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CHANGES IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL
CHANGES IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to inquire into the reports in the English press on the ecclesiastical changes of the French Revolution. To determine when and why these reports became condemnatory is my aim. Essentially this is an analysis of counter-revolutionary propaganda, a sifting of facts and fallacies on a particular theme -- religion during the French Revolution. What the English press wrote about it is still largely believed today. *Why* leads to the more interesting question of motivation.

There were for the period 1789 through 1795 nineteen daily newspapers published in London and nineteen which appeared tri-weekly, semi- or weekly. A selected number of provincial newspapers for almost the entire period were available for this study. In total I have read over seventy English news periodicals, most of them in the Burney Collection in the British Museum or at Yale University.

My acknowledgments of appreciation go to Professor Beatrice F. Hyslop whose lifelong wisdom and unfailing patience sustained me and to Professors Corinne C. Weston and Louis L. Snyder for their valuable criticism. The kindness of Mr. Edward Flushing gave me courage. I wish to thank Mr. Gilbert H. Lay for typing this manuscript and the staff of the Beinecke Library of Yale, where my ghost still wanders. To the students at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York -- my love.

R. S. G.

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CHAPTER I

THE ENGLISH PRESS DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1789-1795

The principle of the freedom of the press, the expanding economy and the advanced technology of Great Britain made the English press in 1789 the most developed in the world. With the coming of the French Revolution, the power of the English press grew as the interest of readers became stimulated by events. The influence of English newspapers was far reaching. It was exerted on the American press which was more developed than the French press, although France had six times the population of the United States and three times that of Great Britain. During the French Revolution, American newspapers most often relied on the English press for news and, inevitably, for opinions.¹

English newspapers first appeared in the early seventeenth century as newsheets of foreign news, later with domestic intelligence of shipping and goods for sale. With the development of her navy and merchant marine, England was in the forefront of the publication of news. Towards the end of the reign of Queen Anne, there were eighteen newspapers in London; one daily, fifteen tri-weeklies, one semi-weekly, one weekly, with an estimated weekly circulation of 44,000 copies and an average of twelve

¹Ian Christie, *Myth & Reality in Late Eighteenth Century British Politics and Other Papers* (Berkeley, 1970), "British Newspapers in the Later Georgian Age," pp. 312-314, 327; Beatrice F. Hyslop, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CIV, no. 1, Feb. 1960, pp. 55-58, uses Charles S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820* (Worcester, Mass., 1947); E. Hatin, *Bibliographie de la presse periodique française* (Paris, 1866), introduction, xcv; M. Reinhard, *Histoire générale de la population mondiale* (Paris, 1961), p. 218; C. Ledré, *Histoire de la presse* (Paris, 1958), pp. 97-98.

to fifteen advertisements an issue.²

The English Press from 1714 to 1789

By the time the Hanoverians came to the English throne, newspapers provided domestic and foreign news, sometimes literary features, advertisements and shipping news. Political factions were responsible for founding many newspapers for the increased reading public. Since 1695 the government had ceased its control of the press by licensing, but Parliament continued to prohibit reporting of its sessions until 1771. Punishment for libel in the press remained very severe.

In 1712 a Stamp Act had been passed by the government of Bolingbroke who, it is believed, wanted not only revenue but also to control the press. A red stamp costing a half penny was placed on every half sheet and a penny stamp on a whole sheet. This led to the cessation of many literary journals as well as fly-by-night half penny posts. Other newspapers doubled their prices and found a loophole by increasing the size of the sheet to be taxed. This same act also imposed a tax of one shilling on each advertisement.³ In 1725 another stamp tax was imposed and defined to prevent evasion of payment but in spite of this tax, the

²Stanley Morison, *The English Newspaper* (Cambridge, Eng., 1932), p. 84; Alexander Andrews, *History of British Journalism* (London, 1859, I, 93-94; Rosamond Bayne-Powell, *Eighteenth Century London Life* (London, 1937), p. 357.

³Andrews, pp. 107-109; Morison, p. 84, Charles Pebody, *English Journalism and the Men Who Have Made It* (London, 1887), p. 47; Harold Herd, *The March of Journalism* (London, 1952), p. 43; F. S. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776* (Urbana, Ill., 1952), pp. 309-310, 316; Hatin, p. xc; Lucyle Werkmeister, *The London Daily Press, 1772-1792* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1963), p. 1; A. Aspinall, "Statistical Accounts of the London Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century," *English Historical Review* (April 1948), LXIII, 201-202.

press grew. In 1728 there were three daily newspapers, ten evening tri-weeklies and five weekly newspapers in London.⁴

The first "advertising" newspaper, the *Daily Advertiser* appeared in 1730 with nothing but advertisements and was distributed *gratis* to the coffee houses where newspapers were read. After three weeks it included minimal foreign and domestic news and sold cheaply. The *Daily Gazetteer* founded in 1735 was also an "advertising" paper. The *London Daily Post*, founded the year before, became in 1744 the *General Advertiser* and after 1752 the *Public Advertiser*. The *Daily Advertiser* appeared regularly after 1754 with four pages and four columns to the page, setting the style for English newspapers in the second half of the eighteenth century. All of these newspapers as well as the *London Evening Post* founded in 1737 still published during the French Revolution.⁵

Walpole's government in the 1730's preferred payment to newspapermen for special services, rather than direct subsidies of the press. Walpole admitted spending £5,000 a year on newspapers, so that over £50,000 of public money went to the English press in the 1730's.⁶ The English press in the eighteenth century was free in principle but not from political corruption.

The expanding economy in the 1740's led to more commercial news and advertising. The new Stamp Act in 1757 did little to impede the growth of the English press. It raised the tax to one penny on every half sheet

⁴Andrews, pp. 129-130; Siebert, p. 319; Aspinall, "Statistical Accounts," p. 203; Morison, p. 121.

⁵Herd, pp. 64-65; Morison, pp. 123-126, 131.

⁶Siebert, pp. 242-243; A. Aspinall, *Politics and the Press* (London, 1949), p. 69.

and two shillings on every advertisement. Since a full sheet was now taxed the same as a half sheet, all daily newspapers came out with four pages. The tri-weeklies found a loophole which allowed journals of six or more pages to be taxed only three shillings an edition, and they soon appeared with eight small pages. The provincial press in mid-century, growing with the expansion of industry outside London, overtook the London press in advertising revenue.⁷

The *London Chronicle* was founded in 1757 by Samuel Johnson's friend, Robert Dodesley, poet and bookseller. Johnson, who despised journalism but wrote for a living, was astonished and displeased by the thirst for news which provoked political discussion in the coffee houses. For the preliminary issue of the *London Chronicle* Johnson wrote (for a guinea) that it was pledged to report accurate news, both foreign and domestic, and influenced by no party. It was a success. Johnson rarely appeared in the gallery of Parliament, preferring to write the speeches in the debates according to his taste. He evaded the prohibition against parliamentary reporting by using initials or strange names, sometimes under the heading of the Senate, Lilliput. Other tri-weeklies founded in this period copied the style of the *London Chronicle*: *Lloyd's Evening Post*, the *Whitehall Evening Post*, the *General Evening Post*, the *St. James's Chronicle*, all of which lasted through the French Revolution.⁸

The *Morning Chronicle* was founded in 1769 by William Woodfall who ran it for twenty years and earned the name "Memory Woodfall" for his

⁷Aspinall, "Statistical Accounts . . . ," p. 204.

⁸Siebert, pp. 320-321, 354; Bayne-Powell, pp. 358-359, 361; Herd, p. 64; Morison, pp. 135-137.

ability to publish long parliamentary speeches without taking notes. A syndicate founded the *Morning Post* in 1772 as an organ of Lord North's ministry. The syndicate included two clergymen, Henry Bate (Dudley) and John Trusler. By 1775 Bate edited the newspaper which featured scurrilous gossip, sometimes remunerative when silenced. The *Morning Post* was fashionable in the West End rather than in the City of London where other newspapers circulated.⁹

In the 1780's any new newspaper had to succeed at the expense of older ones. The *Morning Herald* was founded in 1780 by Henry Bate who had quarrelled with the management of the *Morning Post*. Using the same formula of fashionable gossip, the *Morning Herald* surpassed the older paper in appeal to the West End. It also had a serious side in publishing parliamentary reports. Its politics favored the young Prince of Wales around whom formed a center of opposition to the royal court and the ministry. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the playwright and member of Parliament, contributed articles to the *Herald* while directing funds to the press of the opposition factions.¹⁰

In 1783, after the American Revolutionary war was ended, there were nine daily newspapers in London. A coalition of Charles James Fox and Lord North was overturned when George III chose the young William Pitt as minister. In the election of the following year Pitt won a triumph, although most English newspapers were against him. Pitt succeeded in subsidizing former opposition newspapers, such as the *Public Advertiser*,

⁹Pebody, pp. 72-73; Morison, pp. 165-167.

¹⁰Pebody, p. 84; Morison, p. 167; Werkmeister, pp. 41-42; Andrews, pp. 222-223.

to support his ministry. In 1785 the *Daily Universal Register* was founded by John Walter who was pro-Pitt and was appointed in 1787 printer to the Customs. In 1787 the elegant *World* made its appearance, managed by Captain Ed Topham and John Bell, the latter responsible for its stylistic innovations. The *World* published much poetry and the political views of Pitt's ministry.¹¹

The Times was the new title given the *Daily Universal Register* on January 1, 1788. In its first issue *The Times* professed to be of no party, but during the election of 1788 it supported the Pitt ministry which now controlled seven out of ten daily newspapers. *The Times* spent much money on hiring reporters and on the latest equipment so as to report news promptly and accurately. It curtailed extensive parliamentary reports in the interest of getting the newspaper out on time, which pleased its many advertisers who bought space on the front page. In its earliest days *The Times* was not considered a first rate political newspaper, nor was it as yet very profitable.¹²

The Liberty of the Press

After George III ascended the throne in 1760, the competition between newspapers called for parliamentary reports, despite the prohibition. Lord Bute, George III's first minister was disliked by the opposition press for influencing Parliament by offers of places and preferment. John Wilkes, a member of Parliament, criticized on April 23, 1763 in no. 45 of the *North*

¹¹Pebody, pp. 93-94; Morison, pp. 179-181; Christie, p. 317; Werkmeister, p. 317; John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt* (London, 1969) pp. 143-144, 502, 606-607.

¹²*The Times* office, *The History of the Times*, I, "The Thunderer in the Making, 1785-1841" (London, 1935), pp. 30-31; Morison, pp. 181-185; Christie, p. 326; Andrews, pp. 226-227.

Briton a speech from the throne said to be written by Lord Bute. The government served an illegal general warrant on the staff of the *North Briton* for sedition, but Wilkes was released from prison on his privilege of being a member of Parliament. In February 1764, after both houses requested the suppression of the *North Briton* for seditious libel, Wilkes was expelled from the Commons and put on trial. He refused to surrender to judgment and was outlawed when he left for the continent. He returned in 1768 and, upon paying a fine of £500 and going to prison, he petitioned for restoration of his seat. He was re-elected in March 1769 and again expelled from the Commons who gave his seat to his defeated opponent. Wilkes was discharged from prison after serving twenty-two months, and was so revered by the London populace that he subsequently was elected sheriff, lord mayor and alderman of the City of London. In 1769 a tri-weekly which supported Wilkes was founded, the *Middlesex Journal* (or *Chronicle of Liberty*), and continued to publish until 1790.¹³

In January 1769 the *Public Advertiser*, managed by Henry Sampson Woodfall, published the "Letters of Junius," attacking the ministry, and became the most influential newspaper. The authorship of these invective letters remains today a mystery, but during the next three years they nearly doubled the circulation of the *Public Advertiser*. In December 1769 Junius' letter to the King led to the prosecution of Woodfall and other newspapermen. The failure to convict them vindicated the liberty

¹³Henry Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers* (New York, 1966, reprint, 1887), I, 169-180, 198; Siebert, pp. 355-356; Pebody, pp. 58-60; Christie, p. 328; Andrews, p. 167 ff; Robert R. Rea, *The English Press in Politics, 1760-1774* (Lincoln, Neb., 1963), ch. V, "Press, Parliament and Privilege," pp. 70-86.

of the press.¹⁴

The English press won the right to publish parliamentary reports in 1771 after the printers of several newspapers were reprimanded by the House of Commons. Parliament failed to punish the press when it supported two members of the House of Commons, friends of Wilkes who had resisted arrest with the help of the London populace. From this time on, Parliament could only resort to suits for libel on the contents published in newspapers. There was liberty of the press but not independence because political factions, including the ministry, subsidized the news.¹⁵

During the American Revolutionary war, the liberty of the press was threatened. In 1776 the opposition newspapers, such as the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Public Advertiser*, and the *Gazetteer*, blamed the war with America on the intransigence of the ministry. The managers of four other newspapers, the *London Chronicle*, the *London Evening Post*, the *St. James's Chronicle* and the *Public Ledger* were found guilty and fined in February 1777 for advertising a subscription to relieve widows and orphans of "our beloved American fellow-subjects . . . inhumanly murdered by the King's troops at or near Lexington and Concord."¹⁶

Perhaps to intimidate them, the government at 1776 increased the stamp duty on newspapers to one and a half penny, which forced newspapers to raise their price to three pence. Another blow fell on the press in

¹⁴Pebody, pp. 65-72; Bayne-Powell, p. 36; Rea, ch. X, "Junius and his Printers," p. 174, claims it was not possible to identify Junius, but believes he was Philip Francis, a friend of Burke.

¹⁵Pebody, pp. 72-73; Morison, pp. 165-167; Christie, pp. 315-316.

¹⁶Robert L. Haig, *The Gazetteer, 1736-1797* (Carbondale, Ill., 1960), p. 145.

1780 when the government increased the tax on each advertisement to two and one half shillings.

The growth of the English press during the first two decades of George III's reign was indicated by the number of stamps issued by the government each year: yearly circulation rose from 9,464,790 in 1760 to 12,680,000 in 1775.¹⁷ In 1780 the number of stamps used were 14,217,371. Apparently the increased taxes hurt newspaper circulation, because ten years later, at the beginning of the French Revolution, circulation was reduced to 14,035,639.¹⁸ Although yearly circulation increased in 1782 to 15,272,519, there was significantly little growth of individual circulation for newspapers which averaged during the war years 1776 to 1782 about 2,500 copies daily for successful papers. Keeping in mind that newspapers passed from hand to hand in coffee houses, so that in 1789 the Treasury estimated that a single copy of a London newspaper was read by from twenty to thirty people, there were indications that in the 1780's the number of newspapers serving the public had reached a saturation point.¹⁹ The end of the war saw a decline in circulation.

The English Press, 1789-1792

The format of daily newspapers was remarkably the same in 1789 as a result of the Stamp Acts which in effect restricted them to four large pages. On the first page were grouped advertisements; the more solid the

¹⁷Christie, p. 313; Fox Bourne, pp. 225-226.

¹⁸Andrews, p. 236; Fox Bourne, p. 226; Christie, pp. 323-324.

¹⁹Solomon Lutnick, *The American Revolution and the British Press* (Columbia, Mo., 1967), p. 2 and appendix; Andrews, p. 236; Ehrman, p. 605, f. n. 4.

block of advertisements, the more successful the newspaper, with the first column reserved for theatrical notices, and the other columns advertising commercial concerns and organizational meetings. When Parliament was in session, reports often started on page one and spilled over to the second page. The speeches were paraphrased in the third person, always polite in reference to the speakers, but the newspaper's politics were revealed by the fullness in the reporting of certain speeches. The proceedings of the Houses of Lords were listed before the House of Commons. If nothing of importance occurred during the sessions, the various bills were merely listed.²⁰

Foreign news generally appeared on page two under the headings and dateline of place of origin. By August 1789 the foreign news from France took up much space and the National Assembly deserved a heading by itself. The English press used the same style in reporting the Assembly's proceedings as for Parliament and as much space. It was apparent that the abridged minutes of the National Assembly came from French periodicals, as well as the news, and after November 1789 the *Moniteur Universel* was favored as a source. Sometimes English newspapers announced there was no news from France because the French newspapers had not yet arrived.

On page two, following the foreign news, was the official news culled from the *London Gazette* of the royal court and then a heading for London intelligence. Underneath this heading were paragraphs with political commentary which were written by those in the hire of political factions who

²⁰*The Times* office, "Thunderer . . . ," p. 25, describes the early format of *The Times*.

inserted them in as many newspapers as possible, willing to accept payment for them. This rather sordid arrangement was the genesis of the modern newspaper editorial.

Much of the news appearing generally on page three featured local reporting, such as the social life of the aristocracy and theatrical reviews. Managers of theatres -- the Haymarket, Drury-Lane, Covent Gardens -- were personally connected with newspapers and justly accused of paragraph puffing for their plays. Poetry also appeared on page three and sometimes the review of an art exhibition, or to fill up space, excerpts from historical works. It was important for readers involved in commerce to look at the shipping news and the closing prices at the markets. There was also sporting intelligence and lists of winners of the English or Irish lotteries.

All this could very well appear on the rear page which sometimes carried letters to the editor, but if these letters appeared prominently on page two they were often editorials in disguise signed by Latinized pseudonyms. On page four would very likely appear law intelligence of various kinds, including fascinating details under the heady heading *Crim. Carn.* of those suing for divorce. Modest advertisements or notices of houses or animals to be bought or sold, or clergymen seeking a living, graced the rear page. On the bottom of the rear page was the address for subscriptions and advertisements.

Increasingly the more important newspapers hired foreign correspondents who were paid small fees for sending reports. Continental newspapers were widely used; also, reports by ship captains and letters to private individuals turned over to the newspaper. In general, it took a week for events from France to appear in London newspapers, and longer

for news from more distant parts of Europe. The English provincial press derived most of its news from London newspapers. Recently improved mail coaches sped the London news to the provincial press within three or four days.

In the spring of 1789 the Pitt ministry controlled seven daily London newspapers: the *Public Advertiser*, the *Daily Advertiser*, the *Public Ledger*, *The Times*, the *World*, and two newly acquired, the *Star*, and the *Diary, or Woodfall's Register*. The most influential newspaper in 1789 was the *World*. The *Daily Advertiser* and the *Public Ledger*, although political enough to be subsidized by the ministry, remained advertising papers with so little foreign news that they were of little use for this study on the French Revolution.²¹

The opposition, more or less united behind Charles James Fox, its spokesman in Parliament, controlled in 1789 the *Gazetteer*, the *Morning Herald* and the *General Advertiser*. It acquired early in 1789 two newspapers which had been ministerial, the *Morning Post* and the *Morning Chronicle*, plus a newspaper started in March 1789, the *Argus*, and a spurious *Star* which ceased publication in April 1789. The *General Advertiser* was another daily advertising newspaper with too little foreign news for this study. The opposition press complained that the ministerial newspapers were subsidized from public funds, whereas various factions had to raise money privately to support the opposition press.²²

²¹Werkmeister, p. 319. Ministerial expenditures for the press of this period can be found among the Chatham papers in the Public Record Office, London. For list of payments, see Aspinall, *Politics and the Press*, p. 68; *The Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," p. 61.

²²Werkmeister, p. 317.

The tri-weeklies suffered from lack of political subsidy. Due to faster mail coach service, the daily newspapers were taking over the function of the tri-weeklies in reaching the countryside. Several tri-weeklies supported the ministry: the *St. James's Chronicle*, the *Whitehall Evening Post*, the *London Evening Post*, the *London Packet*, *Lloyd's Evening Post* and the newly started *Evening Mail*. Other tri-weeklies either favored the opposition or, perhaps for lack of subsidy, were politically neutral: the *London Chronicle*, the *English Chronicle* or *Universal Evening Post*, and the *General Evening Post*.²³

Sunday newspapers tended to be neutral because the ministry did not subsidize them. The *Sunday Observer*, founded in 1791 and continuing today, was not subsidized until the late 1790's. English sabbatarianism frowned on newspapers that day. George Crabbe, poet and Anglican clergyman, had written disapprovingly in 1785 on *The Newspaper*:

Those who ne'er deigned their Bible peruse,
Would think it hard to be denied their news
.
.
.
.
The fresh-coined lie, the secret whispered last,
And all the gleanings of six days past.
With these, retired, through half the Sabbath day,
The London lounge yawns his hours away.²⁴

Early in 1789 the English press was concerned with domestic issues, rising out of the Regency crisis when George III was for a few months mentally ill, the trial of Warren Hastings for misrule in India, and the efforts to repeal the Corporation and Test Acts which imposed civil disabilities on religious Dissenters. With the coming of the French Revolution

²³Aspinall, *Politics and the Press*, pp. 68-70; Werkmeister, pp. 268, 281; Morison, pp. 175, 197; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," pp. 53, 61.

²⁴S. C. Carpenter, *Eighteenth Century Church and People* (London, 1959), p. 164; Fox Bourne, p. 290; Aspinall, pp. 13-14, 83; Werkmeister, p. 378.

in 1789, these issues in the press did not recede into the background but became more complex.

Much of the gossip in fashionable newspapers, such as the *World*, gave way to serious news. Having built a large circulation of 3,000 to 4,000 readers on gossip, the *World* received from the ministry a large subsidy of £600 a year.²⁵ One of its founders, John Bell left the *World* in May 1789 to start the *Oracle*, or Bell's New World. Captain Ed Topham remained with the *World* which was actually managed by the actress Mary Wells.²⁶ In June 1789, R. Bostock of the *World* was indicted for libel of the House of Commons concerning the Hastings trial. Neither the *World* nor the *Oracle* prospered after Topham and Bell went their separate ways.²⁷ The *World* faced failure late in 1792 when its editor, John Heriot founded a new daily newspaper, the *Sun*, which was financed by members in the government.²⁸

The government brought Bell's *Oracle* into line in 1790 for the coming elections with a subsidy of £200 which was raised the following year to £250. The *Oracle* was run by Peter Stuart who hired his brother-in-law, James Mackintosh to superintend the foreign news. In April 1791 Mackintosh published *Vindiciae Gallicae*, a defence of the French Revolution. In that year he went to work for the opposition *Morning Post*, run by a brother-in-law, Daniel Stuart.

²⁵Aspinall, pp. 72-73; Morison, pp. 178-179.

²⁶Christie, pp. 317-318; *Memoirs of Mrs. Sumbel, late Wells* (London, 1811), I, 59-81, contains letters between Topham and Wells on running the newspaper.

²⁷Christie, p. 318; Morison, p. 187; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . . ," p. 33; Werkmeister, p. 327. See chapter II for the trial of Hastings.

²⁸Werkmeister, pp. 202, 204-205, 335; Aspinall, p. 73.

The *Oracle* in 1791 and 1792, despite government subsidy, was a hodgepodge edited by friends of reformers who were not Foxites. It praised Mackintosh's *Vindiciae Gallicae*, and although it was ministerial, upheld Sheridan in 1792 when he was attacked for his defence of the liberty of the press. Late in September 1792 the *Oracle* briefly defected to the opposition, perhaps under the influence of its new printer who belonged to the Association of the Friends of the People, started by the more advanced Whigs. In January 1793 the *Oracle* went back to the government for another annual subsidy in time to support the war with France the following month.²⁹

The Times, not yet a leading ministerial newspaper, received in 1789 a subsidy of £300 a year.³⁰ In attacking the opposition, John Walter, printer and editor of *The Times*, ran the risk of libel suits from the Prince of Wales and the royal dukes who were not in favor at court. In February and May 1789, Walter was sued separately for each libel and in November 1789 and again in February of the following year he was sentenced to fines and a year in prison at Newgate. There Walter managed *The Times*.³¹ He was released in March 1791 through the intervention of the Prince of Wales. Walter filed counter-suit to the opposition *Argus*' suit for libel but he was never sentenced, which was more than could be said for the editor of the *Argus*. In June 1792 Walter received an extra £250 from the Secret Service Funds, most likely in compensation for fines and

²⁹Werkmeister, pp. 332, 334, 350-351, 369, 376; Aspinall, p. 68; Morison, pp. 193-195.

³⁰*Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," p. 33, 61; Morison, pp. 185-187, 197; Aspinall, pp. 68, 74-75; Werkmeister, p. 319.

³¹*Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," pp. 53-55; Andrews, p. 228.

prison.³²

After France was at war with Austria and Prussia, *The Times* announced on May 21, 1792 that it spared no expense in hiring correspondents at Brussels and Paris to report the news accurately and promptly because *The Times* found French journals too partial for reliance. Through its foreign correspondents, and also through connections with the British admiralty, *The Times* published many exclusives. The tri-weekly *Evening Mail* was also managed by John Walter.³³

Two other newspapers in 1789, the *Public Advertiser* and the *Diary*, managed by the Woodfalls, served the Pitt ministry. The *Diary* was started early in 1789 when Pitt wanted another newspaper to support the Regency bill which limited the prerogatives of the Prince of Wales as regent. The *Diary* was listed in the Secret Service Funds for £400 a year, and it was likely that the *Public Advertiser* received the same. The *Public Advertiser*, somewhat old fashioned with its penchant for reprinting speeches and proclamations, was in decline during this period.³⁴

The *Star* was an evening newspaper, the first daily evening paper made possible because of improved mail service carrying it to the countryside earlier than the morning dailies. A political quarrel over the Regency bill in February 1789 caused Pater Stuart to refuse to support the management of the ministerial *Star*. A spurious *Star* appeared with the

³²*Times* office, "Thunderer . . . ," pp. 60-61; Werkmeister, pp. 337-339; Andrews, p. 227.

³³*Times* office, "Thunderer . . . ," pp. 63-65.

³⁴Morison, p. 193; Aspinall, pp. 68-69; Andrews, p. 229; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . . ," p. 33; Werkmeister, pp. 181-182, 335.

title Stuart's *Star*, or the *Morning Star*, with the Prince of Wales' insignia on the masthead. After the recovery of George III, Peter Stuart and his co-workers in April 1789 moved over to the *Oracle* and continued working there when it received a ministerial subsidy in 1790.³⁵ In mid-1790 the Pitt ministry lost the evening *Star* which became neutral and eventually functioned as the evening edition of the opposition's *Morning Chronicle*.³⁶

The tri-weekly *St. James's Chronicle*, printed and owned by theatre managers, received a yearly subsidy of £200 for supporting the ministry. The tri-weekly *Evening Mail* was started by John Walter of *The Times* early in 1789 when the ministry offered him an additional £200 for it. Similarly, the *London Packet* was published by William Woodfall of the *Diary*. The *London Evening Post* was listed for £200 a year in the Secret Service Funds, as was the *Whitehall Evening Post*.³⁷

In 1789 the *Gazetteer* was the oldest opposition daily newspaper with a good reputation for serious parliamentary reporting because James Perry, its editor since 1783, organized relays of reporters to sit through the sessions. Perry continued to serve the *Gazetteer* in 1789 after he became editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. Perry was a personal friend of Fox and praised him in May 1789 for his efforts to aid the Dissenters repeal the Test Act. John Almon, the manager of the *Gazetteer*, was once a follower of "Wilkes and Liberty" and now an advocate of thorough constitutional

³⁵Morison, pp. 191-192; Christie, p. 346; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," p. 33; Werkmeister, pp. 229-230; Andrews, p. 229; Hatin, p. 1, xxviii.

³⁶Werkmeister, pp. 334, 366; Christie, "James Perry of the *Morning Chronicle*," p. 346.

³⁷Aspinall, pp. 68, 70-71; Werkmeister, pp. 240, 268, 281, 319; Morison, p. 192, f. n. 1; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," pp. 53, 61.

reform of Parliament. Although the *Gazetteer* claimed in 1789 it was the official organ of the Whig opposition, it became too radical for them.³⁸ It was more and more the organ of the Society for Constitutional Information. After James Perry resigned officially in December 1790, the *Gazetteer* was badly run and declined in circulation. The proprietors assumed the management of the newspaper to inform its readers they were devoted not to any opposition faction but to the people. The events of 1792 on the continent stimulated the circulation of the *Gazetteer*, but only to halt its eventual decline.³⁹

The *Morning Chronicle* became the leading opposition daily newspaper in 1789. Earlier that year during the Regency crisis it changed from a ministerial to an opposition newspaper when several influential leaders of the opposition subsidized it for £300 a year. James Perry of the *Gazetteer* became its editor and the Duke of Norfolk gave Perry the house at no. 474, Strand for publishing the *Morning Chronicle*. Perry helped finance the tour of James Mackintosh in 1789 who reported first hand the events of the French Revolution.⁴⁰ The *Morning Chronicle* attempted to strike a balance between the cause of constitutional reform at home and extreme democratic opinions. In the summer of 1791 James Perry went to Paris to send first hand reports to the newspaper. The subsidy from influential Whigs was dropped by the end of 1791 when the more conservative of them suspected

³⁸Morison, p. 193; Werkmeister, pp. 74, 336; Haig, pp. 196-198, 202; Christie, pp. 338-339.

³⁹Werkmeister, pp. 337, 342, 357; Haig, p. 96 ff.

⁴⁰Andrews, pp. 231-232; Morison, p. 193; Christie, pp. 341-343; Haig, p. 215; Werkmeister, pp. 322-323; Fox Bourne, pp. 261-262; Aspinall, p. 69.

Perry of being an agent of the French government. Perry remained a champion of the Foxites. Although the *Morning Chronicle* had a modest circulation in 1791, it increased dramatically under Perry's management. By the end of 1792 it was referred to in the ministerial press as the *Jacobin Chronicle* and accused of being in French pay.⁴¹

The New Whigs who influenced the *Morning Post* in 1789 found the *Morning Chronicle* too conservative an opposition newspaper to please them. The *Morning Post* in the beginning of the year was a somewhat disreputable gossip sheet which the ministry had subsidized for £400 a year. It was sold to a syndicate which included agents of the Prince of Wales, to be managed by his friend Richard Sheridan and printed by Daniel Stuart, brother of Peter Stuart. The Prince of Wales' interest in the *Morning Post* was not merely to support him during the Regency crisis but to protect his illegal morganatic marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Catholic. The New Whigs were not satisfied with the erratic leadership of Fox and the conservatism of the Duke of Portland.⁴² The *Morning Post* became the newspaper for the Association for the Friends of the People which advocated moderate measures of constitutional reform. In July 1792 it was ordered to pay damages to George Rose of the Treasury for libel and its printer was sentenced to a year in prison. Towards the end of the year, Sheridan and some of the newspaper staff helped organize the Association for the Liberty of the Press.⁴³

⁴¹Christie, pp. 344-347; Fox Bourne, p. 365; Aspinall, pp. 69, 102; Werkmeister, pp. 366-367.

⁴²Werkmeister, pp. 103-104, 169, 317, 342; Aspinall, pp. 71-72, 126; Wilfred Hindle, *The Morning Post, 1772-1937* (London, 1937), pp. 29-30.

⁴³Werkmeister, pp. 351, 354, 373; Hindle, p. 67.

The *Morning Herald* in 1789 was an opposition newspaper which rivalled the *Morning Post* in appealing to the fashionable West End. For the *Morning Herald*, Richard Sheridan, who produced the plays of Charles Stuart, brother of Peter and Daniel Stuart, arranged that Charles write a weekly political column. The *Morning Herald's* printers were plagued by libel suits and were sentenced and convicted in June 1789 and early the following year. By June 1790 the *Morning Herald* was a ministerial newspaper, just in time to support the government's candidates in the general election. The new management of the *Morning Herald* was paid a large annual subsidy of £600. In April and May 1792 the newspaper grew very severe with the Association of the Friends of the People and the more radical Constitutional Society.⁴⁴

A radical newspaper for the opposition was the *Argus* which Sampson Perry (no relation to James) founded in March 1789. Sampson Perry was indicted in November 1790 for charging the Pitt ministry with misrepresenting the agreement with Spain on Nootka Sound, and in 1791 spent six months in prison after being fined £100. He was convicted anew in December 1792 for libel of the House of Commons. When he failed to appear for sentence he was outlawed, after he had fled to France to join Thomas Paine and a small group of English radical exiles. The government confiscated the press of the *Argus*.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Werkmeister, pp. 224, 263, 320-327, 330, 356-358; Aspinall, p. 68; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," appendix I, 451, reprints the letter of Charles Stuart to the ministry in 1793, offering advice on the press. The three Stuart brothers worked for both factions.

⁴⁵Frederic K. Hunt, *The Fourth Estate* (London, 1850), I, 255-256, erroneously states that the *Argus* was founded by Lewis Goldsmith, an English Jew, who fled to France much later than Perry and in 1802 published an *Argus* with French funds. Andrews, pp. 233-234, somehow confuses the two, but not Werkmeister, pp. 318, 336, 364-365, 373, nor the *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1927), VIII, 85-86, XV, 92.

The evening tri-weeklies which were not ministerial were not very political. The *London Chronicle* retained its literary flavor, publishing many excerpts from books. The *English Chronicle* published at the same address as the *Morning Post* and seemed another organ of Carlton House, the residence of the Prince of Wales. The *General Evening Post* was printed at the same address as the *Gazetteer* but shared little of its political conviction.⁴⁶

In reading most of the provincial newspapers between 1789 and 1792, the modern reader has difficulty in discerning political affiliations. The proprietors of these newspapers were printers rather than journalists; their immediate concern was receiving revenue from advertisements. An article published forty years later claimed not a single provincial editor in the French Revolutionary period would have risked an original piece of writing. This was somewhat an exaggeration. The value of the provincial press in disseminating political views from London was not underestimated in this period. Although literacy remained low in the countryside, all classes of people relied on the provincial press for opinions. People gathered at public inns to hear the newspapers read aloud.

It was in the opposition newspapers that spokesmen for industrial and artisan centers, still unrepresented in Parliament, agitated for constitutional reform. The *Sheffield Register* was founded in 1787 by Joseph Gales, a Unitarian reformer, to rival the established *Sheffield Advertiser*. The publishers of the *Newark Herald*, the *Leicester Herald*, the *Chester Chronicle* and the *Manchester Herald* printed the addresses of the reformers' societies. The fast growing cities had two or more newspapers -- Manchester

⁴⁶Morison, p. 175; Werkmeister, pp. 89-90.

during the French Revolution had four -- but even towns such as Cambridge, Gloucester, Canterbury, Leicester, Leeds, Exeter, Chester, Newcastle and Norwich boasted of two or more newspapers.⁴⁷

The English Press, 1793-1795

Towards the end of 1792, with public opinion aroused against the French Revolution, new newspapers were founded. The ministry launched the *Sun* in October 1792, and after confiscating the press of the *Argus*, was prepared to launch the *True Briton*. The *Sun* was personally acquired by two members of the government, J. Bland Burges, under secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Charles Long, a secretary of the Treasury. Its editor, John Heriot, a friend of George Rose of the Treasury, wrote later that Edmund Burke repeatedly had urged the Treasury to buy an evening newspaper, and the *Sun* was under Burke's influence. It was successful because it was in competition only with the evening *Star* and also because the Treasury bought copies for free distribution. It carried parliamentary reports faster than the morning papers. Articles signed "Alfred" and "Tacitus" were thought to have been written by Bland Burges.⁴⁸

On January 1, 1793 the confiscated press of the *Argus* brought forth a new Treasury paper, the *True Briton*. George Rose, secretary of the Treasury, personally acquired the *True Briton*, whose motto was "*Nolumus Leges Angliae Mutari.*" The twin papers fathered by the Treasury fared

⁴⁷*New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* (London, 1836), XLVIII, 137-149; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1966), pp. 114, 151; Donald Read, *Press and People, 1790-1850, Opinion in Three English Cities* (London, 1961), pp. 39, 61-62.

⁴⁸Werkmeister, pp. 368-370; Morison, p. 198; Aspinall, p. 78; Hatin, p. 1, xxix; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," pp. 68-69.

well from parental care. Both were supplied free of charge to the provincial weeklies and became vehicles of anti-Jacobin propaganda.⁴⁹

John Walter of *The Times* was furious at the favored treatment given the *Sun*. *The Times* had the good fortune to have many advertisements on the front page which enabled it to hire foreign correspondents and pay expensive rates for international mail. After war was declared between Great Britain and the French Republic in February 1793, *The Times* resorted to extraordinary measures; for instance, it hired a light cutter to run back and forth across the channel to intercept fishing boats for contraband French newspapers. *The Times* policy of being first with the news was successful; in November 1793 it announced its circulation was nearly 4,000 daily readers. Perhaps the financial health of *The Times* contributed to its eventual independence. After 1799, when the government suspected the loyalty of *The Times* and discontinued its subsidy, *The Times* immediately attacked William Pitt. *The Times* did not acquire a first rate reputation until the turn of the century under the management of John Walter II.⁵⁰

The *Oracle*, solidly ministerial in 1793, suffered reverses and despite John Bell's elegant format it became bankrupt. There is no record of government subsidy for 1794. In April of that year the *Oracle* acquired the *Public Advertiser* after Woodfall's other newspaper, the *Diary* discontinued publishing on August 31, 1793. The *Oracle and the Public Advertiser* did not flourish even after John Bell in 1794 accompanied the armies of the coalition on the continent and so became the first war correspondent.

⁴⁹Werkmeister, pp. 373-375; Aspinall, pp. 72-73; Morison, p. 198.

⁵⁰*Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," pp. 35, 43, 61; Aspinall, pp. 74-75; Christie, pp. 317, 319.

The Times on June 18, 1794 accused Bell of being a "vagabond Jacobin." The tri-weekly *St. James's Chronicle* also suffered loss of ministerial subsidy after 1794. The ministerial *World*, the leading ministerial newspaper in 1789, sank into oblivion during this period. When its large subsidy of £600 was not renewed, it was absorbed in July 1794 by the opposition *Morning Post* as the *Morning Post and Fashionable World*. In 1797 when the *Morning Post* acquired the *Gazetteer*, it dropped the *World* even as a subtitle.⁵¹

It will be seen that the ministerial newspapers which lost favor and subsidy from the government were the very ones which had at first resisted Burke's views condemning the French Revolution. Although they joined the counter-revolutionary crusade well before 1792, these newspapers gave way to newer ones more adept in anti-Jacobin propaganda.

No additional government censorship hampered the English press during wartime, because restrictions against sedition made such censorship unnecessary. A law in May 1792 was directed against seditious writing which had Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* in mind. The Libel Act moved by Charles Fox in June 1792 required decisions by jury on matters of libel but did not prevent convictions and prison terms for newspapermen during wartime. When in May 1794 the government committed to trial thirteen leaders of the English reform movement for conspiracy to commit treason, and Parliament suspended a few days later the *Habeas Corpus* Act, the ministerial press supported the treason trials. The opposition newspapers hailed the prisoners' acquittal by English juries at the end of the year as a vindication of English liberties.

⁵¹Morison, p. 196; *Times* office, "Thunderer . . .," p. 43; Werkmeister, pp. 217, 376; Aspinall, pp. 73-74. The *Morning Advertiser* appeared on February 10, 1794 and continued through 1795 as an "advertising" newspaper, published by the Association of Publicans.

In an atmosphere of hysteria, the opposition press stood its ground. In October 1792 a new opposition newspaper, the *Courier*, appeared. Offered first to the Treasury and not accepted, Charles Este, one of its founders with a history in journalistic extortion, offered it to the opposition in a letter dated October 12, 1792, addressed to William Adam who dispensed funds for the opposition press. Despite its sordid origin, the *Courier* proved its courage in advocating peace with the French Republic.⁵²

The opposition newspapers complained when another half penny increase in the stamp duty in 1794 burdened them while the ministerial press obtained relief from the Treasury. Also, the problem of getting news from France was more difficult for opposition newspapers without access to government sources. The *Gazetteer* relied on French newspapers, although they were contraband. There are virtually no issues of the *Gazetteer* available for 1794 when it was rapidly declining. Despite loss of much money by its proprietors by the autumn of 1794, it continued publishing. In September 1797 Daniel Stuart of the *Morning Post* bought the copyright.⁵³

The *Morning Post* between 1793 and 1795 was edited by Daniel Stuart who published *Peace and Reform, against War and Corruption*, a pamphlet in reply to Arthur Young's *The Example of France, A Warning to Great Britain*, which had found its way into the ministerial press. After the proprietors of the *Post*, agents of the Prince of Wales, lost interest in the newspaper when the prince agreed to marry Caroline of Brunswick in exchange for ministerial payment of his debts, Daniel Stuart in 1795 was able to purchase this newspaper cheaply. Retaining James Mackintosh, he hired some fine young

⁵²Morison, pp. 169, 198; Werkmeister, pp. 378-379.

