

= Le souper de Beaucaire =

Le souper de Beaucaire was a political pamphlet written by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1793 . With the French Revolution into its fourth year , civil war had spread across France between various rival political factions . Napoleon was involved in military action , on the government 's side , against some rebellious cities of southern France . It was during these events , in 1793 , that he spoke with four merchants from the Midi and heard their views . As a loyal soldier of the Republic he responded in turn , set on dispelling the fears of the merchants and discouraging their beliefs . He later wrote about his conversation in the form of a pamphlet , calling for an end to the civil war .

= = Background = =

During the French Revolution the National Convention became the executive power of France , following the execution of King Louis XVI . With powerful members , such as Maximilien Robespierre and Georges Danton , the Jacobin Club , a French political party established in 1790 , at the birth of the revolution , managed to secure control of the government and pursue the revolution to their own ends , culminating in a " Reign of Terror " . Its repressive policies resulted in insurrection across much of France , including the three largest cities after Paris , namely Lyon , Marseille and Toulon , in the south of France .

Citizens in the south were opposed to a centralised government , and to the decrees of its rule , which resulted in rebellion . Prior to the revolution France had been divided into provinces with local governments . In 1790 the government , the National Constituent Assembly , reorganised France into administrative departments in order to rebalance the uneven distribution of French wealth , which had been subject to feudalism under the monarchical Ancien Régime .

= = Rebellion in Southern France = =

In July 1793 Captain Napoleon Bonaparte , an artillery officer , was placed under the command of Jean @-@ Baptiste Carteaux to deal with rebels from Marseille situated in Avignon , where army munitions required by the French Army of Italy were being stored . On 24 July , Carteaux 's troops attacked rebellious National Guardsmen , killing several citizens during the siege , before capturing the town and army supplies . Afterwards , Napoleon travelled to nearby Tarascon to find wagons with which to transport the munition . He visited Beaucaire , across the river from Tarascon , which had been holding an annual fair . Napoleon arrived on 28 July , the last day of the fair , and went to a tavern where he shared supper and conversation with four merchants ? two from Marseille , one from Montpellier and another from Nîmes .

That evening Napoleon and the four merchants discussed the revolution , subsequent rebellions , and their consequences . Speaking as a pro @-@ Republican , Napoleon supported the Jacobin cause , and explained the benefits of the revolution , whilst defending Carteaux 's actions in Avignon . One of the merchants from Marseille expressed his moderate views regarding the revolution , and reasons for supporting civil war against a central government . The merchant stressed that Marseille did not fight for the Royalist cause , but opposed the nature of the Convention itself , condemning its decrees and deeming the execution of citizens as unlawful . Napoleon concluded that the people of Marseille should reject counter @-@ revolutionary ideals and adopt the constitution of the French Republic in order to end the civil war and allow the regular army to restore France .

Following their conversation the group drank champagne until two in the morning , paid for by the Marseillais merchant .

= = Publication and recognition = =

Shortly after the events , possibly on the 29 July whilst still in Beaucaire , Napoleon wrote a political pamphlet titled Le souper de Beaucaire (The supper at Beaucaire) in which a soldier speaks with four merchants and sympathetic to their opinions attempts to dissipate their counter @-@

revolutionary sentiments .

The pamphlet was read by Augustin Robespierre , brother of Maximilien Robespierre , who was impressed by the revolutionary context . The pamphlet itself had little effect against the rebellious forces , but served to advance Napoleon 's career . He soon became recognised for his political ambitions by a Corsica @-@ born politician , and family friend , Christophe Saliceti , who arranged to have it published and distributed . Christophe 's influence , along with fellow Convention deputy Augustin Robespierre , advanced Napoleon into the position of senior gunner , at Toulon .

In Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte , a biography by Napoleon 's private secretary , Louis de Bourrienne , he notes that *Le souper de Beaucaire* was reprinted as a book ? the first edition issued at the cost of the Public Treasury in August 1798 , and a second edition in 1821 , following Napoleon 's death . He also states , " It was during my absence from France that Bonaparte , in the rank of ' chef de bataillon ' [major] , performed his first campaign , and contributed so materially to the recapture of Toulon . Of this period of his life I have no personal knowledge , and therefore I shall not speak of it as an eye @-@ witness . I shall merely relate some facts which fill up the interval between 1793 and 1795 , and which I have collected from papers which he himself delivered to me . Among these papers is a little production , entitled ' *Le Souper de Beaucaire* ' , the copies of which he bought up at considerable expense , and destroyed upon his attaining the Consulate . "