

1 ‘A lover of peace more than liberty’? The Genevan rejection of Rousseau’s politics

Richard Whatmore

I

Writing in 1836, an anonymous contributor to the *Bibliothèque de Genève* noted,

There are few writers whose most private actions and intimate thoughts have occupied the public in the manner of J.-J. Rousseau’s. There are fewer still whose life has been scrutinized to the extent that his has been; his friends and his enemies have with equal alacrity published everything they knew about his private conduct, his writings and even the least substantial of his words. Has the public curiosity been satisfied to the extent that further information about Rousseau will not be welcomed? We do not think so.¹

Etienne Dumont was typical of many Genevans born in the latter half of the eighteenth century; he never managed to escape from Rousseau’s shadow. Having seemingly been an enemy to Rousseau’s politics for most of his life, acting as the editor and translator of Jeremy Bentham’s incomplete manuscripts and being at the forefront of the admirers of Britain’s constitution and commercial society, he was drawn back to Rousseau, both in his private reflections and in considered references in his own published work.² Dumont’s manuscripts contain endless references to Rousseau, whose work he consistently returned to.³ As he put it in a letter to his close friend Samuel Romilly, they were living in ‘the age of Rousseau’, and future generations would find it difficult to understand

¹ Anon., *Bibliothèque de Genève. Nouvelle série* (Geneva and Paris, 1836), vol. 1, 82. All translations are by the author unless otherwise stated. The French has not been modernised.

² Dumont edited and translated Bentham’s attacks upon Rousseau in the *Traité de législation civile et pénale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1802), vol. 1, 112, 117–118.

³ Étienne Dumont to Samuel Romilly, December 1789: ‘Vous avez donc lu les Confessions de Rousseau, on voit combien son stile dépendoit de l’état de son ame, on y cherchoit l’histoire de ses Sentiments, on n’y trouve guere que celle de son menage, la premiere lecture m’a desapointé, la seconde m’a fait plus de plaisir, il est si bon homme, si naïf, il se montre avec tant de verité, ses sentiments sont toujours si près de la nature – cet ouvrage a fait peu de sensation, mais cette sensation n’a pas été defavorable à Rousseau.’: Rousseau, *Correspondance complète de Jean Jacques Rousseau*, ed. R. A. Leigh et al., 52 vols. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1965–1998), vol. 46, 150–151 (Letter 8004).

2 *Richard Whatmore*

why Voltaire, who was altogether inferior, had been venerated in the same breath.⁴ In addition to Dumont's history of the early years of the French Revolution, the only two essays that his literary executor believed were suitable for publication after Dumont's death in 1832 concerned Rousseau.⁵

On the surface, Dumont's continuing fascination is explicable. As a young man, he was supportive of the *représentant* rebellion against the magistrates at Geneva, culminating in the revolution of 1782. During training for Protestant ministry, his mentor was Jacob Vernes, who considered himself a disciple of Rousseau.⁶ In the 1760s, Vernes was one of many who viewed Rousseau as a latter-day Calvin for the city. In an extensive correspondence with Rousseau, commenced after Rousseau returned to the Calvinist Church and thereby reclaimed his status as a citizen in 1755, Vernes pushed Rousseau to solve the problems facing the old republic. He called Rousseau the great instructor of humanity.⁷ Divisions between magistrates and reformers beset Geneva. The former acknowledged the dominion of France in the affairs of the city and encouraged closer economic and political ties to their great neighbour. This strategy was eminently realistic given the growing strength of France in the region. It was also held to be paying immediate dividends in that the wealth of the city was rising while the magistrates, often investors in the French economy themselves, were respected at Versailles. The reformers' task was difficult since they had to develop an alternative future that would see the city maintain its reputation for austere morals, the protestant religion, political liberty, and commercial growth, which were held to be in jeopardy because of the policies of the magistrates; and all of this without alienating France. At the same time, concerns were expressed more generally about the fit between Protestantism and commerce, between republics and the imperial monarchies that surrounded them,

⁴ Étienne Dumont to Samuel Romilly, Friday, 22 May 1789, *ibid.*, 37–38 (Letter 7954): 'le règne de Voltaire est passé, excepté au Théâtre. Rousseau s'éleve à mesure que l'autre s'abaisse. La postérité sera bien étonnée qu'on les ait regardé comme rivaux.'