⁵³Haig, pp. 233, 241-242, 260.

writers named Samuel Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Robert Southey and Charles Lamb. With this brilliant staff the newspaper's circulation rose to become the leading opposition newspaper. Mackintosh shortly became reconciled with his old friend Edmund Burke before the latter died in 1797.

The same able staff served the *Courier* in 1797 when Daniel Stuart purchased it. Another newspaper which first appeared on December 30, 1794, the *Telegraph* was bought by Daniel Stuart some time in 1795 and after 1796 was absorbed by the *Morning Post*. Daniel Stuart continued to publish the *Morning Post* and from 1797 the *Courier* until he retired after the turn of the century.⁵⁴

The *Morning Chronicle* remained the loyal newspaper of the Foxite opposition. Before war was declared in 1793, James Perry was on the continent and remained there to send back first hand reports. The victories won by the French republican armies in 1794 encouraged the *Morning Chronicle* to publicize the many petitions for peace. The circulation of the newspaper declined until 1797 when the Foxites gained more political support for their proposals for peace, but by the turn of the century the Foxites had virtually retired from the opposition.⁵⁵

The Pitt ministry considered the provincial press of utmost importance and sent London newspapers with paragraphs marked in red ink for insertion. According to an article on the provincial press of this period,

The clergy [Anglican] at this time were, it would appear, the principal provincial paper agents in this arrangement and exercised so much influence that a few years afterwards some of them made their exertions the ground for a claim in clerical

⁵⁴Hindle, pp. 67-71; Fox-Bourne, p. 273; Christie, pp. 318-319, 329-330; Morison, p. 198.

⁵⁵Christie, pp. 347, 351; Werkmeister, pp. 373, 377-378.

patronage, and in more than one case obtained it from the government.⁵⁶

The provincial newspapers in opposition to the Pitt ministry were more vulnerable than the opposition press in London. The publishers and printers of the *Newark Herald*, the *Leicester Herald* and the *Manchester Herald* in 1793 either went to prison for printing "seditious" addresses of reform societies or fled the country to avoid prosecution. The *Chester Chronicle* was also the target of the local loyalist association for Church and King. The *Cambridge Intelligencer*, founded in 1793 by the Unitarian Dissenter, Benjamin Flower, offered editorial comment that was libertarian and reformist. The *Sheffield Register* was congratulated by the local Constitutional Society in October 1793 for its policy of publishing extracts of radical works. In May the following year the newspaper boasted of a weekly circulation of over 2,000 copies. Immediately afterwards, the publisher, Joseph Gales was implicated in the charge of treason for arming artisans in Sheffield with pikes. Gales fled the country and on June 27, 1794 appeared the last issue of the *Sheffield Register*. Arising from the ashes was the *Sheffield Iris*, managed by James Montgomery who supported constitutional reforms without risking editorial opinions. Montgomery was imprisoned for political libel in 1795 and again in 1796.⁵⁷

It must be concluded that the hard won liberty of the English press was in jeopardy during the French Revolution. But despite government harassment of the opposition press and the submissive conformity of the ministerial newspapers, to be successful English newspapers had to satisfy

⁵⁶*New Monthly Magazine* (London, 1836), XLVIII, 138; also quoted in Fox-Bourne, p. 246; Hunt, p. 279.

⁵⁷Read, pp. 69-73; Thompson, p. 114; George Rudé, *The Crowd in History, 1730-1848* (New York, 1964), ch. 9, "Church and King Riots," p. 141.

their readers' appetite for prompt and accurate news. This the English press did and achieved maturity during the French Revolution.

The circulation, as well as the number of newspapers, increased during the French Revolution. There had been approximately 7,500,000 copies in the middle of the eighteenth century, almost a doubling by 1780. A high point was reached in 1782 with a circulation of 15,272,519 but by 1790 circulation had dropped to 14,035,639.⁵⁸ According to the number of stamps imposed on newspapers, an article in the *True Briton* reported an increase from August 1792 of 14,219,760 copies to 17,073,621 in August 1793, or an increase of 2,853,861 circulated newspapers in one year.⁵⁹

There had been a lag in circulation during the peace years of the 1780's, but the increase of 1793 proves that it was the war and the French Revolution which stimulated the newspaper press in England, and not simply an expanding economy. The increase in population during the second half of the century from six and one half million to nine million does not alone explain the corresponding growth in newspaper circulation. France during the period of the French Revolution had a population from twenty seven to twenty eight million, three times that of Great Britain, and six times that of the United States, yet the French newspaper press was not nearly so developed as that of the two other countries.⁶⁰ Although relative literacy was also a factor, the answer lay in the relation of the press to

⁵⁸Andrews, p. 236. Some of these figures appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1794, pp. 21-22, and the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Aug. 11, 1794. The *Morning Post*, Nov. 11, 1794, traced the history of the English press.

⁵⁹*True Briton*, Aug. 31, 1793.

⁶⁰Read, p. 2; Hatin, p. xcv; Reinhard, p. 218.

the government. The English press was in principle free, although harassed or corrupted, while in France the government suppressed counter-revolutionary periodicals.⁶¹

The pride of English newspapers in their amazing growth revealed a heightened nationalist sentiment. The *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* on August 11, 1794 wrote after describing the origin and development of English newspapers, "This forms such a phenomenon of curiosity, political and literary, of riches universely diffused, and of enquiry universally awake, as has not been paralleled on any other part of the world."

The English press became so powerful that it could alter public opinion concerning the French Revolution. An inquiry into British politics between 1789 and 1795 will help us understand the role of the English press on the ecclesiastical changes of the French Revolution.

⁶¹Ledré, pp. 123, 126, 143, 145.

CHAPTER II
BRITISH POLITICS, 1789-1795

The young prime minister favored by George III to keep Charles Fox out of the cabinet was William Pitt, but he was insecure in his power. The tradition of independence was still strong in Parliament with the majority not attached to any faction or party in the modern sense. Pitt had support from commercial interests in the City of London after the Eden treaty with France in 1786 had increased British exports. He wished to strengthen his cabinet by including his followers and dispensing with those who were independent of him. To accomplish this, Pitt had to weaken further the Foxite opposition to prevent a coalition of the disgruntled.¹

After the death of Lord Rockingham in 1782, the Rockingham Whigs had formed just this sort of coalition with the followers of Lord North. The coalition was turned out in 1783 when the King influenced the House of Lords to defeat the India Bill which would have extended Parliament's patronage. The King chose Pitt as minister, who in the general election the following year won a triumph when the voters repudiated the Fox-North coalition and its India Bill. Out of power since then, "Fox's Martyrs" had no consistent policy. They were led by the cautious Duke of Portland and the great landowning families on whose country estates the party was

¹F. O'Gorman, *The Whig Party and the French Revolution* (New York, 1967), pp. 1-2; Richard Pares, *King George III and the Politicians* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 78, 151; Carl B. Cone, *Burke and the Nature of Politics*, (Lexington, Ky., 1964), II, 264-265; John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt* (London, 1969), pp. 489-491.

loosely organized while Whig clubs or societies formulated policy.²

It was not until the 1790's that political parties emerged organized and united on issues. In the preceding decade there was no real unity among members in opposition. Charles Fox, their spokesman in the House of Commons, was brilliant but erratic. Although Fox valued the friendship of Richard Sheridan, playwright and member of the opposition in the House of Commons, the group of New Whigs formed around Sheridan was distrusted. Another member of the opposition, Edmund Burke, coming from an impecunious Irish family, considered the Whig aristocrats the inheritors of the Lockean tradition and had used his considerable talents in their service as Rockingham's "mouthpiece." Burke was conservative, fearing the tyranny of the mob since the Gordon anti-Catholic riots in 1780. In spite of Burke's defence of "party," he was indifferent to unity and responded rather to interests or connections. Burke blamed the catastrophe of the coalition's defeat in 1784 on the monied interest supporting Pitt and those who made fortunes in India and corrupted Parliament.³

Burke was the moving force behind the trial of Warren Hastings for misrule as Governor-general in India. Burke wished not only to expose the

²A. S. Foord, *His Majesty's Opposition, 1714-1830* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 369, 376, 393, 398-400, 406; Donald E. Ginter, ed., *Whig Organization in the General Election of 1790* (Berkeley, 1967), pp. xxxi-xxxiii; William T. Laprade, *England and the French Revolution* (Baltimore, 1909), p. 27; Philip A. Brown, *The French Revolution in English History* (New York, 1965, reprint, 1918), p. 40; Ehrman, pp. 121, 127; Pares, pp. 121-123, 126-128, 133-135; John Brooke, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790: Introductory Survey* (New York, 1968), pp. 127-129, 130, 299.

³Alfred Cobban, *Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1960, reprint, 1929), pp. 59-63; Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 323; Ian Christie, *Myth & Reality* (Berkeley, 1970), ch. 4, "Charles James Fox," pp. 134-137; Ehrman, pp. 134-137; P. A. Brown, pp. 16, 75; O'Gorman, pp. 4, 13; Cone, pp. 8-10; Ginter, pp. xxxii; Pares, pp. 73-75, 84, 98, 194; Foord, pp. 380, 404; Brooke, p. 285.

cruelties committed in India but justify the reforms advocated in the repudiated India Bill which Burke had drawn up in 1783.⁴ Pitt remained neutral during the trial of Hastings after he had succeeded in passing a new India Bill in 1784 instituting reform. The trial of Hastings dragged on for years, from 1788 to 1795, at great expense to the government. The House of Commons moved for impeachment of Hastings in 1787 but the House of Lords in April 1795 voted him an acquittal. Long before this, Burke broke with Sheridan and those who continued to serve with him on the trial. In 1789, and 1790, Burke was exasperated with Sheridan and Fox who had lost interest in the Hastings matter.⁵

Political Developments - 1789 to 1793

Pitt welcomed dissension among the opposition. During the Regency crisis early in 1789, Burke disliked Sheridan's close association with the Prince of Wales. Fox was disturbed by the Prince's secret, illegal marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Catholic. When George III manifested instability late in 1788, there was no question that the Prince of Wales was to become regent. But since the opposition was favored by the Prince of Wales, and since the royal doctors predicted the King's recovery, the ministry introduced in February 1789 a bill to limit the regent's prerogatives. Edmund Burke wanted the Prince of Wales to announce his regency in Parliament and assume full control, but Sheridan and Fox hesitated. George III recovered that month and in April 1789 a grateful nation

⁴Cobban, p. 69; Cone, p. 165, describes Burke's personal interest in India; Brooke, p. 261.

⁵Ehrman, pp. 444-450; Cone, pp. 162, 183, 189, 212, 233-237, 252; O'Gorman, pp. xiv, 11-12.

offered thanksgiving.⁶

The Foxites' disappointment was keen. The old Whig leaders sat back and waited for Pitt to make a ministerial mistake, but the younger members in opposition looked for other remedies. In the 1780's middle class reformers urged the reconstitution of Parliament which was unchanged in structure since the Middle Ages. Newer, fast growing cities were not represented while barely inhabited boroughs elected members to Parliament who were influenced by the landowners in the region. The Whig oligarchy was contented with this situation, but others in opposition advocated constitutional reforms. Fox was conciliatory, wishing to make a party of the diverse factions in opposition. The English reformers were by no means committed to the opposition, for they had been repelled by Fox's coalition in 1783 with North who opposed reform. The middle class Society for Constitutional Information, advocating universal suffrage and annual Parliaments, distrusted Fox's opportunism. The moderate reformers had supported Pitt in the election of 1784 after he had pledged to propose a measure of reform. The following year Pitt introduced a reform bill, not as a ministerial bill but with Fox's support, which offered compensation to the electors of "rotten boroughs" in order to redistribute their seats to the new cities. The independent majority in the House of Commons defeated the bill and Pitt dropped reform.⁷

⁶Pares, p. 136; Foord, pp. 409-410; Cone, pp. 266-271; Laprade, p. 17; O'Gorman, pp. 8-10; Charles C. Trench, *The Royal Malady* (New York, 1965), pp. 167-198; Ursula Henriquez, *Religious Toleration in England, 1787-1833* (London, 1961), p. 108.

⁷Eugene C. Black, *The Association, British Extraparliamentary Political Organization, 1769-1793* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 203-204; George S. Veitch, *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform* (London, 1963), p. 2; Corinne C. Weston, *English Constitutional Theory and the House of Lords* (New York, 1965), p. 154; P. A. Brown, pp. 21-23; Christie, pp. 139-140; Henriquez, p. 57; Ehrman, pp. 67, 235-236; Brooke, p. 140.

The reform movement languished while the Protestant Dissenters in the Society for the Revolution of 1688 sought to remove their civil disabilities by repealing the Corporation and Test Acts of 1661 and 1673 which excluded them from public office. According to the Toleration Act of 1689, Protestant Dissenters had the right to hold public worship, provided their meeting houses were registered in the archdeacons' courts and their assemblies were held with unlocked doors. The Protestant Dissenters, who among themselves differed on other issues, formed an affluent group in the newer cities but were kept from power by the gentry and Anglican churchmen. The radical Dissenters distrusted the opportunism of the Foxites, but in 1787 and again early in 1789 Pitt failed to support motions to repeal the Test Act. The motion in 1789 had come within twenty votes of passing. Anxious for closer alliance with the Dissenters, Fox promised to move the bill for repeal of the Test Act the following year, this time to comprehend relief for Catholics who suffered even more disabilities. Burke approved of Fox's commitment to move for repeal.⁸

Meanwhile the Estates General met in France; the Third Estate formed the National Assembly, and on July 14, 1789 the Bastille was captured by the people of Paris. On August 26, 1789 the National Assembly decreed the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* which guaranteed in principle equality before the law.

The English reformers and religious Dissenters hailed the French Revolution and hoped for similar measures. Dr. Richard Price, a Dissenting

⁸Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (Hamden, Conn., 1962, reprint, 1934), p. 32; Peter Brown, *The Chathamites* (New York, 1967), p. 172; Alfred Cobban, ed., *The Debate on the French Revolution* (London, 1963), pp. 3-4; P. A. Brown, p. 25; Black, pp. 208-209, 214-215; O'Gorman, p. 47; Weston, p. 155; Brooke, 168; Henriquez, pp. 12-13, 33, 57-58, 60-63, 113.

minister, preached on November 4, 1789, the anniversary of the Glorious Revolution, a *Discourse on the Love of Our Country* which praised the French Revolution for extending the Lockean principles of liberties. He interpreted these principles as the right to choose a governor, the right of liberty of conscience, and the right to resist abuse of power. The *Discourse* referred bitterly to Pitt's refusal to repeal the Test Act but it also implied criticism of the Foxites for lack of moral commitment.⁹

It was Edmund Burke who almost alone felt alarm at Dr. Price's discourse. During the October Days of 1789, when the crowd marching from Paris to Versailles threatened the safety of the royal family, Burke became condemnatory. A young Frenchman, Charles J. F. Depont (who with his father, the royal intendant at Metz, had visited Burke in England) wrote him asking his views on the French Revolution. After hearing of the decree of the National Assembly on November 2, 1789, confiscating the property of the French Church, Burke prepared his answer, the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. It was reported ready for publication in February 1790 in *The Times*, the *London Chronicle* and the *World*, but did not appear until November 1790.¹⁰ Why?

Burke waited for the propitious moment to publish the *Reflections* so as to influence the Whig opposition. On February 9, 1790, during the debate on the army estimate bill in the House of Commons, Fox called for the reduction of the supply voted on the ground that the French Revolution had ushered in an era of peace between the two countries. Burke

⁹Laprade, pp. 11, 19; Peter Brown, pp. 171-173; P. A. Brown, p. 31; Black, p. 216; Veitch, pp. 103-104; Robbins, p. 345; Weston, pp. 156-157.

¹⁰Peter Brown, pp. 172, 174; Laprade, pp. 14-15, 18-19; Cone, pp. 181, 295-296, 298, 300, 339; Henriquez, pp. 111-112.

rose to differ. Although Fox was conciliatory, Sheridan answered Burke with a sharp speech defending the French Revolution.¹¹

Pitt watched with interest the growing dissension among the opposition in respect to the French Revolution. On March 2, 1790, when Fox moved the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, Pitt allied himself with the Anglican clergy in supporting Burke's opposition to the bill. Burke admitted that previously he had not opposed repeal of the Test Act (although absent from the voting). Pointing to the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in France as a warning, Burke predicted the despoliation of the Anglican Church if Dissenters were in public office. Burke distorted as a threat to Anglican churches a letter published by Joseph Priestley, Unitarian minister and scientist, to inhabitants of Birmingham, in which Priestley alluded to "the train of gunpowder under the old building of error." The vote for the repeal was 105 to 294, a blow to the Foxites because the year before it had come within twenty votes of passing.¹²

The leaders of the opposition seemed little disposed to adopt Burke's views condemning the French Revolution. The contest for the seat in Westminster in the election of June 1790, which did not concern affairs in France, was won narrowly by Charles Fox while the reformer, Horne Tooke ran independently against Fox and the ministerial candidate, Lord Hood. However, events in France produced tensions which broke down the traditional ties in the Whig party, which were replaced by more modern organizational methods.¹³

¹¹Laprade, pp. 21-22; O'Gorman, pp. 45-46.

¹²Henriquez, pp. 65, 90, 108-109, 114-115; Cone, pp. 305-307; Laprade, pp. 22-24, 31; O'Gorman, pp. 48-49.

¹³Ginter, p. 1; P. A. Brown, p. 51; Ehrman, pp. 616-617; O'Gorman, p. 51.

On the first anniversary of the capture of the Bastille, July 14, 1790, a dinner was held in celebration in London attended by English reformers and the more advanced Whigs, but the more conservative of them declined invitations. Disturbed by the dinner, Burke decided to publish the *Reflections* to influence the opposition in the coming session of Parliament. He submitted the *Reflections* to friends and received mixed criticism, which caused him to admit that his knowledge of France was imperfect. Burke was particularly incensed by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy decreed by the National Assembly on July 12, 1790. From France the abbé Jean Maury, spokesman for ecclesiastical privileges, pointed out to Burke factual errors. On November 1, 1790, when the *Reflections* appeared, the ministerial press hailed it in unison.¹⁴

The *Reflections* defended Burke's concepts of a Christian commonwealth in harmony with divine laws and an established order conserving hereditary rights, that is, a landowning oligarchy with an established religion as the guardian of morality and culture. Burke reconciled Lockean natural law with the older natural law of Christendom and arrived at a conservative utilitarianism which, allowing very gradual changes, denied Locke's social contract of natural rights. Burke revered the Whig aristocracy; he did not understand the newer, monied society which required wider political representation. To Burke, religion was integrated with civilized society founded on the Aristotelian virtues of a mixed government, which would be undermined by innovations. "Man is by his constitution a religious animal," wrote Burke, "that atheism is against, not only our reason

¹⁴Cone, pp. 308-309, 340-343; Cobban, *Burke* . . . , p. viii; O'Gorman, pp. 54-55, 58; Laprade, pp. 22, 24.

but our instincts. . . . We are resolved to keep an established church, an established monarchy, an established aristocracy, and an established democracy, each in the degree it exists, and in no greater."¹⁵

Although Burke's political principles were not based on expediency, they were pragmatic, expressed on matters of party politics. It is questionable whether Burke's *Reflections* immediately changed public opinion on the French Revolution. The ministry assured it a large sale. By 1797 an estimated 18,000 copies were sold in Great Britain which earned Burke £2,000. His publisher was James Dodsley who with his brother had hired the young Burke as a writer for the *Annual Register* and had once apprenticed John Walter of *The Times*.¹⁶ It was written to appeal to the anti-intellectual country gentry and old-fashioned mercantilists. The Anglican lower clergy, some of them "fox-hunting parsons" given to hasty sermons, and most of them discomfited by new economic developments and new philosophies, favored Burke's book. The Anglican bishops were delighted with Burke's ideas on established religion. George III was pleased with Burke's monarchical principles and told him so when Burke visited the royal palace. The opposition derided Burke's sudden found favor at court after years of denouncing the crown's influence on Parliament.¹⁷

The *Reflections* prompted thirty-eight replies refuting Burke, but

¹⁵Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1790), pp. 135-136; Pares, p. 60; Weston, pp. 134-135; Henriquez, pp. 100-103, 120-121; Peter Brown, 178; Cone, pp. 285-288, 316, 320-322; Cobban, *Burke . . .*, pp. 38, 46, 52, 80; Cobban, p. 93, believed that Burke, a devout Anglican, would have been more comfortable as a Catholic.

¹⁶Cone, pp. 341-343; John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1812), VI, 437-438.

¹⁷Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians. The Age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge, Eng., 1961), pp. 32-33; P. A. Brown, pp. 75-77; Cone, p. 349.

only a few will be noted here. Thomas Paine, famous for advocating independence for America, had been grateful to Burke for introducing him to the Whigs after Paine's return to England in September 1787.¹⁸ In March 1791 Paine answered Burke's *Reflections* with part I of the *Rights of Man*, upholding the principles of the Enlightenment triumphant in France. James Mackintosh's *Vindiciae Gallicae* was a rational defence of reforms in France with an apology for the violence of the Revolution. Mackintosh hoped Parliament would adopt the reforms and avert revolution. Mary Wollstonecroft wrote the *Vindication of the Rights of Man*, having earlier written the *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Wollstonecroft attacked Burke's contempt for the poor, the "swinish multitude," just as Mackintosh attacked Burke's reverence for genealogy. Joseph Priestley's *Letter to the Rt. Honorable Edmund Burke . . .*, published in Birmingham in the spring of 1791, accused Burke of being a "lay divine" of high church Toryism.¹⁹

What gladdened the ministerial heart was rupture in the opposition, but Portland, although sharing some of Burke's views, refused to disavow Fox's admiration of the French Revolution. In April 1791, after Pitt backed down from his diplomatic blunder of threatening Russia for occupation of a Turkish fortress, Pitt decided on changes in his cabinet which was not united behind him on this issue. Above all, he wanted to isolate the opposition by detaching them one by one. When Burke in April 1791 again differed in public with Fox, Pitt gave him more than encouragement. The issue was the Constitutional Act of 1791 concerning the French

¹⁹Cobban, *Debate . . .*, pp. 11-16; Laprade, pp. 25-26; Peter Brown, pp. 130, 180-183; P. A. Brown, pp. 41-45; Weston, pp. 194, 206.

inhabitants in Canada. The full debate took place on May 6, 1791, after Burke sought protection from the ministry from being called out of order. That day Burke denounced Fox for his praise of the new constitution of France; then he disavowed their past friendship while Fox wept.²⁰

Ministerial newspapers in May and June, 1791 (even before the flight of the French King) warned members of the opposition not to attend the second anniversary dinner celebrating the fall of the Bastille. Louis XVI's attempted flight from France and his arrest at Varennes on June 21st further turned public opinion against the French Revolution. A dinner in London attended by nine hundred guests was peaceful, despite an unfriendly crowd outside the tavern.

In Birmingham -- the year before it had been convulsed by the bill to repeal the Test Act -- the crowd rioted and pillaged for three days in the name of Church and King. The eighty or so guests meeting at the hotel in Birmingham escaped by leaving at six o'clock before the crowd smashed the windows of the hotel. The crowd destroyed the two meeting houses of the Dissenters and wrecked their private property. The laboratory and residence of Joseph Priestley, who was detested because of his doctrinal controversies with Anglican bishops, were also destroyed. The magistrates never read the Riot Act and were slow to call for outside forces to restore order. A letter from Priestley published in the English press after he left Birmingham blamed bigots in the established church for inciting mob violence.²¹

²⁰Foord, p. 403; Pares, p. 87; Weston, pp. 160-161, Laprade, pp. 34-36; Cone, pp. 351-355; O'Gorman, pp. 62-66.

²¹Cone, pp. 358-359, 371; Weston, pp. 183-185; Laprade, pp. 40-51; P. A. Brown, pp. 77-80; O'Gorman, p. 71; Cobban, *Debate . . .*, p. 17; George Rudé, *The Crowd in History*, pp. 139-147, stresses resentment of the poor towards affluent Dissenters.

In August 1791 Burke wrote an *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* which denounced the principles of reform as derived from the false philosophy of the rights of man and inconsistent with the traditions of English liberty. The bishop of Salisbury sent Burke word of the King's approval of the *Appeal*, which was also praised by the bishop of London. However, the conservative leaders of the opposition, the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam, were not pleased and judged it divisive.²²

Towards the end of the year the English reformers became active and a real concern to the ministry. Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker, founded the London Corresponding Society which set up societies in artisan centers and elsewhere with very low dues while circulating inexpensive editions of Thomas Paine's works. The *Argus* in April 1792 printed their program for radical reform but disclaimed violence. The Society for Constitutional Information was reactivated in March 1792 by Horne Tooke who also aided the London Corresponding Society. In April 1792 Sheridan, Charles Grey and other gentlemen reformers in Parliament, founded the Association for the Friends of the People in hopes of making moderate reform respectable. Towards the end of the year, James Mackintosh, Sheridan and others founded the Association for the Liberty of the Press to defend writers from harassment.²³

On May 21, 1792, a royal proclamation prohibited seditious writings, such as Part II of Paine's *Rights of Man* which outlined a program of social welfare for the English poor, the sick and the aged. Despite the proclamation, Paine's *Rights of Man* sold an estimated 200,000 copies in

²²Cone, pp. 360-365; Laprade, p. 37; O'Gorman, pp. 73-75.

²³Foord, p. 407; Weston, pp. 198-199; Black, pp. 225-226; Laprade, pp. 137-140; Cone, pp. 371-372, 385; O'Gorman, pp. 81-84; P. A. Brown, pp. 53-58; Cobban, *Debate . . .*, p. 20; Christie, p. 218.

1793.²⁴ The proclamation achieved its purpose of crippling dissent in the newspaper press. Charles Fox succeeded on June 11, 1792 in moving the Libel Act which made libel a matter for jury trials, but the government had little to fear from this bill.²⁵

The overthrow of the monarchy in France on August 10, 1792, followed by the September massacres of prisoners, heightened hysteria in Great Britain. Thousands of French refugees came to Great Britain many of them priests who had refused the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Burke wrote the *Case of the Suffering Clergy* to raise funds for the committee aiding refugee French priests. Imot, member of Parliament. Burke exaggerated the reaction from the public and hatred of the French Revolution. Public reaction from the English public, Burke questioned because it published in the press information about the description. Burke was also critical of the committee for entering the royal palace at Winchester for sheltering six hundred priests.²⁶

John Reeves, a lawyer from Canada, founded the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, also known as the Crown and Anchor Association from its place of meeting in London, or the Reeves Association. Organized with the connivance of the Pitt ministry, it published anti-Jacobin material in major London newspapers and distributed it to the provincial press.²⁷

²⁴Black, p. 221; P. A. Brown, p. 84; Cone, pp. 391-392; O'Gorman, pp. 88-89; Laprade, p. 62.

²⁵Foord, p. 414; Werkmeister, pp. 358-359.

²⁶Cone, pp. 405-406; O'Gorman, p. 104; Cobban, *Debate . . .*, p. 18.

²⁷Black, pp. 233-237, 270; P. A. Brown, pp. 83-84, 92; Cone, p. 401; Laprade, pp. 75-77, 86-88.

On December 1, 1792 a royal proclamation called for raising the militia to suppress an insurrection in Great Britain. The opposition denied there was an insurrection, choosing to disregard the planting of liberty trees in Dundee, Scotland, or the celebration of French victories in Sheffield, and claimed raising the militia was a ministerial trick to recall Parliament and prepare for war. However, the Duke of Portland was sincerely alarmed at sedition in Great Britain and was ready to support Pitt's government. The Anglican clergy sermonized for the Reeves Association while in the countryside effigies of Tom Paine were burnt. The Dissenters inserted advertisements in the press proclaiming their loyalty to the British constitution. Thomas Paine, who had left for France in September to be elected a deputy to the National Convention, was tried *in absentia* on December 18, 1792 and outlawed.²⁸

Although the Whigs led by the Duke of Portland approved of the royal proclamation of December and preparations for war, they refused to form a coalition with the Pitt ministry. The year 1792 drew to a close with debate on the Alien Bill for detaining foreigners suspected of subversion, during which Edmund Burke dramatically exhibited a dagger manufactured at Birmingham, presumably ordered by French assassins to murder George III and the royal family.²⁹

Foreign Policy of Great Britain during the French Revolution

Pitt early in his career wished to avoid European conflicts so as to increase British overseas trade. The Pitt ministry in 1789 did not regard

²⁸O'Gorman, pp. 111-112, 117-118; Black, pp. 239, 247, 257; P. A. Brown, pp. 86-88; Laprade, pp. 79, 85; Christie, p. 141, considers Charles Fox excluded in regarding Pitt's security measures the extinction of British liberty.

²⁹O'Gorman, pp. 113, 116-117; Laprade, pp. 94-96.

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the French Revolution as a threat to British economic interests. It expected France to be too occupied by internal disturbances during the French Revolution to continue as a rival of Great Britain's empire. The foreign policy of the National Assembly was considered benign. In 1790, during the controversy between Great Britain and Spain over Nootka Sound on the west coast of North America, the National Assembly renounced foreign conquests and was reluctant to implement the Family Compact between the Bourbon monarchs of France and Spain. British foreign policy early in 1791 was far more concerned with Russia's expansion than with the French Revolution. Pitt's belligerence in calling out the fleet in the Baltic to protest Russia's occupation of the Oczacov fortress caused the desertion of some of his followers in April 1791 and the reversal of his foreign policy. He renewed efforts to strengthen his cabinet by offering places to those in opposition.³⁰

In 1791, although the ministry had given every encouragement to Burke's *Reflections*, it was not receptive to his pleas to aid the émigrés at Coblenz who desired armed intervention in France. Even after July 21, 1791, when Louis XVI was arrested at Varennes and the ministerial press echoed Burke's condemnation of the Revolution, Pitt refused to support the émigrés. In August 1791 Burke sent his son Richard to Coblenz to arrange a *liaison* between the émigrés and the ministry in London. The mission, influenced by Calonne, the former minister of France residing in London, had government knowledge but no backing and ended in failure. After communicating with ecclesiastical authorities in France and the papal nuncio at Liege, Burke warned of France's aggression in annexing papal Avignon

³⁰Harvey Mitchell, *The Underground War Against Revolutionary France* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 13-18; Ehrman, pp. 516, 554-555, 567; Laprade, p. 30; O'Gorman, pp. 61-62.

in September 1791. But when Louis XVI took the oath to the constitution of 1791 on September 14th, despite Burke's unasked for advice, the Pitt ministry was disposed to negotiate with the French government.³¹

In a speech in the House of Commons on February 17, 1792, Pitt foresaw fifteen years of peace between Britain and France. After France declared war on Prussia and Austria, George III in May 1792 issued a declaration of strict neutrality. The combined forces led by the Duke of Brunswick were expected to defeat France and then Pitt intended to become the mediator and gain French colonies overseas. When the monarchy was overthrown in France on August 10, 1792, Great Britain recalled its ambassador and suspended diplomatic relations. Reports of the September massacres of prisoners in Paris intensified war propaganda in Great Britain.³²

The French armies stopped the Duke of Brunswick's forces at Valmy on September 20, 1792. Early in November the French victory at Jemappes upset the balance of power on the continent. British interests in Flanders were upset by the French opening the Scheldt river in the Austrian Netherlands to navigation on November 16, 1792 in defiance of an international treaty which protected the safety and commerce of Britain's ally, Holland. Pitt decided on the course of war also in hopes of gaining the French West Indies for Britain.

The two propagandist decrees of the National Convention, November 19 and December 15, 1792, offered assistance to people wishing to be liberated from their oppressors. They were interpreted by English ministerial newspapers as a promise to aid sedition within Great Britain. On December 1,

³¹Mitchell, pp. 16-17, 20-23; Cone, pp. 350, 374-377, 380-381; Laprade, p. 39; O'Gorman, pp. 76, 79.

³²Pierre Caron, *Les massacres de septembre* (Paris, 1935), p. 63, f. n. 2; Mitchell, pp. 25-26; Cone, pp. 383-384; P. A. Brown, p. 89; Cobban, *Debate . . .*, pp. 24-25.

1792 a royal proclamation declared there was danger of insurrection in Great Britain. An Alien Act for detention of subversive foreigners became law the beginning of 1793. The execution of Louis XVI on January 21st found public opinion ready for war with France. The French Republic sent an envoy to negotiate with Great Britain; he was notified that if he remained in London he would fall under the jurisdiction of the Alien Act. On February 1, 1793, France declared war on Great Britain.³³

The Pitt ministry expected the coalition (Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Holland and Spain) to win a speedy victory over the ill-prepared French Republic. The British preferred in 1793 to negotiate with the constitutional royalists of France rather than the émigré princes who sought aid for the royalist rebellion in the Vendée. The ultra-royalists, refusing to unite with the constitutional monarchists, were dissatisfied with the British occupation of Toulon in August 1793. Burke disliked Pitt's aims to aggrandize English commercial interests rather than wage a counter-revolutionary war, and he distrusted the negotiations with constitutionalists in France whom he had repudiated in the *Reflections*. However, Burke's efforts to establish harmonious relations between Great Britain and the papacy met with some success when his friend, John Coxe Hippenley arranged in Rome that Mons. Charles Erskine be sent to London. George III was grateful to the Pope for urging Irish Catholics to remain peaceful during the war and the papacy expressed gratitude in a letter to Burke for British kindness to the French refugee clergy.³⁴

The Jacobins in France assumed power in June 1793, and after Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety organized republican resources,

³³Mitchell, pp. 10, 26-28, 30; Laprade, pp. 114, 124-125; Cone, pp. 399-401; O'Gorman, pp. 117-118; Cobban, *Debate . . .*, p. 25.

³⁴Cone, pp. 420-421, 425-427; Mitchell, pp. 32-33.

won victories and suppressed the counter-revolution by the end of the year. In Great Britain the followers of the Duke of Portland were alarmed, criticizing the Pitt ministry for pursuing naval victories in the French West Indies rather than supporting the royalist émigrés on the continent. The fear of subversion by English "Jacobins" after reformers in May 1794 were arrested and charged with treason, and the decisive victory of France at Fleurus on June 26th, brought the Portland Whigs in July into coalition with the Pitt ministry.³⁵

After the fall of Robespierre on the 9th of Thermidor (July 27, 1794) the British foreign office was disappointed when republican Thermidorians maintained control of the French government. Lord Grenville in October 1794 was prepared to support the counter-revolution in the name of Louis XVII (the Dauphin in prison in Paris) and repudiate the constitutional monarchists who distrusted British territorial ambitions.³⁶

The victories won by France resulted in economic exhaustion for both sides. Early in 1795 Great Britain was faced with the problem of raising taxes to subsidize the allies while the English people suffered from wartime inflation. By the summer of 1795, Holland, Prussia and Spain deserted the coalition to sign separate peace treaties with France. The British expedition of French émigrés landing at the Bay of Quiberon to proclaim (after the death of the Dauphin) the comte de Provence as Louis XVIII ended in disaster. The British supported White Terror in Lyons, incited by the émigré clergy, alienated public opinion in France by the assassination of Jacobin prisoners. The success of the republican Thermidorians in September and

³⁵Mitchell, pp. 38-39; Laprade, pp. 131-132, 148; O'Gorman, pp. 185-186, 189, 198.

³⁶Mitchell, pp. 41, 45-47; W. R. Fryer, *Republic or Restoration in France?* (Manchester, 1965), p. 4.

October 1795 in the suppression of uprisings against the new constitution for the Directory blasted the hopes of the Pitt ministry for a royalist restoration. Pitt was forced to enter into secret negotiations in November 1795, but the Directory refused his terms for indemnifying Great Britain with French maritime colonies. Except for a brief year of peace in 1802, Great Britain remained at war with France for twenty more years.³⁷

Political Affairs in Great Britain, 1793-1795

The news of Louis XVI's execution on January 21, 1793 outraged British sentiment. After France declared war in February 1793, the Foxite opposition was isolated and English reformers dogged by government spies. When the reformers sent late in 1793 four delegates to a British Convention in Edinburgh, they were arrested, tried for treason and sentenced to Botany Bay. In May 1794 the government suspended the *Habeas Corpus* Act after it arrested Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke among thirteen leaders of the English reformers. Burke served on the Committee of Secrecy appointed by Pitt to draw up charges of a conspiracy to commit treason. In July, when the Portland Whigs entered into coalition with the ministry, Burke retired from political life. Pitt was unable to award him a peerage for furthering the coalition, but Burke received a life pension from the public funds.³⁸

The fear of the French Revolution strengthened the coalition which was now a Tory government. Although Thomas Hardy and the others were acquitted by juries, the reformers never recovered from the treason trials.

³⁷Laprade, pp. 135, 153, 157, 172-173; Mitchell, pp. 51-61; Fryer, pp. 24-38.

³⁸Cone, pp. 440-441, 448-450; Laprade, pp. 142, 153-154; P. A. Brown, pp. 104-107, 118-119; Pares, p. 194.

The London Corresponding Society in 1795 petitioned for peace, reform and relief from economic distress. On the opening day of Parliament, October 28, 1795, the King on his way to give the address from the throne was allegedly struck by a stone from demonstrators who shouted, "Bread! Peace!" and it was thought, "No George!" The ministerial *Sun* on November 3, 1795 accused the London Corresponding Society of inspiring the attack on the King. On December 18, 1795 Parliament passed the Two Acts; one, the Treasonable Practices Act banned seditious writing and speeches, and the other, the Seditious Meeting Act, prohibited public meetings of more than fifty people without government consent.³⁹

In the 1790's the Evangelical publicist Hannah More wrote tracts for village readers which warned against infidelity and democratic ideas from France. Widely read, these tracts were praised by the clergy, reprinted by the government and distributed by associations loyal to the British Constitution.⁴⁰ The ideas expressed in Burke's *Reflections* now dominated public opinion against the French Revolution. Edmund Burke had as early as 1790, when many Englishmen still hailed events in France, prophesized that the ecclesiastical decrees of the National Assembly would lead to the downfall of Christianity.⁴¹

How valid was this prophecy of Burke and what was the purpose of this propaganda? To answer we must first describe the Gallican Church of the *ancien régime*, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in 1789 and then the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

³⁹Foord, pp. 403, 415-416, 418; Weston, pp. 199-201; P. A. Brown, pp. 120-129, 150-152; Laprade, pp. 158-167.

⁴⁰Ford K. Brown, pp. 123-124, 126-127.

⁴¹Burke, *Reflections*. . . , pp. 218-219 "This new ecclesiastical establishment is intended only to be temporary and preparatory to the utter abolition under any of its forms of the Christian religion."

CHAPTER III
THE ECCLESIASTICAL REFORMS OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (1789-1791)

On the eve of the French Revolution, the clergy was the first of three orders recognized by law in France -- the clergy, the nobility and the Third Estate. The clergy formed a separate corporate entity within the state, governed by its own assemblies and courts. Numbering somewhat over 130,000, with about half regular or monastic and half secular or diocesan clergy, they composed less than one percent of the total population of France of over twenty-four million.¹ The regular clergy, removed from the laity except for activities in education and charity, were considered in decline. In 1768, during the reign of Louis XV, a royal commission which included Loménie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, and five bishops had suppressed many monastic orders as useless to society. The secular ecclesiastical hierarchy, after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1764, shared with the monarchy control of religious life in France.²

The secular hierarchy of eighteen archbishops and 121 bishops, and an additional eleven bishops without dioceses, were recruited exclusively

¹H. Sée, *Economic and Social Conditions in France during the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1927), p. 60; A. Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine* (Paris, 1948), I, p. 15; Ch. Ledré, *L'Eglise de France sous la Révolution* (Paris, 1949), p. 23; M. G. Hutt, "The Curés and the Third Estate," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, London, (1957), VIII, p. 80; Louis S. Greenbaum, *Talleyrand, Statesman-Priest* (Washington, 1970), pp. 3, 49.

