @-@ year @-@ old Saint @-@ Just thereby added his own touch to the social tumult of the times with *Organt* , poem in twenty cantos . The poem , a medieval epic fantasy , relates the quest of young Antoine Organt . It extols the virtues of primitive man , praising his libertinism and independence while blaming all present @-@ day troubles on modern inequalities of wealth and power . Written in a style mimicking Ariosto , it gave a juvenile foreshadowing of his own political extremism . Spiked with brutal satire and scandalous pornographic episodes , it also made unmistakable attacks upon the monarchy , the nobility , and the Church .

Contemporaries regarded Organt as something of a salacious novelty and it was quickly banned , but censors who tried to confiscate it discovered that few copies were available anywhere . It did not sell well and resulted in a financial loss for its author . The public 's taste for literature had changed in the prelude to the Revolution , and Saint @-@ Just 's taste changed with it : aside from a few pages of an unfinished novel found amidst his papers at the end of his life , Saint @-@ Just devoted his future writing entirely to undecorated essays of social and political theory . With his previous ambitions of literary and lawyerly fame unfulfilled , Saint @-@ Just directed his focus on the single goal of revolutionary command .

= = Early revolutionary career = =

Blérancourt 's traditional power structure was reshaped by the events of 1789 . The notary Gellé , previously an undisputed town leader , was challenged by a group of reformists who were led by several of Saint @-@ Just 's friends , including the husband of his sister Louise . Their attempts were not successful until 1790 when Blérancourt held its first open municipal elections . Mandated by the National Constituent Assembly , the new electoral structure allowed Saint @-@ Just 's friends to assume authority in the village as mayor , secretary , and , in the case of his brother @-@ in @-@ law , head of the local National Guard . The jobless Saint @-@ Just , despite not meeting the legal age and tax qualifications , was allowed to join the Guard .

Saint @-@ Just immediately exhibited the ruthless disciplinarianism for which he would be famous . Within a few months he was the commanding officer , at the rank of lieutenant @-@ colonel . At local meetings he moved attendees with his patriotic zeal and flair : in one much @-@ repeated story , Saint @-@ Just brought the town council to tears by thrusting his hand into the flame of a burning anti @-@ revolutionary pamphlet , swearing his devotion to the Republic . He had powerful allies when he sought to become a member of his district 's electoral assembly , and he initiated correspondence with well @-@ known leaders of the Revolution like Camille Desmoulins . In late 1790 , he wrote to Robespierre for the first time , asking him to consider a local petition . The letter was filled with the highest of praise , beginning : " You , who uphold our tottering country against the torrent of despotism and intrigue ; you whom I know , as I know God , only through his miracles ... " Through their correspondence , the two developed " a deep and mysterious friendship that would last until the day [they] died . "

= = L 'Esprit de la Revolution = = =

While Saint @-@ Just waited for the next election , he composed an extensive work , *L 'Esprit de la Revolution et de la constitution de France* , published in the spring of 1791 . His writing style had shed all satire and now adopted the stern and moralizing tone of classical Romans so adored by French revolutionaries . It revealed an unexpectedly moderate set of principles deeply influenced by Montesquieu , and remained fully confined to a paradigm of constitutional monarchy . He expressed abhorrence at the violence in the Revolution thus far , and he disdained the character of those who partook in it as little more than " riotous slaves " . Instead , he heaped his praise upon the people 's representatives in the Legislative Assembly , whose sober virtue would guide the Revolution best . Spread out over five books , *L 'Esprit de la Revolution* is inconsistent in many of its assertions but still shows clearly that Saint @-@ Just no longer saw government as oppressive to man 's nature but necessary to its success : its ultimate object was to " edge society in the direction of the distant

ideal . "

The new work , like its predecessor , attracted minimal readership . On 21 June 1791 , just days after it was published , all attention became focused on King Louis XVI 's ill @-@ fated flight to Varennes , and Saint @-@ Just 's theories about constitutional monarchy were made suddenly irrelevant . Yet the episode had another effect ? it fostered a public anger toward the king which simmered all year until finally a Parisian mob attacked the Tuileries Palace on 10 August 1792 . In response , the Assembly declared itself ready to step down ahead of schedule and called for a new election , this one under universal male suffrage . The timing was excellent for Saint @-@ Just , who turned the legal age of twenty @-@ five before the end of the month . The fear inspired by the invasion of the Tuileries made most of his opponents retire from the scene , and Saint @-@ Just was elected as one of the deputies for the département of Aisne . He left for Paris to join the National Convention as its youngest member .