⁵ Dumont, 'Observations sur le caractère et les écrits de Rousseau', *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève. Nouvelle série* (Geneva and Paris, 1836), vol. 2, 128–135; 'Observations sur le style de J.-J. Rousseau', *Bibliothèque de Genève*, vol. 2, 298–313.

⁶ Jacob Vernes to Jean Jacques Rousseau, July 1756: 'Vos lettres, cher philosophe, sont lues et dévorées par tous nos concitoyens.' *Correspondance complète*, vol. 4, 25–26 (Letter 417). Vernes became very close to Rousseau after the death of his wife: Jacob Vernes to Rousseau: Friday, 15 February 1760 in *Correspondance complète*, vol. 7, 37–39 (Letter 942).

⁷ Jacob Vernes to Rousseau, 26 May 1761, Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, vol. 8, 332–333 (Letter 1419): 'J'ai lu, il y a quelques jours, le Projet de Paix perpetuelle. Je crains bien, mon cher Ami, que la Musique françoise ne subsiste malgré votre Lettre, que les Sciences ne gatent les hommes malgré votre Discours, & que la guerre ne fasse ses ravages malgré votre Projet; mais enfin vous instruisés les hommes, & ce n'est pas votre faute s'ils ferment les oreilles à vos leçons.'

and between the existence of small states and modern political and economic trends. Within the Protestant community at Geneva, worries were expressed about the apparent vibrancy of Gallican Catholicism, about the capacity of Protestantism to support morality in a commercial world, and about the future of Calvinism itself.⁸ Vernes was certain that Rousseau's vision of a moralised world made compatible with commerce and religion needed to be embraced; furthermore, it ought to be tested within the walls of Geneva by magistrates devoted to Rousseau's creed. Vernes at first believed that Rousseau was a Christian, and that his association of natural religion with Christianity could transform the world.⁹ The Rousseau Vernes corresponded with was perceived by the latter to be a friend of the people. Rousseau was anticipated to become a mentor to advocates of democratic government in small states, being the only one to have found solutions to the problems of Protestant republics in modern times. Vernes fell out with Rousseau after the publication of the *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, which Vernes believed was critical of his own view of Christianity and of the Christian faith more generally. A split accompanied by far more vitriol followed because Rousseau was convinced that Vernes was the author of the *Sentiment du citoyen*, circulated in Geneva in early 1765, which revealed that the writer of *Emile* had abandoned his own children on the steps of the Paris founding hospital. Despite the fact that proof that Voltaire had written it only came to light after Rousseau's death, Vernes retained a powerful sense of identification with Rousseau. Jacques-Pierre Brissot reported in 1782 on a visit to Geneva, that Vernes confessed to have sobbed on learning of Rousseau's death.¹⁰ Brissot called Vernes a democrat, and perceived an affinity between Rousseau's religious politics and the democratic leanings of the *représentants*, in whose ranks Vernes was prominent.

A secularised version of Vernes' Rousseau, despite having few adherents among contemporary Genevans, has become the Rousseau most recognisable to scholars. In part because of the cult of Rousseau established in the French Revolution, and because of the widespread claim, these days most often associated with Benjamin Constant, that Rousseau's doctrines caused the Terror, the radical elements of Rousseau's politics are almost always to the fore.¹¹ Rousseau's cynical

⁸ R. Whatmore, *Against War and Empire. Geneva, Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁹ Jacob Vernes to Rousseau, 21 July 1762, Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, vol. 12, 76–78 (Letter 2018).

¹⁰ Jacques-Pierre Brissot, *Mémoires*, ed. Claude Perroud (Paris: A. Picard & Fils, 1912), vol. 1, 277–279.

¹¹ See Jeremy Jennings's discussion of Rousseau and French liberalism in Chapter 4 of this volume.

perspective upon the contemporary world, and especially upon place-men, politeness, commerce, and public credit, ensured that those dissatisfied with the state of the present would turn to Rousseau for inspiration. When it comes to Rousseau's ideas about practical reform, however, a point that Rousseau made time and time again needs to be underscored. Almost every modern state could not avoid a turbulent destiny because of the forces unleashed by commerce and egoism. States like France were straightforwardly doomed, with a future certain to include social collapse and civil war. This did not mean, though, that revolutionary doctrines would solve the problems modern societies faced. As will be made clear in this chapter, Rousseau believed that radical politics at Geneva would only make things worse. The only states that had a chance of survival were those that had already turned their backs on the modern world. Rousseau was, therefore, a complicated figure for reformers, and especially those who were attracted to democratic politics or called themselves democrats.

This is made plain when Dumont's experience is considered. When Dumont became a leading figure within the Genevan diaspora that was established after the invasion of the city by French, Bernese, and Savoyard troops, he came into contact with *représentants* who were much more critical of Rousseau. One such was Etienne Clavière, the merchant and Genevan bourgeois agitator, who only ever referred to Rousseau's writings in an ad hoc fashion, deeming them to be largely irrelevant to his causes and interests.¹² Clavière had been one of those who turned to Voltaire rather than Rousseau for aid in the crisis of the late 1760s.¹³ As a political economist who saw Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* as the best book written on the subject, Clavière had no time for Rousseau's critique of commercial society, and did not see any overlap between Rousseau's ideas and those of Smith.¹⁴ François d'Ivernois was another prominent *représentant* who came to know Dumont in London in the late 1780s. A citizen of Geneva from a family that had long had strong ties with Rousseau, d'Ivernois inherited from his father and other *représentants* their voluminous correspondence with Rousseau during

¹² Clavière and Brissot, *De la France et des États-Unis* (London, 1787), 159; *De la foi publique envers les créanciers de l'État: lettres à M. Linguet sur le N° 116 de ses Annales* (London, 1789), 63.

¹³ Jacob Vernes to Voltaire, 17 November 1768, Voltaire, *Correspondence and Related Documents: XXXIV: August 1768–May 1769, letters D15164–D15672*, 2nd ed., ed. Theodore Besterman, *Les Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, 51 vols. (Geneva, Banbury & Oxford: Institut et Musée Voltaire & Voltaire Foundation, 1968–[ongoing]), vol. 34, 139–140 (Letter D15320).

¹⁴ Clavière, *Opinions d'un créancier de l'état. Sur quelques matières de finance importantes dans le moment actuel* (Paris, 1789), 56, 90, 103.

the travails of the 1750s and 1760s. D'Ivernois took advantage of this – and other manuscripts he was granted access to by Marie Thérèse Levasseur and the friends to whom Rousseau had presented his manuscripts – and brought to the world the Geneva edition of Rousseau's works from 1782.¹⁵ Detailed knowledge of Rousseau's private writings led d'Ivernois to the conclusion that the sage had loved peace more than liberty, and was no model for any reformist politician in the modern world. A third critic of Rousseau among Dumont's close friends and advocates of change at Geneva, although he was equally critical of the *représentants*, was Jacques Mallet du Pan, who ultimately blamed Rousseau's imprecision and over-general prophetic pronouncements for the political explosions in Paris and Geneva in the mid 1790s. As du Pan put it, 'The innocent blood which has been shed for these four years past spurts back upon, and attaints [Rousseau's] memory; and I fear not to tell his enthusiastic admirers, if any yet remain beyond the bloody limits of Paris, that he ought to be solemnly branded with public infamy, if the goodness of his intentions, and his inconsequential conclusions from his own principles, did not dictate to us some tenderness for his genius.'¹⁶

With such influences close at hand, Dumont might have been expected to reject Rousseau altogether as a traitor to the radical cause within their native city – the line that d'Ivernois took during the following decades. But Dumont, like other friends such as the Pastor Étienne Salomon Reybaz, always considered Rousseau to be worth taking seriously, and kept returning to Rousseau's books for sustenance during his own intellectual journey.¹⁷ One example was described in Dumont's *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, where he recalled reading Rousseau's *Contrat Social* and *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* and giving Mirabeau the idea of graduated elections. Dumont advised forcing would-be legislators to serve in lower echelons of government, in the manner of the ranks of the armed forces, prior to standing for elections carrying significant national power. All of this was in order to prevent the worst excesses of democracy. Mirabeau embraced the idea, but was not sufficiently conversant in the minutiae of the Rousseau-Dumont proposal to repel the criticisms of

¹⁵ François d'Ivernois to René Louis de Girardin, marquis de Girardin, 24 December 1779 in Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, vol. 44, 121–122; d'Ivernois to *Journal de Paris*, 30 May 1779; no. 150, 602–603 in Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, vol. 43, 300–301.

¹⁶ Mallet du Pan, *Considerations on the Nature of the French Revolution: And on the Causes which Prolong Its Duration* (J. Owen, London, 1793), 8. Mallet continued, 'The English, who are far-advanced beyond the rest of Europe in political knowledge, always despised the *Social Contract*.'

¹⁷ Étienne Salomon Reybaz to René Louis de Girardin, marquis de Girardin, 14 February 1779, in Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, vol. 43, 141–144 (Letter 7475).

Antoine Barnave and other members of the National Assembly.¹⁸ In his contribution to the book he wrote with Samuel Romilly and James Scarlett, the *Account of the Late Revolution in France*, Dumont also praised ‘the masculine genius of Rousseau’ for propagating important principles and for being prescient about the future of France.¹⁹

This chapter will not consider one of the central conundrums of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century politics, the relationship between Rousseau and Bentham; rather, it will focus on some of the Genevan perspectives upon Rousseau in order to give substance to the claim that Rousseau was considered insufficiently democratic, and too obsessed by peace, in order to serve as inspiration for the reform-minded before and during the French Revolution. At the same time, Rousseau’s writings could not be ignored by critics or reformers of any stamp.

II

Rousseau’s involvement with the Genevans from the late 1750s and into the 1760s has been well documented. Rousseau, through his friendship with the De Luc family, among others, was directly involved with the reformist cause within the city and gradually became associated with the longstanding critique of magistracy. The response of the magistrates was marked, condemning Rousseau’s books and seeking to arrest him in 1762, and organising a campaign against Rousseau in which he was vilified as an enemy of Christianity and an advocate of anarchy. Rousseau became the bugbear of the critics of reform. They accused him of favouring ‘pure democracy’, the destruction of social order, and of plotting for equality and the abandonment of wealth. This line, said to be evident in all of Rousseau’s works, but especially in the *Contrat social* and *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, was commonplace in anti-*représentant* tracts over the following decades. Rousseau had become a notorious rebel who had been hounded out of so many states that it was natural to tarnish the cause of reform at Geneva through his name. Isaac Cornuaud, perhaps the most vigorous and vitriolic opponent of the *représentants* in the 1780s, repeatedly invoked Rousseau to blacken the reputation of his enemies and to associate their politics with extremism.²⁰

¹⁸ Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau et sur les deux premières assemblées législatives* (Paris, 1832), 238–240.

¹⁹ Henry Frederic Groenvelt, [Dumont, Romilly and James Scarlett], *Letters Containing an Account of the Late Revolution in France* (London, 1792), 166, 176.

²⁰ Isaac Cornuaud, *Le natif interrogé, ou confession morali-politique d’un patriote* (Geneva, 5 April 1782), in Emile Rivoire, *Biographie historique de Genève au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1897), vol. 1, 299 (entry 1899).

Significantly, Rousseau's response was not to embrace the reformist cause. Historians have not sufficiently appreciated this. Rather, Rousseau saw the reformers at Geneva as excessively democratic and made clear his opinion in the *Lettres écrites de la montagne*. His advice, over the three years between the publication of the *Lettres* and the settlement of the constitutional turmoil within the city, was to accept that nothing could be done about increasing French dominion. The reformers at Geneva had to accept the existing constitution and the status quo. Democratic rebellions would result in civil war and would then be crushed by France. This fact was problematic for the *représentants* because so many of them had believed Rousseau to be on their side. Many of the better informed tracts authored by the enemies of the *représentants* took pleasure in reminding their opponents of the fact that Rousseau had not been of their party. Rather, he had accepted that Geneva enjoyed an aristocratic government modelled on that of Venice. He had not only seen this to be of benefit to the state but had explicitly followed the argument that the existing form of government was the best possible for Geneva. While the *représentants* sought to dismantle the constitution ratified by France, Bern, and Zurich in 1738, Rousseau always declared himself in favour of it.²¹

Rousseau's stance was rejected by the reformist *représentants*, for whom he became a complicated figure. They drew upon his renown and associated him in general terms with their cause, while making clear that they were not following his political prescriptions. Rousseau the martyr unfairly oppressed by the magistrates at Geneva was the oft-relayed message. Some of the *représentants* continued into the late 1760s to turn to Rousseau for advice in the hope that he would come closer to their position. But in his letters to the leaders of the movement he clung to the position he had articulated in the *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, that they had no chance of standing against France and had no possibility of creating a better future for Geneva without working out means of replacing both the magistrates and the influence of France in Genevan counsels. The reformers at Geneva were utopian dreamers. In his correspondence with the pastor Paul Moulto, to whom Rousseau was especially close during these years, he ridiculed *représentant* politics for being naïve and impractical.

Recognising that Rousseau was not a natural friend to them, the new generation of *représentants* who began to lead the movement after 1767, many of whose fathers had associated with Rousseau in the 1750s and

²¹ Anon., *Adresse des membres constitutionnaires du magnifique conseil des deux-cent, au magnifique petit-conseil, présentée aux seigneurs syndics Le 24 Février 1780* ([Geneva], 1780), 22, 42.

1760s, responded to Rousseau's work in a different manner. A case in point is François d'Ivernois, the young lawyer who became increasingly prominent within the *représentant* movement from the late 1770s. In his writings, d'Ivernois condemned the magistrates for their behaviour towards Rousseau and described Rousseau as a victim of a grotesque violation of liberty and law. D'Ivernois called himself a democrat. While he argued that democracy in a pure form was suited to states based on agriculture and arms, in which citizens laboured on the soil and fought to defend the state, in a commercial society a tempered form of democracy was necessary.²² It had to be based on a distinction between sovereignty and government. This was not derived from Rousseau's *Contrat social*, but was rather a product of domestic discussion of the relationship between the small and large councils of state within Geneva. Rousseau had justified aristocratic government in the *Contrat social*; this was exactly what d'Ivernois wanted to avoid. He warned the French foreign minister Vergennes that while aristocracy might be suited to large monarchies like France, it would always destroy a small commercial city.²³ The need to avoid the establishment of aristocracy meant it was necessary to elect magistrates at Geneva annually. The General Council of citizens also had to consent to every new law proposed to them by the small councils every year, once again in order to prevent aristocrats from emerging. D'Ivernois did not go to Rousseau for such arguments, but rather drew on longstanding concerns about the establishment of aristocratic government at Geneva, which was in his view on the verge of destroying Calvinism, commerce, and liberty. As long as the magistrates at Geneva had the support of France, d'Ivernois was concerned that the *représentants* could do little to combat them. His attempt to persuade the French of the benefits of tempered democracy in small republics came to nothing.

In the aftermath of this failure, d'Ivernois, like all of the younger generation of reformers, had to combat the French destruction of democracy at Geneva, which meant the French assault, culminating in 1782, upon a constitution which they believed had been stable since the

²² D'Ivernois, *Lettre à son Excellence Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes* ([Geneva], 3 November 1780), 6: 'La pure Démocratie pouvoit être un régime salubre pour les Genevois, tant qu'ils ne formerent qu'une société d'agriculteurs & de soldats, uniquement occupés de leur défense; mais il ne pouvoit plus convenir à une société tranquille, industrielle & commerçante, & il fallut le tempérer, quand la paix, cimentée au-dehors, nous eut forcé à chercher dans notre activité les ressources que nous refusoit notre local. Les richesses & l'instruction publique furent les fruits de ce développement d'industrie, & l'on en vit bientôt résulter, au milieu de nous, les talens de l'ambition & les vertus de l'égalité.'

²³ D'Ivernois, *Lettre à son Excellence Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes*, 10: 'Une sage Aristocratie peut convenir à de grands États; mais son poids seroit insupportable dans une petite Ville où l'on ne rencontre que des Négocians & des Artistes.'

Reformation because 'almost every member of the community has, and any member of it may easily have, a share in the Government'.²⁴ By this time Rousseau was seen to have become an opponent of the cause of liberty rather than a source of arguments to sustain it. In composing the *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, Rousseau had written a book that 'deserved to be admired for its general principles, and the closeness of its reasoning'. At the same time, however, it erred in 'circumstantial details, because he was not in possession of particular facts'.²⁵ In short, Rousseau was no guide to the problems of Geneva because he did not understand the nature of the civil war within the city nor the nature of the democratic constitution that the reformers were defending. Rousseau's ignorance was confirmed when d'Ivernois's father, François-Henri, obtained Rousseau's verdict upon the increasingly violent struggles of 1767. Rousseau then advised the *représentants* to leave Geneva to 'seek liberty under another climate', on the grounds that it had been 'lost to their country'. D'Ivernois called this 'timid advice' and stated that 'fortunately it did not prevail'. Furthermore, he printed Rousseau's letter in a note to the text.²⁶ D'Ivernois also made explicit Rousseau's non-involvement in the struggles of the reformers within the republic leading up to the partial settlement of 1768, stating that 'I have not spoken of Rousseau since his abdication, because he took no share whatever in the duration of the troubles.' Rather than supporting the reform cause, Rousseau, from 1765, had 'exerted all his persuasion to induce [the *représentants*] to yield to the force that threatened them'. Abandoning Geneva, d'Ivernois claimed that Rousseau 'retired to England, to forget the injustice of his country, and to hear of her misfortunes no more'. In correspondence with the older d'Ivernois, however, and as confirmed by the printed letter, Rousseau 'often bewailed the fate of his fellow

²⁴ D'Ivernois, *A Short Account of the Late Revolution in Geneva, and of the Conduct of France towards That Republic, from October 1792, to October 1794: In a Series of Letters to an American* (London: T. Spilbury and Son, 1795), 3.

²⁵ D'Ivernois, *Tableau historique et politique des révolutions de Genève dans le dix-huitième siècle* (Geneva, 1782), 193.

²⁶ D'Ivernois, *Tableau historique et politique*, 393. The offending passage, from the letter Rousseau sent to François-Henri d'Ivernois on 29 January 1768, read: 'Oui, Messieurs, il vous reste dans le cas que je suppose un dernier parti à prendre, et c'est j'ose le dire, le seul qui soit digne de vous: c'est, au lieu de souiller vos mains dans le sang de vos compatriotes, de leur abandonner ces murs qui devoient être l'azile de la liberté et qui vont n'être plus qu'un repaire de tirans. C'est d'en sortir tous, tous ensemble, en plein jour, vos femmes et vos enfans au milieu de vous, et puisqu'il faut porter des fers, d'aller porter du moins ceux de quelque Grand Prince, et non pas l'insupportable et odieux joug de vos égaux. Et ne vous imaginez pas qu'en pareil cas vous resteriez sans azile: vous ne savez pas quelle estime et quel respect votre courage, votre moderation, votre sagesse ont inspiré pour vous dans toute l'Europe': Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, vol. 35, 62–65 (Letter 6225).

citizens'. This drew the ire of d'Ivernois, who attacked Rousseau for preferring peace to liberty:

Unfortunate man! Instead of fanning the fire of discord amongst them, an imputation he did not escape, he employed in his correspondence with d'Ivernois all the arts of eloquence and friendship to persuade the *représentants* that tranquillity was yet more precious than liberty, and that they ought to think themselves happy to purchase peace by any sacrifice.²⁷

The view that Rousseau's politics were ill suited to addressing the problems of Geneva was reiterated in d'Ivernois's later work. In 1789, he noted that the inspiration for the *représentants* of the 1780s had been the Pastor Reybaz's *Défense Apologétique*, published on 10 November 1779, the style of which was as good as Rousseau's and the substance clearly superior.²⁸ But d'Ivernois's focus altered significantly with the advent of the French Revolution. He began to praise Rousseau in his letters.²⁹ Rousseau was henceforth an ally in the war against the Revolution. The image of Rousseau the lover of peace was then used to taunt the violent revolutionaries at Paris who were making a cult of the Genevan sage. D'Ivernois, like so many who considered themselves to be committed republicans and democrats at Geneva, were altogether opposed to the attempts to turn France into a democratic republic. For d'Ivernois, the republican movement in France was a smokescreen for imperial designs on surrounding states. From this perspective, the Revolution was altogether continuous with the policies of Vergennes, the French foreign minister under Louis XVI who had been responsible for the invasion of 1782 and the destruction of the *représentants* within the city. Associating Rousseau with the French Revolution was, in d'Ivernois's view, entirely bogus. As he put it in a further defence of the reform movement at Geneva, which contrasted sharply with the ideas of the Girondins at Paris, the French idolisation of the memory of Rousseau was an affectation. For Rousseau, it had become clear in the 1760s that 'the most perfect

²⁷ D'Ivernois, *Tableau historique et politique des deux dernières révolutions de Genève* (London, 1789), 162, translated as *An Historical and Political View of the Constitution and Revolutions of Geneva* (London: T. Cadell, 1784), 177, 330–331.

²⁸ D'Ivernois, *Tableau historique*, 162: 'Cette première *défense apologétique*, & celle qui la suivit sous le même titre, sont infiniment supérieures à tout ce qui s'est écrit sur la Constitution de Genève, & ne le cèdent en rien, pas même pour le style, aux *Lettres de la Montagne* de J.-J. Rousseau. Dans tous les tems elles seront dignes de servir de modèles aux peuples libres, assez malheureux pour avoir à plaider la défense de leurs droits, & assez sages pour ne vouloir y employer que les armes de la raison & du sentiment. Le Ministre *Reybaz* était l'auteur de ces deux chefs-d'œuvre.'

²⁹ François d'Ivernois to Pierre Alexandre Du Peyrou, 13 December 1789 in Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, vol. 46, 128–131 (Letter 7987).