²Dansette, pp. 34-35; A. Latreille, "La Période contemporaine," *Histoire du Catholicisme en France*, Paris, 1958-1962, III, p. 45.

from the *cadets* or younger members of the great noble families. One hundred and thirty bishoprics were originally the same dioceses organized in Roman Gaul in the fourth century. These bishoprics, plus those acquired in the expansion of France since the seventeenth century, were too few to satisfy the noble families who competed for them at the royal court. The exclusivity of noble birth among the ecclesiastical hierarchy on the eve of the French Revolution is accorded by all historians, whether favorable or not to the clergy of the *ancien régime*.³

According to the Concordat of 1516 signed with the papacy, the King of France had the right to nominate the bishops with papal approval in exchange for the *annates* (portion of the first year's revenues of bishoprics sent to Rome). There was wide diversity in the wealth and size of bishoprics. The yearly revenues of the bishop of Strasbourg (400,000 livres) and the archbishops of Paris (200,000) and Cambrai (200,000) overshadowed episcopal revenues in the south of France, such as the bishops of Digne and Vence (7,000).

Wealthy bishops received additional revenues from seigneurial rents and plural benefices, often rich commendatory abbeys, that is, given by king to ecclesiastics without requirement of special duties. There were on the eve of the French Revolution 840 abbeys *in commendam* out of 1,100⁴

³A. Sicard, *L'Ancien Clergé de France* (Paris, 1894), I, pp. 6-7; Hutt, p. 81; N. Ravitch, *Sword and Mitre* (The Hague, 1966), pp. 69-73, 120-124, compares the French hierarchy to the Anglican bishops who were chosen by the ministry for their political reliability in the House of Lords. The Anglican bishops did not come from the higher nobility until reaction to the French Revolution in Great Britain increased the importance of the established church; Greenbaum, pp. 11, 44.

⁴Sicard, I, 43, 106-108, 261; Sée, p. 63; L. Sciout, *Histoire de la Constitution civile du clergé*, 1872, I, pp. 45-46; Hutt, p. 75; Latreille p. 49; Ravitch, p. 59; J. McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church* (New York, 1970), p. 10.

Bishops were not required to reside in their dioceses and much absenteeism prevailed. Some bishops exercised temporal power, as the cardinal de Rohan who was both bishop of Strasbourg and its prince, landgrave of Alsace and a prince of the Holy Roman Empire. Some were peers of France and some presided by right over provincial assemblies.

The second or lower order of the secular clergy, the parish priests or curés and their vicars or assistants, were from the *roturier* or plebian class. Their revenues, often inadequate, came from either the tithes of small benefices or an allotment or *congrue* given by the holder of the benefice. These were raised to meet rising prices by royal edict in 1786 from 500 to 700 livres for the curés. Historians agree they were generally respected by the common people, although the abbé Sicard warns against oversimplified comparisons between the good curés and the corrupt prelates.⁵

Much of the revenues of the Church came from extensive land holdings variously estimated by writers as possibly one third of the land (A. Denys-Buirrette), one fourth or one fifth (J. Godechot, A. Aulard), one tenth (G. Lefebvre), or only six or seven percent (C. Ledré, H. Sée, J. McManners). The latest authorities on the church of the *ancien régime* cite contemporary estimates: Louis Greenbaum writes contemporaries claimed one fourth was church property, but he as well as John McManners warns that contemporary estimates were inflated.⁶ The problem lies in the clergy's finances which

⁵Hutt, pp. 76-78; Latreille, p. 49; J. Godechot, *Les Institutions de la France* (Paris, 1951), p. 217; Greenbaum, pp. 96, 100; Ravitch, p. 180; McManners, p. 15.

⁶A. Denys-Buirrette, *Les Questions religieuses dans les cahiers de 1789*, (Paris, 1919) p. 130; Godechot, *Institutions . . .*, pp. 217-218; A. Aulard, *Christianity and the French Revolution* (New York, 1966), p. 29, cites the estimate of Rabaut Saint-Etienne, Protestant deputy to the National Assembly

were accountable only to themselves and therefore valuations of their property remain educated guesswork. There is confusion between extent of ownership of church property and value of the property. There was wide regional diversity with ecclesiastical lands composing as much as forty percent in the northeast compared to the less than two percent in the southwest.

Ch. -M. de Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, when he proposed in the National Assembly on October 10, 1789, to place ecclesiastical property in the hands of the nation, reported that the Church had a yearly revenue of 150 million livres, a little less than half of it derived from the ecclesiastical tax on produce in France, the tithes. Since Talleyrand had been Agent-général of the Assembly of the Clergy from 1780 to 1785, historians concede that he was in a position to know. A. Aulard computes ecclesiastical revenues somewhat higher, based on the estimates of a member of the Ecclesiastical Committee of the National Assembly. It is generally agreed that the capital of the church in France amounted to four or five billion livres.⁷

The ecclesiastical tax on the tithe was only theoretically one tenth of produce collected in kind, and varied from region to region, for different crops collected at different times, causing endless lawsuits between the church and landowners in France. A modern pro-clerical historian, Latreille quotes the economic historian C. -E. Labrousse, that the tithe

of one fifth. G. Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*, New York, 1961, p. 8; Ledré, p. 10; Sée, p. 6; McManners, p. 6; Greenbaum, p. 79. The *St. James's Chronicle*, London, Oct. 29-31, 1789, cited the estimate of the French minister Necker of ecclesiastical property comprising one fifth and three quarters of all land.

⁷Aulard, p. 29; Dansette, p. 17; Ledré, p. 10, f. n. 2; Godechot, p. 219; Greenbaum, pp. 2, 87, 105. Aulard cites Talleyrand's figure.

averaged one thirteenth of produce, but the historian Dansette believes it amounted to one eighteenth. By canon law the tithe was intended for the parish priest, but in this period most of the tithes went to the bishops, the cathedral chapters of canons and the monasteries. L. Greenbaum claims the tithe yielded more to the clergy than any other single direct tax received by the state.⁸

The greatest privilege of the clergy as an order was its exemption from taxation by the state. The burden of taxes in the *ancien régime* fell on the peasantry, but even the nobility in the latter part of the eighteenth century paid the *capitation* and the *vingtième*, or personal taxes on income. Not so the clergy. It paid no taxes but their Assembly voted the state a voluntary contribution, the *don gratuit*. The historian L. Bourgain towards the end of the last century refuted Taine and those who blamed the clergy for the financial collapse of the *ancien régime*. He stressed the generosity of the clergy's *don gratuit* in 1780 when they came to the aid of France in time of war with thirty million livres, followed by sixteen millions in 1782 and eighteen millions in 1785 to alleviate post-war economic distress. The royal government felt obliged to help the clergy repay the interest on its loan for which the clergy⁹ went into debt in order to offer the *don gratuit* to the royal government! Other writers stress that the burden of the *don gratuit*, borne disproportionately by the lower clergy who paid dues to the General Assembly of

⁸Latreille, p. 50; Dansette, p. 16; P. Gagnol, *Le dîme ecclésiastique en France au 18^{me} siècle* (Paris, 1910), p. 52; S. Herbert, *The Fall of Feudalism in France* (London, 1921), pp. 38-40; Greenbaum, pp. 92-93.

⁹L. Bourgain, "Contributions du clergé à l'impôt," *Revue des questions historiques*, Paris, July 1890, pp. 112-114; Sicard, I, pp. 255-256; Denys-Buirette, pp. 81-82; Lefebvre, p. 29, f. n. 7; Greenbaum, pp. 24-25, 38-40, 86; McManners, p. 2.

the Clergy, was considerably smaller than the taxes paid by the Third Estate.

The Need for Ecclesiastical Reforms

The years 1787 and 1788 were disastrous ones with bad harvests, rising prices and unemployment. Starving people roamed the countryside. The provincial nobility, impoverished by inflation, exerted pressure to collect seigneurial dues from their peasantry. The treasury of France was empty from aiding the American colonies win independence in the war against Great Britain ending 1783. The royal government was threatened with bankruptcy in paying the interest for its loans. Commerce suffered after the Eden-Vergennes treaty signed with Great Britain in 1786 which established reciprocity by lowering tariffs on British textiles in return for advantageous prices on French wines.¹⁰

In 1786, Calonne, the royal minister, attempted to impose new taxes on all strata of society, including the clergy, but the Parlements (the thirteen higher courts of law in France) protected privileged groups by exercising their right to refuse to register the royal edicts. After Calonne called an Assembly of Notables, who in February 1787, with fourteen prelates among them, resisted his proposal for new taxes, he was dismissed and left for England. Loménie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, became royal minister but he failed to win acceptance for a land tax from the Parlement of Paris after the Assembly of Notables was dissolved. In May 1788, the royal government transferred the registry of edicts from the Parlement to a new Plenary Court composed of princes and royal officers. The Assembly of the Clergy condemned the establishment of the Plenary Court. At Toulouse, Dijon, Grenoble and Rennes, opposition

¹⁰Lefebvre, pp. 24-26.

mounted among the people in defence of Parlement's resistance to new royal taxes. In August 1788, Loménie de Brienne suspended the Plenary Court, and acceding to the demand of the Parlement of Paris, called for a meeting of the three orders, the Estates General (which had not been convened since 1614) to take place in May 1789 at Versailles. The King recalled Jacques Necker, a Protestant financier from Geneva who had served as minister from 1776 to 1781 during the war with Great Britain.¹¹

The Assembly of Notables was called to meet again in November 1788, to rule on the convocation of the Estates General. Necker hoped to avert bankruptcy by abolishing the exemptions of the privileged orders. On the advice of the Assembly of Notables he succeeded in doubling the representation of the Third Estate so that they had twice as many deputies as the clergy and nobility. However, the Assembly of Notables did not rule on whether the voting at the Estates General was by order, as in 1614, or by head, and Necker and Louis XVI remained silent on this matter.¹²

In Brittany there was virtual civil war when the Third Estate defied the nobles and ecclesiastical hierarchy as the provincial estates who refused to surrender their privileges. In January 1789 a royal edict specified indirect elections for the Third Estate in the electoral assemblies, while the nobles were invited directly to general electoral assemblies to choose deputies to the Estates-General. The bishops and parish priests also had a direct vote in the general electoral assemblies of their order, but the canons and the regular clergy could only send representatives to the assemblies. Some of the bishops at the general electoral assemblies

¹¹J. Egret, *La pre-Révolution française* (Paris, 1962), pp. 18-20; Sicard, II, 128-129; Lefebvre, pp. 29-30; Greenbaum, p. 215.

¹²Lefebvre, pp. 49-52, 54-56.

of their order talked of patriotism, even the surrender of privileges, but the curés who wished to reform the inequities within their order, succeeded in electing a majority of the lower clergy, 208 out of a total of 296 ecclesiastical deputies, to the Estates-General. A few years later, the abbé Barruel, a refugee in London, accused Necker of sending so many curés to the Estates General and doubling the representation of the Third Estate in order to "plunder" the French church and reform it according to Presbyterian "errors." Aulard, a modern historian, claims that Necker was not a threat to the unity of the Catholic church.¹³

The order for convocation ruled that each electoral assembly was to draw up *cahiers de doléances* or lists of grievances and instructions to the deputies, according to the procedure followed in 1614. [The predominance of curés in electoral assemblies led to demand for many changes affecting the lower clergy.] The *cahiers* of the clergy expressed wishes for ecclesiastical reform. The poor curé living on a *portion congrue* of 700 livres a year complained he was not paid regularly, that he was denied a vicar to assist him because the holder of the benefice would not pay the additional 350 livres required by law; that the burden of supporting the poor in the parish fell on the curés instead of the wealthy beneficer who was often not a resident. The curés did not want tithes abolished but claimed the collection was intended for them.¹⁴ Some *cahiers* of the clergy

¹³A. Barruel, *Histoire du clergé pendant la Révolution* (London, 1797), pp. 5-6; Aulard, p. 25; Sicard, II, 129-131; P. Pisani, *L'Église de Paris et la Révolution* (Paris, 1908), I, 39; Hutt, pp. 88-90; Ledré, p. 39; Greenbaum, p. 135; McManners, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴Denys-Buirette, pp. 170, 204-205; Hutt, pp. 79-91; Sicard, II, 163, Greenbaum, p. 96.

criticized the bishops for not residing in the dioceses. They complained of arbitrary ecclesiastical government and urged the re-establishment of diocesan synods and the suppression of the Assembly of the Clergy.¹⁵

The lower clergy manifested Richerist tendencies in the *cahiers* which derived from an early seventeenth century religious movement in France, affirming the right of the lower clergy to organize independently in synods because they claimed to be directly descended from the disciples of Christ. In resenting the absenteeism and opulence of the bishops, the lower clergy were influenced by Jansenism, a late seventeenth century religious development placing doctrinal emphasis on Augustinian predestined grace and a return of the prelates to primitive religious austerity. The hierarchy of France had rid themselves of the Jansenist bishops with the help of a papal bull, *Unigenitus*, in 1713. The lower clergy blamed the pluralism of the bishops on the Concordat of 1516, giving the King the right to nominate them; the lower clergy preferred the earlier Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges of 1438 when bishops were elected by cathedral chapters. However, the lower clergy now looked to the King for reforms while manifesting a Gallican distaste for interference by the papacy.¹⁶

As an order, the clergy on the eve of the French Revolution were more prepared to surrender tax exemptions than the nobility. However, the

¹⁵B. F. Hyslop, *French Nationalism in 1789 according to the General Cahiers* (New York, 1938), pp. 87, 260 on democratization of the clergy.

¹⁶Hyslop, pp. 102-103, 262, on the hostility in the *cahiers* of the three orders to the Concordat of 1516; Sicard, I, 422-423; Dansette, pp. 54-62; Latreille, pp. 52-53; E. Pr clin, *Les Jansenistes du 18me si cle et la Constitution civile du clerg * (Paris, 1929), pp. 458-460; Greenbaum, p. 98; McManners, pp. 16-17.

cahiers of the clergy indicated their alarm at irreligious philosophy and their concern for a regeneration of Christian morals. Not only did they wish to retain censorship of opinions but they objected even to the limited toleration granted the Protestants by the royal edict of November 1787. The historian E. de Pressensé concludes that no matter how liberal were the *cahiers* of the clergy, they could not concede liberty of conscience. R. R. Palmer reminds us that the Assembly of the Clergy in 1775 had officially condemned humanitarianism as an error attributed to loss of faith in eternal law.¹⁷

The *cahiers* of the Third Estate were almost unanimous in wishing to end the pecuniary privileges of the clergy and nobility. Many of the *cahiers* of the rural parishes of the Third Estate wanted to reform the collection of tithes, preferring their curés to benefit from the revenues. The Third Estate manifested an attachment to the Gallican Church and hostility to the papacy in *cahiers* which were critical of the Concordat of 1516 and the *annates* sent to Rome. The monasteries and abbeys were singled out in these *cahiers* as either needing reforms or outright suppression, but only a few *cahiers* urged the end of monastic vows. The general *cahier* of the Third Estate of Paris is of particular significance because of the influence of Paris *intra-muros* on ecclesiastical changes during the Revolution. The Third Estate's *cahier* wanted a Gallican Church without interference from the papacy, the suppression of *annates*, monastic reform, return to the primitive purity of Christianity with bishops chosen

¹⁷Hyslop, pp. 35, 44, 84-86, 252, 253, 257, 263; E. de Pressensé, *L'Église et la Révolution française* (Paris, 1889), p. 33; Pisani, I, 53-55; Greenbaum, pp. 41-43, 80-81, 150; R. R. Palmer, *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France* (Princeton, 1939), p. 197.

by popular election and required to reside in their dioceses, an end to church holidays except Sunday, and so forth.¹⁸ Anti-clericalism, though manifested in a minority of *cahiers* of the Third Estate, was more often expressed as secularism, the wish to reduce the role of the Church in temporal affairs. Many *cahiers* expressed *étatist* opinions for increasing the control of the state over the church. However, the *cahiers* of the Third Estate did not protest ecclesiastical control of the registry of births, marriages and deaths or church directed education and charity. Although the abbé Sicard lamented towards the end of the last century the anti-clerical *cahier* of the Third Estate of Aix-en-Provence, where Mirabeau was influential, which wanted unused ecclesiastical property utilized for commercial purposes and the suppression of the tithes and fees of the clergy, most historians conclude there was virtually no demand in the *cahiers* of the Third Estate for confiscation of ecclesiastical property.¹⁹

The convocation order of January 1789 for the Estates-General permitted the uniting of two or three orders to draw up the *cahiers*, but maintained that deputies were to be elected by separate order. The Third Estate realized it would lose the advantage of its doubled representation if each order in the Estates-General deliberated separately. Some *cahiers*

¹⁸Denys-Buirette, pp. 448-449; Hyslop, pp. 105, 262; A. Mathiez, *Rome et le clergé français sous la Constituante* (Paris, 1911), p. 20; Sicard, II, 163; Ledré, p. 32; Ch. -L. Chassin, *Les élections et les cahiers de Paris, 1888-1889*, III, 350-355, McManners, pp. 9, 13.

¹⁹Hyslop, pp. 104-106, 263-265; Sicard, II, 162; Ledré, p. 31; Dansette, p. 67; Latreille, p. 70, cites Aulard; H. Daniel-Rops, *The Church in the Age of Revolution* (New York, 1967), I, 14.

of the clergy supported voting by head; it was most likely due to the influence of the pro-Third Estate curés that more *cahiers* of the clergy expressed an opinion for union among the three orders than the *cahiers* of the nobility.²⁰

The Surrender of Ecclesiastical Privileges

When the deputies met at the opening of the Estates-General at Versailles on May 4, 1789, the Third Estate was offended by the humiliating dress requirements to wear black, in contrast to the sumptuous robes of the privileged orders. The long speech of the minister Necker was disappointing because he did not settle the crucial question of deliberation by head, although he called for the surrender of pecuniary privileges by the clergy and nobility. A struggle ensued lasting six weeks between the Third Estate and the privileged orders with the clergy assuming the role of mediator. The clergy, sitting separately as an order, surrendered on May 19, 1789 their exemptions for equality of taxation. The journal of the curé Jallet revealed that some of the hierarchy resisted the surrender but voted by acclamation so that, Jallet suspected, they could challenge later the validity of this move.²¹

The majority of curés expressed dissatisfaction with the hierarchy by allying with the Third Estate. After the Third Estate declared itself the National Assembly, a few prelates voted with a bare majority of curés to join it. Earlier ecclesiastical historian attributed Jansenist and Richerist motives to the curés; most modern writers conclude that the

²⁰Hyslop, p. 256.

²¹A. Houtin, *Les Séances des députés du clergé aux Etats-Généraux de 1789* (Paris, 1916), p. 19, f.n. Jallet's journal.

clergy mediated between the Third Estate and the nobility because they wanted ecclesiastical reforms but also to keep their order intact. M. G. Hutt, unlike the historian A. Aulard, believes there was no organized majority of curés for union with the Third Estate, and claims from reading the journals of the canon Coster and the cure Thibault, that they voted on June 19th only for the verification of their powers in common with the Third Estate with the reservation that they remain a separate order. According to Hutt, only the pressure of events in July 1789 led the clergy to accept the merging of orders in the National Assembly.²²

On June 20th, after the members of the Third Estate were locked out of the meeting hall, some of the clerical deputies, the most famous being the abbé Grégoire, joined them to take the Tennis Court oath not to disband. The patriotic lower clergy, who now were the majority, suggested on June 22nd to the National Assembly the church of Saint Louis at Versailles for a meeting place. After the royal session the following day, a small group of clergy, reported to be only twenty-five or thirty in the journal of Coster, remained seated with the deputies of the National Assembly, refusing to be dispersed by royal edict to deliberate by separate order. The majority of the clergy joined the National Assembly on June 24th along with a minority of nobles. The populace was hostile to the ecclesiastical minority dominated by the hierarchy who continued to sit separately until they complied with the King's request on June 27th to join the National Assembly. Ecclesiastical historians

²²M. G. Hutt, "The Role of the Curés in the Estates-General of 1789," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (London, Oct. 1955), VI, 192-195, 205-209, 211-215; Aulard, pp. 48-49; Préclin, pp. 463-464; Ledré, p. 49; Daniel-Rops, I, 15; McManners, pp. 20-21.

stress the hostility of the populace which forced the clergy to capitulate to the Third Estate.²³

In July the aristocratic party at court stiffened the King's will to resist the National Assembly. Louis XVI dismissed his conciliatory minister Necker and brought in troops around Paris. The capture of the Bastille on July 14, 1789 probably saved the National Assembly from dissolution. The aristocrats who made attempts at flight immediately after the fall of the Bastille included some of the hierarchy and abbés such as Vermond, the Queen's adviser, Maury, defender of ecclesiastical privileges, and Calonne, brother of the former minister. The first Revolutionary *Te Deum*, or thanksgiving, celebrated the fall of the Bastille in the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, while in the parish churches patriotic priests blessed the flags of the newly formed National Guards.

After the capture of the Bastille, unrest spread through France in a movement described as the "Great Fear." Oligarchical municipalities surrendered to popular governments which recognized the sovereignty of the National Assembly and formed National Guards to suppress disturbances. Peasants, refusing to pay seigneurial dues and other taxes, joined the starving who became brigands, burning *chateaux* and manor houses, destroying records of payments due the landlords. Among the large landowners subjected to violence were the abbeys and monasteries, particularly in Franche Comté where serfdom had not disappeared.

In order to calm the violence of the countryside, many members of

²³Houtin, pp. 49, 135; Pisani, I, 91; Ledré, p. 54; Daniel-Rops, I, 16; McManners, p. 22.

the National Assembly, chiefly nobles and clergy, proposed during the evening session of August 4, 1789 the surrender of their privileges. The decree on August 11 divided privileges into two categories; those abolished immediately when the law was sanctioned and others to end when new institutions took over their functions. In principle, feudalism was declared abolished, serfdom was suppressed outright but other manorial payments were to be redeemed by the peasants. It was not until March 15, 1790 that the National Assembly ruled on the manner of redemption.²⁴

With respect to the Church, tithes were similarly abolished but their payment continued until the salaries provided by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1790 took effect in 1791. *Annates* and other fees paid to the Pope, including Peter's pence, were abolished outright. Other reforms of the clergy decreed in August 1789 were the surrender of fees for religious ceremonies and the prohibition in the future against plurality of benefices and non-residence.

A solemn *Te Deum* was proposed to commemorate the occasion. Pro-clerical writers stress the patriotism of the hierarchy on August 4th, although they point out that the resolution on tithes benefitted only the owners of large estates. Other writers deflate the sacrifice of the hierarchy whose privileges were actually surrendered by others in the National Assembly. Aulard believes the *Te Deum* proved the attachment

²⁴Herbert, pp. 142-144; J. M. Thompson, *The French Revolution* (New York, 1966), pp. 92-94, 173; Lefebvre, pp. 140-142, 145.

of the National Assembly to Catholicism.²⁵

It is generally agreed that the French hierarchy fought against the decree of August 11th on the tithes by insisting that the resolution of August 4th provided for their redemption, and that Mirabeau held out the prospect of salaries to the lower clergy who forced the hierarchy to accept the decree. Pro-clerical writers dwell on the objections of Sieyès and Grégoire who defended the right of the lower clergy to collection of the tithes. Other historians note that the curés acknowledged the principle that ecclesiastical property belonged to the nation when they accepted the promise of salaries.²⁶

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

The National Assembly proceeded with its main task, the drafting of a constitution for France. Against the wishes of more conservative deputies, it decreed on August 26, 1789, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* as a set of principles based on natural rights for the basic provisions of the constitution. Its seventeen articles declared equality before the law, individual liberty, security of property and the right to resist oppression. The tenth article was: "No one is to be disquieted because of his opinions, even religious, provided the manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law." This article meant, when put into practice, the end of the clergy's control of religious

²⁵Aulard, pp. 50-51; Pisani, I, 98-99; Sicard, II, 166-168; Bourgain, pp. 123-124; Pressensé, p. 43; Dansette, p. 68; Mathiez, p. 26; McManners, p. 26.

²⁶Sicard, II, 168-169; Ledré, p. 53; Latreille, p. 78; A. Gazier, *Études sur l'histoire religieuse de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1887), p. 8; J. F. E. Robinet, *Le Mouvement religieux à Paris pendant la révolution* (1789-1801) (Paris, 1896-1898), I, 111.

opinion in France.

Not only the hierarchy but Grégoire and the Jansenist deputy, Camus wanted a Declaration of Duties to uphold the national religion and balance the *Declaration of Rights*. When the Catholic bloc in the National Assembly withdrew their demand, they attempted to insert an explicit adhesion to Catholicism in the *Declaration of Rights*, but compromised on the article as it was adopted. Some ecclesiastical historians are critical of the Declaration for defining liberty and equality in non-religious terms. Latreille, a modern historian of Catholicism, blames the small group of Protestants and liberal nobles for demanding absolute religious liberty to include the Jews who were regarded as foreigners and enemies of Christianity. Other historians point out the dissatisfaction of Rabaut-Saint Etienne, Protestant pastor and deputy from Nîmes, and other liberals with article X in the *Declaration of Rights* which emerged in the compromise as granting toleration rather than religious liberty. Mathiez concludes that the majority in the National Assembly wanted a dominant Catholic religion but with toleration for all.²⁷

Article X of the Declaration was considered adequate to insure the rights of religious dissenters until December 24, 1789 when the National Assembly, upon decreeing the administrative apparatus for the sale of ecclesiastical property, realized that Protestants and other minorities could not hold public office. It passed a decree granting eligibility for office to non-Catholics, but the opposition of the abbé Maury and the bishop of Nancy, as well as Reubell, the deputy from Alsace, resulted

²⁷Gazier, p. 8; Pisani, I, 122; Latreille, pp. 81-82; Aulard, p. 51; Mathiez, pp. 89-90; McManners, p. 25.

in deferment of citizenship for the Jews who were defended by Robespierre, Mirabeau and Clermont-Tonnère. Those Jews centered at Bordeaux and near Avignon were soon granted citizenship on January 28, 1790 when Talleyrand moved their petition for citizenship on grounds that they had enjoyed this right as the "Portuguese nation" by royal patent since the mid-sixteenth century. The Assembly feared that the Jews of Alsace who had no legal rights, and who had petitioned for citizenship in October 1789, would be subject to continuous massacres incited by clerical interests resisting the sale of ecclesiastical property. It was not until September 27, 1791, that the Jews in Alsace became citizens. An historian concerned with religious toleration, E. de Pressensé, remarks that the postponement of Jewish citizenship was not surprising, considering that Great Britain had not granted citizenship to the Jews.²⁸

By the end of 1789, the Protestants, who were the most important religious minority in France, enjoyed religious toleration and civil liberty. Early in 1790 the property confiscated by the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685 was restored to Protestant heirs. But Protestants became involved in a civil war in southeastern France where some Catholics resisted the sale of ecclesiastical property. The election of Rabaut-Saint Etienne in March 1790 as president of the National Assembly was yet another cause for disturbance in that area. The violence escalated

²⁸Pressensé, pp. 117-119; Lafont, pp. 44-45; I. H. Hersch, "The French Revolution and the Emancipation of the Jews," *Jewish Quarterly Review* (London, 1907), pp. 540-567; S. Posener, "The Immediate Economic and Social Effects of the Emancipation of the Jews in France," *Jewish Social Studies* (New York), I, 271-326; Ruth F. Necheles, "The Abbé Grégoire's Work in Behalf of Jews, 1788-1791," *French Historical Studies*, 1969, VI, 172-184, explains why Grégoire's role was limited.

in April 1790 when the National Assembly rejected the motion of the Carthusian monk, Dom Gerle, that Catholicism be declared the only public religion in France, on grounds that the National Assembly could not legislate on matters of conscience. The rejection of the motion was interpreted by some Catholics as apostasy and led to the explosions in May and June 1790 at Nîmes and Montauban where Protestants had been elected to municipal posts. Laicist historians praise the Assembly for extending civil rights to the Protestants and blame the hierarchy for inciting violence against them. The canon Pisani considers the Assembly's rejection of Dom Gerle's proposal an admission of secularism. Aulard concludes that Dom Gerle's proposal was well intentioned and in accordance with opinions expressed in the *cahiers* the previous year, but the need to reorganize France called for complete religious equality. Mathiez considers the real reason for civil war between Catholics and Protestants in southeast France the hierarchy's resistance to the decree of November 2, 1789, confiscating ecclesiastical property.²⁹

The Confiscation of Ecclesiastical Property

After the National Assembly decreed the *Declaration of Rights* and debated the role of the King, they turned their attention to the financial crisis which had considerably worsened. When Necker called upon citizens to give one fourth of their income to the nation, many of the clergy sent patriotic gifts to the National Assembly. On September 26th a proposal

²⁹Mathiez, pp. 180-182; Pressensé, pp. 116-117; E. Lafont, *La Politique religieuses de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1909), pp. 17-18; R. Poland, *French Protestantism in the French Revolution* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 115-140; Pisani, I, 124-235; Aulard, pp. 53-54; McManners, pp. 25-26.

That the Church surrender its silver plate to the nation was accepted by the hierarchy with some hesitancy. Pro-clerical historians claim either that the hierarchy offered the plate willingly or that they submitted to disarm hostility. The abbé Barruel considered the sacrifice of the church plate spoliation under the mask of an invitation.³⁰

On September 28th, the Benedictine monks of St. Martin-des-champs offered the nation the order's property at Cluny with revenues estimated at 1,800,000 livres. The hierarchy denied the right of the monks to make this offer. In the provinces hierarchical resistance mounted against the August decree on the tithes. The clergy of Alsace who were under the foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Spire, according to the treaty of Westphalia of 1648, refused to recognize the decrees of the National Assembly. The Assembly denounced the clergy there and in Brittany where the bishop of Tréguier preached sedition and attributed to himself the role of Thomas à Becket in resisting dangerous innovations.³¹

Louis XVI's reluctance to sanction the August decrees and the *Declaration of Rights* strengthened ecclesiastical resistance. Louis notified the Assembly he could not sanction the suppression of *annates* in the August 11th decree because they had been granted to the papacy in the Concordat of 1516 signed by the king of France. He also objected to the clause concerning the tithes, questioning whether the clergy's income would be sufficient without them and whether landowners only would benefit rather than the royal treasury. In September there was much agitation in Paris against the grant of the King's veto. Mirabeau worked out a compromise in the

³⁰Barruel, p. 11; Pisani, I, 101; Ledré, p. 56.

³¹Gazier, p. 9; Pressensé, p. 138; Mathiez, p. 117.

National Assembly, giving the King a suspensive veto in the constitution in exchange for his acceptance of the August resolutions. Louis accepted but his sanction in September was no sanction but merely publication of the decrees.

On October 5th and 6th, the market women of Paris who wanted bread, followed by the National Guards commanded by Lafayette marched to Versailles to protest an insult to the tri-color flag by a royal regiment. On instructions of the municipal government, Lafayette brought the King and his family to Paris. The National Assembly soon followed.

An immediate result of the October Days was the King's unqualified acceptance of the August decrees and the *Declaration of Rights*. In Paris anti-clericalism reached new heights because the hierarchy had supported the King's absolute veto in order to retain their privileges. Ecclesiastical deputies complained of anti-clericalism in Paris as they tried with difficulty to obtain passports.

Before the National Assembly moved to Paris, Talleyrand, the bishop of Autun, proposed on October 10, 1789, after a report of the Finance Committee, to place ecclesiastical property at the disposal of the nation. On October 13th, Mirabeau moved that all church property belonged to the nation which would maintain the clergy with salaries of at least 1,200 livres a year. All writers, whether pro-clerical or anti-clerical, have until recently agreed that Talleyrand was cynical and corrupt. Louis S. Greenbaum in his study of Talleyrand as statesman and priest during the years 1780-1785 while he served the clergy as agent-general of its Assembly, and in an article in the *Catholic Historical Review*, rescues Talleyrand's reputation as an ecclesiastic, and Crane Brinton in his book on Talleyrand's

many careers is understanding of his psychological motivation.³²

The debate on October 23rd concerned the principle that the nation had given the clergy the property to support their spiritual duties, and therefore the nation had the right to dispose of the property. Boisgelin, archbishop of Aix, claimed the property of the church had been given to specific institutions by private donors. He offered the nation in the name of the clergy a loan of 400 million livres, provided the clergy remained in possession of their property, and pointed out that the credit of the clergy rated higher than the state's. The archbishop's motion was rejected. On November 2, 1789, the Assembly decreed by a vote of 568 to 346, with forty deputies abstaining, that ecclesiastical property was at the disposal of the nation.³³ Despite the acceptance of the principle underlying this motion, many historians observe that the decree avoided specifying confiscation. Pro-clerical historians account for the sizable vote in favor, by the hostility of the crowd around the Assembly hall, causing many deputies friendly to the Church to leave the Assembly.³³

On October 28, 1789, the Assembly had suppressed the taking of further religious vows, but the suppression of monasticism was not decreed until February 13, 1790 in the process of confiscating ecclesiastical property. Until then, the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Assembly was

³²L. Greenbaum, "The General Assembly of the Clergy and its Situation at the End of the *Ancien Régime*," *Catholic Historical Review*, July 1967, LIII, 153-193; Greenbaum, *Talleyrand, Statesman-Priest*, pp. 210-216; C. Brinton, *Lives of Talleyrand* (New York, 1963), pp. 72-76; Sicard, II, 157, 173-174; Gazier, p. 9; Bourgain, p. 128; Pressensé, p. 69; Ledré, p. 55; Dansette, I, 69; Pisani, I, 128-129, 132-134, McManners, p. 27.

³³Sicard, II, 175, 181; Dansette, p. 70; Pressensé, p. 75; Gazier, pp. 9-10; Ledré, p. 56, f. n. 4; Mathiez, pp. 84-87; McManners, pp. 27-28.

deadlocked when its president, the bishop of Clermont and other ecclesiastics on the fifteen member committee opposed the suppression of monasticism. It was known that monastic property, with large revenues in the hands of the secular hierarchy, was less encumbered by claims for redemption from the laity and therefore would be the first to be sequestered by the nation. After the Ecclesiastical Committee was doubled in February 1790 to include more aggressive reformers from the laity, the National Assembly decreed the suppression of monasticism. It allotted pensions to the regular clergy at 700 to 1,200 livres a year, depending on age, allowing them either to leave the cloisters or retire to live in communal houses. Pro-clerical historians defending monasticism explain the significant numbers who left for secular pursuits by the inadequacy of the pensions and the insecurity of the future. Pro-laic writers praise the moderation of the decree which caused little disturbance.³⁴

On April 12, 1790, the archbishop of Aix, in order to prevent the sale of ecclesiastical property, proposed a bank for which the property of the church would serve as security, sparing the nation the enormous burden of maintaining the clergy and aiding the poor. Again he pointed out that the clergy had better credit than the state, and again the proposal was rejected. The Assembly decreed the issue of *assignats* or paper money secured by the church property which would facilitate its sale. Despite admonitions from the clergy, ecclesiastical property was sold on favorable terms to the bourgeoisie, the richer peasantry and even some of the nobility -- all henceforth having a vested interest in defending the French Revolution. Clerical historians concede with other writers

³⁴Pisani, I, 141-142, 145-146; Gazier, p. 10; Pressensé, p. 98-100; Aulard, pp. 54-55; Mathiez, p. 82; McManners, pp. 31, 35.

the success of the sale of ecclesiastical property, but feel vindicated by the subsequent worthlessness of the *assignats*, which was caused by war time inflation.³⁵

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy

The Ecclesiastical Committee of the National Assembly drafted the organic laws entitled the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The Committee claimed it had no desire to alter dogma; the constitution it drafted for the clergy was called civil because it pertained only to the clergy's civil organization. The members of the Ecclesiastical Committee were Catholics motivated by a Gallican belief in a strong Church to support the state, but their Gallicanism became more radical with the measures needed to regenerate the nation. Modern historians, including defenders of the clergy, agree on the Catholic Gallicanism of the Ecclesiastical committee. Historians at the turn of the century tended to attribute the attitude of the Committee to the influence of Jansenism or the *philosophes*.³⁶

The hierarchy appeared indecisive during the period of drafting the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The Pope's hostility to the work of the Ecclesiastical Committee was set after its suppression of monasticism on February 1790, but the turbulence in papal Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin, enclaves within France, kept him silent. It is the thesis of A. Mathiez that early in 1790 the French bishops were in the main conciliatory toward

³⁵Pisani, I, 137-138; Sicard, II, 189-192; Ledré, pp. 61-62; Dansette, p. 72; McManners, pp. 29-30

³⁶Those believing in the Gallicanism of the Ecclesiastical Committee: Latreille, pp. 85-86; Aulard, p. 58; Mathiez, pp. 92-95; but Dansette, pp. 76-77; E. Préclin, p. 473, believe its Gallicanism was infused with Jansenism; and Pisani, I, 152-153, 159, stress influences alien to Catholicism on the committee; Pressensé, p. 121; Sciout, pp. 54-55.

the reforms of the National Assembly, but the Pope was encouraged in his intransigence by the success of ecclesiastical resistance in the Austrian Netherlands to the reforms of Joseph II. The French ambassador at Rome, the cardinal de Bernis who was also archbishop of Albi, failed to reconcile the Pope to the ecclesiastical decrees of the National Assembly because the cardinal himself was opposed to them and was in touch with the French émigrés.³⁷

The debates in the National Assembly on the provisions drafted by the Ecclesiastical Committee for the Civil Constitution of the Clergy took place from May 29, to July 12, 1790. Proponents disclaimed any hostility to the Church or the Catholic religion. Boisgelin, the archbishop of Aix on May 29th opposed the report of the Ecclesiastical Committee but indicated a willingness to compromise by not denying the right of the state to reform the Church, but only in concurrence with ecclesiastical authority. After suggesting that national or regional church councils cooperate with the Assembly on reforming the clergy, Boisgelin refused to recognize the competence of the National Assembly alone. The Ecclesiastical Committee refused to admit that the National Assembly did not have exclusive power to exercise national sovereignty on ecclesiastical affairs. Fearing that church councils would become vehicles for counter-revolution, the Assembly preferred to give tacit consent to the King to negotiate with the Pope for canonical acceptance of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, for this was the traditional method of the monarchy since the Concordat

³⁷Mathiez, pp. 142-148; Aulard, p. 56; Pressensé, pp. 145-147; Pisani, I, 168-169; Dansette, pp. 83-84.

of 1516.³⁸

The provisions of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy concerned (1) the creation of new dioceses and parishes, (2) the mode and qualifications for popular election of the clergy, (3) their salaries and dwellings, and (4) the law of residence. The dioceses, reduced to eighty-three and grouped around ten metropolitan capitals, were identical to the new administrative departments of France. Just as reform in government administration in 1789 and 1790 eliminated the inequities of the old provinces, so did the eighty-three dioceses end the unequal size and wealth of the old bishoprics. Each bishopric, as well as department, was of a size that a priest or bishop could travel anywhere within it during the day to the seat of government. The principle underlying the correlation of church and secular administration was that the clergy were the magistrates of the people serving their spiritual needs. The cathedral and collegial clergy were no longer considered useful and were suppressed. Councils of episcopal vicars and the directors of diocesan seminaries for educating the clergy now had a role with the bishops in governing the dioceses. The parishes within the dioceses were reorganized so that none had less than 6,000 souls.³⁹

The mode of popular election of the clergy as spiritual magistrates was identical to that of any magistrate, that is, the bishops were chosen by the electorate of active citizens (qualified by payment of taxes to vote) in the departments and the priests by the electorate of the districts,

³⁸Mathiez, pp. 160, 171-172; Pisani, I, 160-162; Pressensé, pp. 126-127; Aulard, p. 59; Dansette, p. 82; McManners, pp. 41-42.

³⁹J. H. Stewart, *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*, (New York, 1966), pp. 169-181, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

excepting that the place and time of elections were in church on Sunday after mass. All the electorate, whether Catholic or not, were eligible to vote because the clergy were maintained at public expense. Upon election, the priest or bishop was examined by his ecclesiastical superior to see if he were worthy of office. He was to take an oath to the nation similar to that of any public official, and this oath was the same oath to the constitution of France decreed later on November 27, 1790, but now it pertained only to the newly elected clergy. No papal representative was needed for the consecration of a bishop, but after his investiture he was to inform the Pope as visible head of the universal Catholic church.

The salaries granted the bishops by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy meant a considerable reduction of income for some of the hierarchy, although the less wealthy were to suffer less. The Ecclesiastical Committee deemed 12,000 to 20,000 livres a year sufficient, depending on the number of souls in the cathedral parish, plus episcopal mansions and gardens, with 50,000 livres allotted to the bishop of Paris. The episcopal vicars received 2,000 to 4,000 livres; the parish priests, 1,200 to 4,000, and their vicars to assist them, 700 to 1,200, with all salaries scaled to population and the clergy of Paris receiving higher amounts. The clergy were required to reside in their dioceses and not accept certain secular posts.

Even clerical historians concede that there was no provision in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, including popular election, that was in itself contrary to Catholic dogma. Laic writers stress that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was not intended to create a schism but concede that the Gallican church had always considered discipline (organization of the clergy) interrelated with dogma. Therefore, historians

with various attitudes toward the clergy, consider the Civil Constitution of the Clergy a mistake, at best, because it infringed on matters of conscience and thus caused a schism in the Gallican Church. However, Mathiez denies it was a mistake, claiming it was a necessary reform for the French Revolution. He blames the schism on the temporal interests of the Pope in Avignon which caused him to procrastinate toward negotiations while the French hierarchy were forced to submit to his jurisdiction and became refractory.⁴⁰

After pensions were provided the many ecclesiastics whose functions were suppressed, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was decreed on July 12, 1790. Two days later, at the fête of Federation celebrating the anniversary of the capture of the Bastille, Talleyrand, the bishop of Autun performed a public mass on the altar on the Champs de Mars where, surrounded by four hundred priests, he blessed the banners of the National Guards of eighty-three departments. Despite the bishop of Clermont that day adding a reservation on spiritual jurisdiction to his oath to the nation, there was great optimism for the success of the French Revolution and its ecclesiastical reforms.

Certainly there was little expectation of a schism in the Gallican Church. The National Assembly in June 1790 had postponed indefinitely an answer to the petition of the rebellious inhabitants of Avignon for reunion with France because it hoped that the Pope would be reconciled to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. On July 10, 1790, Pope Pius VI wrote the King and the archbishops of Vienne and Bordeaux who were in

⁴⁰Mathiez, pp. 150-151, 159-160; Aulard, pp. 61-62; Lafont, p. 25; Pressensé, p. 125; pro-clerical historians are Ledré, pp. 69-70, 72-73; Latreille, pp. 84-85; Daniel-Rops, I, 22-23.

the King's council confidential letters of dissatisfaction with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. He also asked the King's help in suppressing the rebellion in Avignon, but the Pope seemed to have no intention of pronouncing publicly on the Civil Constitution at this time. Historians agree that the Assembly was reluctant to intervene in Avignon because it wanted papal accomodation. Mathiez feels that Louis XVI and most of the French hierarchy were at this time confident that the Pope would be reconciled to the Civil Constitution, and the Pope was equally confident that the French bishops would not act without his approval.⁴¹

On July 22, 1790, Louis XVI promised to sanction the Civil Constitution while holding back its promulgation in order to gain time to negotiate with the papacy. On July 28th Louis publicly declared in a letter to the Pope his intention of executing the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and asked the Pope to give at least provisional approval. Historians have given various interpretations to the King's letter; many conclude that the King was weak and frightened in supplicating the Pope to approve the Civil Constitution. Clerical writers express some surprise that the pious Louis addressed the Pope in such an aggressive manner and blame the two archbishops in the King's council for acting as men of state rather than churchmen.⁴²

The French ambassador at Rome, instead of seeking papal approval of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, encouraged the Pope to support the counter-revolution led by the émigrés grouped around the King's brother, the Comte d'Artois. Meanwhile, ecclesiastical resistance to the decrees

⁴¹Mathiez, pp. 221-222, 252; Aulard, p. 68; Ledré, p. 95; McManners, pp. 43-44.

⁴²Dansette, p. 84; Pressensé, p. 148; Pisani, I, 170-172; Ledré, pp. 75-76.

of the National Assembly was growing in France. The cardinal de Rohan, prince-bishop of Strasbourg, fled across the Rhine and as a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, he protested the Civil Constitution of the Clergy at Frankfort and at Rome. The war that broke out between Protestants and Catholics in southeast France threatened to become involved with the rebellion in nearby papal Avignon. When the King promulgated the Civil Constitution on August 24th, the growing group of intransigents among the hierarchy pretended the proclamation of the King was not promulgation. The Pope sent the King a new letter on September 22, 1790 in sorrow that the King was forced to sanction the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.⁴³

Towards the end of October the intransigent clergy more or less balanced those who still hoped for papal reconciliation. No doubt the intransigents profitted from the silence of the Pope who claimed to be waiting for advice from the French bishops. On October 30, 1790, the thirty bishops who were deputies to the National Assembly drew up an *Exposition of Principles on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy* as an explanation for their non-compliance. It was also an appeal for canonical approval to avert a schism in the Gallican Church. Since it was signed during the following month by 125 prelates, the *Exposition of Principles* expressed the French hierarchy's position that the secular power could not alter the organization of the clergy without papal approval. Historians agree that the *Exposition* was meant to be conciliatory, but Mathiez claims it arrived too late in Rome for the Pope to heed its appeal. Clerical writers praise the consistency of the bishops' position

⁴³Mathiez, pp. 281-289; Pressensé, pp. 140-141, 151; Lafont, pp. 28-29.

in protesting the *étatism* of the National Assembly, but have difficulty in explaining the time lapse between the *Exposition* and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and also the eight months it took for the Pope to answer the *Exposition*.⁴⁴

After adopting the *Exposition of Principles*, the bishops sent the clergy in their dioceses a recommendation for passive resistance while waiting for the Pope's answer. Cardinal Loménie de Brienne, meanwhile, informed the Pope late in November 1790 that he intended to remain to serve the faithful because he expected the lower clergy to adhere to the Civil Constitution. The administrators of the departments considered the passive resistance of most of the bishops seditious and urged the National Assembly to take measures because it jeopardized the sale of ecclesiastical property.

The elections of new bishops were beset with difficulties. At Quimper in Brittany the old bishop died; the Ecclesiastical Committee convoked the electors of the department of Finistère to replace him. The vicars of the suppressed chapter sent a pastoral letter to the electors, instructing them not to proceed, but the electors chose as their new bishop the abbé Expilly, who was then president of the Ecclesiastical Committee. Because the metropolitan bishop at Rennes refused to consecrate Expilly, the National Assembly decreed on November 15, 1790 that in case of such refusals, an elected bishop could be consecrated by a neighboring bishop, and if refused again, could appeal to the civil power for co-operation from the hierarchy. Historians point out the further

⁴⁴Mathiez, pp. 333, 352-353; Dansette, p. 85; Latreille, pp. 86-87; Daniel-Rops, I, 24; McManners, p. 45.

subordination of the Church to the state with this decree.⁴⁵

The Clerical Oath to the Constitution

By mid-November 1790, many deputies in the National Assembly voiced the need for a decree forcing the resignation of the refractory clergy. A proposal for an oath to be taken by all officiating clergy was debated on November 26 and 27, 1790. Ridiculing the idea that ecclesiastical reforms in France had to be approved by a foreign power, the Pope, it was proposed that an oath be taken within eight days, with those refusing it to be considered as having renounced their office. Abbé Maury insisted the Assembly wait for the Pope's response and excused the slowness of the Pope in negotiating with the King. On November 27, 1790, it was decreed that the clergy take this oath:

I swear to watch with care over the faithful of the diocese entrusted to me, to be faithful to the nation, to the law, and to the King, and to maintain with all my power the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King.⁴⁶

It was not an oath specifically to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy but implied its acceptance as part of the laws of France. Pro-clerical historians blame the oath on the impatience of the department administrators and the local popular societies, but other writers blame the slowness of the Pope and the French hierarchy in pronouncing against the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Secular historians join clerical writers in blaming the oath for the rupture between Church and state. Mathiez considers the oath too late to be effective in dealing with the intransigent clergy and too weak in punitive force since the decree

⁴⁵Mathiez, pp. 363, 372-379; Dansette, p. 85; McManners, p. 45.

⁴⁶Stewart, pp. 176, 182-184.

allowed non-jurors to resign with pensions.⁴⁷

The National Assembly expected the Pope to be reconciled to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy because he needed France to put down rebellion in Avignon. Louis XVI acceded to the Pope's request to send troops there but the Assembly specified that the French troops were to cooperate with municipal authorities. Irritated by the Assembly's interference in Avignon, the Pope did nothing to further reconciliation with the Civil Constitution. The twelve cardinals meeting in Rome in December 1790 advised the Pope that he should not make concessions.

Many of the French hierarchy tried to persuade the King to refuse his sanction to the decree for the clerical oath. The abbé Maury warned that any sanction forced from the King would be regarded as without validity. Louis XVI consulted Boisgelin, archbishop of Aix, who advised him to sanction the decree for the oath before the courier arrived from Rome with the Pope's response, so that if the Pope's answer were negative, the King's sanction would appear extorted by force. On December 26, 1790, the King allowed his minister to place his signature on the decree but he himself avoided making observations. Aulard and Mathiez conclude that the National Assembly was resigned to the rupture with Rome but believed that Boisgelin and the hierarchy were conciliatory and did not expect a schism *within* the Gallican church. Some lay writers such as Pressensé join ecclesiastical historians in criticizing the King's sanction of the oath as a moral abdication.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Mathiez, pp. 396-397; Aulard, p. 64; Dansette, p. 86; Pisani, I, 176-177; Ledré, pp. 79-81, 84-85; Latreille, p. 88; McManners, p. 38.

⁴⁸Mathiez, pp. 415-417, 460-462; Aulard, p. 72; Dansette, p. 87; Pressensé, pp. 161, 177-178; Ledré, pp. 96-97.

On December 27, 1790, Abbé Grégoire and some sixty ecclesiastical deputies took the oath in the National Assembly. On the following day only Talleyrand among the bishops complied, although he was to be joined soon by three bishops of the functioning hierarchy and three others without dioceses. Writers discredit the first four bishops who took the oath as lacking in faith and morals.⁴⁹ Some ecclesiastical deputies, such as Bonal, bishop of Clermont, attempted to qualify the oath with a reservation on spiritual jurisdiction but it was ruled unacceptable by the National Assembly. Retractions followed in the National Assembly from other ecclesiastics who had taken the oath.

Throughout France the clergy manifested much confusion about taking the oath because the Pope's opposition had not been made public. According to available statistics, slightly more than half the clergy took the oath, but its success varied from region to region. All historians since base their conclusions on Ph. Sagnac's *Étude statistique sur le clergé constitutionnel* which is limited by the statistics available from only forty-three departments. This study indicates that 14,047 of the clergy took the oath while 10,395 refused, or 57 per cent of the clergy were jurors. Concerning regional variations, only 8 per cent of the clergy took the oath in the lower Rhine, a little more in northern France, 35 per cent in lower Languedoc, but in other regions, such as the Touraine, the Pyrennes, Provence and Dauphiné a large majority of the clergy took the oath.⁵⁰ It is possible that less than half of the functioning clergy

⁴⁹Sicard, II, 157, 173-174; Dansette, p. 87; Latreille, p. 88; McManners, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁰Ph. Sagnac, "Étude statistique sur le clergé constitutionnel," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (Paris, Sept. 1907), VIII, 97-115; Pisani, I, 180-184; Aulard, pp. 72-73; Mathiez, pp. 465-468; Ledré, pp. 82-84; McManners, pp. 48-49.

subscribed to the oath because the oaths of non-functioning clergy (monks, etc.) were included by some departments and also the oaths of the clergy who later retracted. This confusion pervades the statistics on the clergy of Paris who in the majority subscribed to the oath, but there was some resistance despite the hostility of the crowds. Here clerical historians insist that half or even two thirds of the clergy refused the oath, but critics point to the statistics to prove the reverse.⁵¹

The Pope was overjoyed to hear that the French bishops refused the oath. In February 1791 he threatened to deprive cardinal Loménie de Brienne of his cardinal's hat if he did not immediately offer a retraction. On March 10, 1791 the Pope promulgated the brief *Quod aliquantum*, which he sent to the cardinal de la Rochefoucauld as the first signer of the bishops' *Exposition of Principles*. He condemned publicly for the first time the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, claiming the king had been forced to sanction it, and denounced the principle of liberty and equality in the *Declaration of Rights* as unChristian. The National Assembly tried to keep the papal brief a secret in order to find some way of continuing negotiations with the Pope. The French bishops themselves hesitated to publish it.

On April 13th, the Pope sent a second brief, *Charitas quae*, to the clergy and the people of France, threatening the clergy who took the oath with suspension unless they retracted it within forty days and forbidding the faithful to have any contact with them. There were many retractions. Latreille, a modern Catholic historian, explains the slowness of the Pope to denounce publicly the clerical oath not only by the habitual slowness of the papal government, but by reluctance to embarrass Louis XVI and

⁵¹Pisani, I, 190-192; Lafont, 27, f. n. 1, McManners, p. 59.

fear of creating a schism. Ledré, another pro-clerical historian, attributes the reluctance of the French bishops to publish the papal briefs to lingering Gallicanism and perhaps resentment that the Pope had not prevented a schism. Aulard and Mathiez differ on the first papal brief; Aulard denies it was a strong condemnation and thinks the Pope left the door open for bishops to seek alternatives in France, but Mathiez considers this brief violent enough to satisfy the counter-revolutionary émigré clergy who now influenced the Pope.⁵²

The newly elected bishops, such as Expilly in Finistère, Fauchet in Calvados, Claude le Coz at Rennes, Lamourette at Lyons and Grégoire at Blois, chosen for the most part from the lower ranks of the clergy, had difficulty recruiting priests for their dioceses. Gobel, a bishop of the *ancien régime*, whose plebian birth had prevented his enjoyment of a bishopric, was elected metropolitan of Paris in March 1790 after the abbé Sièyes had declined the honor. Two constitutional bishops who had been prelates of the *ancien régime*, Jarente of Orléans and Savine of Viviers, declined to consecrate Gobel out of respect for the old archbishop of Paris, Leclerc de Juigné, who had emigrated to Switzerland. Talleyrand, about to resign as bishop of Autun after he had been elected a director of the department of Paris, consecrated Gobel as metropolitan with members of the National Assembly present. Clerical historians criticize the elected bishops as either opportunists or incompetent, although all agree that Grégoire was the best of them. A conservative historian, Pressensé, disliked the role

⁵²Latreille, pp. 90-91; Ledré, pp. 85-87; Aulard, p. 71; Mathiez, pp. 490-494; Lafont, pp. 151-179, publishes in French the papal briefs of March 10 and April 13, 1791, and also a third brief, *Novae hae litterae*, sent March 19, 1792, threatening excommunication if the juring clergy did not retract within four months.

of the constitutional bishops as too democratically political, particularly Gobel who infused his sermons with Revolutionary harangues.⁵³

The non-jurors meanwhile refused to abandon the faithful to the "intruders." They performed the sacraments of marriage, baptism and extreme unction in secret. The administrators of the departments ordered some of them to leave their residences, including those who officiated in the chapels of convents which were not yet suppressed. On April 11, 1791, the directors of Paris denied the non-jurors the use of all chapels and churches but allowed them to rent or buy private buildings for their worship. On April 17th, the non-juring clergy of Paris, having succeeded in renting the church of the Théatins, were prevented by hostile crowds from entering it.

The following day, April 18, 1791, the King attempted to go to Saint-Cloud to take Easter communion from non-juring clergy. Having been forced recently by public opinion to retain a constitutional chaplain at the palace of the Tuilleries, he was denounced by the club of Cordeliers for giving refuge there to the non-juring bishops who had been ousted from their sees. The common people suspected that the King's journey to Saint-Cloud was a pretext for joining the counter-revolution, and they succeeded in stopping his carriage to force him to return. A secular historian, Dansette, considers the stopping of the King's carriage a violation of his liberty of conscience. Other writers see the King's piety motivating his flight later on June 21st.⁵⁴

⁵³Pressensé, pp. 188-189; Ledré, pp. 99-100; Latreille, pp. 89-90; Daniel-Rops, p. 28; McManners, p. 60.

⁵⁴Pisani, I, 238-242; Dansette, p. 91; Aulard, pp. 74-75; Pressensé, p. 221; Latreille, pp. 94-95; McManners, pp. 61-62.

On April 23, 1791, the Pope again solicited the support of the King against the rebellion in Avignon. Although the Jacobin faction now desired the reunion of Avignon with France, the moderates, including Talleyrand and Sieyès, still hoped for papal reconciliation. Despite the defeat of the motion in the Assembly on May 3, 1791 to annex Avignon, a plebiscite was authorized in the communes in the papal enclaves which showed an overwhelming majority wanted reunion with France. Ledré, a modern Catholic historian, questions the impartiality of the French mediators sent to validate the votes of the plebiscite before the National Assembly voted on September 14, 1791 for reunion with Avignon.⁵⁵

On May 3rd an effigy of Pius VI was burnt at the Palais-Royal. The French ambassador to Rome, the cardinal de Bernis, had been recalled in March 1791 after he had refused to take the oath to the constitution. The papacy refused to recognize his replacement by a constitutional priest. The papal *nuncio* severed relations with France and the rupture with Rome was complete.⁵⁶

However, the moderates in the National Assembly defended the rights of the non-juring clergy because it was apparent that the monarchy supported their cause. The National Assembly adopted the policy of the department of Paris which allowed the non-juring clergy freedom to worship in private buildings. Early in May 1791, Talleyrand, now a director of Paris, reported to the National Assembly, and made clear that refusal to take the clerical oath to the constitution meant only loss of the priest's function and salary but not ecclesiastical standing. Talleyrand assailed

⁵⁵Ledré, pp. 96-97; Mathiez, pp. 517-518.

⁵⁶Latreille, pp. 93; Ledré, pp. 97-98.

mere toleration as contrary to the *Declaration of Rights*, but by defending the existence of another sect within the dominant religion (to which the King had a right to adhere) he undermined the unity of the Gallican church. As a result of his report, the Assembly decreed on May 7, 1791, that non-jurors could not be priests in churches but they had the right to say mass and to conduct religious services elsewhere, providing they did not attack the constitution. Most historians praise Talleyrand's decree for its toleration, which, they note, was displeasing to the Catholic bloc in the Assembly because it granted the same rights to all religious sects as to the non-jurors.⁵⁷

On June 20, 1791, the King and the royal family attempted to flee France. After being arrested at Varennes and brought back to Paris, it was difficult to maintain the fiction that the King was reconciled to constitutional government and ecclesiastical reform. The Pope's official congratulations to Louis for his flight, sent before the Pope heard news of the King's arrest at Varennes, revealed the Pope's alliance with the counter-revolutionary and intransigent clergy.⁵⁸

After much discussion the Assembly re-instated the King, leaving him his constitutional powers. At the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, July 14, 1791, which the King did not attend, the popular societies circulated a petition for a plebiscite on the monarchy. On July 17th the signers of a petition were fired upon on the Champs de Mars by the National Guards under the command of Lafayette.

⁵⁷Pisani, I, 244-245; Pressensé, pp. 206-209; Aulard, pp. 76-77; Lafont, p. 46; Ledré, pp. 107.

⁵⁸Latreille, pp. 95-96.

While repressing republican sentiment, the National Assembly utilized the following two months to complete the constitution for a limited monarchy and secure Louis XVI's consent to it. Despite the urging of émigrés and Edmund Burke in a letter of August 6, 1791, to reject the constitution, Louis appeared on September 14th in the hall of the Assembly to take an oath of loyalty to it.⁵⁹ The following Sunday a *Te Deum* was sung at Notre Dame.

When the National Assembly, before its dissolution, decreed the reunion of Avignon with France, it made unlikely any reconciliation with the Pope on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The efforts of the National Assembly to create a unified Gallican church to serve a regenerated nation had ended in schism. A large group of refractory clergy, refusing to surrender their ancient privileges and to accept the confiscation of their wealth in order to be the spiritual magistrates of the people under a civil constitution, became inveterate enemies of the French Revolution. It was not the intention of the National Assembly in decreeing ecclesiastical reforms to alter Catholic doctrines, nor in any way to undermine the Gallican Church.

⁵⁹Thompson, p. 244.

CHAPTER IV
THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE SURRENDER
OF ECCLESIASTICAL PRIVILEGES

The following list of principal English newspapers used in this study appeared during 1789 through 1795 (although not all inclusively) and are marked with their political affiliations. In the course of analysis, changes of politics will be cited. Not all political affiliations were obvious, particularly in the provincial newspapers when politics sometimes remained local. Three dailies have been omitted because they were chiefly advertising sheets: *Daily Advertiser*, *Public Ledger* and the *Morning Advertiser*.

Daily Newspapers, London*

<i>Argus</i>	O
<i>Courier</i>	O
<i>Diary</i> or Woodfall's Register	M
<i>Gazetteer</i>	O
<i>Morning Chronicle</i>	O
<i>Morning Herald</i>	O
<i>Morning Post</i>	O
<i>Oracle</i> , Bell's New World	M
<i>Patriot</i> , or General Advertiser	O
<i>Public Advertiser</i>	M
<i>Star</i>	M
<i>Sun</i>	M
<i>Telegraph</i>	O
<i>The Times</i>	M
<i>True Briton</i>	M
<i>World</i>	M

*Key: M - ministerial
O - opposition
N - neutral

Tri- and Semi-Weekly Newspapers, London

<i>Courier de l'Europe</i>	
<i>English Chronicle</i>	O
<i>General Evening Post</i>	N
<i>Journal de Middlesex</i>	
<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	M
<i>London Chronicle</i>	N
<i>London Evening Post</i>	M
<i>London Gazette, (official)</i>	
<i>London Packet</i>	M
<i>St. James's Chronicle</i>	M
<i>Whitehall Evening Post</i>	M

Weekly Newspapers, London

<i>Ayre's Sunday London Gazette</i>	N
<i>Baldwin's London Weekly Journal</i>	M
<i>The Craftsman or Say's Weekly Journal</i>	N
<i>E. Johnson's British Gazette</i>	N
<i>The Observer</i>	N
<i>Sunday Reformer and Universal Register</i>	O

Provincial Newspapers

<i>Bath Journal</i>	M
<i>Brice's old Exeter Journal</i>	
<i>Cambridge Intelligencer</i>	O
<i>Chelmsford Chronicle</i>	
<i>Chester Chronicle</i>	O
<i>Exeter Gazette</i>	
<i>Glocester Journal</i>	M
<i>Jackson's Oxford Journal</i>	M
<i>Kentish Gazette</i>	M
<i>Leeds Intelligencer</i>	M
<i>Leeds Mercury</i>	O
<i>Leicester Herald</i>	O
<i>Leicester Journal</i>	M
<i>(Wheeler's) Manchester Chronicle</i>	M
<i>Manchester Herald</i>	O
<i>Manchester Mercury</i>	M
<i>Newark Herald</i>	O
<i>Newcastle Chronicle</i>	M
<i>Newcastle Courant</i>	M
<i>Norfolk Chronicle</i>	O
<i>Norwich Mercury</i>	M
<i>Nottingham Journal</i>	M
<i>Salisbury and Winchester Journal</i>	M
<i>Sheffield Register</i>	O
<i>Staffordshire Advertiser</i>	
<i>Swinney's Birmingham and Stafford Chronicle</i>	O
<i>Wolverhampton Chronicle</i>	M

In 1789 the English newspapers supporting the ministry of William Pitt were not at the beginning of the French Revolution any less enthusiastic about its ecclesiastical reforms than the newspapers of the Whig opposition. The press in England hailed the French Revolution as a victory of the Enlightenment over monarchical despotism and "superstitious" religion.

During the electoral period for the Estates General, the English press gave increasingly more space to affairs in France. The news at first came from diverse sources -- letters from English travellers, personal correspondence, news brought on merchant packets, etc. -- most of it from Paris or the principal cities within a period of one or two weeks. There was general agreement that the economic distress in France was shocking and that something momentous was to happen at the Estates General. The opinions were often personal observations. When the controversy sharpened after the opening of the Estates General on May 5th, differences of opinion were those of the correspondents often published in the same newspaper.

Anti-papalism in England prepared public opinion to welcome the surrender of the privileges of the Catholic hierarchy by the National Assembly. The Gallican Church was considered too independent of the state compared to the Anglican establishment. During the electoral period the English press, both ministerial and opposition, favored a constitution for France with the clergy subordinate to the state, that is, on the English model. In January, prior to the opening of the Estates General, *The Times* wrote approvingly, ". . . The Constitution of France is everyday drawing nearer to the principles of our own," and repeated

this opinion in April.¹ The attention of English newspapers in this period was not on the clergy but on members of the Third Estate, sometimes referred to as the Commons, who were expected to transform France into a modern constitutional monarchy.

Both the ministerial and opposition newspapers praised the clergy when it cooperated with the Third Estate in local electoral assemblies by wishing to vote in common at the Estates General. The newspapers reported the French hierarchy resisting in Brittany and Franche Comté as deservedly unpopular.² At Aix-en-Provence, where the anti-clerical Mirabeau was influential, the Third Estate was quoted as denouncing the prelates for choosing to sit as a separate order, "Go, my revered Fathers in God, say your masses, pray to God for this province, but take care not to meddle with our affairs which are too profane for men who should be occupied in spiritual ones only!"³ To the English press in 1789 the clergy's non-interference in secular matters was a well-founded principle. The clergy of Paris, refusing to surrender their privileges by uniting with the Third Estate, was criticized as, ". . . the Holy Fraternity who, tenacious of their prerogatives, and insolently proud of their immense riches, bid defiance to the laws of the kingdom, and pay but

¹*Times*, Jan. 9, 1789, April 16, 1789; also, *London Chronicle*, April 16-18, 1789.

²*St. James's Chronicle*, Feb. 17-19, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Feb. 12-14, 1789, Feb. 14-17, 1789; *Times*, April 8, 1789.

³*St. James's Chronicle*, March 7-10, 1789; *London Chronicle*, March 7-10, 1789.

small contributions (free gifts) *ad libitum* to the onerous charges of the state."⁴ The *Gazetteer*, an opposition paper, printed French doggerel at the beginning of the year to indicate the low esteem in which the privileged hierarchy was held compared to the Third Estate.⁵

However, the English press was not anti-clerical concerning French affairs in this period, and for the clergy cooperating with the Third Estate there was praise. The neutral *London Chronicle* and the Sunday weekly, *E. Johnson's British Gazette* approved of the clergy of Chartres who responded to the request of the Third Estate for unanimity of the three orders.⁶

During the electoral period, a story circulated in France which appeared in the *London Chronicle*. A farmer elected to represent Falaise in Normandy said he was going to propose to the Estates General the destruction of pigeons, rabbits and monks, because pigeons devoured the corn when it was sown, rabbits when it came up and monks when it was ripe. Obviously, this deputy intended to end the tithes collected by the regular

⁴*London Chronicle*, May 2-5, 1789.

⁵*Gazetteer*, Jan. 27, 1789: "La Noblesse -- *blesse*,
Le Parlement -- *ment*,
Le haut clergé s'entete -- *sans tête*,
Et le Tiers-État degoute -- *goute*."

Vive le Roi! -- On fait pourquoi,
Vivent les Parlemens! -- Jusqu' à quand,
Vive le Clergé! -- Jusqu' a son congé,
Vive le Noblesse! -- Laquelle est-ce?
Vive le Tiers État! -- Ah! bon pour cela!"

⁶*London Chronicle*, March 31 - April 2, 1789; *E. Johnson's British Gazette*, April 5, 1789.

clergy, and the privilege of the nobility of keeping dovecotes and warrens.⁷

The reporting in the English press on the *cahiers* or list of grievances on ecclesiastical matters was meager as compared with citations on the need of secular reforms. *The Times* praised the *cahiers* influenced by the Duke of Orleans for advocating liberty of opinion.⁸ The opposition *Morning Post*, strongly favoring religious toleration, published the extensive list of ecclesiastical reforms desired by the Third Estate of the city of Paris: liberty of worship, an established Gallican church separate from Rome, superiority of temporal jurisdiction, election of prelates as practiced in primitive Christian times, enforcement of residence requirement for the clergy, prohibition of their holding plural benefices, an end to irrevocable monastic vows and also mendicity, the regulation and, in some cases, suppression of monastic orders, the abolition of all holidays but Sundays, and a proper provision for the parish priests with church repairs provided from ecclesiastical revenues.⁹

The ceremonies at the opening of the Estates General on May 4th were given much space in the English press. *The Times* was one newspaper which

⁷*London Chronicle*, May 2-5, 1789; also, *St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 1-3, 1789, after the National Assembly had proposed the suppression of monasticism.

⁸*Times*, March 28, 1789.

⁹*Morning Post*, June 22, 1789. The Third Estate of Paris was late in drawing up the *cahiers*.

carried the complaints of the Third Estate, required to wear somber clothes while the lesser nobility had the privilege of wearing the hat with plumes of the great lords.¹⁰ It was immediately reported that the Third Estate refused to deliberate until their powers as deputies were verified in common with the first two estates.

The Times was critical of Necker's opening speech because it threw no light on whether the three orders should sit separately or in common, although he did call for the surrender of the pecuniary privileges of the nobility and clergy.¹¹ Necker was a Protestant from Geneva and popular in the English press. *The Times* in January reported the hostility of the hierarchy and the nobility towards Necker for his favoring the Commons. The *London Chronicle* claimed in May there was a cabal formed against Necker because he was a Protestant, and that the cabal accused him of causing disturbances in order to avenge the massacre of Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572.¹² Both ministerial and opposition newspapers were aware that the Protestants had only lately won limited toleration with the edict of 1787 which the clergy had opposed. The English press now expected gains for Protestantism in a new constitution. Some newspapers singled out Rabaut-Saint Etienne, the Protestant pastor from Nîmes as a leader of the patriotic party of the Third Estate, and praised five deputies who were Protestants as distinguished men of letters (unnamed).

¹⁰*Times*, May 9, 1789. On May 12th the *Times* announced it had engaged a correspondent at Versailles to report the proceedings, and on May 19th that it spared no expense in procuring official reports and other periodicals for the earliest information.

¹¹*Times*, May 20, 1789.

¹²*Times*, Jan. 23, 1789; *London Chronicle*, May 9-12, 1789.

Actually there were fifteen known Protestants in the National Assembly.¹³

There were contradictory reports in the English press on the reluctance of the clergy to surrender their privileged exemption from taxation. *The Times*, cautious and conservative, reported that the clergy debated the matter violently and the exemption was only surrendered by a small majority. The opposition *Morning Post*, very optimistic about affairs in France, claimed the clergy agreed by a considerable margin. A letter published in the neutral *London Chronicle* revealed that the Third Estate was not satisfied that the voluntary renunciation of the clergy sitting as an order was binding.¹⁴

The Formation of the National Assembly

During the deadlock on whether deputies should deliberate in common or by separate order, *The Times* at first reported the clergy allied with the nobility against the Third Estate, but soon conceded that the clergy played a conciliatory role. The opposition *Morning Post*, noting the large number of curés who were ". . . almost to a man inclined to the cause of freedom," saw the clergy as mediating between the nobility and the Third Estate, and as, "animated from that spirit of concord which religion inspires. . . ."¹⁵ It was recognized in both the ministerial and opposition English press that there were two parties within the clergy,

¹³*Morning Post*, June 5, 1789; *London Chronicle*, June 2-4, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, July 23-25, 1789. See B. C. Poland, *French Protestantism and the French Revolution*, appendix IV.

¹⁴*Times*, May 27, 1789; *Morning Post*, May 30, 1789; *London Chronicle*, May 26-28, 1789, May 30 - June 2, 1789.

¹⁵*Times*, May 15, 1789, June 2, 1789; *Morning Post*, May 30, 1789, June 1, 1789; *Glocester Journal*, June 8, 1789, carried the same report as the *Morning Post*.

the aristocratic faction led by the archbishop of Aix, and the pro-Third group with the archbishop of Vienne at its head. The opposition provincial newspaper, the *Sheffield Register* reported that the cardinal de Rochefoucauld thanked the nobility who voted against deliberation in common for defending the churches built by their ancestors.¹⁶

Although there was no essential difference between the ministerial and opposition English press on French affairs in this period, an early conservatism can be detected in *The Times*. In June it criticized the Third Estate for summoning the clergy and nobility to meet in common as illegal and arbitrary, but soon after it condemned the "unbounded ambition" of the clergy who were unwilling to acquiesce in some of the reasonable demands of the Third Estate.¹⁷ Other English newspapers were less equivocal. The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* rejoiced that the Third Estate was emerging triumphant, that 150, or the majority of the clergy joined the Third on June 19th, listed the seven distinguished prelates at their head, and praised the fifty or so members of the clergy who on June 23rd at the royal session remained seated with the deputies of the National Assembly when ordered to disperse. The opposition *Morning Post* expressed the same attitudes, sometimes in *verbatim* reports, as did the neutral *London Chronicle* and the provincial weekly newspapers.¹⁸

¹⁶*Morning Post*, June 2, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, June 2-4, 1789; *Sheffield Register*, June 13, 1789.

¹⁷*Times*, June 17, 1789, June 19, 1789, June 22, 1789, July 3, 1789.

¹⁸*St. James's Chronicle*, June 20-23, 1789, June 27-30, 1789, July 2-4, 1789; *Morning Post*, June 15, 1789, June 26, 1789, June 30, 1789, July 3, 1789; *London Chronicle*, June 18-20, 1789, June 23-25, 1789, June 25-27, 1789, June 27-30, 1789, July 2-4, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, June 23, 1789, June 30, 1789; *Newcastle Chronicle*, July 4, 1789; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, July 3, 1789; *Norwich Mercury*, July 4, 1789; *Newcastle Courant*, July 11, 1789.

English newspapers expressed satisfaction when the aristocratic minority of the clergy, and the nobility were forced to comply with the King's request and join the National Assembly. It is perhaps significant that the two strong opposition newspapers, the *Gazetteer* and the *Morning Post* were critical of Louis XVI in this period, and it should be noted that the English press favored the deputies at the royal session of June 23rd who refused to obey the King's order to disperse. There was no unqualified admiration of the French monarchy in this period, not even in *The Times*. The *Gazetteer* printed some anti-monarchical doggerel from France which now praised the clergy for being patriotic.¹⁹ The *Morning Post* printed a derisive story of the archbishop of Paris falling on his knees before the King, begging him to swear on the crucifix to resist the Third Estate to save his crown.²⁰

The Capture of the Bastille

In reporting the capture of the Bastille, the *Morning Post* showed its Whig colors in criticizing the French king's despotism and cowardice as more Stuart than Bourbon.²¹ *The Times* in reporting the conflict between the King and the National Assembly praised the King for surrendering but criticized the National Assembly for encroaching on royal prerogatives. After the capture of the Bastille, *The Times* in contrast to all other newspapers remained critical of the National Assembly for disrespect

¹⁹*Gazetteer*, July 16, 1789, wrote, "The Government is poor; -- the people rich; -- the King is imbecile; -- the Commons sagacious; -- the Nobless are impoverished, and the Clergy patriotic."

²⁰*Morning Post*, July 16, 1789.

²¹*Morning Post*, July 21, 1789.

shown the King.²²

The King's dismissal of Necker after the triumph of the Third Estate, followed by reports of the movement of foreign troops, alarmed most English newspapers. The capture of the Bastille on July 14 was thrilling and exciting news, taking up much space in the English press for weeks following July 20th. It took about a week for news to cross the channel. Despite a very English uneasiness about mob violence in both ministerial and opposition newspapers, they both hailed the capture of the Bastille as the fall of a hated bastion of monarchical despotism.²³ The opposition *Morning Post* stressed the activities of the regular clergy during the capture of the Bastille:

Even the peaceful ministers of the altar caught the indignation which the people felt; nay, the *cloistered recluses* sallied forth to support what they called the cause of God because it was the cause of the People. The Crutched Friars, Petits-Pères, and even the Feuillans mixed with the citizens, and bore upon their scapularies the National Cockade.

The Grey Friars, and, to the astonishment of all Paris, even the Capuchin Friars appeared in the ranks with swords girt on and muskets on their shoulders.

This formidable appearance, this general association filled the Court party with dread and terror, and frightened them from their purpose.²⁴

When a *Te Deum* was sung on July 16th for the capture of the Bastille, and public masses said for the souls of the brave citizens who died defending liberty, the English press accepted the sanction of established

²²*Times*, July 19, 1789, July 20, 1789, July 31, 1789.

²³*Times*, July 20, 1789, July 23, 1789, July 29, 1789; *Morning Post*, July 21, 1789, July 29, 1789, Aug. 1, 1789; *London Chronicle*, July 18-21, 1789. *St. James's Chronicle*, July 23-25, 1789, thought the revolution was remarkable for its mildness.

²⁴*Morning Post*, Aug. 5, 1789; also, *Kentish Gazette*, Aug. 4-7, 1789, a ministerial newspaper.

religion for popular insurrection.²⁵ To some English newspapers, the capture of the Bastille meant the downfall of monarchical despotism and something more. The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* thought it would be followed by the emancipation of Catholic Spain and Italy.²⁶ The opposition *Morning Post* and the ministerial *Times* felt confident that in France the church as well as the state would be reformed, and superstition would gradually give way to rational piety and toleration.²⁷ Associating Roman Catholicism with monarchical despotism, these newspapers hoped Protestantism would accompany constitutional reforms.

The anti-clericalism in France reported in the English press in July before and after the capture of the Bastille was directed only towards the hierarchy who had opposed the National Assembly, as for example, the archbishop of Paris who was reviled by the populace. There were reports in London and provincial newspapers that he had been torn to pieces or beheaded which distressed the English press, later much relieved to report the archbishop was safe.²⁸ The newspapers also condemned the violence directed at other ecclesiastics, such as the abbess of Montmartre who had concealed cannon in the convent, and the bishop of Chartres for

²⁵*London Chronicle*, July 18-21, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, July 30-Aug. 1, 1789.

²⁶*St. James's Chronicle*, July 30 - Aug. 1, 1789; a letter in the issue of Sept. 19-22, 1789 predicted, ". . . the tyranny of the Priesthood to tremble on their papistical thrones; the Host, the Cross, Purgatory, and the Bastille long kept France in subjection."

²⁷*Morning Post*, Aug. 1, 1789; *Times*, Aug. 19, 1789.

²⁸*St. James's Chronicle*, June 30 - July 2, 1789, July 2-4, 1789, July 18-21, 1789; *Morning Post*, July 3, 1789, July 16, 1789; *Gazetteer*, July 6, 1789, July 10, 1789, July 20, 1789; *London Chronicle*, June 30 - July 2, 1789, July 2-4, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, July 21-24, 1789; *Gloicester Journal*, July 25, 1789; *Newcastle Chronicle*, July 25, 1789; *Newcastle Courant*, July 26, 1789.

speculating in corn.²⁹ However, when some of the clergy were prevented from leaving France, the English press disapproved of them, in particular, the Queen's adviser, the abbé Vermond, and the abbé Maury, spokesman for ecclesiastical privileges in the National Assembly, and also the abbé de Calonne, brother of the former minister.³⁰

The August Decrees, 1789

After the fall of the Bastille, a great fear seized France with lawless bandits burning and pillaging property. Abbeys, monasteries and chapter houses were reported plundered, particularly in Franche Comté and Alsace.³¹ The English press did not interpret this violence as anti-clericalism but rather the rebellion of the starving against great landowners.

The favorable attitude of the English press towards the clergy in France at this time was based on the patriotism of the majority of ecclesiastical deputies. Only the opposition *Gazetteer* commented cynically on this patriotism. This newspaper was in touch with the more radical reformers in France, in contrast to *The Times* whose correspondent was close to the royal court. The *Gazetteer* published the correspondence of a travelling young English gentleman (nephew of a "most distinguished person") and reported his conversation with two Frenchmen; one, who said that the clergy had cooperated with the Third Estate because they knew that any

²⁹*Morning Post*, July 28, 1789; *Times*, July 29, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, July 28-31, 1789.

³⁰*Kentish Gazette*, July 28-31, 1789; *Times*, Aug. 4, 1789; *Gazetteer*, Aug. 4, 1789. *The Times* was unfriendly to refugees appearing in England at this time.

³¹*St. James's Chronicle*, July 30 - Aug. 1, 1789; *London Chronicle*, July 30 - Aug. 1, 1789; *Gazetteer*, Aug. 12, 1789; *Morning Post*, Aug. 12, 1789.

other conduct would have meant the destruction of their order, which they hoped to delay; the second, the discontent of the lower clergy with their allotments was their chief motive for patriotism.³²

Most of the English newspapers continued to believe in the good intentions of the clergy. In the National Assembly on the night of August 4th, both ecclesiastical and lay deputies proclaimed the surrender of special privileges in hopes of restoring calm in the countryside. The London and provincial newspapers praised the clergy for surrendering their tithes, *casuels* or fees, the *annates* or revenues sent to Rome, and plural benefices; also the resolution suppressing monasticism.³³ It was noted that it was not the hierarchy but the duc du Châtelet who proposed the redemption of tithes. English newspapers observed that on August 8th during discussion of the text of the law, the hierarchy resisted the editing of the resolution on the tithes without providing redemption. The opposition *Gazetteer* tended to sarcasm in reporting the eloquence of the hierarchy who stressed the divine origin of the tithes confirmed in the time of Charlemagne. This newspaper took satisfaction in Mirabeau's contemptuous offer of salaries. The *Gazetteer's* attitude was in contrast to its admiration for the poor curés surrender of their fees. In general, the English press had little sympathy for the hierarchy when they were forced to accept the decree of August 11th on the tithes after eighteen curé deputies

³²*Gazetteer*, Aug. 6, 1789.

³³*Times*, Aug. 11, 1789, Aug. 14, 1789, Aug. 18, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 13-15, 1789, Aug. 20-22, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Aug. 8-11, 1789, Aug. 15-18, 1789; *Gazetteer*, Aug. 14, 1789, Aug. 15, 1789, Aug. 17, 1789; *Morning Post*, Aug. 18, 1789; *Sheffield Register*, Aug. 15, 1789, Aug. 22, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, Aug. 18-21, 1789; *Newcastle Courant*, Aug. 15, 1789; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, Aug. 21, 1789; *Norwich Mercury*, Aug. 22, 1789.

issued a paper agreeing to Mirabeau's plan of salaries. According to some newspapers, ". . . the hierarchy yielded with the best grace what they were no longer able to defend."³⁴

The decree on the tithes was considered by the English press a severe blow to the clergy who were to be made subservient to the state in order to liquidate the government's debt. The English press approved in general of this decree and recognized that it was the first step in confiscating ecclesiastical property. The *Morning Post* predicted that ecclesiastical property was to be vested in the provincial estates and actually listed the salaries Mirabeau planned to propose for the clergy.³⁵ It reported in detail Lameth's opinion expressed in the debate in the National Assembly on August 8th that the temporal possessions of the church were the property of the state, that church property was unlike private property in that it belonged to a corporate body formed for the benefit of society, and that body should cease to exist when no longer useful.³⁶ The opposition *Gazetteer* also reported approvingly the same principle and estimated the gain expected for France from the clergy's revenues.³⁷

³⁴*Gazetteer*, Aug. 15, 1789, Aug. 17, 1789, Aug. 19, 1789, Aug. 21, 1789; *Times*, Aug. 18, 1789, Aug. 20, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 20-22, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Aug. 18-20, 1789, Aug. 20-22, 1789; *Sheffield Register*, Aug. 29, 1789.

³⁵*Morning Post*, Aug. 22, 1789; also, *Norwich Mercury*, Aug. 29, 1789. The salaries were remarkably close to what was decreed in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1790.

³⁶*Morning Post*, Sept. 5, 1789; on Sept. 9th it published a letter calling for abolition of tithes in England.

³⁷*Gazetteer*, Aug. 17, 1789, Aug. 24, 1789.

The suppression of *annates* to Rome gave great satisfaction to the Protestant-conscious English press. The *St. James's Chronicle* chuckled that the Pope was robbed of his "first fruits" and now, like St. Peter, had to fish for a livelihood, while *The Times* thought the Pope was obliged to look to Heaven at last for consolation. The *Argus*, a radical opposition newspaper, thought Voltaire would have been pleased, since he had considered the *annates* one of the most oppressive contributions. The *London Chronicle* thought the Pope suffered both a loss of revenue and authority, but the opposition *Morning Post* considered the loss of the *annates* to the Papacy greatly exaggerated.³⁹

The end of plural benefices likewise found favor in the English press. *The Times* thought the resolution of August 4th in the National Assembly an example worthy to be followed by the British legislature, and the *St. James's Chronicle* published a letter critical of the Anglican clergy holding plural benefices while poor curates starved.⁴⁰

The English press had a strong aversion to monasticism and hailed the resolution calling for its suppression. The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* was exultant, writing, "The monks will be shortly annihilated as they already have begun to suppress the monasteries whose immense riches, luxury and indolence, were shocking to common sense and hurtful to the moral order of society."⁴¹ In a subsequent issue it accused the monasteries of devouring the substance of the poor.

³⁹*St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 20-22, 1789, Oct. 31 - Nov. 3, 1789; *Times*, Aug. 19, 1789, Oct. 29, 1789; *Morning Post*, Oct. 31, 1789; *Argus*, Aug. 27, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Aug. 22-25, 1789.

⁴⁰*Times*, Aug. 11, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 15-18, 1789.

⁴¹*St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 1-3, 1789, Sept. 10-12, 1789.

It amused some English newspapers that the National Assembly ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung for the surrender of privileges in August. They wrote, "Among the religious whimsicalities of the day, none are more ludicrous, than the National Assembly obliging the Fathers to have *Te Deum* sung in all the churches, for the abolition of tithes."⁴² That the tithes continued to be paid throughout 1790, as well as the King's reluctance in September to sanction the decrees as laws, escaped them. The August decrees against ecclesiastical privileges evoked little sympathy for the French hierarchy in both ministerial and opposition English newspapers.

Religious Liberty in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

When the National Assembly began to discuss the constitution for France, it drew up a *Declaration of Rights* to guide the laws within the constitution. Two of these rights ended the special privileges of the French clergy in controlling opinions -- the freedom of religion which was article X, and the freedom of the press, article XI. English newspapers, in general, approved of the *Declaration* as an expression of enlightenment and recognized the opposition to it by the hierarchy. However, there were reservations both in opposition and ministerial newspapers, concerning the abstract nature of the rights of man in the Declaration. *The Times* complained that the debates on it were ". . . so tinctured with metaphysics."⁴³ The opposition *Morning Herald* (ministerial, early the next year) considered the debates too abstract, while the

⁴²*St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 27-29, 1789; also, *Glocester Journal*, Aug. 31, 1789; *Sheffield Register*, Sept. 4, 1789.

⁴³*Times*, Aug. 28, 1789.

Morning Post wondered about these abstract discussions while it thought the country was overrun by lawless mobs.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, *The Times* and the *Morning Herald* praised the article (X) in the *Declaration* guaranteeing liberty of worship to which the hierarchy was opposed. The problem was, as phrased by some English newspapers, "Can opinion be free when the public worship is not?"⁴⁶ This same article was carried in the *Kentish Gazette* and the *Sheffield Register*, the former a ministerial newspaper close to the primary see of the Anglican Church, while the *Sheffield Register* advocated radical reforms in an artisan center. That their reports were identical shows the wide approval for ecclesiastical reforms in France in the English press.

The compromise proposed by the bishop of Lydda (Gobel, later constitutional bishop of Paris) was reportedly based on the example of England and Holland granting religious toleration while maintaining an established church. The article, as finally decreed -- liberty of worship, providing it did not disturb public order -- seemed sensible to the English press, but Mirabeau's speech and that of the Protestant pastor, Rabaut-Saint Etienne, decrying mere toleration as a humiliating concession, received full coverage. A few newspapers recognized that article X on religious toleration of the *Declaration* was neither satisfactory to the hierarchy nor to the liberal Catholics and Protestants in the National Assembly. The *Morning Post* and the *Kentish Gazette* reported that the article as

⁴⁴*Morning Herald*, Sept. 2, 1789; *Morning Post*, Sept. 4, 1789.

⁴⁵*Times*, Sept. 1, 1789; *Morning Post*, Sept. 4, 1789.

⁴⁶*London Chronicle*, Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, Sept. 1-4, 1789; *Sheffield Register*, Sept. 4, 1789.

adopted was denounced by the people of Paris as a manoeuvre of the clergy.⁴⁷

In reporting the *Declaration of Rights*, the English press did not comment directly on the similar controversy in Great Britain over the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, originally passed by the Restoration Parliament of Charles II to prevent religious dissenters from holding office. Repeal in 1789 came within twenty votes of passing in the House of Commons. It was hoped by those advocating complete religious liberty as well as other constitutional reforms that it would succeed in passing when the spokesman for the opposition, Charles Fox moved the bill in March 1790. A sermon by the dissenting minister, Dr. Richard Price, on November 4, 1789, the anniversary of the Glorious Revolution in England, extolled the French Revolution for its constitutional reforms and religious liberty as an example for Great Britain. The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* later reported Price at the annual dinner of the Constitutional Society in London, as reading a letter from the duc de Rochefoucauld, acknowledging congratulations to the National Assembly. The opposition *Gazetteer* praised Price's sermon and regretted that the minister, William Pitt, opposed the repeal of the Test Act.⁴⁸

The ministerial English press was at first undecided on repeal of the Test Act. *The Times* in January 1790 sometimes denounced the English Dissenters for troubling the Pitt ministry with repeal, and on other days

⁴⁷*Morning Post*, Sept. 8, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Aug. 27-29, 1789; *Times*, Sept. 3, 1789; *Sheffield Register*, Sept. 4, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, Sept. 8-11, 1789; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, Nov. 13, 1789, reprinted Rabaut's speech, including his plea for citizenship for the Jews, in the same issue it reported the decree of November 2, 1789, confiscating ecclesiastical property.

⁴⁸*St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 17-19, 1789; *Gazetteer*, Dec. 23, 1789.

it praised the liberty of New England where there were no longer religious tests. *The Times* also praised the religious liberty granted by the National Assembly in France.⁴⁹ The *St. James's Chronicle* and the ministerial *Public Advertiser* made available their letter columns for opinion *pro* and *con* repeal of the Test Act. Some letters advocating repeal cited the religious liberty granted in France. Other letters denied that religious Dissenters would subvert the Anglican Church and the British constitution if they were allowed to hold office. Arguments against repeal of the Test Act in the ministerial press indicated fear of subversion of the Anglican Church by the Protestant Dissenters who were assumed to be sympathizers of the French Revolution and anxious to introduce French anarchy and irreligion. It was reported that the Anglican hierarchy organized meetings protesting repeal of the Test Act, that the bishop of St. David's threatened Anglican curates supporting repeal and also members of Parliament, also that Dissenters threatened members of Parliament who opposed repeal. According to the *Public Advertiser*, the bishop of Carlisle likened Fox to Mirabeau, Sheridan to the abbé Sieyès and Burke to the abbé Maury. Letters in the ministerial newspapers expressed fear of repeal because the Protestant Dissenters were for the first time allied with the "papists." Others condemned repeal because it was claimed Calvinists were proven republicans. An obviously spurious letter signed by one Aaron Solomon, asked (in dialect) that Jews sit in Parliament, too.⁵⁰

⁴⁹*Times*, Jan. 1, 1790, Jan. 2, 1790, Jan. 8, 1790, Jan. 9, 1790, Jan. 14, 1790.

⁵⁰*Diary*, Jan. 2, 1790; *Times*, Jan. 15, 1790; *St. James's Chronicle*, Jan. 7-9, 1790, Jan. 19-21, 1790; Jan. 21-23, 1790; Feb. 11-13, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, Feb. 1, 1790, Feb. 12, 1790, Feb. 19, 1790. Arguments favoring repeal were in the *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 12-14, 1789, Feb. 11-13, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, Jan. 18, 1790, Feb. 13, 1790.

The English press was not aware until late in December 1789 that non-Catholics in France did not have the right to hold public office, even though the *Declaration of Rights* had provided religious toleration. The National Assembly decreed this right on December 24, 1789 after excepting the Jews who were given citizenship later. Both the ministerial and opposition press in England praised this decree which benefitted Protestants.⁵¹ The plea for citizenship for the Jews, opposed in the National Assembly by the clergy and deputies from the upper Rhine, received extensive coverage. It was reported that the Jews offered two million sterling to the National Assembly as the price of their naturalization. The *Public Advertiser* added, "The Jews have the money and the Assembly want it."⁵² None of the newspapers mentioned that Jews in Great Britain were denied citizenship.

When it was reported from Madrid that the Holy Office condemned the *Declaration of Rights*, as well as some *cahiers*, the ministerial *Diary* expressed disgust.⁵³ The anti-Catholicism of the English press, which

⁵¹*London Evening Post*, Dec. 26-29, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Dec. 26-29, 1789, Dec. 31-Jan. 2, 1790; *St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 29-31, 1789; *Times*, Dec. 31, 1789, Jan. 1, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, Jan. 1, 1790; *Morning Post*, Dec. 29, 1789, Dec. 31, 1789; *Gazetteer*, Dec. 28, 1789, Dec. 30, 1789, Dec. 31, 1789.

⁵²*Public Advertiser*, Jan. 4, 1790; *Gazetteer*, Dec. 31, 1789; *Times*, Jan. 1, 1790, Jan. 2, 1790; *London Chronicle*, Dec. 29-31, 1789. The *London Evening Post*, Feb. 2-4, 1790, Feb. 4-6, 1790, and the *Times*, Feb. 5, 1790, reported the petition of the Jews of Bordeaux for citizenship which had been granted them by Henry II in 1550 and confirmed by royal successors; the decree was moved by Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, and passed despite clerical opposition, and was praised by these newspapers. The *Public Advertiser*, Feb. 5, 1790 reported the Jews of Bordeaux were well received in the national militia; *London Chronicle*, Feb. 13-16, 1790 praised the decree but deplored anti-Semitism in the gallery of the National Assembly.

⁵³*Diary*, Jan. 8, 1790.

was perhaps more virulent in the ministerial newspapers, was strengthened by the decrees of the National Assembly in February and April 1790, restoring the property confiscated by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 to Protestant heirs, some who lived in England and Holland.⁵⁴ The election on March 15, 1790 of Rabaut-Saint Etienne as president of the National Assembly was hailed in the ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* and *The Times*, while the *London Chronicle* was concerned by the report that four Protestants were assassinated at Nîmes following news of Rabaut's election.⁵⁵ Celebrations fusing the Protestant religion with Catholic rites were reported with enthusiasm in the English press, such as a ceremony participated in by the clergy of three sects at Strasbourg for consecration of the new Calvinist church.⁵⁶

Both ministerial and opposition newspapers were gratified when on April 13, 1790, the motion of the Carthusian monk, Dom Gerle, that a declaration be made that Catholicism was the only public religion in France was withdrawn in the National Assembly. The English press considered it a manoeuvre of the French clergy to recover their privileges and blamed the clergy, following rejection of the motion, for inciting violence against Protestants in southeastern France. In May civil war erupted in Toulouse, Montauban and Nîmes between Protestants and Catholics which was attributed by ministerial English newspapers to the French hierarchy's

⁵⁴*St. James's Chronicle*, Feb. 16-18, 1790, Feb. 18-20, 1790; *London Chronicle*, Feb. 18-20, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, Feb. 19, 1790; *Times*, May 4, 1790.

⁵⁵*St. James's Chronicle*, March 20-23, 1790; *Times*, March 22, 1790; *London Chronicle*, April 17-20, 1790.

⁵⁶*Public Advertiser*, April 26, 1790; *St. James's Chronicle*, April 29 - May 1, 1790.

resistance to the sale of ecclesiastical property. They praised Louis XVI for denouncing this religious warfare.⁵⁸

In 1789 the hostility of the English press, both ministerial and opposition, to the French hierarchy derived from the unwillingness of the French bishops to extend toleration to non-Catholics. During the electoral period to the Estates General, English newspapers favored demands for the surrender of ecclesiastical privileges. The Erastian belief that the Church must be subordinate to the state led the English press to welcome the triumph of the Third Estate over the hierarchy.

After the capture of the Bastille, when English newspapers hailed the downfall of "monarchical despotism," they expected a religious reformation, similar to Protestantism, to accompany the political reformation in France.

The ecclesiastical reforms of the National Assembly decreed in August 1789 were pronounced "worthy of adoption" by English newspapers of all factions. Their anti-papalism was gratified by the suppression of annates. The newspapers reinforced their criticism of Anglican tithes, plural benefices and the inequities of revenues for the opulent Anglican episcopacy and impoverished curates. Clearly the surrender of ecclesiastical privileges in France gave impetus in the English press to demands for reform of the Anglican Church.

The *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* was highly regarded as enlightened principles although some criticism was voiced of their metaphysical nature. The provision for religious toleration in

⁵⁸*St. James's Chronicle*, April 20-22, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, May 11, May 19, 1790; *World*, May 18, 1790, May 24, 1790.

the *Declaration* pleased newspapers of all factions and was to have bearing on the English press in the coming controversy concerning repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

CHAPTER V
THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE CONFISCATION
OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY

After the surrender of privileges, the National Assembly in September 1789 turned to the financial crisis. The English press favored the utilization of the wealth of the clergy to avert bankruptcy in France. Both ministerial and opposition newspapers regarded the clergy, if not the hierarchy, as patriotic and willing to make this sacrifice. There was as yet no consistent difference in the newspapers on the French Revolution. Their only commitment was to the political faction which supported them, and in 1789 the Pitt ministry had no fixed position on events in France.

Since the principle that ecclesiastical property belonged to the nation, voiced during the debates on the tithes in August, had been accepted by the National Assembly, the English press viewed the coming confiscation as a matter of time. The patriotic clergy continued to enjoy the high esteem of the English press.

Both ministerial and opposition newspapers praised the individual gifts of the clergy to the nation to help avert bankruptcy.¹ When some

¹*St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 19-22, 1789, Sept. 26-29, 1789, etc.; *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 30, 1789, etc.; *Morning Post*, Sept. 22, 1789, Sept. 29, 1789, Sept. 30, 1789, etc.; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, Sept. 30, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Oct. 13-15, 1789, considered the clergy's gifts ". . . expressive of the true patriotism characteristic of that order who had not been corrupted by opulence, superstition or fanaticism."

religious communities offered their enormous revenues to the National Assembly in exchange for pensions or secular posts, the English press criticized the hierarchy who protested the offer.² The generosity of the clergy in surrendering their silver plate was also appreciated by the English press. When the archbishop of Paris and other church dignitaries unexpectedly opposed the motion in the National Assembly that the church plate be carried to the mint, the English press treated their sudden resistance with sarcasm, concluding that the patriotic enthusiasm of the clergy had cooled. The *Morning Post* considered the church plate financially important, estimating it as one half the wrought silver in the kingdom. When the impasse was solved by the bishop of Nancy's proposal that the clergy be invited to send the plate to the mint, the niceties of the situation tickled the English press. *Le Courier de l'Europe*, a French language newspaper published in London, commented, "*Mais ce n'est pas des politesses que l'on payera la dette nationale.*"³

The King's Sanction and the October Days

It was obvious to London and provincial newspapers that not all the French clergy were patriotic, and that the August decrees had met with clerical resistance in the provinces, particularly in Alsace and Brittany.⁴

²*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 3-6, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Oct. 3-6, 1789; *Times*, Oct. 5, 1789; *Public Advertiser*, Oct. 6, 1789; *Morning Post*, Oct. 6, 1789; *E. Johnson's British Gazette*, Oct. 11, 1789.

³*Le Courier de l'Europe*, Oct. 30, 1789; *Morning Post*, Sept. 29, 1789, Oct. 6, 1789, Oct. 13, 1789, Dec. 7, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 26-28, 1789; *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 30, 1789, Oct. 6, 1789, Oct. 7, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Oct. 3-6, 1789; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, Oct. 2, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, Oct. 6-9, 1789; *Norwich Mercury*, Oct. 10, 1789.

⁴*Morning Post*, Sept. 16, 1789, Sept. 22, 1789, Sept. 30, 1789; *Public Advertiser*, Oct. 2, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Sept. 29 - Oct. 1, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, Sept. 29 - Oct. 2, 1789.

The Times, having supported the August resolutions, considered them in October unjust because in suppressing "feudalism" and the ecclesiastical tithes in Alsace, the National Assembly had violated the treaty of Westphalia signed by France in 1648.⁵

Perhaps the King's reluctance to sanction the August decrees and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* helped change the attitude of *The Times*, which was protective of royal prerogatives. It was reported in the English press that the people of Paris were aroused by the coalition of the clergy and nobles in the National Assembly to prevent the King's sanction to the August decrees, and that a compromise was reached in granting him a suspensive instead of an absolute veto. It was also reported that the King was negotiating the suppression of *annates* with the Pope and that the King protested the abolition of tithes which would reduce the income of bishops. A provincial weekly, the *Newcastle Courant*, commented disapprovingly on Louis XVI's solicitude in preserving the privileges of the clergy.⁶

The King's reluctance to sanction the August decrees introduced a note of pessimism towards ecclesiastical reforms. Both the *Star*, a ministerial newspaper that was to become opposition, and the ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* warned that the National Assembly had been too hasty in incurring the enmity of the clergy; the latter newspaper concluded that the King was uniting with the hierarchy and the nobility, and the army would soon dissolve the National Assembly.⁷ The English press noted that the King did

⁵*Times*, Oct. 8, 1789.

⁶*Newcastle Courant*, Oct. 3, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Sept. 12-15, 1789, Sept. 19-22, 1789, Sept. 22-24, 1789; *Morning Post*, Sept. 19, 1789, Sept. 22, 1789; *Times*, Sept. 19, 1789.

⁷*Star*, Sept. 26, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 13-15, 1789.

not sanction the August decrees, but gave only his qualified consent in publishing them.⁸ The rejection of a bicameral legislature by the Assembly which would have protected the privileges of the clergy and nobility, and now the refusal to give the King an absolute veto, displeased some newspapers but they continued to favor the "patriotic party" in the National Assembly.

When the King, under the influence of the court party, ordered the new regiment of Flanders to Versailles, the ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* attributed the move to the King's refusal to sanction the August decrees. *The Times* justified in a sense the popular dissatisfaction of the October Days with the King's procrastination of his sanction.⁹ The women marching to Versailles evoked sympathy because they were starving, but the English press regretted their excesses, the threat to the Queen (although she was not in this period admired in English newspapers) and the murder of the King's body guards. The English press seemed reassured when the King and the royal family came to Paris that all was well again with the National Assembly. However, *The Times*, unlike other ministerial newspapers, stressed that the royal family were now prisoners in the palace of the Tuileries in Paris.¹⁰

An immediate consequence of the October Days was the King's unqualified sanction of the August decrees and the *Declaration of Rights*. That the English press, both ministerial and opposition, still favored these

⁹*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 8-10, 1789; *Times*, Oct. 10, 1789.

¹⁰*Times*, Oct. 14, 1789, Oct. 15, 1789. Other reports of the October Days: *London Chronicle*, Oct. 10-13, 1789; *Public Advertiser*, Oct. 12, 1789, Oct. 13, 1789; *Morning Post*, Oct. 12, 1789, Oct. 14, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, Oct. 13-16, 1789.

measures was proven by its condemnation late in October of the seditious mandate preached by the bishop of Tréguier in Brittany against the August decrees. *The Times* wrote that the bishop, ". . . invoked the peace of Heaven with the same seditious lips with which he was spreading discord on earth," while the *London Chronicle* compared unflatteringly the bishop's opposition to that of Thomas à Becket of Canterbury.¹¹

The marked anti-clericalism in Paris which followed the October Days disturbed the English press somewhat but not unduly. The Parisians blamed the hierarchy for supporting the absolute veto for the King in order to prevent acceptance of the decrees suppressing their privileges. The ministerial *Public Advertiser* published letters from Paris with little editorial comment, as "The general cry of the people is against the clergy, whose power and number they want to diminish; even when the women were at the National Assembly, they desired that one bishop only might be delivered them." Another letter read, "The general cry in the streets the day his Majesty entered Paris was down with the Clergy -- by which was meant the Clergy in the Assembly. The abbés have almost entirely disappeared in the streets."¹²

The opposition's *Morning Post* in this period was equally, if not more condemnatory of anti-clerical violence. Reporting that an ecclesiastical deputy complained that the National Guards had threatened to bayonet him, it commented, "Indeed, for the last eight days, such Members as are churchmen, have attended the Assembly in fear and trembling, and during that

¹¹*Times*, Oct. 24, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Oct. 22-24, 1789; *Morning Post*, Oct. 30, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 22-24, 1789.

¹²*Public Advertiser*, Oct. 13, 1789, Oct. 17, 1789.

period seldom more than twenty of them attended the evening meetings lest they should be butchered on their return."¹³ This newspaper and the neutral *London Chronicle* expressed horror when an abbé, mistaken for another of the aristocratic party, was almost killed by a Paris mob.¹⁴

However, the English press did not view favorably the attempts of ecclesiastical deputies to obtain passports, when it was decided that the National Assembly was to meet in Paris. Two opposition newspapers, the *Morning Post* and the *Patriot*, reported disapprovingly the abbé Maury and the bishop of Clermont for begging the Assembly for passports and identified them as having consistently opposed the claims of the nation to church property. There was as yet no sympathy in the English press for French émigrés in general.¹⁵ In August, *The Times* had reported the unpopularity of the émigrés in London.

The Confiscation of Ecclesiastical Property, November 2, 1789

Before the National Assembly moved to Paris in October, it heard the motion of the bishop of Autun (Talleyrand) to place ecclesiastical property at the disposal of the nation. The English press, both ministerial and opposition, supported this motion. The *Times* wrote:

A very plausible scheme has been proposed in France for relieving the nation of its present distress for money

Should the bishop of Autun's plan for reestablishing the French finances at the expense of the churches be adopted, it is not morally impossible that before the next summer France will not only be a free nation, but will also so much recover from her present convulsion of Government and complication of distress, so as to be able to fell Flanders with her armies.¹⁶

¹³*Morning Post*, Oct. 16, 1789.

¹⁴*Morning Post*, Oct. 19, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Oct. 17-20, 1789.

¹⁵*Times*, Aug. 4, 1789; *Morning Post*, Oct. 20, 1789; *Patriot*, Oct. 21, 1789.

¹⁶*Times*, Oct. 19, 1789. On October 16th it printed a letter praising

The Times was not alone. The ministerial *Public Advertiser* noted that the bishop of Autun's proposal on October 10th received great applause in the National Assembly and had the support of some of the clergy; the opposition *Morning Post* praised the bishop's long and able speech, while the neutral *London Chronicle* and E. Johnson's *British Gazette* expected from his plan an easing of credit in France, and reported significantly that French popular opinion favored the confiscation of ecclesiastical property.¹⁷

When Mirabeau moved on October 13th that church property belonged to the nation and the ministers of the public cult would receive salaries of at least 1,200 livres a year, there was little criticism expressed in the English press. The opposition *Morning Post*, reporting the debate during October 1789 in more detail than any other newspaper, considered Mirabeau's motion, ". . . a principle founded on justice."¹⁸ The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* openly favored the nation's claim while anticipating without sorrow the destruction of the clergy. This newspaper thought the bishop of Autun was defending the interest of the clergy by making them the first creditors of the state.¹⁹

If it were not for the second thoughts of *The Times*, one could conclude that in November 1789 neither the ministerial nor the opposition

the National Assembly for ending plural benefices and bettering conditions for the lower clergy, recommending the same for the Anglican church.

¹⁷*Public Advertiser*, Oct. 17, 1789; *Morning Post*, Oct. 16, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Oct. 15-17, 1789, Nov. 5-7, 1789; E. Johnson's *British Gazette*, Oct. 18, 1789.

¹⁸*Morning Post*, Oct. 20, 1789, Oct. 30, 1789.

¹⁹*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 29-31, 1789, Nov. 5-7, 1789.

English press disapproved of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in France. During September and October, English newspapers praised the patriotic sacrifices of the clergy, accepted the principle that the church property belonged to the nation and showed little sympathy with the French hierarchy resisting the will of the National Assembly. As the date approached for the vote on the motion, *The Times* compared unfavorably the recent ecclesiastical reformation in France with the English reformation in the sixteenth century:

When the great work of the Reformation was accomplished in England, the wisdom of those learned and great men who conducted that glorious change, and shook off the intolerable yoke of the See of Rome, prevented our falling into the misfortune which too often attends such great alterations either in Church or State, when generally persons who destroy tyranny fall into extremes of anarchy and confusion. The present situation of France, where a reform in Church as well as in State, is now attempted, furnished a most melancholy and striking proof of this remark.²⁰

But *The Times* went on to criticize the French King, whose irresolution was leading the country into civil war. It attributed the "extremes of anarchy" resulting from the ecclesiastical reformation in France to the failure of the King in controlling these changes. *The Times*, supporting an Erastian ecclesiastical reformation, was disappointed in Louis XVI.²¹

That *The Times* continued to think well of the financial aspects of the plan to confiscate ecclesiastical property was seen in its prediction a few days later that France would be ten times compensated by the sale of church lands for its loss of the *don*

²⁰*Times*, Nov. 2, 1789.

²¹*Times*, Dec. 21, 1789 revealed its disappointment in Louis XVI in a very unflattering character sketch.

gratuit or free gift from the clergy.²² Far from being pessimistic, *The Times* reported late in November that the news of the abolition of large church estates was received in the provinces with great joy. It also printed a mock funeral notice for the French Church (modelled on the one it had written for the death of the Regency bill which it had opposed) indicating that *The Times* had little sympathy as yet with the French hierarchy. Part of it read:

The Body will be laid with all funeral pomp in the National chest and in that new Shell carried to the Royal Treasury. The supporters on this melancholy occasion are to be Mess. Mirabeau, Thouret, Chapelier, Lameth. The Procession will pass by the Exchange and the Caisse d'Escompte, at each of which places it will be sprinkled with holy water and *te deum laudamus* be sung over its remains. The Abbés Sieyès and Maury as chief mourners will follow the procession. The Abbé Montesquiou will pronounce the funeral oration, after which the celebrated religious composition of the 130th psalm, *De Profundis*, by the Opera singers, who are to be habited as widows. The mourners are desired to meet at Monsieur Necker's where the creditors of the state will await their coming.²³

Both ministerial and opposition newspapers supported the decree of November 2, 1789 confiscating church property which was voted in the National Assembly with 578 favoring it, 436 against, 236 absent, and 40 abstaining. The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle*, after criticizing the abbé Montesquiou for opposing it, was optimistic about the decree, reporting that even in Brittany as well as in other provinces, opposition had died away. In the same issue, the *St. James's* denounced the aristocratic party for assisting "the holy fathers" in fanning religious persecution in Toulouse, and added, "Paris boasts too many Patriots to

²²*Times*, Nov. 7, 1789.

²³*Times*, Nov. 30, 1789.

suffer this wicked combination to exist against the natural rights of mankind."²⁴ The ministerial *Oracle* praised Mirabeau during the debate as an ". . . eloquent and enlightened enemy to ecclesiastical property."²⁵

However, the offer of the archbishop of Aix in the name of the clergy, of 300 million livres, providing the clergy retained their property, was considered generous by most newspapers, but too late by some.²⁶ The opposition *Morning Post*, seemingly a supporter of the nation's claim to church property in France, had sudden reservations concerning the confiscation of ecclesiastical property. After praising the ability of the archbishop of Aix in defending the cause of the clergy, some weeks later this newspaper, and also the neutral *London Chronicle* wrote:

It is seldom that the Clergy had such reason to complain then in the late treatment which they suffered by the determination of the National Assembly to wrest that property from them which belonged to them as well by the grant of former governments, as by the will of those who had the clearest right to dispose of their possessions as they pleased, was an act of severest and most despotic oppression.

Those who know what superstition governs the lower class of people in all countries and particularly in France, where the ecclesiastical order are beheld with the highest reverence, will not wonder that a body considered so sacred should be able to kindle a rebellion in their favour, and shake the foundations of the Empire, when the basis of their importance was rudely assailed and threatened with destruction.²⁷

²⁴*St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 3-5, 1789; also, see Nov. 5-7, 1789.

²⁵*Oracle*, Nov. 7, 1789.

²⁶*Morning Post*, Nov. 6, 1789, Nov. 9, 1789; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 7-9, 1789; *Oracle*, Nov. 7, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Nov. 5-7, 1789; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, Nov. 13, 1789. *Courier de l'Europe* (no date available on issue) preferred the archbishop of Aix' plan; this newspaper came early under émigré influence.

²⁷Identical in both the *Morning Post*, Nov. 27, 1789, and the *London Chronicle*, Nov. 26-28, 1789.

Not even the ministerial *Times*, in warning against extremes in ecclesiastical reforms, denounced the confiscation of ecclesiastical property as unjust, as did the opposition *Morning Post*. There was as yet no great difference in policy between ministerial and opposition English newspapers concerning the ecclesiastical reforms in France.

The inconsistencies in the *Times* and *Morning Post* can best be explained by the custom in the English press of filling its columns with paragraphs written by different people and accepted by many newspapers. The inconsistency of the *Morning Post* was perhaps that of Richard Sheridan, the playwright and member of Parliament, who exerted influence on this paper. In November 1789, Sheridan was still a friend and a political ally of Burke, whose views were already formulated against the French Revolution and its ecclesiastical changes.²⁸ That the *Morning Post* had as yet no consistent policy on the ecclesiastical reforms of the French Revolution was proven in its report in mid-December that the decree on the church lands had produced great harmony between the people of France and the National Assembly, which contradicted directly its earlier condemnation.²⁹

The *Gazetteer* was a strong opposition newspaper that had no such problem of inconsistency in supporting the decree confiscating ecclesiastical property in France. Together with the neutral *London Chronicle*, it thought in November 1789 the decree was drawn up with sufficient caution to be approved in the provinces and also by the lower clergy whose influence was strong on the people.³⁰ By the end of November, the

²⁸*Morning Post*, Dec. 1, 1789, praised Burke.

²⁹*Morning Post*, Dec. 11, 1789.

³⁰*Gazetteer*, Nov. 9, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Nov. 7-10, 1789.

London Chronicle expressed the same reservations as the *Morning Post*, but not the *Gazetteer*. The following month, the weekly *Say's Craftsman* believed that in France the people of the provinces had renounced their "prejudices" for the Revolution. And the *Gazetteer*, more in touch with popular opinion in France, told of a woman in the gallery of the National Assembly during the debate on confiscating ecclesiastical property, who cried, "Gentlemen of the Clergy, we only wish to shave you; but be quiet, if you *struggle*, we shall cut you."³¹

The Suppression of Monasteries

Although some English newspapers expressed reservations about the political consequences of confiscating ecclesiastical property, the English press in 1789 was united in its aversion to monasticism. Perhaps its suppression, which was understood as part of ecclesiastical confiscation, influenced the generally favorable attitude of the English press to the early reforms of the French Revolution. Before the suppression of monasticism, the requests of many monks to quit their orders for secular employment or pensions were hailed as a victory of the Enlightenment over a way of life which violated the laws of nature.³²

Not all petitions from monastic institutions requested liberty, according to the English press. The opposition *Morning Post* was more sensitive to instances of monks wishing to continue communal life and of nuns

³¹*Gazetteer*, Dec. 28, 1789; *Say's Craftsman*, Dec. 19, 1789.

³²*St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 21-24, 1789; *Gazetteer*, Nov. 19, 1789, Nov. 23, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Nov. 21-24, 1789; *Kentish Gazette*, Nov. 17-20, 1789; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, Nov. 20, 1789, and the *London Chronicle*, Nov. 14-17, 1789, reported the Benedictine monks of Franche Comté requested liberty after they complained the peasants harassed them.

desiring that their convents be spared for work in education.³³ The *Star* had earlier remarked on the astonishing number of letters from nuns to the National Assembly on the suppression of religious vows, while the *London Chronicle* and the *Newcastle Courant* rejoiced that half the nuns in France were willing to recant their vows.³⁴ Later, the ministerial *St. James's Chronicle*, the opposition *Gazetteer* and the neutral E. Johnson's *British Gazette* reported more realistically that some convents were grateful to the National Assembly and some were not so pleased.³⁵ The *Morning Post* concluded that monasticism was suppressed for utilitarian reasons, because it no longer existed in France on a large scale.³⁶ Monasteries, it may be remembered, had been closed before in the eighteenth century in France and elsewhere.

After the membership of the Ecclesiastical Committee was doubled to break a deadlock, the suppression of monasteries was decreed on February 13, 1790. Both the ministerial and opposition English press supported this decree.³⁷

Shortly before these reports, Edmund Burke on February 9th in a debate on the British supply bill in the House of Commons denounced the French Revolution and differed publicly from Sheridan and Fox, leaders of the opposition party. The *London Chronicle* paraphrased Burke in

³³*Morning Post*, Nov. 24, 1789, Dec. 4, 1789, Dec. 5, 1789, Dec. 21, 1789.

³⁴*Star*, Sept. 26, 1789; *London Chronicle*, Sept. 26-29, 1789; *Newcastle Courant*, Oct. 3, 1789.

³⁵*St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 12-14, 1789; *Gazetteer*, Nov. 14, 1789; E. Johnson's *British Gazette*, Nov. 15, 1789.

³⁶*Morning Post*, Dec. 29, 1789.

³⁷*St. James's Chronicle*, Feb. 18-20, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, Feb. 20, 1790; *Star*, Feb. 22, 1790; E. Johnson's *British Gazette*, Feb. 21, 1790.

the House of Commons saying of France "It was an example set by a bloody, a ferocious, and a tyrannical democracy. . . . They had madly pulled down their monarchy, their churches, their laws."³⁸ The ministerial *Public Advertiser* announced in February that Burke's pamphlet on France was shortly expected and that Burke had left the Foxite opposition. It was very possible that Burke's defense of French monasticism was already known.³⁹ The *Public Advertiser* became inconsistent about monasticism: one day it hoped the Benedictines and Carthusians in France would be spared because of their erudition, piety and cultivation of the countryside, and in the following issue it published a letter attacking the Benedictines for enjoying too much luxury to be contented with pensions. In this period the *Public Advertiser* gave much space to the rift between Burke and Sheridan, and Burke and Fox.⁴⁰ Although it had been an enemy of Burke, as a ministerial newspaper it had to attack the opposition. It was with difficulty that it welcomed Burke's defection from the Foxites. *The Times* in February 1790 at first praised the suppression of monasticism as an example of the "humanity" of the eighteenth century, but its following issue was critical of the ecclesiastical decrees in France, including the "driving away" of monks.⁴¹ It is significant that *The Times* was the one important ministerial newspaper to praise Burke (although previously derisive of him) and criticize Sheridan for defending

³⁸*London Chronicle*, Feb. 9-11, 1790.

³⁹*Public Advertiser*, Feb. 16, 1790.

⁴⁰*Public Advertiser*, Feb. 13, 1790, Feb. 17, 1790, Feb. 18, 1790.

⁴¹*Times*, Feb. 22, 1790, Feb. 23, 1790.

mob democracy in France.⁴² *The Times* observed that Burke was opposed to innovations in the Catholic religion in France, but hinted that there were other causes than the French Revolution for the disagreement between Burke and Sheridan.⁴³

Burke's break with Fox and the Whig opposition became serious when he opposed Fox's motion to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts which prevented religious Dissenters in Great Britain from holding public office. Fox in his speech on March 2nd in the House of Commons defended the French Revolution for extending religious liberty; Burke, in opposing repeal of the Test Acts evoked the spectre of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in France which would befall the established church in England, once Dissenters gained power.⁴⁴

Ministerial newspapers seemed torn between praise of religious liberty in France and supporting repeal of the Test Acts, and the defense of the privileges of the Anglican bishops who were the mainstay of the ministry in the House of Lords. However, the ministerial press did indulge in criticism of the Anglican Church, and even the *Times* the past year had given space to letters deploring plural benefices and the poverty of country curates.⁴⁵

⁴²*Times*, Feb. 11, 1790. This issue noted that Burke supported the revolution in Brabant where regional and clerical interests opposed the innovations of the Austrian ruler, Joseph II.

⁴³*Times*, Feb. 13, 1790, Feb. 19, 1790. On April 10, 1790 it announced Burke's pamphlet on France as ". . . a composition that does honour to his genius and historic erudition, but he fears it may give offense to some of his party friends."

⁴⁴*London Chronicle*, March 2-4, 1790; *Times*, March 3, 1790; *St. James's Chronicle*, March 2-4, 1790.

⁴⁵See chapter IV, f. n. 40 for *Times* and *St. James's Chronicle*. Also chapter VI, f. n. 16.

The Protestantism of most ministerial newspapers prevented their acceptance of Burke's condemnation of the ecclesiastical confiscation of the National Assembly as reason for opposing repeal of the Test Acts. Having praised the National Assembly for the restoration of property confiscated by the revocation of the edict of Nantes to Protestants, and having held the French hierarchy responsible for inciting disturbances against Protestants in southern France, these newspapers had difficulty supporting the ministry which utilized Burke's views to oppose repeal. The *Public Advertiser* and the *St. James's Chronicle* solved their problem by publishing letters for and against repeal of the Test Acts, but as time approached for the vote on March 2, 1790, the weight of the Pitt ministry allied to the Anglican episcopacy influenced them to oppose repeal. It was defeated on March 2nd by a vote of 105-294. *The Times* hailed its defeat and attacked Sheridan's silence during the debate, declaring him a friend of Parisian democracy and an enemy of the English church as well as the state.⁴⁶ Seemingly the vote was a victory for Burke's argument that the established church in Great Britain risked confiscation of its property as in France, but political considerations of the ministry had demanded its support of the Anglican bishops who organized meetings throughout the countryside against the Dissenters.

The Sale of Ecclesiastical Property

Except for *The Times* and the *Morning Herald* which was in the process of becoming a ministerial newspaper, the English press did not in the

⁴⁶*Times*, March 4, 1790.

spring of 1790 adopt Burke's views on the ecclesiastical changes in France. On April 12, 1790, the drafts of three decrees were read in the National Assembly: a plan of salaries for the clergy, the issue of paper money or *assignats* backed by the 400 million livres to be realized by the sale of ecclesiastical property, and a resolution declaring Catholicism the only public religion in France. The agitation in Paris was great while the clergy made determined moves to defeat the sale of their property. The English press, both ministerial and opposition, was gratified when on the following day Dom Gerle, who proposed the motion on Catholicism, withdrew it. Declaring that Gerle's motion was a manoeuvre of the hierarchy, the *St. James's Chronicle* and the *Public Advertiser* favored the National Assembly's decree on the sale of ecclesiastical property.⁴⁷ The ministerial *World* was less specific but continued to denounce cabals of the French clergy.⁴⁸

The Times and the *Morning Herald* opposed the sale of ecclesiastical property. The former predicted that the clergy had the power to overthrow by force, if necessary, the decree of November 2nd, writing:

The resumption of property which the church had peacefully possessed upward of fourteen centuries, must deeply affect the prejudices of the Catholic multitude. . . . The clergy of France are on the point of appealing by a public manifesto; nor have we a doubt that the pathetic eloquence, for which they are celebrated, will animate the populace to revenge the impiety of

⁴⁷*St. James's Chronicle*, April 17-20, 1790, April 22-24, 1790, April 29 - May 1, 1790, May 4-6, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, April 22, 1790, April 24, 1790, May 8, 1790. *St. James's Chronicle*, April 24-27, 1790, published a letter refuting Burke's charge of atheism in France; *Public Advertiser* had two letters, May 11, 1790 and May 17, 1790, condemning the avarice of the French clergy and defending the confiscation.

⁴⁸*World*, May 18, 1790, May 25, 1790, May 29, 1790.

stripping the church of its hereditary prerogatives.⁴⁹

The *Morning Herald* defended the clergy's claim to the property and praised the abbé Sieyès, who had in 1789 led the Third Estate, for now protesting that the *cahiers* of the Estates General had given no instructions to deprive the clergy of their revenues.⁵⁰

The opposition newspapers, the *Gazetteer* and the *Morning Post* remained hostile to the French hierarchy. The *Morning Post* in 1790 (for which year very few issues are available) stressed the support of the lower clergy for the sale of ecclesiastical property.⁵¹ The neutral *London Chronicle* continued to support the ecclesiastical decrees of the National Assembly. In May 1790 it carried the address of the abbé Gouttes, when he was elected president of the National Assembly, which praised its ecclesiastical reforms and refuted the charge of atheism.⁵²

However, the decree for issuing *assignats* received diverse reactions in the English press. The ministerial *Times* thought well enough at first of the *assignats* as a financial scheme.⁵³ The *Morning Herald* immediately disapproved of them, doubting whether paper money would remedy the shortage in specie in France.⁵⁴ The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* and the

⁴⁹*Times*, April 26, 1790; April 27, 1790.

⁵⁰*Morning Herald*, April 21, 1790.

⁵¹*Morning Post*, April 27, 1790; *Gazetteer*, April 20, 1790, April 21, 1790, April 23, 1790.

⁵²*London Chronicle*, April 17-20, 1790, April 20-22, 1790, May 15-18, 1790.

⁵³*Times*, April 23, 1790. On Nov. 3, 1790, the *Times* printed the extract of Burke's pamphlet on the French Revolution which condemned the *assignats* as sacrilegious plunder of the church.

⁵⁴*Morning Herald*, April 23, 1790.

Public Advertiser fluctuated, sometimes favoring the plan to facilitate the sale of ecclesiastical property and at other times doubting that it would provide safe collateral.⁵⁵ The neutral *London Chronicle* found the *assignats* feasible, concluding they were nothing more than the funding of the national debt, similar to the British Funds with the special bank established by the National Assembly having the same relation to the national debt as the Bank of England.⁵⁶ The ministerial English press did not as a bloc disapprove of the *assignats* until later, when it disapproved of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in France.

When on November 2, 1789, ecclesiastical property was decreed at the disposal of the nation, there was little difference between ministerial and opposition English newspapers on this issue. Its financial aspects met approval. The reservations expressed in *The Times*, the opposition *Morning Post* and the neutral *London Chronicle* were the opinions of the writers or correspondents and not yet the consistent policy of the newspapers.

The principle voiced in the National Assembly that the property had been given the Gallican Church for use and remained at the disposal of the nation was not shocking to the English press, despite the endowments enjoyed by the Anglican Church. The views of Edmund Burke condemning the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in France were well known in February 1790 when Burke publicly differed with members of the opposition.

⁵⁵*St. James's Chronicle*, April 15-17, 1790, April 22-24, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, April 26, 1790, May 22, 1790. On Sept. 24, 1790 it criticized the *assignats*, apparently for the first time.

⁵⁶*London Chronicle*, April 20-22, 1790.

His influence was felt on this issue only by *The Times* and the newly ministerial *Morning Herald* which appreciated the political significance of Burke's rift with the Foxites on the French Revolution. Seemingly Burke's views had their effect on March 2, 1790 in the defeat of repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts when he argued that repeal endangered the property of the Anglican Church. However, this vote reflected the need of the Pitt ministry to ally with the Anglican clergy at the expense of the Dissenters.

The Protestantism of most of the ministerial English newspapers caused them to retain their hostility to the French hierarchy and their approval of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property in France. The suppression of monasticism which followed the confiscation of church property in France was approved with very few reservations in the English press.

Reforms already adopted by the National Assembly were embodied in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, completed in 1790. The following chapter describes the reaction of the English press to this reorganization of the Gallican Church.

CHAPTER VI
THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE CIVIL CONSTITUTION
OF THE CLERGY

Until June 1790 the English press seemed little aware of the Ecclesiastical Committee of the National Assembly which was drafting the provisions for the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The attention of the press had been directed to the resistance of the French hierarchy to the sale of ecclesiastical property. Most English newspapers published the abridged minutes of the debates in the National Assembly on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, in June and July 1790, offering little comment but a general impression of approval. *The Times* relied less on the minutes of the National Assembly and more on the opinions of correspondents in France who were close to the royal court and were critical of ecclesiastical reforms. Most English newspapers were prepared to accept the reorganization of the Gallican Church.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, July 12, 1790

In June 1790 the attitude of many English ministerial newspapers remained unfavorable towards the French hierarchy who were opposed to the ecclesiastical decrees of the National Assembly. When the archbishop of Aix, spokesman for the hierarchy, maintained that the Assembly was not competent to rule on the Gallican church, the *St. James's Chronicle* considered his speech "of repulsive and unavailing tediousness." The *Public Advertiser* was kinder, considered it a brilliant

discourse but out of order.¹ The archbishop's argument ran counter to the Erastian policy of the English ministerial press, for the Anglican Church had been subordinated since the sixteenth century to Parliament. The *St. James's Chronicle* and the *Public Advertiser* failed to be shocked at the provision for the popular election of the clergy in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. These newspapers quoted the deputy Treilhard of the Ecclesiastical Committee who claimed that people would be more influenced by merit in choosing their bishops than the royal court. The *St. James's Chronicle* appreciated that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy prohibited confirmation by the Pope of the popularly elected bishops.² Anti-papalism, aggravated by news of a rebellion in Avignon, accounted for the acceptance of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy by some ministerial newspapers.

The Times, seemingly influenced by the views of Edmund Burke, did not criticize the provisions for the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in June 1790. It wrote, "The moment is approaching when the grandeur and influence of the priesthood of France will be reduced to a level with that of England."³ Publishing the list of salaries for the French clergy, ranging from the bishops' to the parish vicars', *The Times* praised what was provided the lower clergy and asked, "How many clergymen of piety and learning would be happy to enjoy even that last salary in England!"

¹*St. James's Chronicle*, June 3-5, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, June 5, 1790, June 8, 1790.

²*St. James's Chronicle*, June 12-15, 1790, June 19-22, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, June 8, 1790.

³*Times*, June 5, 1790.

Add to this the clergy are to be provided with comfortable habitation at the national expense."⁴ *The Times* did not as yet consider salaries a debasement for the clergy whereas Burke condemned salaries because he thought the clergy should enjoy revenues independent of the state. In July 1790 and later in August and September *The Times* criticized the small share of the tithes in England that the lower clergy received and praised the ecclesiastical decree on the tithes in France. *The Times* also considered the provision in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy which required the clergy to reside in their dioceses worth adopting, because some Anglican bishops neglected their spiritual duties.⁵

However, *The Times* was from the start troubled by the provision in the Civil Constitution for the popular election of the clergy. What seemed ominous to *The Times* was that the lower clergy elected by the people could not be dismissed by the hierarchy, and that the King was deprived of his power to dispense church patronage. *The Times* also found objectionable that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy did not require the French clergy to subscribe to articles of faith.⁶ Far from agreeing with the archbishop of Aix, who decried secular interference with the organization of the clergy, *The Times* saw no reason why the doctrines of an established religion should not be prescribed by the state.

The ministerial *Morning Herald* was consistent in its Burkean condemnation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. It castigated its supporters as free thinkers who dared not openly avow their atheism but acted instead to degrade the episcopacy. *The Morning Herald* denounced the

⁴*Times*, June 4, 1790, June 24, 1790.

⁵*Times*, July 8, 1790, July 10, 1790, Aug. 30, 1790, Sept. 17, 1790.

⁶*Times*, June 3, 1790, June 22, 1790, June 29, 1790.

salaries for bishops as unjust and cruel because they reduced the bishops' income.⁷

The opposition *Morning Post* and the *Morning Chronicle* were not available for this period. The reports of the neutral *London Chronicle* derived from the National Assembly minutes and therefore did not differ much from the ministerial press in favoring the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.⁸ The *Kentish Gazette*, a ministerial newspaper published at Canterbury, primary see of the Anglican church, compared the opulent revenues of the archbishop of Toledo in Spain to the reduced income of the archbishop of Paris and thought the latter's salary equal to that of the bishop of Upsala in Sweden where church lands had been confiscated during a reformation. The *Kentish Gazette* did not express disapproval of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The following month the *Leicester Journal* disapproved of celebrations in England of the anniversary of the French Revolution, but it praised wholeheartedly the provisions in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy for the lower clergy and the ecclesiastical decree in France on the tithes.⁹

The Anniversary of the French Revolution, July 14, 1790

The decree of the National Assembly on June 19, 1790 abolishing titles of nobility had little relation to ecclesiastical affairs in France. It disturbed the ministerial English press more than the opposition newspapers. Perhaps as a consequence, the first anniversary of the capture

⁷*Morning Herald*, June 8, 1790, June 29, 1790.

⁸*London Chronicle*, June 5-8, 1790, June 15-17, 1790, June 29-July 1, 1790.

⁹*Kentish Gazette*, June 6-9, 1790; *Leicester Journal*, July 16, 1790.

of the Bastille celebrated at a dinner in London on July 14, 1790 by the English Revolution (1688) Society found the press divided directly on English party lines. The political reformers and the Dissenters attending the anniversary dinner saw the French Revolution as an example for further reforms in church and state. The opposition *Gazetteer* was delighted that so many distinguished English patriots celebrated the freedom won in France and that the Earl of Stanhope toasted the National Assembly for establishing religious liberty and equality. The *Gazetteer* drew up a comparative chart of conditions in England and France which indicated that England had refused to repeal the Test Act and had made no adequate provision for the lower clergy while France had granted universal toleration and reorganized the church on the basis of equality, raising the incomes of the lower clergy and lowering those of the hierarchy. The *Gazetteer* criticized the ministerial English press for denouncing the anniversary dinner at London celebrating the French Revolution, and accused these newspapers of stifling demands for reform and religious liberty which were opposed by the ministry and the Anglican hierarchy. However, the *Gazetteer* was careful to deny that the Whigs attending the dinner wished to overthrow the establishment.¹⁰

There was no question that the ministerial English press was hostile to the anniversary dinner for the French Revolution held in London. The *Times* announced before the dinner, "The Earl of Stanhope, whose religious ideas are as anti-episcopal as those of the most bigotted free-thinkers of the National Assembly, is publicly announced to sit at the head of the

¹⁰*Gazetteer*, July 13, 1790, July 15, 1790, July 23, 1790. The *Chelmsford Chronicle*, July 23, 1790, praised Stanhope's toast to religious liberty in France.

the new French Whig Society." This was an attack on the Whigs as a foreign group. *The Times* later reported the toast of Stanhope at the dinner was severe on the Anglican Church.¹¹ On the day of the dinner the ministerial *World* published a Burkean letter signed by a Revolution Whig, attacking the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* for destroying the religious ideas of the French people.¹² The *Public Advertiser* denied that France was in possession of liberty since it had manifested a distressing spirit of levelling, but this newspaper admitted that the National Assembly had passed some laws which had set the British legislature a good example.¹³

What had happened to turn the ministerial *Public Advertiser* against the French Revolution which it had recently hailed for extending religious liberty? At the end of June 1790, after nobility had been abolished by the National Assembly, the *Public Advertiser* wrote:

Mr. Burke from time since termed the French as a nation of atheists, and their recent conduct has in great measure justified his assertion; for . . . it can afford to the considerate mind nothing but the most disagreeable reflections to find all religions set at defiance, the ministers indiscriminately abused, and publicly ridiculed. These are strong marks of the depravity of a nation and rank symptoms of gross atheism.¹⁴

The influence of Burke on the *Public Advertiser* appeared unmistakable. As if to answer the *Gazetteer's* chart which compared France and England, the *Public Advertiser* drew up its own and found the balance in favor of the home country. After decrying the recent degradation of

¹¹*Times*, July 9, 1790, July 15, 1790.

¹²*World*, July 14, 1790.

¹³*Public Advertiser*, July 14, 1790.

¹⁴*Public Advertiser*, June 30, 1790.

nobility in France, it described the Civil Constitution of the Clergy as, "No regulated Church -- her orders, her gradations, and her influence taken away in the confiscation of her property -- whilst the former disciples are running fast into atheism."¹⁵

Seemingly this denunciation marked a turning point in the *Public Advertiser's* attitude towards ecclesiastical changes in France, but this newspaper was too antagonized by the French hierarchy's suspected role in inciting religious warfare in Nîmes in the spring and summer of 1790 to remain opposed to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The English press, including most of the ministerial newspapers, continued to favor the ecclesiastical reforms of the National Assembly. This was shown by the end of 1790 when they approved of the "patriotic" clergy in France who complied with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. It was party politics in July 1790 which caused the ministerial newspapers to censure the few opposition leaders who attended the celebration sponsored by the English reformers of the first anniversary of the French Revolution.

That most ministerial newspapers were not opposed to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was demonstrated by their favorable reports a few days later of the celebration at Paris of the anniversary of the French Revolution. They seemed fascinated by France's new religious establishment on display at the fête of the Federation on the Champs de Mars on July 14th, two days after the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was decreed. However, the incense and myrrh of the public mass disturbed

¹⁵*Public Advertiser*, July 16, 1790.

the Protestant readers of the ministerial press who had, according to their letters, hitherto approved of the ecclesiastical reforms of France. That these reforms had changed only the civil organization of the clergy in France and not their Catholic doctrines was a source of disappointment to some ministerial newspapers.¹⁶ Only *The Times* failed to be impressed with the fête of the Federation in Paris, terming the oath taken at the altar by members of the National Assembly before Talleyrand, the bishop of Autun, a "Jesuitical perversion." *The Times* claimed the following week that the National Assembly had debased the priesthood and trampled on the crown.¹⁷

The provincial weeklies, whether ministerial or opposition, reported the fête of the Federation in Paris in almost the identical wording of the London newspapers which admired the spectacle.¹⁸ The general acceptance by the ministerial English press of the fête of the Federation celebrating the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille was in marked contrast to its condemnation as a *bloc* of the celebration at the dinner in London.

Hierarchical Resistance to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy

In the summer and fall of 1790, the English press considered hierarchical resistance to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy the beginning of counter-revolution. *The Times*, the *Evening Mail* and the *Whitehall*

¹⁶*Public Advertiser*, July 19, 1790; *World*, July 17, 1790, July 20, 1790, July 21, 1790; *Whitehall Evening Post*, July 20-22, 1790.

¹⁷*Times*, July 19, 1790, July 23, 1790.

¹⁸*Chelmsford Chronicle*, July 23, 1790; *Norwich Mercury*, July 24, 1790, Aug. 9-11, 1790; *Newcastle Courant*, July 24, 1790; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, July 26, 1790.

Evening Post awaited its coming.¹⁹ However, most ministerial newspapers and the neutral *General Evening Post* in the summer of 1790 supported the patriotic party at Avignon who had rebelled against papal rule.²⁰ Even *The Times* in this period disliked papal rule in Avignon.²¹ The English press thought the papacy supported the French hierarchy against the Protestants in southern France. The ministerial press was also unsympathetic to the cardinal de Rohan, hopelessly in debt when his revenues were reduced by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, who had moved across the Rhine to preach and raise an army against the French Revolution.²² They disapproved of the pastoral letter of the bishop of Toulon condemning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, after he had fled to Nice. Even the *Morning Herald* could not accept the bishop's obvious pique at the reduction of his income.²³

Although ministerial English newspapers were prepared for a counter-revolution in France in the fall of 1790, they had difficulty accepting a Catholic counter-revolution. *The Times* joined their denunciation of the abbé de la Bastide and his counter-revolutionary forces in Languedoc as bigoted and worried that these forces had papal support from nearby

¹⁹*Times*, July 28, 1790, Aug. 26, 1790; *Evening Mail*, July 26-28, 1790, Aug. 9-11, 1790; *Whitehall Evening Post*, July 27-29, 1790.

²⁰*Public Advertiser*, July 30, 1790; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 31, 1790; *General Evening Post*, Aug. 3-5, 1790.

²¹*Times*, Sept. 6, 1790, Sept. 7, 1790.

²²*World*, Aug. 5, 1790, Sept. 9, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, Aug. 5, 1790, Aug. 9, 1790; *Evening Mail*, Aug. 9-11, 1790; also, *London Chronicle*, Aug. 3-5, 1790.

²³*Oracle*, Aug. 23, 1790; *World*, Aug. 26, 1790; *Whitehall Evening Post*, Aug. 21-24, 1790; *Morning Herald*, Aug. 26, 1790, Aug. 28, 1790; *London Chronicle*, Aug. 21-24, 1790.

Avignon.²⁴

By the autumn of 1790, *The Times* had irrevocably turned against the French Revolution. This newspaper came to terms with a Catholic counter-revolution. It, as well as the *Whitehall Evening Post*, wrote in September 1790 that the clergy, who had been "trampled underfoot," and the nobility who still possessed the wealth of the nation, would crush the "free booting" Assembly.²⁵ *The Times* that month published an article in French by Calonne, former minister of France now residing in England, which attacked Necker's financial program and accused him of seeking the ruin of the French clergy so that Protestantism would triumph. Only a year before Necker had been a Protestant hero to the English press.²⁶ *The Times* began to rewrite the abridged minutes of the National Assembly to interject derogatory remarks, to refer sarcastically to it as the "August Diet" (Great Diet), to criticize the clamor at the speech of the bishop of Clermont as the "inviolable freedom of speech."²⁷ During this time it predicted a counter-revolution led by the clergy whose lands were confiscated.

In September 1790 the *Public Advertiser* still had difficulty in accepting a Catholic counter-revolution. Its inconsistency was very marked on the *assignats* issued for the sale of ecclesiastical property, sometimes questioning their security, other times hailing their success.²⁸

²⁴*Times*, Sept. 15, 1790; Oct. 13, 1790.

²⁵*Times*, Sept. 3, 1790; *Whitehall Evening Post*, Sept. 2-4, 1790.

²⁶*Times*, Sept. 24, 1790, did not translate Calonne's remarks but quoted, "Depuis quinze mois qu'a fait cet homme [Necker] si célèbre pour rendre à la France quelque repos? Il a consommé la ruine du clergé et le triomphe du Protestantisme."

²⁷*Times*, Oct. 18, 1790, Oct. 23, 1790, Oct. 27, 1790.

²⁸*Public Advertiser*, Sept. 7, 1790, Sept. 13, 1790, Sept. 23, 1790,

The ministerial *World* also was inconsistent. Late in September it congratulated France for its ecclesiastical reforms, but one month later it seemed to welcome a counter-revolution led by the nobility and the clergy.²⁹ By this time the *Public Advertiser* acknowledged the truth of *The Times'* prediction of counter-revolution and declared it was ready to accept it if France were restored "...to a moderated [sic] state of its former Government."³⁰ The *Whitehall Evening Post* said much the same -- a coalition of nobility and the clergy would overturn the Revolution. It wrote, "The clergy were a body never with impunity to be injured. They are too firmly rooted to be thus dispossessed at once."³¹ Although the ministerial press at this time was willing to accept the counter-revolution in France, many of these newspapers continued to approve of the ecclesiastical reforms of the National Assembly.

The Influence of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

On November 1, 1790, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was published in London with extracts appearing in the English press. Although the ministerial newspapers hailed it in unison, Burke's influence on the press concerning the ecclesiastical changes in France was not decisive until the middle of the next year. This will be seen by the reports in the ministerial press early in 1791 of the oath taken by the French clergy to the Civil Constitution.

The reception by the English press of Burke's work was clearly a

Sept. 24, 1790, Oct. 14, 1790; also, E. Johnson's *British Gazette*, Oct. 17, 1790.

²⁹*World*, Sept. 29, 1790; Oct. 28, 1790.

³⁰*Public Advertiser*, Oct. 25, 1790.

³¹*Whitehall Evening Post*, Oct. 28-30, 1790.

matter of party politics. The ministerial newspapers acclaimed the *Reflections* because Burke had broken with the Foxites on the French Revolution; the opposition newspapers either ignored or scorned it. However, even ministerial newspapers found ways of expressing reservations on Burke's views concerning religion in France.

Among ministerial newspapers, *The Times*, the *Public Advertiser*, the *St. James's Chronicle*, the *World* and the *Morning Herald* published extracts of Burke's pamphlet and praised it extravagantly. In respect to ecclesiastical developments in France, *The Times* published Burke's fears that these changes might be adopted in Great Britain to the ruin of the Anglican Church. Another extract attacked the *assignats* as the product of church plunder. The following week *The Times* announced that Burke's work was found pleasing to the "dignified" Anglican clergy.³³

The *Public Advertiser* printed more extensively than *The Times* extracts from the *Reflections*, including its defense of the bishops of the *ancien régime*, their noble birth, education and morals, and Burke's condemnation of the salaries provided by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.³⁴ Unlike *The Times*, the *Public Advertiser* also printed many letters attacking Burke's work, as well as defending it. The more usual practice was not to publish letters if they ran counter to editorial policy; letters that provoked controversy were printed before the editors had formed opinions on matters that lay outside their commitment to the

³²*Times*, Nov. 2, 1790, Nov. 3, 1790; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 2, 1790, Nov. 3, 1790, Nov. 4, 1790, Nov. 5, 1790, Nov. 9, 1790, Nov. 12, 1790, Nov. 13, 1790, Nov. 14, 1790; *St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 30 - Nov. 2, 1790, Nov. 2-4, 1790, Nov. 4-6, 1790; *World*, Nov. 3, 1790; *Morning Herald*, Nov. 2, 1790, Nov. 3, 1790, Nov. 4, 1790, Nov. 5, 1790

³³*Times*, Nov. 3, 1790, Nov. 13, 1790; on Nov. 19, 1790, it printed a letter which praised Burke but criticized the French hierarchy.

³⁴*Public Advertiser*, Nov. 2, 1790.

ministry or a political faction. It was obvious that Burke's rift with the Foxites in the spring of 1790 over the French Revolution compelled ministerial newspapers to praise the *Reflections*; it was by no means equally obvious that all ministerial newspapers shared Burke's views on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. In fact they did not. Perhaps at this time, the influence of the *Reflections* was greater on constitutional than ecclesiastical matters.

The *Public Advertiser* printed a mock funeral announcement for the deceased Whiggism of Edmund Burke with a funeral procession brought up in the rear by the cardinals, bishops and abbés of the Gallican Church.³⁵ Among the letters critical of Burke's pamphlet, one accused Burke of prejudices against the abolition of church property in France; another defended the confiscation of ecclesiastical property as a practical measure; and still another supported the rights of people to choose their own pastors; another questioned Burke's motives in writing the pamphlet, suggesting it was either to glorify Roman Catholicism or satisfy his own pecuniary needs.³⁶ There were, however, more letters in the *Public Advertiser* praising Burke for defending the British constitution. The *Public Advertiser* also published the preface and additions of Dr. Richard Price on the *Discourse on the Love of our Country*, which was an answer to Burke's pamphlet.³⁷

The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* praised Burke's pamphlet for "a noble liberality and candour apparently unfettered by party ties or

³⁵*Public Advertiser*, Nov. 5, 1790.

³⁶*Public Advertiser*, Nov. 5, 1790, Nov. 8, 1790, Nov. 12, 1790, Nov. 15, 1790, Nov. 24, 1790, Nov. 26, 1790, Dec. 1, 1790, Dec. 6, 1790.

³⁷*Public Advertiser*, Nov. 25, 1790; *Diary*, Nov. 24, 1790.

private considerations."³⁸ Many, it thought, would consider Burke too severe on the confiscation of ecclesiastical property. The *St. James* printed Burke's passage condemning the *assignats* and claiming religion was the basis of civil society, and also on confiscation by arbitrary power. It also published letters critical of Burke's work signed by Lucius (unidentified), as well as other letters praising Burke. Letter III from Lucius defended the confiscation of ecclesiastical property and the salaries provided by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and letter V criticized Burke for vindicating monasticism. However, the *St. James's Chronicle* continued to praise Burke and announced that he had refused to profit from the phenomenal sale of 13,000 of his work.³⁹

The ministerial *World*, perhaps still ill-disposed towards Burke, printed much less of his pamphlet and pursued the same policy of praising it and publishing some letters attacking Burke. On November 3rd it criticized Burke's adulation of Marie Antoinette. A correspondent from Paris reported to the *World* that Burke's pamphlet was being "devoured" by the aristocracy.⁴⁰ The ministerial *Morning Herald* attacked Burke's attackers on "Grub Street," that is, the hack writers who answered Burke.⁴¹ The *World* made support of Burke's pamphlet a party matter by accusing the opposition press of refusing to print extracts from it and of abusing the author.⁴²

³⁸*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 30 - Nov. 2, 1790.

³⁹*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 20 - Nov. 2, 1790, Nov. 2-4, 1790, Nov. 4-6, 1790, Nov. 13-16, 1790, Nov. 25-27, 1790, Dec. 2-4, 1790.

⁴⁰*World*, Nov. 8, 1790, Nov. 12, 1790, Nov. 22, 1790.

⁴¹*Morning Herald*, Nov. 4, 1790.

⁴²*World*, Nov. 17, 1790.

The accusation was true. The *Star*, no longer ministerial and soon to go over to the opposition, ignored Burke's pamphlet as if it never existed. The *Morning Post* and the *Morning Chronicle* have not been preserved for this period. The *Gazetteer* refused outright to give its readers extracts; instead, it analyzed the pamphlet in pseudo-medical Latin sprinkled with pseudo diseases meaning monarchical, ecclesiastical, quixotic, irrational. In another issue, the *Gazetteer* thought Burke's views would have made impossible both the sixteenth century reformation of the Church in England and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. A letter signed *Ça Ira* [sic] in the *Gazetteer* implied a Catholic influence on Burke and likened his views to that of the absolutist Robert Filmer in the seventeenth century. The *Gazetteer* gave space to Dr. Price's preface and addition to his *Discourse*, which was an answer to Burke. In February 1790 the *Gazetteer* criticized Burke's visit to St. James's palace soon after the publication of his pamphlet, inferring it was in expectation of reward.⁴³

The *London Chronicle* manifested its supposed neutrality by publishing many extracts from Burke's pamphlet and one from Dr. Price's. This newspaper considered Burke remarkably severe on events in France but his conclusions were just. It gave extracts from the *Reflections* of Burke's defense of the French hierarchy and his condemnation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the *assignats*. One issue carried Burke's attack on Lord George Gordon, who in 1780 had incited anti-Catholic riots in London but was now a recent convert to the Jews and in prison for libeling the Queen of France. The *London Chronicle* quoted Burke's suggestion

⁴³*Gazetteer*, Nov. 1, 1790, Nov. 2, 1790, Nov. 4, 1790, Nov. 17, 1790, Nov. 23, 1790, Feb. 7, 1791.

that Gordon's "Hebrew brethern" ransom him from prison, so that, "He may then be enabled to purchase, with the old hoards of the synagogue . . . the lands which are discovered to have been usurped by the Gallican Church."⁴⁴

Burke's pamphlet had an impact on the provincial press. The *Kentish Gazette* was critical of Burke's extravagant style, remembering that he had exulted in the misfortunes of a "beloved king" (George III) during the Regency crisis but now defended a "despot" (Louis XVI). Nevertheless, it printed extracts condemning the sale of ecclesiastical property in France, and also denouncing Lord George Gordon and his Jewish co-religionists.⁴⁵ The more neutral *Chelmsford Chronicle* printed some of Burke's pamphlet but showed some editorial resistance by publishing in the same issue an address of the Protestant Rabaut-Saint Etienne to the people of England, advocating peace between the two countries. Two weeks later it reported from France that Mirabeau called Burke's work a Jesuitical attack.⁴⁶ The ministerial *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* praised Burke's work, did not print extracts, but commenting on its enormous sale, lauded Burke's generosity to his bookseller in refusing to profit from it.⁴⁷

⁴⁴*London Chronicle*, Dec. 2-4, 1790; other tracts, Nov. 2-4, 1790, Nov. 4-6, 1790, Nov. 6-9, 1790, Nov. 11-13, 1790, Nov. 16-18, 1790, Nov. 18-20, 1790, Nov. 23-25, 1790. This newspaper was founded in 1757 by Robert Dodesley who also hired the young Edmund Burke to write for the *Annual Register*. Dodesley soon withdrew from the *London Chronicle*, but his younger brother James Dodesley published Burke's *Reflections* in 1790.

⁴⁵*Kentish Gazette*, Nov. 2-5, 1790, Nov. 9-12, 1790, Nov. 30 - Dec. 3, 1790.

⁴⁶*Chelmsford Chronicle*, Nov. 12, 1790, Nov. 26, 1790.

⁴⁷*Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Dec. 6, 1790. According to Cone's biography of Burke, he profitted handsomely. See ch. II, f. n. 16.

The Decree for the Clerical Oath, November 27, 1790

Following the publication of Burke's *Reflections*, *The Times* was unquestionably hostile to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Its news sources were close to the French hierarchy. The clerical resistance in Brittany to the popular election of the bishop of Finistère took up much space in *The Times*. Along with the *St. James's Chronicle*, it reported the pastoral letter of the bishop of St. Pol de Léon and the obedience of the clergy of Quimper to their dying bishop who had told them never to acknowledge a bishop chosen by the people. *The Times* considered that the bishop of Nantes, who left his diocese in protest against the Civil Constitution, was persecuted by the disciples of modern philosophy. According to *The Times* a frantic democracy in France was resolved to destroy religion, because the sale of church property had exceeded expectations.⁴⁸

When *The Times* reported the decree of the National Assembly of November 27, 1790, requiring the clergy to take an oath to the constitution of France, it stressed the hierarchy's efforts to persuade the King to withhold sanction. *The Times* published the letter of Louis XVI to the Pope, requesting a reply on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy within twenty-four hours, and two days later *The Times* observed that in Paris the Pope was treated without deference.⁴⁹ But *The Times* at the end of December praised the French king because it thought he had withheld

⁴⁸*Times*, Nov. 10, 1790, Nov. 11, 1790, Nov. 13, 1790, Nov. 15, 1790, Nov. 29, 1790, Dec. 2, 1790, Dec. 7, 1790, Dec. 8, 1790, Dec. 10, 1790, Dec. 11, 1790; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 11-13, 1790.

⁴⁹*Times*, Dec. 2, 1790, Dec. 13, 1790, Dec. 15, 1790.

sanction to the decree for the oath. It wrote:

The decree on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy has been passed above a month and is not yet sanctioned by the King. . . .

The King of the French is not one of the disciples of modern arrogant Philosophers. He is a Christian and it is his wish to support the Church, which the Infidels of the National Assembly are earnestly endeavouring gradually to destroy. Civil and religious wars have been kindled by much smaller sparks.⁵⁰

After the King sanctioned the decree on December 26th, *The Times* condemned the oath as tyranny over conscience, and expressed sympathy with the bishop of Clermont who tried in vain to qualify it with a reservation on spiritual jurisdiction.⁵¹ *The Times* predicted that the entire French hierarchy would refuse the oath. It congratulated the non-jurors, writing:

The Clergy of France begin to assume their former consequence. They are all in the highest spirits and almost unanimously resolved to keep their ground in opposition to the whole force of the Legislature.

The influence which they still retain over the minds of the people is very great. The populace of France are all bigots, of dispositions diametrically contrary to the *soi-disant* Philosophers who are totally destitute of religious principles. The contest will now be between religion or rather superstition, and philosophy or rather irreligion. The clergy will not submit to take the oath subscribed by Philosophic Legislators. The Legislators will treat them as being guilty of contumacy and deprive them of their cures. But a few natural questions offer themselves -- If they deprive the whole body of the clergy of their bishoprics and benefices, where will they procure priests to replace them all?⁵²

Two days later *The Times* maintained again that the French clergy refused to subscribe to the oath as a solid body. *The Times* towards the end of January 1791 considered the non-juring clergy religious martyrs whom the mobs of Paris threatened *à la lanterne*.⁵³

⁵⁰*Times*, Dec. 30, 1790. ⁵¹*Times*, Jan. 4, 1791, Jan. 5, 1791.

⁵²*Times*, Jan. 15, 1791.

⁵³*Times*, Jan. 17, 1791, Jan. 20, 1791, Jan. 24, 1791, Jan 28, 1791.

In February *The Times* judged the bishops elected by the people unsuitable for the episcopacy. One newly elected bishop was the son of a tradesman; other bishops, the creatures of the Jacobins. *The Times* took satisfaction that only six bishops of the *ancien régime* subscribed to the oath.⁵⁴ In March, when *The Times* acknowledged that some of the clergy had taken the oath, it castigated them for being ". . . willing to swallow it with some victuals in support of the outward man."⁵⁵ *The Times* relished the Assembly's difficulty in finding someone to consecrate the newly elected bishops.⁵⁶

However, it was apparent that other ministerial English newspapers were divided on the decree of November 27, 1790 for the clerical oath. The *Public Advertiser* continued to rely on the minutes of the National Assembly, which gave an impression of general approval of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. It still presented news from Paris that was anti-hierarchical. The *Public Advertiser* and the *World* gave space to the anti-papal remarks of the deputies in the National Assembly who answered the abbé Maury's contention that papal approval was necessary for ecclesiastics to take the oath.⁵⁷ Despite past fulminations against atheism in France, the *Public Advertiser* and the *St. James's Chronicle* printed the opinion of a correspondent from Paris that the Revolution had done some good because the Bible was now published in the

⁵⁴*Times*, Feb. 8, 1791, Feb. 9, 1791, Feb. 11, 1791, March 3, 1791, March 7, 1791, March 8, 1791, March 14, 1791.

⁵⁵*Times*, March 25, 1791; *Times*, March 26, 1791, rhymed: "Tis he that makes the Oath that breaks it. Not he that for convenience takes it."

⁵⁶*Times*, March 7, 1791, March 8, 1791, April 11, 1791.

⁵⁷*Public Advertiser*, Dec. 7, 1790; *World*, Dec. 7, 1791.

vernacular.⁵⁸

The promptness of the King's sanction to the decree for the oath without his waiting for papal approval, did much to keep ministerial English newspapers from condemning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The *Public Advertiser* and the *Diary* were convinced of the French king's sincerity. In January 1791 they praised the abbé Grégoire and the fifty or so ecclesiastics who took the oath in the National Assembly for waiting only for their King's sanction to prove their patriotism. They printed reports praising Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, for taking the oath. A letter from Paris was printed in the *Public Advertiser* which was critical of the non-juring prelates and stressed that all was calm since the King had given sanction to the clerical oath. The *Public Advertiser* and the *Diary* reported that the majority of the clergy were attached to the Civil Constitution.⁵⁹

The *St. James's Chronicle* continued to use news sources disapproving of hierarchical resistance to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. There was very little elsewhere in the English press on the French bishops' *Exposition of Principles* protesting the Civil Constitution, but the *St. James* reported that the insurrections of suppressed chapters at Quimper, Vannes, Soissons and Lyons had been caused by the bishops' statement. The *St. James* in its following issues indicated some ambivalence concerning the oath of the clergy. It seemed to admire the bishop of Nantes for refusing the oath, but in the issue of December 9-11 its correspondent

⁵⁸*Public Advertiser*, Dec. 17, 1790; *St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 14-16, 1790, Dec. 18-20, 1790.

⁵⁹*Public Advertiser*, Jan. 3, 1791, Jan. 5, 1791, Jan. 6, 1791, Feb. 10, 1791, Feb. 12, 1791; *Diary*, Jan. 3, 1791, Jan. 6, 1791, Feb. 8, 1791, Feb. 9, 1791.

from Paris had extravagant praise for the popular election of bishops: "Virtue, Modesty, Experience, will now occupy in the French church the dignified places hitherto too often, usurped by Ambition, Intrigue, Pride and Ignorance; where the people have a bishop to name, their choice is worthy of the primitive church." This newspaper considered the King's sanction of the oath a blow to the aristocratic party and praised the King for being independent of the Pope. It retained its hostility to the Catholic hierarchy in France, printing salacious gossip about prelates who refused the oath.⁶⁰

In contrast, the *World* predicted dire consequences for France from the refusal of the clergy to take the oath, but it still warned its readers of cabals formed by the priests to harass Protestants.⁶¹ The ministerial *Oracle* was so unconvinced of the cause of the non-juring clergy that it printed a letter to Burke signed *Vindicator*, suggesting that the non-jurors refused less for reasons of conscience than to regain their authority.⁶²

The Papal Briefs: March 10, April 13, 1791

The ministerial newspapers which approved of the clergy complying with the Civil Constitution were also motivated by anti-papalism. They blamed the French hierarchy for supporting the papacy in preventing the lower clergy from taking the oath. The *Public Advertiser*, after

⁶⁰*St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 2-4, 1790, Dec. 4-7, 1790, Dec. 7-9, 1790, Dec. 9-11, 1790; Dec. 21-23, 1790, Dec. 28-30, 1790, Jan. 6-8, 1791, Jan. 13-15, 1791, Jan. 15-18, 1791, Jan. 22-25, 1791.

⁶¹*World*, Jan. 1, 1791, Jan. 6, 1791, Jan. 13, 1791, Jan. 14, 1791.

⁶²*Oracle*, Feb. 23, 1791.

publishing the Pope's letter to the non-juring bishop of St. Pol de Léon in January, joined the *Diary* and the *St. James's Chronicle* in looking forward to the coming separation of the Gallican Church from Rome.⁶³ The *Public Advertiser* published the viewpoint of a correspondent who disagreed with Burke's *Reflections*. He compared the dilemma of the French clergy to that of English Catholics required during the reign of James I to take an oath renouncing papal sovereignty; both resolved their dilemma by pretending the Pope's brief was a forgery.⁶⁴ The *Public Advertiser* and the *Diary* disapproved of the non-jurors in France for informing the people that the constitutional priests were schismatic intruders. It was the opinion of these newspapers that only a minority in France supported the non-juring clergy and that the lower clergy with few exceptions had taken the oath.⁶⁵

The *St. James's Chronicle* in February 1791 became inconsistent, sometimes complaining of the barbarous treatment given non-juring priests, at other times praising the popular election of the clergy. But when the Pope's brief on March 10, 1791 condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, it joined the *Public Advertiser* in deriding it.⁶⁶ The *Diary* appreciated that Loménie de Brienne sent back his cardinal's hat to Rome in defiance. It expressed surprise that the Pope, considering his weakness,

⁶³*Public Advertiser*, Jan. 14, 1791, Jan. 17, 1791, Jan. 19, 1791; *Diary*, Jan. 14, 1791; *St. James's Chronicle*, Jan. 13-15, 1791, Jan. 15-18, 1791.

⁶⁴*Public Advertiser*, Jan. 14, 1791, Jan. 15, 1791, Jan. 27, 1791.

⁶⁵*Public Advertiser*, Feb. 9, 1791, Feb. 10, 1791, Feb. 21, 1791, March 9, 1791; *Diary*, Feb. 8, 1791, Feb. 9, 1791, Feb. 22, 1791, March 8, 1791.

⁶⁶*St. James's Chronicle*, Feb. 1-3, 1791, Feb. 10-12, 1791, Feb. 12-15, 1791; March 24-26, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, March 28, 1791 on the papal brief, ". . . either a *brutum fulmen* or at best an *ignis fatuus*"; also March 30, 1791, April 6, 1791.

did not assume an appearance of neutrality in order to prevent a schism in the Gallican Church.⁶⁷

The opposition press in England assumed that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was a success. The *Gazetteer* and the *Morning Chronicle* were confident that the lower classes in France were not so easily led by the priesthood and the Pope's opposition was ineffective.⁶⁸ Their optimism was based on Louis XVI's sanction as well as an abiding faith that the Enlightenment had trickled down to the people. The *Morning Chronicle* claimed that the King had willingly sanctioned the decree for the oath and that Louis disliked as much as the National Assembly the interference of the Pope.⁶⁹ According to the *Gazetteer*, the King's sanction of the oath had resulted in the clergy's overwhelming approval of the Civil Constitution. The opposition press published reports praising the patriotism of the ecclesiastical deputies in the National Assembly who took the oath, and considered the Assembly rather indulgent to the clergy who refused it. The correspondent to the *Morning Chronicle* denied that resistance to the oath was general, although reported in Alsace, Brittany and southeastern France. Discounting the Pope's ability to take strong measures against the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the *Morning Post* praised Loménie de Brienne when he was elected bishop of Toulouse by a considerable majority.⁷¹

⁶⁷*Diary*, April 1, 1791; on April 18, 1791 it published a translation of the first papal brief.

⁶⁸*Gazetteer*, Nov. 20, 1790, Dec. 4, 1790; *Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 7, 1790, Dec. 8, 1790, Dec. 10, 1790.

⁶⁹*Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 3, 1791.

⁷⁰*Gazetteer*, Jan. 3, 1791, Jan. 4, 1791, Jan. 10, 1791, Jan. 11, 1791.

⁷¹*Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 14, 1791, Jan. 19, 1791, Jan. 21, 1791,

The provincial press, both ministerial and opposition, shared hostility to the papal brief and was slow to support the non-juring clergy in France.⁷² In the spring of 1791 these newspapers were still critical of the Anglican tithes, resented by the local gentry because they were paid in kind. It was to take a series of shocking events before the provincial ministerial newspapers ceased admiring the ecclesiastical decrees of the National Assembly. The influence of Edmund Burke's views was not decisive until it was obvious that Louis XVI did not approve of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

The King's Support of the Non-Juring Clergy

On April 18, 1791, Louis XVI attempted to go to St. Cloud to take Easter communion from non-juring priests. The opposition press believed Louis' protests to the crowd who stopped his carriage that he approved of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The *Morning Chronicle* blamed the non-juring bishops to whom he had given refuge in the royal palace. The *Morning Post* reported the opinion of the Cordelier club in Paris that it was a scandal that the King heard mass from non-juring priests.⁷³

In contrast, *The Times* condemned the mob threatening the King and blamed the Cordeliers for inciting the riot against the higher clergy

Jan. 26, 1791, Feb. 16, 1791, Feb. 21, 1791, March 9, 1791; *Morning Post*, Jan. 20, 1791, Jan. 25, 1791, Feb. 10, 1791, March 15, 1791; *Gazetteer*, Jan. 15, 1791, Jan. 17, 1791, Jan. 19, 1791, Feb. 4, 1791, Feb. 10, 1791, *London Chronicle*, Jan. 22-25, 1791.

⁷²*Newcastle Courant*, April 9, 1791; *Glocester Journal*, April 18, 1791; *Chester Chronicle*, March 4, 1791, March 11, 1791, April 22, 1791. On Anglican tithes, see *Kentish Gazette*, April 26-29, 1791; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, April 29, 1791; *Leeds Mercury*, May 3, 1791, *Newcastle Courant*, May 7, 1791.

⁷³*Morning Chronicle*, April 26, 1791; *Morning Post*, April 27, 1791.

in the royal carriage. The *Public Advertiser*, aghast at the threats to the King, realized that Louis was allied with the non-jurors and quickly changed its unfavorable attitude towards them.⁷⁴

Although the provincial ministerial newspapers condemned the stopping of the King's carriage, they were slower to come to the support of the non-jurors. Even the ministerial *Kentish Gazette* wrote that the Pope told a lie in claiming that Louis had been forced to sanction the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The *Chelmsford Chronicle* considered both the objection of the Cordeliers to the non-juring clergy and the latter's right to worship proof there was liberty in France. The *Newcastle Courant* continued to favor the constitutional clergy. The pro-reform *Chester Chronicle* believed Louis when he affirmed his sanction to the Civil Constitution to the people who stopped his carriage. This newspaper hailed the King as a patriot monarch and denied he was a prisoner.⁷⁵

Some of the ministerial London newspapers surrendered their anti-papalism the following week when they favored the vote in the National Assembly against reunion of Avignon with France.⁷⁶ The *Diary*, previously so anti-papal, was disturbed that the Parisians on May 3rd burnt an effigy of the Pope along with a copy of the papal brief of April 13, 1791, condemning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The *Diary* wrote of the Parisians, "Royalty that they formerly idolized is become a jest, religion

⁷⁴*Times*, April 26, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, April 26, 1791.

⁷⁵*Kentish Gazette*, April 26-29, 1791, May 10-13, 1791; *Newcastle Courant*, April 30, 1791; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, May 6, 1791; *Chester Chronicle*, May 13, 1791. At this time the *Chester Chronicle* printed extracts and praised Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*; see issues, April 15, 1791, April 22, 1791, May 6, 1791, May 13, 1791.

⁷⁶*Diary*, May 6, 1791, May 10, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, May 9, 1791, May 11, 1791, May 12, 1791.

a mockery, and the holy Roman pontiff, who was formerly so formidable a bugbear, is now hardly considered a scarecrow."⁷⁷ This newspaper in six separate issues published without comment (and the *Public Advertiser* published part of it) the papal brief of April 13, 1791, which blamed the new sect of philosophers in the National Assembly for waging war against Catholicism, attacked the principle of popular election of the clergy and asserted the King had been forced to sanction the Civil Constitution.⁷⁸

Although the *Public Advertiser* seemed to relish the burning of an effigy of the Pope, it expressed disappointment that the Parisians reacted with violence to the papal brief instead of soberly turning towards Protestantism. It wrote, "But as yet there is no appearance of the National Assembly taking up Protestant grounds and principles to oppose the policies of the Conclave. The people at large in France are not sufficiently learned and ripe to enquire freely into religious constitution."⁷⁹

The one ministerial newspaper which obstinately defended the ecclesiastical changes in France was the *Oracle*, which perhaps reflected the number of reformers working on its staff. The correspondent to the *Oracle* defended the French who were so irritated by the papal brief against the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.⁸⁰

In May 1791 when Talleyrand, now a director of the department of Paris, proposed in the National Assembly the decree to protect the right

⁷⁷*Diary*, May 10, 1791.

⁷⁸*Diary*, May 27, 1791, June 2, 1791, June 3, 1791, June 10, 1791, June 16, 1791, June 31, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, June 6, 1791, June 10, 1791.

⁷⁹*Public Advertiser*, May 7, 1791.

⁸⁰*Oracle*, June 2, 1791.

of the non-juring clergy to worship in public, the ministerial press expressed approval. Only *The Times* disapproved of Talleyrand's speech because the non-juring clergy in France disliked Talleyrand's advocacy of religious toleration in principle. It complained that religion was ridiculed in France when the ashes of Voltaire were worshipped in the Pantheon and the Jews, Turks, infidels and bankers were buying church property.⁸¹

The provincial press also approved of Talleyrand's decree of religious toleration for non-jurors. The ministerial provincial newspapers worried increasingly about Louis XVI's safety. The *Kentish Gazette* warned the opposition against seditious sentiments that would be expressed at the coming anniversary dinner for the French Revolution.⁸²

On June 21, 1791, the flight of the royal family from France had apparently no direct connection with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, although *The Times* and the *World* claimed that the non-juring clergy influenced the King's plans. The ministerial English press expressed deep concern over the fate of the King when he was brought back from Varennes to Paris. It published the memorial of the King on his departure from Paris which stressed the thwarting of his religious convictions when he tried to go to St. Cloud.⁸³

The English opposition press carried virtually the same reports but

⁸¹*St. James's Chronicle*, May 12-14, 1791; *Morning Herald*, May 13, 1791; *Times*, May 14, 1791, June 2, 1791, June 14, 1791.

⁸²*Kentish Gazette*, May 10-13, 1791, May 24-27, 1791, June 14-17, 1791; *Newcastle Courant*, May 21, 1791, June 4, 1791; *Leeds Mercury*, May 24, 1791, May 31, 1791, June 7, 1791; *Glocester Journal*, May 23, 1791.

⁸³*Times*, June 27, 1791, June 29, 1791; *World*, June 27, 1791, June 29, 1791; *Morning Herald*, June 27, 1791; *Diary*, June 27, 1791, June 28, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, June 27, 1791.

it stressed the suspicions in Paris of the King's treachery which also appeared in the ministerial *Oracle* and the *Diary*.⁸⁴ The letter of Pope Pius dated July 6, 1791, to Louis XVI, offering felicitations for his miraculous escape was published in mid-August in both the opposition's *Morning Chronicle* and the ministerial *Diary*.⁸⁵

Among the provincial newspapers, the *Kentish Gazette* was furious with English democrats who rejoiced at the capture of the King, and concluded that the French had no God. Other provincial ministerial newspapers praised the moderation of the National Assembly in affirming the King's inviolability. They compared Louis XVI's flight to James II's abdication and Louis' present situation to Charles I's.⁸⁶

The Second Anniversary of the French Revolution

Even before the shock of Louis XVI's flight, the ministerial press expressed antagonism towards the coming celebration in England of the second anniversary of the French Revolution. The French Revolution became a full-fledged party matter in England. The ministry, already shaken by Pitt's diplomatic blunder in April 1791 of threatening Russia for occupying a Turkish fortress, was bent on separating the conservative Whig opposition from the Foxites. It was no wonder then that Pitt supported Burke. On May 6th when he broke publicly with Charles Fox over the French Revolution during a debate on a new constitution for Canada, Burke crossed the House to sit on the ministerial benches.

⁸⁴*Star*, June 25, 1791; *Morning Post*, June 27, 1791; *Morning Chronicle*, June 27, 1791; *Oracle*, June 27, 1791; *Diary*, June 27, 1791.

⁸⁵*Morning Chronicle*, Aug. 12, 1791; *Diary*, Aug. 17, 1791

⁸⁶*Kentish Gazette*, July 1, 1791, July 8, 1791; *Norwich Mercury*, July 2, 1791; *Norfolk Chronicle*, July 2, 1791; *Newcastle Courant*, July 5, 1791.

The arrest of Louis XVI shocked English monarchical sentiments and played into the hands of the ministry in disrupting the opposition. Anyone defending the French Revolution was henceforth to the ministerial press subverting the British constitution and religion, as well. The few Whigs attending the dinner sponsored by the English Revolution society were targets. The ministerial *Oracle* wrote that just as Burke had recommended precautions be taken in France to prevent the elected clergy from stealing the altar plate, so precautions might be useful at the dinner of the Revolution Society by providing guests with "lead."⁸⁷ *The Times* questioned whether at the Revolution dinner any Christian of any denomination would have "the impious audacity to thank God for having given the French nation the liberty to insult his religion, to annihilate all distinctions between church and state."⁸⁸ The *Diary* printed a pretended ode written for the anniversary dinner which included these lines,

". . . Who lords despise and bishops hate
Who rail at ministers of state
But most of all -- at Kings!"⁸⁹

The *Public Advertiser* and the *Diary* published another poem on the Revolution dinner, referring to a peer with a double face who was a Presbyterian (Stanhope).⁹⁰

For the dinner on July 14, 1791, over eight hundred guests met at the Crown and Anchor tavern on the Strand in London to toast the French Revolution. That day the *Oracle* congratulated the government for wisely

⁸⁷*Oracle*, July 5, 1791.

⁸⁸*Times*, July 6, 1791, July 8, 1791.

⁸⁹*Diary*, July 9, 1791.

⁹⁰*Public Advertiser*, July 13, 1791; *Diary*, July 13, 1791.

providing security for the guests. The morning after some of the English newspapers seemed relieved that the guests had left the tavern early when a mob assembled and became unruly. The *Morning Herald* made light of the threats of violence. The *Public Advertiser* reported that the people assembled around the tavern were peaceful despite the evil designs of the reformers, but the *Diary* disclaimed the tumultuous rabble.⁹¹ The following day the *Public Advertiser* published a poem apparently directed at those rash enough to have attended the dinner:

"Shrink, Atheists, shrink! An offended God
is plainly now become your foe! . . ."⁹²

The Times reported the dinner and again asserted that the French were atheists because they now worshipped Saint Voltaire.⁹³

At Birmingham a mob rioted for many days when the anniversary of the French Revolution was celebrated at a dinner in a hotel. The English press made clear that the mob was aroused by their hatred of the religious Dissenters who were suspected of wishing to undermine Church and King. The London ministerial newspapers were somewhat concerned at the damage for which it blamed a mob "of the lowest order."⁹⁴ The eighty or so guests who attended the dinner at the hotel in Birmingham escaped

⁹¹*Morning Herald*, July 15, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, July 15, 1791; *Diary*, July 15, 1791; *Oracle*, July 14, 1791, on July 15, the *Oracle* printed the 21 toasts at the dinner: . . . 9th. Perfect Freedom instead of Toleration in matters of Religion. . . . 13th. Thanks to Mr. Burke for the Discussion he had provoked. . . . 21st. To the memory of Hampden, Milton, Sidney, Locke, and Franklin.

⁹²*Public Advertiser*, July 16, 1791.

⁹³*Times*, July 16, 1791

⁹⁴*Morning Herald*, July 18, 1791; *Diary*, July 18, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, July 18, 1791; *Oracle*, July 18, 1791.

violence by leaving the hotel at six o'clock, two hours before the mob broke the windows of the hotel. The mob in Birmingham then demolished the meeting houses of the Protestant Dissenters and their residences, including the laboratory and home of the scientist and Unitarian minister, Dr. Joseph Priestley.

After expressing initial concern at the damage, the London ministerial press blamed the Birmingham riots on the "ill-advised" dinner celebrating the French Revolution and the Protestant Dissenters who supported it, which angered the people attached to the monarchical system. *The Times* held those responsible who had distributed inflammatory pamphlets in support of the French Revolution. It reported that the people destroying Dr. Priestley's house shouted, "Long live the King and the Constitution in church and state!" *The Times* thought it was their "first opportunity to show their abhorrence of the atheistical precepts of the new Rights of Man."⁹⁵ *The Times* noted the following day that the loyalty of the people of Birmingham to King and Church had been sharpened by their resentment of the wealthy inhabitants of Birmingham who were religious Dissenters. The *Public Advertiser* observed that every sixth man attending the Revolution dinner at Birmingham was a minister of the Dissenters or an elder of their church. The *Diary* and other ministerial newspapers identified the seditious literature which had provoked the riots as some printed bills affixed to the Anglican churches of Birmingham, proclaiming "This Barn to be let, . . ." which excited the friends of the episcopacy against the Dissenters.⁹⁶

⁹⁵*Times*, July 18, 1791, July 19, 1791.

⁹⁶*Public Advertiser*, July 19, 1791, July 20, 1791; *Diary*, July 19, 1791 *Times*, July 20, 1791, July 21, 1791.

The Times published an ode supposedly from Birmingham:

"Dissenters attend now, and I will unfold
How Lewis, poor King, he is bought and is sold.
He is King of the French, said to govern them all
But I swear by priest Priestley he is no King at all."⁹⁷

The provincial newspapers disapproved of the violence of the Birmingham riots but, quoting the *St. James's Chronicle*, they were critical of those attending the dinner. However, the *Kentish Gazette* only had words of blame for the Presbyterian party and its inflammatory hand-bill. It copied *The Times* in reporting falsely a toast at the dinner, "Destruction to the Present Government and the King's Head upon a Charger!" A letter from Priestley forced a retraction from the *Kentish Gazette*, but on page four it printed,

On Thursday the 14th inst. died as she was sitting at dinner in a large company at Birmingham Miss Presbyterea Democracy . . . caused by an extraordinary Paine that attacked her internally.⁹⁸

The opposition press deplored the violence on the anniversary of the French Revolution. The *Morning Post* claimed that sincere friends of freedom attended the dinner in London and that enemies of liberty had retained "venal incendiaries" to excite confusion.⁹⁹ The opposition newspapers stressed the respectability of the dinner. The *Morning Chronicle* wrote that the dinner was in celebration of the civil and religious liberty of France and had no relation to affairs in Great Britain. The *Morning Post*

⁹⁷*Times*, July 22, 1791.

⁹⁸*Kentish Gazette*, July 22, 1791; *Times*, July 19, 1791; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, July 22, 1791; *Glocester Journal*, July 18, 1791; *Norwich Mercury*, July 23, 1791; *Norfolk Chronicle*, July 23, 1791; *Newcastle Courant*, July 23, 1791; all, except the *Kentish Gazette* and the *Times*, disapproved of the riots at Birmingham.

⁹⁹*Morning Post*, July 14, 1791.

dismissed the slanders against the dinner and the *Star* congratulated the good sense and discretion of the toasts.¹⁰⁰

Concerning the riots at Birmingham, the *Morning Post* noted with disapproval the similarity between the "No Popery!" riots in 1780 and the cry of "No Dissenters!", while the supposedly ministerial *Oracle* made the same observation.¹⁰¹ The *Morning Chronicle* blamed the ministerial press for inciting the disorders. It praised the letter of Joseph Priestley to the inhabitants of Birmingham appearing in several London newspapers which claimed that the rioters had been misled by bigotry against the Dissenters. The neutral *London Chronicle* also deplored the riots at Birmingham.¹⁰²

Two anti-ministerial provincial newspapers, the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Chester Chronicle*, not only disapproved of the riots at Birmingham but denied they had upheld the British constitution and the Church.¹⁰³

It was no wonder that the English press virtually ignored the celebration at Paris on the Champs de Mars of the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, although *The Times* stressed the anti-monarchical agitation.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰*Morning Chronicle*, July 15, 1791; *Morning Post*, July 15, 1791; *Star*, July 15, 1791; also, *London Chronicle*, July 14-16, 1791.

¹⁰¹*Morning Post*, July 18, 1791; *Oracle*, July 18, 1791.

¹⁰²*London Chronicle*, July 16-19, 1791; *Morning Chronicle*, July 18, 1791, July 20, 1791; the *Oracle*, July 28, 1791, published a letter answering Priestley, denying that the established church had a role in the Birmingham riots, as did the *Star*, Sept. 10, 1791.

¹⁰³*Leeds Mercury*, July 19, 1791, July 26, 1791; *Chester Chronicle*, Aug. 5, 1791.

¹⁰⁴*Times*, July 23, 1791.

The Constitutional Clergy versus the Non-jurors

In the period after the King's flight on June 21, 1791 until the dissolution of the National Assembly at the end of September, English ministerial newspapers reported the growing influence of the non-juring clergy on the inhabitants. *The Times*, and to a lesser extent the *Public Advertiser* and the *Diary*, fulminated against French atheism.¹⁰⁵ It was significant that when religious warfare flared again in Nîmes, the sympathies of *The Times* were decidedly with the Catholics. In September *The Times* criticized the National Assembly for annexing papal Avignon, complaining that some powers in Europe ought to seize from France what France had seized from them.¹⁰⁶ When on the last day of the National Assembly, it was decreed to extend the right of citizenship to the Jews of Alsace, the ministerial *Diary* factually reported the opposition of the *ci-devant* nobility and clergy, but *The Times* disapprovingly cited the admonition in the Bible that the Jews shall ever be strangers and vagabonds. This was in striking contrast to its issue of January 2, 1790, in which it hailed citizenship for the Jews as an enlightened principle.¹⁰⁷

The opposition English press, relying on the minutes of the National Assembly, reported the activities of the refractory priests somehow with assurance that the majority in France opposed their sedition. These newspapers gave space to the requests of department administrators to the

¹⁰⁵*Times*, July 23, 1791, July 28, 1791, July 30, 1791, Aug. 13, 1791, Aug. 16, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, Aug. 2, 1791, Aug. 10-1791, Aug. 13, 1791, Aug. 28, 1791; *Diary*, July 29, 1791, Aug. 3, 1791, Aug. 12, 1791, Aug. 13, 1791.

¹⁰⁶*Times*, Aug. 22, 1791, Sept. 15, 1791, Sept. 23, 1791, Sept. 27, 1791.

¹⁰⁷*Diary*, Oct. 3, 1791; *Times*, Oct 4, 1791.

Assembly for measures to remove troublesome priests.¹⁰⁸ After August 15, 1791, when the *Morning Post* proudly announced it had hired an anonymous new correspondent, an Englishman residing in Paris who was a member of the Jacobin club, the newspaper's views on ecclesiastical affairs in France became progressively anti-clerical.

At the end of August 1791 the English opposition press printed *in toto* the letter of Edmund Burke to the archbishop of Aix, dated July 15th, and the archbishop's reply on August 7th. In his letter Burke praised the constancy of the French clergy in their days of misfortune which proved the advantages derived from their illustrious birth, and informed the archbishop of Aix that the bishop of St. Pol de Léon had been well received at London by the Anglican prelates. According to the archbishop's reply thanking Burke, "The first orator of England has become the defender of the Clergy of France."¹⁰⁹ He also thanked the clergy of England for their kindness to one of his colleagues.

Why should such a correspondence be published in opposition English newspapers rather than the ministerial press? One suspects it was to discredit Burke for advocating the cause of the French clergy. *The Times* a week later commented, "Because Mr. Burke would not assent to the doctrine of dethroning the King -- trampling upon his God -- and denying the truth of religion, he is to be abused by the party papers as the worst man that ever existed."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸*Morning Post*, Aug. 1, 1791, Aug. 10, 1791, Aug. 12, 1791, Aug. 13, 1791; *Star*, Aug. 1, 1791, Aug. 9, 1791, Aug. 11, 1791, Aug. 12, 1791, Aug. 25, 1791; *Morning Chronicle*, Aug. 8, 1791, Aug. 10, 1791, Aug. 22, 1791.

¹⁰⁹*Star*, Aug. 30, 1791; *Morning Chronicle*, Aug. 30, 1791; *Morning Post*, Aug. 31, 1791.

¹¹⁰*Times*, Sept. 7, 1791. Its following issue argued against reforms in the distribution of revenues among the Anglican clergy.

In 1790 most English newspapers approved of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The regulation of the organization of the clergy by the secular power was in the English tradition. The English press of all factions admired the generous provisions for the lower clergy in France while it seemed to agree that the French Church was being restored to its primitive purity. Even the popular election of the clergy did not shock the ministerial English press, except *The Times* which criticized the deprivation of the French monarchy of its ecclesiastical patronage.

The French bishops who resisted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1790 were regarded by the majority of English newspapers as unpatriotic, even disloyal. In 1790 the hostility of the English press to the Catholic bishops in France was strong enough to offset fears expressed in the ministerial newspapers that France was becoming egalitarian. However, the Whigs who joined the English reformers and Dissenters in celebrating at London the first anniversary of the capture of the Bastille were targets of the ministerial press, more because of their advocacy of English reforms than their approval of the French Revolution.

In November 1790 Edmund Burke's *Reflections* was hailed in the ministerial press in expectation of the dissension sown among opposition factions. At first the *Reflections* had little influence on opinion on ecclesiastical matters in the majority of English newspapers, although *The Times* and the *Morning Herald* adopted Burke's views. The ministerial newspapers continued to approve of the French clergy who complied with the Civil Constitution by taking the oath decreed on November 27, 1790. Except for *The Times*, the English press believed that Louis XVI had sanctioned in good faith the clerical oath in December 1790. The non-jurors were considered in both the ministerial and opposition press as selfish and

corrupt, obeying a foreign power, the Pope. Even after ministerial newspapers became critical of other developments in France, they continued to approve of the ecclesiastical decrees of the National Assembly.

The beginning of a change in opinion in the ministerial press took place at the end of April 1791 when Louis XVI attempted the journey to St. Cloud to take Easter communion from non-juring priests. The radicalism of the people who stopped his carriage apparently caused the ministerial press to soften its attitude to the non-jurors and mute its anti-papalism.

At this very time Pitt's ministry was almost turned out because of his belligerent foreign policy toward Russia. In Parliament both Burke and Fox voted against the Pitt ministry on this issue. At the end of April the French Revolution became a party matter. On May 6, 1791, Pitt gave Burke protection for disavowing Charles Fox's admiration for the French Revolution during a debate on the constitution for Canada. The rift between Burke and the Foxites was final while the ministry waited for Burke to detach the conservative Whigs from the opposition.

Between May and July 1791 the ministerial press reversed its earlier approval of the ecclesiastical changes of the French Revolution. The flight of Louis XVI in June left no doubt that the cause of the monarchy in France was linked with that of the non-juring clergy. In July 1791, after it was reported that the royal family was arrested at Varennes, the ministerial press justified its opposition to the French Revolution with the charge of French atheism. The ministerial press utilized monarchist sentiment in Great Britain to disrupt the opposition factions. Even the restoration of power to Louis XVI did not change the growing hostility to the French government. However, the provincial ministerial newspapers

lagged behind the London ministerial press in condemning the National Assembly and its ecclesiastical decrees.

In this same period the English opposition newspapers condemned the violence to which the reformers and Dissenters were subjected in London and Birmingham at the second anniversary dinners of the capture of Bastille. The ministerial press condoned the violence and accused the reformers and the Dissenters of wishing to subvert the British constitution and undermine the Anglican Church. The English opposition press denied this propaganda but hastened to affirm the respectability of its faith in the ecclesiastical reforms of the National Assembly.

A new period of ecclesiastical changes opened in France with the fall of 1791, and English newspapers became further divided.

CHAPTER VII
THE ECCLESIASTICAL CHANGES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
AND THE NATIONAL CONVENTION, 1791-1795

After Louis XVI took the oath to the Constitution of 1791, France became a limited monarchy. The schism in the clergy between those adhering to the Civil Constitution and those who had refused the clerical oath seemed irreparable. Within a year France declared war, overthrew the monarchy and became a republic. The non-juring clergy were accused of sedition. The constitutional clergy, some of them wavering in their allegiance to the Republic, failed to provide the nation with a unified church. The wealth of the Church, used at first to regenerate the nation's finances, was now needed to fight the Republic's enemies.

Decrees against the Non-juring Clergy

In the Legislative Assembly convening on October 1, 1791, from which members of the National Assembly were excluded, there were fewer ecclesiastical deputies than in the first legislature. Religious policy was further subordinated to the needs of the state. The National Assembly had decreed on May 7, 1791, that non-juring priests could not be the official priest of a church but had the right to perform the mass there and conduct religious services elsewhere. To satisfy the complaints of the directors of departments concerning the seditious activities of non-jurors, the abbé Fauchet, now constitutional bishop in Calvados, proposed to the Legislative Assembly that all priests, whether in office or not, take the oath to the constitution of the nation, obligatory for all civil

functionaries, and in case of refusal, suffer loss of pensions. Pro-clerical and other historians are in virtual agreement in condemning this proposal and consider the Legislative Assembly more anti-clerical than the National Assembly; Lafont thought the Legislative Assembly was disenchanted with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.¹

The deputy Isnard from the Var, a leader of the Girondin faction in the Assembly, wanted a more stringent law to punish the refractory clergy with deportation to Italy, but Fauchet's proposal was adopted in the decree of November 29, 1791. The priests refusing this civic oath lost not only their pensions but their right to say mass in churches; they were to be kept under surveillance, and if they caused disturbances, they could be provisionally removed from their residence or imprisoned for two years. The directors of the department of Paris, under Talleyrand's leadership, urged the King not to sanction the decree of November 29, 1791 for a new oath. The King refused sanction but forty-two departments enforced the decree as if it were law.

After France declared war on April 20, 1792 on Prussia and Austria, the non-juring clergy were regarded as possible enemy agents. The Legislative Assembly, now controlled by the minister Roland and his Girondin faction, passed a decree on May 27, 1792, deporting non-juring priests if twenty active (qualified to vote) citizens from the same canton accused the priests of sedition with the approval of the directors of the department. Most historians deplore this decree.² The King, who had already

¹Ledré, pp. 108-11; Aulard, *Christianity* . . . , pp. 81-82, 85-86; Lafont, pp. 49-50, 54-55; Dansette, I, 97-99.

²Aulard, pp. 87-88; Pisani, I, 263-265; Lafont, p. 56; Ledré, pp. 114-116; Latreille, p. 100; Dansette, I, 100.

vetoed a decree against émigrés, refused sanction and again some departments enforced it as if it were law.

On June 20, 1792 (anniversary of the Tennis Court oath of 1789) the *sans-culottes*, or more radical members of the Paris sections, invaded the palace at the Tuilleries to demand the King's sanction of the decrees against the non-juring clergy and the émigrés. Although the King behaved in a very conciliatory manner, he persisted later in refusing to sanction the decrees.

The Austrian and Prussian armies massed on the border of France invaded the eastern provinces. At the end of July, the Duke of Brunswick, general of the coalition armies moving toward Paris, threatened in his *Manifesto* the destruction of any who harmed the royal family or who opposed the restoration of the privileges of the clergy and nobility. On August 10, 1792, the *fédérés* of the National Guards and the *sans-culottes* organised an insurrection against the royal palace. After ordering his Swiss guards to fire on the attackers, the King and his family fled to the Legislative Assembly for protection. Heavy losses were suffered on both sides. The Legislative Assembly voted after considerable debate to suspend the monarchy and authorized the imprisonment of the royal family at the Temple, despite the clause of the King's inviolability written into the Constitution of 1791. The Assembly then declared the decrees which had not received sanction to be law.

The new revolutionary Commune of Paris ordered on the evening of August 10th the arrest of counter-revolutionary suspects. Many non-juring priests were detained in the convent of the Carmes, in the prison of the Abbaye and the seminary of Saint-Firmin. The Legislative Assembly decreed that all citizens were to take the oath to defend

liberty and equality or die in the attempt; this oath, an answer to the enemy approaching Paris, replaced those to the constitutional monarchy. Some of the refractory clergy took this oath, because the Pope did not condemn it specifically, although he had denounced liberty and equality as unChristian in his brief of March 10, 1791.

According to a new decree of August 26, 1792, all priests who had refused the oath of November 29, 1791 and now refused to subscribe to the oath of liberty and equality had to leave their departments within eight days and France within fifteen days; they were to declare what country they wished to go to and were offered travel money and passports. Those priests who refused to declare where they wished to emigrate were to be deported to French Guiana. Non-juring priests who evaded deportation were condemned upon arrest to ten years' imprisonment, excepting the infirm or those over sixty years of age. Most historians criticize the severity of this measure, but Aulard considered it understandable in view of the danger of war.³

The September Massacres

On September 2, 1792, news reached Paris that the invading army had captured Verdun and was now within three days march of the capital. The toscin rang for citizens to march to Soissons to join the army and repulse the enemy. Panic seized them for the safety of their families who would be slaughtered by the enemy entering Paris, and fury against the prisoners taken on August 10th on suspicion of treason whom the tribunals had

³Pisani, I, 271-273, 283-284; Pressensé, pp. 282-283; Lafont, p. 56; Ledré, pp. 118-120; Latreille, p. 102; Aulard, pp. 88-89.

been slow to bring to trial. The Commune delegated to the sections of Paris the further rounding-up of refractory priests.

The September massacres, as the next few days have come to be called, began at the prison of the Abbaye where an improvised jury of twelve men pronounced verdicts on the prisoners which were carried out by executioners of "popular justice." More than twenty priests were killed at the Abbaye while they were being transferred there; 115 priests died at the convent of the Carmes, dispatched systematically within a few hours, and 74 at Saint-Firmin. The crucial question asked them was whether they had taken the oath of August 1792 for liberty and equality. Nine priests were acquitted at the Carmes when they took the "little oath" but the great majority died for their refusal. A few prelates were among them -- Dulau, archbishop of Arles (hated for inciting a massacre there earlier that year) and the two Rochefoucaulds, the bishops of Saintes and Beauvais. Pierre Caron, the best authority on the September massacres, estimates that between 1,200 to 1,400 persons were killed, among whom were 220 to 300 priests, and that non-political or common criminals were the majority of those massacred. He comments on the exaggerations in the English newspapers which, citing some French journals, prepared public opinion for a rupture with France. The abbé Barruel, arriving in London in the autumn of 1792, claimed there were 12,000 killed in the September massacres. Modern historians, including pro-clerical writers, tend to agree with Caron's estimate.⁴

⁴P. Caron, *Les massacres de septembre*, Paris, 1935, pp. 27, 33, 52, 63, f. n. 2, 101, 107, 213-214; Barruel, p. 299 ff.; Ledre, p. 123; Daniel-Rops, p. 35; Dansette, I, 101-102; Latreille, p. 102; McManners, p. 67, claims the question of the oath for priests was exaggerated by clerical historians.

The question of who bore responsibility for the massacres remains unsolved, but was important in formulating anti-revolutionary propaganda. Historians on the right and on the left agree on the atmosphere of panic in Paris since August 10th, the rumor of plots in the prisons, culminating in a climate of near insanity with the news of the approach of the invading armies.⁵ The Legislative Assembly, the Commune, and Danton, minister of Justice, were blameable only in not preventing the massacre. It cannot be proven that either the Jacobin club under the influence of Robespierre, or the section assemblies deliberated on it, or even that the more incendiary journalists instigated it. The police organ of the Commune, the Committee of Surveillance, had recently made Marat, whose journal *L'Ami du Peuple* was incendiary, a member, but there was little indication that any organ of government ordered the massacre. Although Caron concedes that certain leaders of the Commune were seen participating in the tribunals at various prisons, he concludes it was the collective and spontaneous will of the people perpetrating the massacre. Pro-clerical writers refuse to absolve Danton and the leaders of the French Revolution who, they claim, were motivated by hatred of religion.⁶

A new wave of emigration ensued with the non-juring clergy fleeing to England, Holland, Spain, Italy and the Rhineland. Though preferring the warm, Catholic countries, the priests who fled to Protestant countries found a generous welcome in Great Britain where Edmund Burke had done much to overcome anti-papalism. Eight thousand priests found

⁵G. Walter, *Les massacres de septembre*, Paris, 1932, pp. 11-12, 36-38; Daniel-Rops, p. 34.

⁶Caron, pp. 283-284, 304-306, 325-327, 443-446, 469; Pisani, II, 5-7; Ledré, p. 123.

shelter in England with 600 residing at the royal castle at Winchester.⁷ The émigré bishop of St. Pol de Léon, inveterate enemy of all ecclesiastical reforms and a friend of Burke, organized aid to the refugee clergy in England with the co-operation of George III, Parliament, the Anglican Church and the "best society."

In Spain the monarch and the Inquisition feared the liberalism of the émigré French clergy, so that many were forced to hide in the mountains or monasteries, while they were forbidden to say mass in Spanish churches. Rome and the papal states welcomed 4,000 of the French non-juring clergy who had to take a special oath to obey the papal bull condemning Jansenism. According to Donald Greer's statistical study on emigration, there were 24,596 of the clergy who were émigrés during the French Revolution, and they formed little more than 25 per cent of the total emigration.⁸

Secularization and Dechristianization under the French Republic

The advance of the allies was halted at the battle of Valmy on September 20, 1792. The victory in November of the French general Dumouriez at Jemappes in the Austrian Netherlands saved the Republic and allayed the fears that had culminated in the September massacres. The new legislature, the National Convention, elected by universal suffrage, but probably no more representative of all Frenchmen by reason of wide spread absentions, proceeded to organize the French Republic.

⁷Cone, pp. 404-406.

⁸Dansette, I, 103-104; Ledré, pp. 126-127; Latreille, pp. 122-123; E. Gabory, *La Révolution et la Vendée* (Paris, 1925), I, 127-128; D. Greer, *The Incidence of the Emigration during the French Revolution*, (Gloucester, Mass., 1966), pp. 114-115, 127, 131.

With the advent of the Republic it became obvious that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy had failed to unify the Gallican church in support of the Revolution. The National Convention passed severe measures to suppress the counter-revolutionary activities of the non-juring clergy. Some of the constitutional priests were suspected of royalist sympathies. The civil authorities moved towards the secularization of daily life which lessened the importance of the constitutional church.

Even before the overthrow of the monarchy, Manuel, the procuror of the Commune of Paris demanded that no citizen be obliged as formerly to decorate the walls of his house for the *Corpus Christi* procession, nor shops be obliged to close, and National Guards employed in religious ceremonies. After August 10, 1792, the Commune prohibited the wearing of ecclesiastical robes outside the churches. That month the Convention suppressed the congregations devoted to charity and education but permitted ex-nuns to continue their work as individuals.

Secularization proceeded rapidly under the Convention. On September 20, 1792, parish registers were transferred from the constitutional clergy to civil authorities because the adherents of the non-juring priests refused to register marriages births and deaths with the "intruders" of the constitutional church. This measure was not intended as secularization but was a practical necessity. Marriage was decreed a civil contract rather than an indissoluble sacrament, and divorce also became legal. In December 1792 the Convention adopted the proposals of Condorcet to secularize primary school education. However, during the trial of the King, the Convention refused to legislate on a matter of conscience when Manuel tried to prohibit midnight mass on Christmas which he feared was conducive to royalist disturbances. Nor did the Convention early in January 1793

ban the festival of the Three Kings (Twelfth Night) as a royalist ceremony.⁹

The marriage of the clergy was encouraged by the Republic because it removed their separation as a caste from the citizenry. The constitutional bishops under the monarchy had attempted to prevent their clergy from marrying; both Grégoire and Fauchet considered marriage a breach of discipline. In November 1792, Thomas Lindet, constitutional bishop of the Eure announced his marriage in the Convention and was applauded. Decrees in March, July, August and September 1793 protected married priests from the disapproval of their bishops or their congregations. Pro-clerical historians consider the marriage of priests a scandal, proving the weakness of the "schismatic" clergy, or they stress the purely platonic nature of these marriages of convenience.¹⁰

The National Convention refused to adopt proposals to end the salaries of the constitutional clergy, despite the pressure of financing the war. In November 1792, while discussing the cost of secularizing education, Cambon brought forth such a proposal. Robespierre and the Jacobins succeeded in opposing it because they considered a national religion necessary for the success of the Revolution. However, during the Terror the

⁹Pisani, II, 42-44; Latreille, pp. 109-112; Aulard, pp. 89-91; Dansette, I, 115-117; Lafont, whose point of view is laic, pp. 62-63, 67, 70-71, includes in his appendix, pp. 237-245, the speech of the deputy Jacob Dupont supporting secular education in which he confessed he was an atheist.

¹⁰Pisani, II, 42; Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison et le culte de l'Être supreme*, Paris, 1904, 21; Dansette, I, 117-118; Ledré, pp. 164-165; Latreille, pp. 111-112; B. Plongeron, "Les Abdicataires parisiens," pp. 52-53, *Les Prêtres abdicataires pendant la Revolution*, ed. M. Reinhard, Congrès des Sociétés savantes de Paris et des départements, section d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, Actes 89, t. 1, Paris, 1964.

Convention denounced on September 28, 1793 the inequality of episcopal salaries, reduced them to 6,000 livres a year and suppressed episcopal vicars.¹¹

In December 1792 and January 1793 the Convention was occupied with the trial of Louis XVI. In his last will before he was executed on January 21, 1793, the King expressed religious remorse for sanctioning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The Jacobins in the Convention had argued for putting the King on trial, then against a popular plebiscite on his punishment. They succeeded in having the death penalty decreed after the majority had voted the King guilty of treason. The King's treason was associated in the public mind with the treason of the émigrés and the clergy.

During the debates on the fate of Louis XVI, the Convention voted the Propagandist decrees of November 19, and December 15, 1792, promising assistance to any people wanting to be free and regulating the provisions for liberation in countries occupied by armies of the French republic. Aimed at the Austrian Netherlands and the princes of the Rhineland of the Holy Roman Empire who had refused to carry out the decrees of the Assemblies, these new measures ushered in an aggressive altruism that peoples everywhere would benefit from revolutionary change. The French occupation under Dumouriez of the Austrian Netherlands faced the hostility of the non-juring clergy who had emigrated there, while the anti-clericalism of the new popular societies in Belgium shocked the Catholic populace. In

¹¹Pisani, II, 45-46; Aulard, *Le culte de la Raison . . .*, p. 18; Lafont, pp. 76-78; A. Mathiez, *Contributions a l'histoire religieuse de la Revolution française* (Paris, 1907), p. 30; Godechot, *Institutions . . .*, p. 361.

liberating Belgium, France decreed the abolition of feudal dues and the sequestering of noble and ecclesiastical property. Dumouriez, who had personal ambitions in the Austrian Netherlands, wished to spare the churches from pillage and requisitions to pay for the French occupation.¹²

A result of the death of Louis XVI and French occupation of the Austrian Netherlands was the extension of the war to include Great Britain, Holland and Spain. Despite Burke and Calonne in England urging intervention, the Pitt ministry had wanted to stay out of war. But when France occupied the Netherlands in November and decreed the river Sheldt open to navigation, Great Britain considered her security and commerce threatened, and that of her ally, Holland.¹³

The entry of England meant naval warfare for which France was ill prepared. In the spring offensive of 1793 French armies began to lose territory. Lafayette had already deserted after the insurrection of August 10, 1792, when the Legislative Assembly failed to vote in favor of the monarchy. In March 1793 Dumouriez was defeated in Holland and early in April he defected to Austria.

The inhabitants of the Vendée in northwestern France had opposed the Civil Constitution of the Clergy before the papal briefs of 1791 when three quarters of their priests refused the oath. Their religious sentiments sustained their opposition to the Convention's decree of February 1793 calling for a volunteer army of 300,000. Civil war in the Vendée and the west of France began in earnest the following month. Virtually all historians conclude that, although the levy of men for

¹²J. Godechot, *La Grande Nation* (Paris, 1956), I, 208, II, 502-504, 539-543.

¹³H. Mitchell, *The Underground War Against Revolutionary France* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 26-29.

the Republic sparked the rebellion, religious strife motivated it more than royalism. A sociologist, Charles Tilly, believes that the inhabitants of this economically backward area expressed in religious terms their animosity to the bourgeois administrators who had replaced the priests in dispensing charity.¹⁴

The rebellion in the Vendée meant that in the spring of 1793 the Republic waged a civil war while also fighting foreign enemies. The National Convention set up the following instruments of government responsible to it to crush counter-revolution with methods of Terror: the Committee of General Security, or police organ to implement this policy, the Committee of Public Safety, its real executive power established in April 1793, and the Revolutionary Tribunal to try cases of treason. Representatives *en mission*, appointed by the Convention on the recommendation of the Committee of Public Safety, were sent to departments to suppress opposition to the laws of the Republic. The Convention passed the first law of the Maximum in May 1793 to remedy severe shortages resulting from wartime inflation.

In the spring of 1793 two groups vied for power which were known as the Jacobins and the Girondins. The Jacobins, who had voted for the death of the King, wanted centralization of power at Paris, while the Girondins had federalist support in the departments. The Jacobins blamed the Girondin deputies for the treason of Dumouriez who had belonged to their faction, and accused them of royalism in their reluctance to vote

¹⁴Ch. Tilly, *The Vendée* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), pp. 110-112, 233-234; J. Godechot, *La contre-révolution* (Paris, 1961), pp. 228-229; Dansette, I, 111-112; Gabory, I, 89, 195-196, 216-217; Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, p. 97; Latreille, p. 114.

death for the King. On June 2, 1793, the *sans-culottes* of Paris brought about a purge of the Girondins and the Jacobins became the dominant power. After the constitution of 1793 was ratified in July by a plebiscite, its operation was suspended until peacetime and the organs of the Terror remained in force.

The National Convention passed additional laws against the seditious clergy. On March 13, 1793, it decreed death for priests involved in recruitment disturbances; also, death for priests already sentenced to transportation and found in the Republic. On April 23rd, the Convention decreed that all priests who had refused the oath to liberty and equality of the Republic were to be deported to Guiana, and this law included not only the non-juring clergy but those who had taken the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Historians consider these laws excessively severe, but Aulard justifies the political necessity for suppressing counter-revolution.¹⁵

On July 13, 1793, the journalist Marat, revered by the *sans-culottes*, was assassinated by Charlotte Corday in a federalist plot against the Jacobins which involved Fauchet, the constitutional bishop of Calvados. Following the assassination and during the repression of the federalist revolts at Marseilles, Lyons and elsewhere, the Terror reigned. On September 17, 1793 the Convention decreed the law of Suspects, which codified the prosecution of crimes against the Republic.

On October 20 and 21, 1793 the Convention decreed death for priests found guilty of bearing arms against the Republic on the signature of two witnesses, and transportation to the colonies for priests denounced by

¹⁵Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, pp. 98-99; Ledré, pp. 134-135; Lafont, pp. 88-89.

six citizens of their cantons with the approval of the directors of the department. Donald Greer's statistical study of the Terror indicates that the more troubled by counter-revolution an area was, the less the percentage of those condemned were refractory priests. In all France 920 of those condemned to death were priests, or only 6½ per cent of the total number of 14,080.¹⁶ Pro-clerical historians consider the condemned priests martyrs, yet account for the clergy's amazing ability to survive and function during the Terror by the uneven application of the laws. They stress the suffering of priests put on boats at Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Rochefort to be deported who died from disease and unsanitary conditions. All writers deplore the *noyades* or drowning of prisoners by Carrier, representative on mission at Nantes in the Vendée, where the boat carrying ninety priests to be deported sank in the Loire.¹⁷

The period of dechristianization which lasted briefly past the end of 1793 is regarded by pro-clerical writers as simply hatred of Catholicism. Other historians see it as the culmination of secularization in the Republic or the failure of the Gallican constitutional church. Unofficially a new civic religion of patriotism had taken the place of Catholicism when Nature or Reason became a republican deity. Commemorating the overthrow of the monarchy, a pageant on August 10, 1793 staged by the artist deputy David failed to mention the Christian God in deifying Nature in poems and works of art.

¹⁶D. Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror during the French Revolution*, (Gloucester, Mass., 1966), pp. 153, 163-164.

¹⁷Pisani, II, 75-76; Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, pp. 98-99; Dansette, I, 119; Ledré, pp. 136-140; Latreille, p. 105; Tilly, pp. 338-339; Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror . . .*, pp. 35-36.

The republican calendar adopted by the Convention on October 7, 1793, devised by two deputies, the mathematician Romme and the poet Fabre d'Eglantine, ushered in dechristianization. The twelve months of the republican year, starting from September 22, 1792, the first day of the Republic, were named after stages of nature. Each month had thirty days divided into three decades of ten days each, the last of which was a republican holiday. Five days at the end of the year were *jours sans-culottes* for revolutionary festivals. The adoption of the republican calendar meant the suppression of Sunday and numerous saints' days.¹⁸

The actual suppression of the Christian religion was never part of the national republican law. The representatives on mission to rebellious areas concerned with the suppression of counter-revolution extirpated "fanaticism." Some of the most fervid dechristianizers among them were ex-priests, such as Fouché who secularized burials in Nevers, inscribing on the gates of cemeteries, "Death is but eternal sleep." After collecting the valuables of churches which were donated to the national treasury, these representatives encouraged the priests to "depretize," to surrender their letters of ordination. Clerical historians, of course, deplore the great number of priests who "depretized" and blame the constitutional clergy for bowing to the "general will." Concurring with historians who claim that dechristianization could not be attributed to any specific group, Albert Mathiez concludes that its spontaneous nature

¹⁸Pisani, II, 55; Aulard, *Le culte de la Raison . . .*, p. 34; Dansette, I, 126, 130-132; Ledré, pp. 178-179; Godechot, *Institutions . . .*, pp. 363-365; A. Soboul, *Les Sans-culottes parisiens en l'en II* (Paris, 1958), p. 286; McManners, p. 99.

derived from popular manifestations of patriotism.¹⁹

On 16 Brumaire, year II (November 6, 1793) the Convention granted communes the right to adopt or suppress publicly supported religion. Some communes closed the churches and reopened them as temples of Reason where people heard patriotic speeches on the *decadi*. Gobel, the bishop of Paris, was encouraged by Chaumette of the Commune to renounce his episcopacy after Gobel was influenced by Anarcharsis Cloots and other foreigners who were free thinkers and attached to the popular societies. On 17 Brumaire, Chaumette appeared with Gobel and eleven of his vicars to inform the Convention they had no need of any other religion than that of liberty and equality. Gobel divested himself of episcopal insignia and donned the *bonnet rouge*. Some ecclesiastical deputies, such as the abbé Sieyès and the Protestant pastor Julien of Toulouse, also abdicated their functions, but not Grégoire who declined to follow their example. Albert Soboul, the historian of the *sans-culottes*, concludes that those influencing Gobel to abdicate were only a small faction because the majority of Parisians believed still in Christianity. Another modern historian, Marcel Reinhard comments on the high percentage of abdicating priests in some departments compared to 27 per cent in Paris.²⁰

On the following *decadi*, 20 Brumaire (November 10, 1793) the Commune of Paris celebrated the festival of Reason at the *ci-devant* cathedral of Notre Dame. A temple of Philosophy was erected on a "mountain" (in the choir) from which emerged the goddess of Reason. (She was probably an

¹⁹Mathiez, *Contributions à l'histoire religieuse . . .*, pp. 21, 26; Pisani, II, 56-59; Dansette, I, 120-121; Ledré, pp. 160-161; Latreille, pp. 115-116.

²⁰Soboul, p. 291; Aulard, *Le culte de la Raison . . .*, pp. 41-45; Reinhard, *Les Prêtres abdicataires . . .*, p. 225; Plongeron, p. 29.

actress and the wife of Momoro, president of the Cordelier Club. A living woman was deemed a more fitting tribute to Nature than an inanimate statue.) Young virgins dressed in white ascended the "mountain" bearing flowers while children sang hymns to Nature and the Republic. The historian Aulard points out the appeal of this ceremony to eighteenth-century minds educated in the Enlightenment with its optimistic belief in abstractions. Aulard denies that the festival to Reason was atheistic; he considers it pantheistic, moral and anti-Christian, but too philosophic for a popular following. Mathiez claims the cult of Reason generated popular enthusiasm through patriotism, and Soboul stresses how it fused with the *sans-culottes'* worship of revolutionary martyrs, such as Marat, who became quasi=saints. Pro-clerical historians regard the festival of Reason as satanic delirium; even the secular-minded Jacques Godechot deplores its vulgar caricature of Catholic ritual.²¹

The Commune continued its dechristianization, sending delegations to the Convention to ridicule the priests by parodying their ritual and to announce the closing of Parisian churches. In the sections the *sans-culottes* carried away the treasures of the churches and burnt the saints' relics. In confiscating the wealth of the church to aid the nation, the *sans-culottes*, according to Soboul, were justified by their ideas on social democracy.²² On 3 Frimaire, year II (November 23, 1793) the Commune excluded former priests and nobles from public work while the Commune's

²¹Aulard, *Le culte de la Raison* . . . , pp. 77-80, 102-104, 200-201; Mathiez, *Contributions* . . . , p. 21; Soboul, pp. 299, 303, 307; Abbé Delarc, *L'Église de Paris pendant la Révolution française* (Paris, n. d.), II, 433; Godechot, *Institutions* . . . , p. 367.

²²Soboul, pp. 289-291.

revolutionary army arrested many priests as counter-revolutionary suspects.

Robespierre's "Supreme Being"

Robespierre, leading member of the Committee of Public Safety since July 1793, was hostile to anti-religious excesses. Danton, who had recently emerged from political retirement, expressed in the Convention the fear that dechristianization would make the Revolution unpalatable abroad, particularly in Belgium which was again being liberated by French troops. Robespierre spoke towards the end of November 1793 in the Convention and at the Jacobin club on the moral imperative of belief in a divinity for the Republic and denounced atheism as aristocratic. Barère, who was also of the Committee of Public Safety, moved the decree of 18 Frimaire, year II (December 6, 1793) guaranteeing liberty of worship.

The Jacobin club at Paris immediately supported Robespierre's policy on religion as members swore publically their belief in God. Chaumette and Hébert, the assistant procuror of the Commune, denied they were atheists. Chaumette professed a puritanical revolutionary deism, condemning priests, prostitution and poverty, while Hébert claimed at the Jacobin club and in his newspaper *Le Père Duchêne* his allegiance to Jesus, the brave *sans-culotte* condemned by the Louis Capet of his time. Chaumette directed the Commune to repeal its decree closing the churches as well as excluding priests from employment. During Christmas of 1793 the churches of Paris were crowded with worshippers. Most historians attribute Robespierre's attack on dechristianization to his realization that the majority in France needed religion, as well as his concern for public opinion abroad. Soboul believes that Robespierre feared the fervor

of the *sans-culottes* in worship of their revolutionary martyrs, doubts the Jacobins could satisfy their demands for social democracy. Biographers of Hébert consider dechristianization subordinate to his social philosophy.²³

Dechristianization lingered in the departments early in 1794, despite the Convention's disapproval. Representatives on mission continued to send the valuable treasures of the churches to the Convention. The deputies applauded this accumulation of wealth so urgently needed for the war, although they frowned on infringements of religious liberty.

The leaders of the *sans-culottes* struggled that winter to alleviate the desperate food scarcity in Paris. To satisfy some of their grievances Saint-Just of the Committee of Public Safety proposed the laws of Ventôse, year II (February 26, March 3, 1794) by which the property of enemies of the Republic was expropriated to aid the poor and landless. These laws were hardly implemented before the fall of Robespierre, and it is doubtful whether they would have helped the poor of Paris.

The Hébertists denounced speculators who flouted the laws of the Maximum and accused the followers of Danton of wishing to end the Terror in order to make huge profits. Robespierre denounced the Hébertists for planning an insurrection to purge the Convention which to him was treason against the general will. The Hébertists were arrested and tried for plotting to betray the Revolution to foreigners, and, charged with being atheists, they were guillotined on 3 Germinal, year II (March 23, 1794). Gobel perished after he was accused of atheism and abandoning his

²³Soboul, pp. 306-313; Aulard, *Le culte de la Raison . . .*, pp. 212-216, 220-222; Ledré, pp. 169-170; G. Walter, *Hébert et le Père Duchêne* (Paris, 1946), pp. 161-162; L. Jacob, *Hébert* (Paris, 1960), p. 230 ff.

ecclesiastical post. Saint-Just then accused Danton and his followers of corruption and plotting to betray the Revolution to the enemy. Some of the followers of Danton were also charged with not believing in religion or the immortality of the soul. The Dantonists were tried and condemned on 16 Germinal (April 5, 1794).

The Committee of Public Safety now controlled the Convention with Robespierre the dominant figure after the fall of the Dantonists. While winning victories against foreign enemies and suppressing rebellion on French soil, the revolutionary government thought it necessary to strengthen the Revolutionary Tribunal. The laws of the Maximum to control war-time inflation were applied to the wages of artisans who since the fall of Hébertism grumbled in political impotence.

According to Robespierre, a religion of virtue was needed for the regenerated nation. On 18 Floréal, year II (May 7, 1794) he outlined to the Convention a cult of the Supreme Being, not, he claimed, the God of priests who served despotism but one who provided patriots the consolation of heavenly reward. When an attempt to assassinate Robespierre failed on 5 Prairial (May 24th) the Convention thanked the protection of the Supreme Being. It decreed on 18 Prairial (June 6th) recognition of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. Although the decree also guaranteed liberty of worship, atheism now became illegal in the French Republic. Pro-clerical and conservative historians question Robespierre's belief in the Supreme Being, although some concede his Rousseauist deism was indirectly Christian. These historians stress that the idea of the Supreme Being was politically useful to Robespierre both in counteracting public opinion abroad and sanctioning republican

morality in France.²⁴

Two days later, on June 8th, the artist deputy David staged a festival for the Supreme Being. The deputies took their seats at an amphitheatre erected at the Tuilleries where Robespierre, recently elected president of the Convention, delivered a discourse and then descended the steps, holding the torch of Truth to destroy a statue of Atheism, while musicians performed a hymn to the Supreme Being. Then the members of the Convention marched with a huge throng of people organized into sections to the Champs de Mars. Historians favorable to the French Revolution admit Robespierre's sincerity while noting the confusion in the popular mind between his cult and the more philosophic cult of Reason when both cults were fused with patriotism.²⁵

Some deputies to the Convention lacked enthusiasm for the new religion with Robespierre as pontiff. Vadier of the Committee of General Security, subordinated to the Committee of Public Safety, warned of a counter-revolutionary plot by followers of Catherine Théot who claimed God had inspired her to interpret political events. Robespierre dismissed it as harmless.²⁶

The law of 22 Prairial (June 10, 1794) decreed to speed the trials of suspects before the Revolutionary Tribunal dispensed with legalities

²⁴Pisani, II, 142-143; Ledre, pp. 180-182; Latreille, p. 120; P. Gaxotte, *The French Revolution* (New York, 1932), p. 339.

²⁵Aulard, *Le culte de la Raison . . .*, pp. 267-275; Mathiez, *Contributions . . .*, p. 21; J. M. Thompson, *The French Revolution* (New York, 1966), pp. 543-545; Leo Gershoy, *The French Revolution and Napoleon* (New York, 1964), pp. 287-288.

²⁶Pisani, II, 145; Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, pp. 125-126; Gaxotte, p. 343; Thompson, pp. 545-546; Godechot, *Institutions . . .*, p. 369.

such as witnesses and counsel for the defense. Deputies to the Convention, representatives on mission who had committed anti-religious and terrorist excesses or were guilty of corruption, feared that the new law deprived them of immunity from arrest. The Terror was accelerated in Paris when prisoners were grouped by the Committee of General Security in batches without sifting evidence against them. According to Donald Greer's study, in the period of the Terror dominated by Robespierre the upper classes including the clergy formed 57 per cent of the total victims, indicating that the Terror became an instrument of social revolution rather than the political repression of the past year.²⁷

On 8 Messidor (June 26th) the great victory at Fleurus of the republican armies seemed the culmination of Robespierre's triumph. Victory awakened the grievances of those who had allied with Robespierre for a common cause. A coalition of all who feared the Terror of the law of 22 Prairial, those who grumbled at the Maximum, those who disliked the religion of virtue, formed to overthrow the "tyrant." Old terrorists such as Carrier, Fouché and Tallien, whose excesses were now under scrutiny, allied themselves with former moderates wanting relaxation of economic controls. The Committee of Public Safety was divided; Cambon and the politically conservative professional men who had organized the victory of the armies made common cause with Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois who were responsive to the *sans-culottes*. Barère joined them because he had been antagonized by Robespierre playing "republican pope" at the fête for the Supreme Being and he feared Robespierre would denounce him, too.²⁸

²⁷Greer, pp. 117-119, 166.

²⁸L. Gershoy, *Bertrand Barère* (Princeton, 1962), pp. 241-242, 250-253.

Sensing the plots forming against him, Robespierre absented himself from the Committee of Public Safety and the Convention. On 5 Thermidor (July 23rd) he returned to the Committee to help implement the Ventôse decrees on land reform to help the poor. An attempt at reconciliation of the dissident members of the Committee failed. Three days later, on 8 Thermidor, Robespierre addressed the Convention to denounce another conspiracy, claiming he would name members of both revolutionary committees. He complained that ever since the decree recognizing the Supreme Being, the successors of Hébert and Danton conspired against him. Vadier accused Robespierre of interfering with the prosecution of Mlle. Théot, the pretended Mother of God, to protect her because she planned to declare Robespierre the new savior of France.

On the following day, 9 Thermidor, among a welter of accusations that Robespierre was a tyrant, Tallien and other deputies ridiculed Robespierre's pontifical role in honoring the Supreme Being. Robespierre and his followers were arrested in the Convention. They escaped with the help of those loyal to the Commune, but they were captured and guillotined the following day.

The Thermidorian Separation of Church and State

The republicans who ruled after Thermidor were not more inclined to restore Catholicism than their predecessors. Immediately after Robespierre's downfall, Barère and Tallien attacked Robespierre's religious policy as superstition while some Parisian journals derided Robespierre for having spared the priests.

On 2 Sans-culottide, year II (September 18, 1794) Cambon moved the decree to end salaries for the clergy, although those who had retired,

abdicated or married were to receive pensions. Most historians who consider this decree the first step in the Thermidorian separation of church and state agree that it was motivated by financial necessity from the drain of war, and that the clergy's salaries had not been paid for almost a year. Pro-clerical writers attribute this decree to the Voltairean anti-clericalism of the Thermidorians, proven by their betrayal of the nation's responsibility to maintain the clergy after it had confiscated ecclesiastical property.²⁹

However, when the Thermidorians released the prisoners of the Jacobin Terror, they released many priests. A climate of moderation towards priests became necessary in order to combat Jacobinism. The Jacobin minority in the Convention wanted to exclude priests and former nobles from public functions and complained of the Thermidorians' indulgence to priests while old patriots were arrested as creatures of Robespierre. The Jacobin club at Paris was shut on 21 Brumaire, year III (November 11, 1794) after members were subjected to the violence of the *jeunesse dorée*, affluent youths organized to intimidate popular societies.

It now suited Thermidorians such as Tallien (himself under attack for his role in the September massacres) to accuse the Jacobins of terrorist brutality to the priests in the Vendée and elsewhere. Two proclamations offered pardon to the Vendéans if they would lay down their arms. The anti-terrorists in the Convention were strengthened by the return of seventy eight Girondins who had been purged by the Jacobins in 1793 and

²⁹E. Champion, *La Separation de l'Église et de l'État en 1794* (Paris, 1903), pp. 264-265; Pisani, II, 158-159; Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, pp. 135-136; Gazier, p. 231; Lafont, pp. 103-106; G. Lefebvre, *The Thermidorians* (New York, 1964), p. 24.

who had managed to survive by hiding.

The Thermidorians in November 1794 accused Carrier, the representative on mission to Nantes during the Terror, of ordering prisoners, including refractory priests, to be drowned. Despite the efforts of the Jacobin minority to save him, Carrier was judged guilty and executed on 26 Frimaire (December 16, 1794). Historians agree that the public was horrified at Carrier's crimes, particularly the *noyades* or drowning of prisoners, and some writers believe people were weary of the never-ending struggle against the priests. The pro-clerical writers refute the thesis that the *noyades* were the collective responsibility of republican authority in the Vendée, although it is admitted that others besides Carrier ordered the drownings. Godechot and Tilly both consider Carrier bloodthirsty; Godechot sees the condemnation of Carrier leading to the White Terror in its first phase of leniency to refractory priests.³⁰

Many émigré priests returned illegally and challenged the clergy loyal to the Republic, causing much religious unrest along the Rhine. The Thermidorians who were unwilling to enforce strong measures against them realized that their only alternative was to provide religious toleration for all. On 1 Nivose (December 21, 1794) Grégoire, former constitutional bishop at Blois, serving on the Committee of Public Instruction and active in restoring works of art (including religious art) requested the Convention to decree the liberty of Catholic worship and re-open the churches. But the deputy Legendre, supporting a decree for decadary festivals which Grégoire also supported, denied that the Republic needed any other

³⁰Gabory, II, 250, 261; Ledré, pp. 144-145, 192-193; Dansette, I, 138; Tilly, pp. 338-339; Godechot, *Contre-Revolution*, pp. 240-241. 265.

religion than that of morality and patriotism. The Convention passed to the order of the day. All historians, pro-clerical or otherwise, praise Grégoire's efforts to regain religious liberty.³¹

More priests entered France illegally after the decree of 22 Nivôse (January 11, 1795) which allowed the return of certain categories of émigrés. Some communes petitioned the Convention to reinstate their old priests in their churches. The newspapers, some of them secretly royalist, publicized the horrible conditions of the priests sentenced to be deported, dying on the two ships detained at Rochefort, and thereby created sympathy for their freedom.

After the rebels of the Vendée were given amnesty and allowed to restore their refractory priests to the churches, the Thermidorians were willing to extend religious liberty to the rest of France in return for political stability. On 3 Ventôse, year III, (February 21, 1795) Boissy d'Anglas, a moderate Thermidorian of Protestant background, moved a decree providing religious liberty after prefacing it with remarks supporting the *decadi*. This decree provided toleration by separating religion from the state. The Republic was neither to pay the clergy nor furnish churches, but it guaranteed against disturbances in the exercise of religion in privately acquired places. The decree prohibited any outward manifestations of religion, such as church bells ringing or processions, so that no sect could gain dominance. The ministers of a religious sect had only to subscribe to the oath of August 1792 for liberty and equality; the constitutional oaths for the clergy of 1790 and 1791 became irrelevant.

A result of this decree was the re-emergence of Roman Catholicism.

³¹Gazier, pp. 242-244; Ledré, p. 196; Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, pp. 137-138.

The former constitutional clergy lacked funds and no longer enjoyed political support. Although Grégoire was able to reunite thirty former constitutional bishops (out of eighty three) and issued an encyclical to reorganize the clergy who had neither married nor apostacized, the law of 3 Ventôse benefitted the Roman Catholics who had private chapels and money at their disposal. Despite the prohibition in the law, the churches of some communes were reclaimed for Catholic worship. Historians generally praise this decree of 3 Ventôse for providing religious rights but complain of its shortcomings. The pro-clerical writers object to the prohibitions in the law of public manifestations of religion; A. Gazier, the historian of the constitutional clergy complains that the papalists benefitted when the communes were denied use of the churches for Catholic worship; the pro-laic historians praise the separation of church and state but acknowledge the law was merely a concession of the Thermidorians who hoped the people would adhere to the *decadi*.³²

It was noted in France in the Thermidorian press that Sunday was again observed as a holiday. Republican Thermidorians were admittedly upset that the re-emergence of Roman Catholicism was at the expense of the decadary festivals, and they were also disturbed by the royalist activities of refractory priests. In the Midi the Catholic churches reopened with the blessing of Thermidorian administrators and former Girondins, such as the hitherto anti-clerical Isnard, who were intent on suppressing the local Jacobins. Quasi-religious associations called the Companies of

³²Abbé Boussoulade, *L'Église de Paris du 9 Thermidor* (Paris, 1950), pp. 29-32; Gazier, pp. 258-260; Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, pp. 138-139; Lafont, pp. 111-112; Lefebvre, *Thermidorians*, pp. 69, 73-74, 78; Godechot, *Contre-Révolution*, p. 266.

Jesus and the Sun organized the White Terror to assassinate Jacobins, constitutional priests and the purchasers of national property. At Lyons they massacred prisoners on 5 and 15 Floréal (April 24, May 4, 1795) to avenge private wrongs committed during the Jacobin Terror. The White Terror was financed by British agents now working for the restoration of Catholicism as well as the monarchy by helping the illegal return of émigré or deported priests.³³

The insurrection of the *sans-culottes* in Paris on 12 Germinal, year III (April 1, 1795) was more disturbing to the Thermidorians than the priests. The food scarcity in Paris became acute when the Thermidorians repealed the laws of the Maximum. After the insurrection was suppressed, there were some in the Convention who blamed the priests for encouraging the peasants during Holy Week to hoard their goods and refuse payment in *assignats*. Although anti-clerical remarks in the Convention were re-proved by Tallien, the republican Thermidorians on 12 Floréal (May 1, 1795) strengthened the law of 3 Ventôse to prevent religious disturbances. Violators of the prohibitions of the law were punished with six months' imprisonment and illegally returned priests were ordered to depart within a month.³⁴

Another insurrection of the Parisian *sans-culottes* on 1 Prairial (May 20, 1795) for "Bread and the Constitution of 1793" was suppressed by the Thermidorians, this time with more difficulty. The *sans-culottes'* demand for implementing the Jacobin constitution convinced the Thermidorians of the danger of egalitarian democracy. They drafted a more

³³Mitchell, pp. 50-53.

³⁴Pisani, II, 220-221; Lafont, pp. 113-114; Ledré, pp. 200-201.

conservative constitution to provide a bi-cameral legislature elected by property qualified suffrage and an executive of five directors responsible to it.

Declaring that atheism was responsible for the *sans-culottes'* insurrection, Lanjuinais, a Girondin deputy from Brittany and former member of the Ecclesiastical Committee, moved a decree on 11 Prairial, year III (May 30, 1795) which again allowed communes free use of their churches. If more than one type of worship existed in the commune, the time was to be set for sharing the use of the church. An amendment to this law removed the need for an oath by allowing the clergy to declare merely their submission to the laws of the Republic in order to use the churches. Lanjuinais was also instrumental in the Convention when it decreed that fifteen instead of twelve churches in Paris be opened for worship. Lanjuinais' decree is praised by all historians for its extension of religious liberty, although pro-clerical writers express resentment that Catholic churches were shared with non-Christian decadary observances, and also by the former constitutional clergy. All writers acknowledge the influence of Grégoire on Lanjuinais in moving the decree.³⁵

It was noted that on *Corpus Christi* day in June 1795 that the churches in Paris were crowded with worshippers and the shops shut. This religious resurgence encouraged the non-juring priests to meet with the former constitutional clergy in assemblies to convince them to retract their oaths. However, a new schism was created among the refractory clergy by the declaration of submission to the laws of the Republic. The illegally

³⁵Pisani, II, 209-214, 239-240; Gazier, pp. 285-286, 295; Lafont, pp. 114-115.

returned priests and the persistently refractory clergy who refused submission kept close ties with those who would restore the monarchy.

When in Brittany and in the Vendée the rebellion flared again in June 1795 after the death of the Dauphin in prison, the republican Thermidorians suspected the refractory clergy and even the sincerity of those making the declaration. In Brittany the royalists, called Chouans, and intransigent clergy awaited an English flotilla carrying French émigrés and priests. Their landing at the Bay of Quiberon on 9 Messidor, year III (June 27, 1795) proved disastrous for the royalists who were cut off by the republican forces. The bishop of Dol and the French clergy on the expedition were captured and executed by military tribunal along with more than seven hundred émigrés.³⁶

The royalist expedition to Brittany frightened the republicans who now feared those refractory priests who were preaching royalism. In Paris a flourishing royalist press supported ecclesiastical activity. Tallien and Fréron who had re-established the liberty of the press in order to combat Jacobinism now complained when royalist newspapers published the proclamation and letters of the Comte de Provence (whom royalists called Louis XVIII after the death of the Dauphin) to the former archbishop of Paris in exile and to the Pope, promising to restore Roman Catholic dominance.

The republicans in the Convention feared subversion by the deputies who were secretly royalists and who now attacked republicans as atheists and former dechristianizers. To prevent the royalists utilizing religious dissension, the republican Thermidorians moved the decree of 7 Vendemiaire,

³⁶Mitchell, pp. 56-58; Lefebvre, *Thermidorians*, p. 169.

year IV (September 29, 1795) requiring the ministers of religious sects to recognize the sovereignty of citizens as well as the laws of the Republic, and prohibiting any sect from gaining dominance; violators of this law were punished by six months' to two years' imprisonment. Pro-clerical historians criticize this law for requiring recognition of a "meaningless" popular sovereignty which nevertheless prevented many priests who had been willing to submit to the laws of the Republic from making the new declaration. Other writers consider the new law in keeping with the principle of religious liberty through the separation of church and state. Georges Lefebvre questions whether the intransigent clergy had public support even among those weary of republican struggles.³⁷

The republicans feared the royalists would exploit the democratic plebiscite approving the Thermidorian constitution, and that the electors under the new constitution would return enough royalists to overthrow the Republic. They succeeded in passing a ruling that two thirds of the new legislature were to be chosen from the Thermidorian Convention. The returns of the plebiscite indicated acceptance of the new constitution but virtually a repudiation of the two thirds electoral ruling. On 13 Vendémiaire (October 5, 1795) royalist groups in Paris led an insurrection which the Convention crushed with an army under Napoleon Bonaparte and others loyal to the Republic. Despite the law passed on the last day of the Convention, 3 Brumaire, year IV (October 25, 1795) which called for enforcement of the rigorous measures of 1793 against seditious priests, Catholicism was regaining its former influence within the government. Of

³⁷Pisani, II, 239-247; Ledré, pp. 204-205; Aulard, *Christianity . . .*, pp. 144-145; Lefebvre, *Thermidorians*, pp. 198-200.

the one-third newly elected to the legislature of the Directory, the majority were royalists and Catholics.³⁸

Ecclesiastical developments in France between 1791 and 1795 went through several stages. Decrees against the non-juring clergy in 1792 were deemed necessary in wartime and in the suppression of counter-revolutionary activity after the overthrow of the monarchy. The September massacres of non-juring clergy resulted from panic at the advance of the invading army and rumors of treachery. The large scale emigration of non-juring clergy spread hatred against the French Republic.

Within the Republic, daily secularization replaced many of the functions of the constitutional clergy who were divided on their allegiance to the government. During the trial of the King there were attempts to interfere in religious ceremonies to prevent royalist disturbances.

The execution of Louis XVI and the occupation of the Austrian Netherlands led to the French declaration of war on February 1, 1793 against Great Britain. A rebellion in the Vendée the following month took the form of a religious and royalist crusade.

When the *sans-culottes* purged the Convention in June 1793 and the Jacobins came to power, the Committee of Public Safety was reorganized to suppress counter-revolution. Some representatives on mission to rebellious areas countered anti-republican ideology by dechristianization -- closing the churches, offering their wealth to the Convention and substituting a patriot cult of Reason. The Paris Commune adopted this cult in November 1793.

Robespierre frowned on anti-religious excesses and, supported by

³⁸Lefebvre, *Thermidorians*, pp. 206-207.

Barère and Danton, succeeded in reaffirming liberty of worship and having dechristianization disowned in the Jacobin club. The charge of atheism to discredit the Republic played a small part in Robespierre's suppression of the rival factions of Hebertists and Dantonists in the spring of 1794. Robespierre in May outlined his plan for a republic of virtue and morality, to be sustained by a deistic belief in the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. Atheism was outlawed and on June 8, 1794 there was a festival in honor of the Supreme Being.

Robespierre was overthrown on the 9th of Thermidor (July 27, 1795) by a coalition who feared the new reorganization of the Revolutionary Tribunal to intensify the Terror. The Thermidorians who triumphed adopted a policy of moderation towards priests in their efforts to combat Jacobinism. After the suppression of salaries to the constitutional clergy, a re-emergence of Catholic worship led to laws in February and May 1795 which separated the state from private worship and then restored to the communes the right to use the churches.

Encouraged by this religious policy and the illegal return of émigré priests, a White Terror of a quasi-religious character in southern France culminated in the assassination of republicans. After an expedition of French émigrés, including priests, failed to join forces with royalist rebels in Brittany, the Thermidorians took measures against the priests preaching the restoration of the monarchy. The Thermidorians had not intended to restore Roman Catholicism as the dominant religion and they found religious liberty dangerous to the politically unstable Republic. They had separated church and state to remove religious dissension in order to steer a middle course between Republican Jacobinism and the monarchy. A solution to a decade of change was found a few years later. Napoleon

Bonaparte signed a Concordat in 1801 with the papacy which restored Catholicism to a regenerated France but provided also for religious toleration.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE NON-JURING CLERGY, 1791-1792

The flight of the King on June 21, 1791 marked a turning point in the attitude of the English press, because the ministerial newspapers supported the non-juring priests and the opposition press still favored the constitutional clergy. On May 7, 1791, the National Assembly had decreed that the non-jurors could celebrate mass in churches and hold religious worship elsewhere, providing it was not directed against the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

Both the ministerial and opposition English press wanted the French Legislative Assembly when it convened on October 1, 1791 to retain the religious toleration granted to the non-juring clergy by the National Assembly. The problem of the moderates in the Legislative Assembly was to strengthen the monarchy and stem the tide of rising republicanism. It was obvious that Louis XVI adhered to the cause of the non-jurors even though he had sanctioned the decree for the clerical oath. In October 1791 the Legislative Assembly heard reports of religious disturbances between the followers of non-juring priests and the constitutional clergy which prompted the administrators of departments to ask for strong measures to curb these activities. The moderates resisted these demands. The ministerial and opposition English newspapers carried identical reports of these disturbances which centered in the Vendée, along the Rhine, and Arles in southeast France.

The Decrees of the Legislative Assembly against the Non-Juring Clergy

In the Legislative Assembly the constitutional bishops, Grégoire and Fauchet, were opposed to the internment of the non-juring clergy, although Fauchet conceded that some measures were needed to repress them. The Girondin deputy, