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# Modern History Sourcebook: The *Levée en Masse*, August 23, 1793

*In response to the dangers of foreign war, the Committee of public safety established a mass conscription (Levée en Masse) and succeeded in training an army of about 800,000 soldiers in less than a year. This was much larger than any army available to other European states, and laid the basis for Napoleon's domination of Europe. In addition to bringing out the creativity of the Committee of Public Safety, the Levée en Masse represents a turning point in the history of warfare. From now on, war was to become "total" involving all elements of the population, and all the reserves of the state.*

1. From this moment until that in which the enemy shall have been driven from the soil of the Republic, all Frenchmen are in permanent requisition for the service of the armies. The young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions; the women shall make tents and clothing and shall serve in the hospitals; the children shall turn old linen into lint; the aged shall betake themselves to the public places in order to arouse the courage of the warriors and preach the hatred of kings and the unity of the Republic.
2. The national buildings shall be converted into barracks, the public places into workshops for arms, the soil of the cellars shall be washed in order to extract therefrom the saltpeter.
3. The arms of the regulation caliber shall be reserved exclusively for those who shall march against the enemy; the service of the interior shall be performed with hunting pieces and side arms.
4. The saddle horses are put into requisition to complete the cavalry corps the draft horses, other than those employed in agriculture, shall convey the artillery and the provisions.
5. The Committee of Public Safety is charged to take all necessary measures to set up without delay an extraordinary manufacture of arms of every sort which corresponds with the ardor and energy of the French people. It is, accordingly, authorized to form all the establishments, factories, workshops, and mills which shall be deemed necessary for the carrying on of these works, as well as to put in requisition, within the entire extent of the Republic, the artists and workingmen who can contribute to their success.
6. The representatives of the people sent out for the execution of the present law shall have the same authority in their respective districts, acting in concert with the Committee of Public Safety; they are invested with the unlimited powers assigned to the representatives of the people to the armies.
7. Nobody can get himself replaced in the service for which he shall have been requisitioned. The public functionaries shall remain at their posts.

Source:

F. M. Anderson, ed., *The Constitutions and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France, 1789-1907*, 2d Ed. (Minneapolis: H. W. Wilson Co., 1908), 184-185.

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