= = = Deputy to the Convention = = =

Among the deputies , Saint @-@ Just was watchful but interacted little at first . He joined the Parisian Jacobin Club but he remained aloof from Girondins and Montagnards alike . He waited until 13 November 1792 to give his first speech to the Convention , but when he did the effect was spectacular . What brought him to the lectern was the discussion over how to treat the king after Varennes . In dramatic contrast to the earlier speakers , Saint @-@ Just delivered a blazing condemnation of the king . He demanded that " Louis Capet " should be judged not as a king or even a citizen , but as a traitor , an enemy who deserves death . " As for me , " he declared , " I see no middle ground : this man must reign or die ! He oppressed a free nation ; he declared himself its enemy ; he abused the laws : he must die to assure the repose of the people , since it was in his mind to crush the people to assure his own . ?

The young deputy 's speech electrified the Convention . Saint @-@ Just was interrupted frequently by bursts of applause and towards the end of his speech he uttered his eerily universal observation , " No one can reign innocently . " Robespierre was particularly impressed ? he spoke from the lectern the next day in terms almost identical to those of Saint @-@ Just , and their views became the official position of the Jacobins . By December , that position had become law : the king was taken to a trial before the Convention , sentenced to death , and executed by guillotine on 21 January 1793 .

= = Constitution of 1793 = =

Because the first French Constitution had included a role for the king , it was long since invalid and needed to be updated for the Republic . A large number of drafts had been circulating within the Convention since the king 's execution , and Saint @-@ Just submitted his own lengthy proposal on 24 April 1793 . His draft incorporated the most common assertions of the others : the right to vote , the right to petition , and equal eligibility for employment were among the basic principles that made his draft tenable . Where he stood apart from the rest was on the issue of elections . Saint @-@ Just dismissed all complex systems of voting and eligibility and supported only the classical style of a simple majority of citizens in a nationwide vote . Amid a flurry of proposals by other deputies , Saint @-@ Just held inflexibly to his " one man one vote " plan , and this conspicuous homage to Greco @-@ Roman traditions (which were particularly prized and idealized in French culture during the Revolution) enhanced his political cachet . When no plan gained enough votes to pass , a compromise was made which tasked a small body of deputies as official constitutional draftsmen , and Saint @-@ Just was among the five elected members . In recognition of the importance of their mission , the draftsmen were all added to the powerful new Committee of Public Safety .

The Convention had given the Committee extraordinary authority to provide for state security ever since the outbreak of the French Revolutionary War in early 1793 . Committee members were originally intended to serve for periods of only thirty days before replacements were elected , so they needed to work quickly . Saint @-@ Just took charge of the issue and led the development of the

French Constitution of 1793 . Before the end of his first term , the new document was completed , submitted to the Convention , and ratified as law on 24 June 1793 .

The new constitution remained a showpiece for Saint @-@ Just but little more . However much he may have wanted to see it implemented , emergency measures for wartime were in effect . The war had called for (or provided cover for) a moratorium on constitutional democracy . It gave supreme power to the sitting Convention , with the Committee of Public Safety at the top of its administrative pyramid . Robespierre , with Saint @-@ Just 's assistance , fought vigorously to ensure that the government would remain under emergency measures ? " revolutionary " ? until victory .

= = Committee of Public Safety = =

= = = Proscription of the Girondins = = =

During the time that Saint @-@ Just was working on the constitution , dramatic political warfare was taking place . The sans @-@ culottes ? deemed " the people " by many radicals , and represented by the Paris Commune ? had grown antipathetic to the moderate Girondins and on 2 June 1793 , in a mass action supported by National Guardsmen , they surrounded the Convention and exacted the arrest of the Girondin deputies . The deputies ? even the Montagnards , who had long enjoyed an informal alliance with the sans @-@ culottes ? resented the intimidation but they were compelled to make some obeisance . The Girondin leader Jacques Pierre Brissot was indicted for treason and scheduled for trial , but the other Brissotins were imprisoned (or pursued) without formal charges . The Convention debated their fate and the political disorder lasted for weeks . Saint @-@ Just had previously remained silent about the Girondins , but now clearly stood with Robespierre who had been thoroughly opposed to most of them for a long time . When the initial indictment by the Committee was served , it was Saint @-@ Just who delivered the report to the Convention .

In its secret negotiations , the Committee of Public Safety was initially unable to form a consensus concerning the jailed deputies , but as some Girondins fled to the provinces and attempted to incite an insurrection , its opinion hardened . By early July , Saint @-@ Just was able to address the Convention with a lengthy report in the name of the Committee , and his damning attack left no room for any further conciliation . The Girondins ' trials must proceed , he said , and any verdicts must be severe . The proceedings dragged on for months , but Brissot and twenty of his allies were eventually condemned and sent to the guillotine on 31 October 1793 . Saint @-@ Just used their situation to gain approval for intimidating new laws , culminating in the Law of Suspects (17 September 1793) which gave the Committee vast new powers of arrest and punishment .

= = Military commissar = =

Saint @-@ Just made the proposal that deputies from the Convention should directly oversee all military efforts , which was approved on 10 October 1793 . Amid worsening conditions at the front in the fall of that year , several deputies were sent to the critical area of Alsace to shore up the disintegrating Army of the Rhine . Results were not sufficiently forthcoming , so at the end of the month Saint @-@ Just himself was sent there along with an ally from the Convention , Philippe @-@ François @-@ Joseph Le Bas . The two men were charged with " extraordinary powers " to impose discipline and reorganize the troops .

From the start , Saint @-@ Just dominated the mission . He was relentless in demanding results from the commanders as well as sympathetic to the complaints of common soldiers . On his first day at the front , he issued a proclamation promising " examples of justice and severity as the Army has not yet witnessed . " Within a short time , many officers were dismissed and many more were executed by firing squad , including at least one general . The entire army was placed immediately under the harshest discipline .

Among soldiers and civilians alike , Saint @-@ Just repressed opponents of the Revolution but he

did not agree to the mass executions ordered by some of the other deputies on the mission . He vetoed much of the deputies ' work and had many of them recalled to Paris . Local politicians were even more vulnerable to him : even the powerful Eulogius Schneider , the revolutionary leader of Alsace 's largest city and called the " Marat of Strasbourg " , was arrested by Saint @-@ Just 's orders and rapidly dispatched to the guillotine . Saint @-@ Just worked closely only with General Charles Pichegru , a reliable Jacobin whom he respected . Under Saint @-@ Just 's unblinking surveillance , Pichegru and General Lazare Hoche ably secured the frontier and began an invasion of the German Rhineland .

With the army revitalized , Saint @-@ Just returned briefly to Paris where his success was applauded . However , there was little time to celebrate . He was quickly sent back to the frontlines , this time in Belgium where the Army of the North was experiencing the same problems of discipline and organization . Again he delivered results ruthlessly and effectively , but after less than a month the mission was cut short . As Paris convulsed in political violence , his assistance was required by Robespierre .

= = President of the Convention = =

With the republican army advancing and the Girondins destroyed , the left @-@ wing Montagnards , led by the Jacobins and Robespierre , controlled the Convention . In these circumstances , on the first day of Ventôse in Year II of the Revolution (19 February 1794) , Saint @-@ Just was elected president of the National Convention .

With this new power he persuaded the chamber to pass the radical Ventôse Decrees , under which the régime would confiscate aristocratic émigré property and distribute it to needy sans @-@ culottes . But these acts of wealth redistribution , arguably the most revolutionary acts of the French Revolution , never went into operation . The Committee faltered in creating procedures for their enforcement , and the frantic pace of unfolding political events left them behind .

Opponents of the Jacobins saw the Ventôse Decrees as a cynical ploy to appeal to the militant extreme left . Sincere or not , Saint @-@ Just made impassioned arguments for them . One week after their adoption , Saint @-@ Just urged that the Decrees be exercised vigorously , and hailed them for ushering in a new era : " Eliminate the poverty that dishonors a free state ; the property of patriots is sacred but the goods of conspirators are there for the wretched . The wretched are the powerful of the earth ; they have the right to speak as masters to the governments who neglect them . "

= = = Germinal = = =

As the spring of 1794 approached , the Committee of Public Safety , led by Robespierre , Couthon , Lebas and Saint @-@ Just , exercised near complete control over the government . Despite the vast reach of their powers , however , rivals and enemies remained . One of the thorniest problems , at least to Robespierre , came in the shape of the populist agitator Jacques Hébert , who discharged torrents of criticism against bourgeois Jacobinism in his newspaper , Le Père Duchesne . Ultra @-@ radical Hébertists in the Cordeliers Club undermined Jacobin efforts to court and manage the sans @-@ culottes , and the most extreme Hébertists even called openly for insurrection .

Saint @-@ Just , in his role as president of the Convention , announced unequivocally that " whoever vilified or attacked the dignity of the revolutionary government should be condemned to death " , and the Convention agreed in a vote on 13 Ventôse . Hébert and his closest associates were arrested the following day . Saint @-@ Just vowed , " No more pity , no weakness towards the guilty ... Henceforth the government will pardon no more crimes , " and on 4 Germinal (24 March 1794) , the Revolutionary Tribunal sent Hébert , Ronsin , Vincent and most other prominent Hébertists to the guillotine .

The ongoing political combat ? bloody enough since at least the time of the arrest of the Girondins to be known as the Reign of Terror ? spread more and more widely . When the Hébertists fell , Robespierre felt compelled to eliminate his other rivals in the Cordeliers , starting with Fabre d

'Églantine and his close friend Georges Danton . These powerful deputies were difficult prey , but a financial scandal involving the French East India Company provided a " convenient pretext " . Robespierre again sent Saint @-@ Just to the Convention to deliver a Committee " report " (31 March 1794) in which he announced the arrest of Danton and " the last partisans of royalism " . After a tumultuous show @-@ trial , Fabre , Desmoulins , and other top supporters of Danton went to the scaffold with their leader on 16 Germinal (5 April 1794) . In his report , Saint @-@ Just had promised that this would be a " final cleansing " of the Republic 's enemies .

The violent removal of the Hébertists and Dantonists provided only a mirage of stability for Saint @-@ Just and Robespierre . The deaths caused deep resentment and their absence only made it more difficult for the Jacobins to influence the dangerously unpredictable masses of sans @-@ culottes . This lack of support in the street would prove fatal during the events of Thermidor .

As the deliverer of Committee reports , Saint @-@ Just served as the public face of the Terror , and he became known widely as the " Angel of Death " . After the events of Germinal , Saint @-@ Just intensified his control over the state @-@ security apparatus . He created a new bureau of " general police " for the Committee of Public Safety which matched ? and usurped ? the powers that had been given officially to the Committee of General Security . Shortly after its establishment , however , administration of the new bureau passed to Robespierre when Saint @-@ Just left Paris once more for the front lines .

= = Last days = =

= = = Battle of Fleurus = = =

Sent back on mission to the army in Belgium , Saint @-@ Just again took supreme oversight of the Army of the North and contributed to the victory at Fleurus . This hotly contested battle on 26 June 1794 sent the Austrian army into retreat and marked the turning point in the War of the First Coalition . France would remain on the offensive until its eventual victory in 1797 . After his return from the battle , Saint @-@ Just was treated as a hero and " cheered from all sides . "

Back in Paris , Saint @-@ Just discovered that Robespierre 's political position had degraded significantly . As the Terror reached its apogee ? the so @-@ called " Great Terror " ? the danger of a counterstrike by his enemies became almost inevitable . Saint @-@ Just , however , remained unshakable in his alliance with Robespierre . The French victory at Fleurus , and others which followed , reduced the need for national security during the war which had been predicated as a justification for the Terror . " The excuse for the Terror was at an end . " Opponents of the Terror used Saint @-@ Just 's own words against him by demanding a full implementation of the constitution of 1793 .

With political combat reaching a fever pitch , the Committee introduced a bill to establish a newer version of the " Law of Suspects " ? the Law of 22 Prairial . With it , a new category of " enemies of the people " was established in terms so vague that virtually anyone could be accused . Defendants were not permitted legal counsel and the Revolutionary Tribunal was instructed to impose no sentence other than death . The bill was swiftly shepherded into law by Robespierre , and although Saint @-@ Just was not directly involved in its composition , he was certainly supportive . The new statutes defined the Great Terror : in their first month , the average of executions in Paris rose from five per day to seventeen , soaring in the following month to twenty @-@ six .

The Law of Prairial was the breaking point for opponents of Robespierre . Resistance to the Terror spread throughout the Convention , and Saint @-@ Just was compelled to address the division . Barère and other Thermidorians have claimed that he proposed a dictatorship for Robespierre , but nonetheless some of them considered him to be redeemable , or at least useful ? until he delivered his uncompromising public defence of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor (27 July 1794) .

= = = Thermidor = = =

On the dais , Saint @-@ Just declared the absolute necessity of current law , and conspiring deputies buzzed angrily as he spoke . Finally several of them physically shoved him away from the lectern , and each started his own address in which they called for the removal of Robespierre and all his supporters . Amid the uproar , recalled Barras , Saint @-@ Just " did not leave the platform , in spite of the interruptions which would have driven any one else away . He only came down a few steps , then mounted again , to continue his discourse proudly ... Motionless , unmoved , he seemed to defy everyone with his calm . "

Saint @-@ Just saved his dignity at the lectern but not his life . Rising in his support , Robespierre sputtered and lost his voice ; his brother Augustin , Philippe Lebas , and other key allies all tried to sway the deputies , but failed . The meeting ended with an order for their arrest . Saint @-@ Just , still on the platform , remained unmoved and " looked on contemptuously " at the scene . His confidence seemed validated when troops from the Paris Commune under Hanriot arrived to liberate them , but within hours the entire group was confined to the Hôtel de Ville . When soldiers finally broke inside , a number of the defeated Jacobins tried to commit suicide ; Saint @-@ Just stood beside Lebas who shot himself in the head . Any contemplation of his own suicide is unclear , but he alone emerged unruffled from the wild , violent final arrest ? among the captured , " only St. Just , his hands bound but his head held high , was able to walk . " Robespierre , Saint @-@ Just and twenty of their allies were guillotined the next day , and Saint @-@ Just reputedly accepted his death with coolness and pride . At a last formality of identification , he gestured to a copy of the Constitution of 1793 and said , " I am the one who made that . "

= = Legacy = =

= = = Other writings = = =

Throughout his lifetime , Saint @-@ Just continued to work on books and essays about the meaning of the Revolution , but he did not survive to see any of them published . They have been collected and edited in various ?uvres complètes . These include Organt , L 'Esprit de la Revolution , published speeches and legislative proposals , as well as military orders , notes , drafts , and private correspondence .

Many of Saint @-@ Just 's legislative proposals were compiled after his death to form an outline for a communal and egalitarian society ? they were published as a single volume , Fragments sur les institutions républicaines . The proposals were far more radical than the constitution of 1793 , and identify closely with the legendarily fearsome traditions of ancient Sparta . Many of them are interpreted as proto @-@ socialist precepts : the overarching theme is equality , which Saint @-@ Just at one point summarizes as " Man must be independent ... There should be neither rich nor poor . "

= = = De la Nature = = =

Saint @-@ Just also composed a lengthy draft of his own philosophical views , De la Nature , which remained hidden in obscurity until its transcription by Albert Soboul in 1951 . Soboul first published this work in 1951 under the title " Un manuscrit oublié de Saint @-@ Just " in the Annales historiques de la révolution française , No. 124 . An expanded version is included in Alain Liénard 's Saint @-@ Just , théorie politique and later versions of ?uvres complètes . De la Nature outlines Saint @-@ Just 's ideas on the nature of society ; the actual date it was written is disputed , but the most agreed upon range is between 1791 and 1792 .

Based on the assumption that man is a social animal , Saint @-@ Just argues that in nature there is no need for contracts , legislation , or acts of force . These constructs only become necessary when a society is in need of moral regeneration and serve merely as unsatisfactory substitutes for the natural bonds of free people . Such constructs permit small groups to assume unwarranted powers which , according to Saint @-@ Just , leads to corruption within society . Because a return

to the natural state is impossible , Saint @-@ Just argues for a government composed of the most educated members of society , who could be expected to share an understanding of the larger social good . Outside the government itself , Saint @-@ Just asserts there must be full equality between all men , including equal security in material possessions and personal independence . Property must be protected by the state but , in order to secure universal independence , all citizens (including women) must own property .

= = = Posthumous publications = = =

Saint @-@ Just , Fragments sur les institutions républicaines (French)

Saint @-@ Just , Théorie politique , edited by Alain Liénard , Seuil , Paris , 1976 . (French)

= = = Complete collections = = =

?uvres de Saint @-@ Just , précédés d 'une notice historique sur sa vie edited by Adolphe Havard , Paris , 1834 . (French)

?uvres complètes de Saint @-@ Just in two volumes edited by Charles Vellay , Paris , 1908 . (French)

?uvres choisies , with introduction by Jean Gratien , Paris , 1946 . (French)

?uvres complètes , edited by Michèle Duval , Paris , 1984 . (French)

?uvres complètes , edited by Anne Kupiec and Miguel Abensour , Paris , 2004 . (French)

= = = Character = = =

Ambitious and active @-@ minded , Saint @-@ Just worked urgently and tirelessly towards his goals : " For Revolutionists there is no rest but in the tomb . " He was repeatedly described by contemporaries as arrogant , believing himself to be a skilled leader and orator as well as having proper revolutionary character . This self @-@ assurance manifested itself in a superiority complex , and he always ? made it clear ? that he considered himself to be in charge and that his will was law . ? Camille Desmoulins once wrote of Saint @-@ Just , " He carries his head like a sacred host . "

Saint @-@ Just 's rise to power wrought a remarkable change in his personality . Freewheeling and passionate in his youth , Saint @-@ Just quickly became focused , " tyrannical and pitilessly thorough . " He became " the ice @-@ cold ideologist of republican purity , " " as inaccessible as stone to all the warm passions . " A measure of his change can be inferred from the experience of Thérèse Gellé , who is known to have left her husband and taken up residence in a Parisian neighborhood near Saint @-@ Just in late 1793 . Saint @-@ Just ? who had already developed something of a relationship , tepid but potentially expedient , with the sister of his colleague Lebas ? refused to see her . Gelle stayed there for over a year , returning to Blérancourt only after Saint @-@ Just was dead . No record exists of any exchanges they might have had , but Saint @-@ Just is known to have written to a friend complaining impatiently about the rumors connecting him to " citizen Thorin " .

In his public speaking , Saint @-@ Just was even more daring and outspoken than his mentor Robespierre . Regarding France 's internal strife , he spared few : ? You have to punish not only the traitors , but even those who are indifferent ; you have to punish whoever is passive in the republic , and who does nothing for it . ? He thought the only way to create a true republic was to rid it of enemies , to enforce the ? complete destruction of its opposite . ? Regarding the war , he declared without regret to the Convention , ? The vessel of the Revolution can arrive in port only on a sea reddened with torrents of blood . ? He urged the deputies to embrace the notion that ? a nation generates itself only upon heaps of corpses . ?

Despite his flaws , Saint @-@ Just is often accorded respect for the strength of his convictions . Although his words and actions may be viewed as reprehensible , his commitment to them is rarely questioned : he was " implacable but sincere " . Like Robespierre , he was incorruptible in the sense that he exhibited no attraction to material benefits but devoted himself entirely to the advancement

of a political agenda .

===== Camus and Saint @-@ Just =====

In Albert Camus 's *The Rebel* (1951) , Saint @-@ Just is discussed extensively in the context of an analysis of rebellion and man 's progression towards enlightenment and freedom . Camus identifies Saint @-@ Just 's successful argument for the execution of Louis XVI as the moment of death for monarchical divine right , a Nietzschean *Twilight of the Idols* . Saint @-@ Just 's dedication to " the sovereignty of the people and the sacred power of laws " is described as " a source of absolutism " and indeed " the new God " . His kind of " deification of the political " is examined as the source of the creeping totalitarianism which grew so powerfully in Camus ' own lifetime .

===== In popular culture =====

Representations of Saint @-@ Just include those found in the novel *Stello* (1832) by Alfred de Vigny , and in the plays *Danton 's Death* (1835 , by Georg Büchner) and *Poor Bitos* (*Pauvre Bitos* , ou *Le dîner de têtes* , 1956 , by Jean Anouilh) . In film , Saint @-@ Just has been portrayed by Abel Gance in *Napoléon* (1927) ; Jess Barker in *Reign of Terror* (1949) ; Bogus?aw Linda in *Danton* (1983) ; and Christopher Thompson in *La Révolution française* (1989) . Jean @-@ Pierre Léaud plays a surreal caricature of Saint @-@ Just in Jean @-@ Luc Godard 's *Week End* (1967) . Saint @-@ Just is the main character in the fantasy novel *Light from Aphelion : Rising from Dust* (2016 , by Martine Carlsson) .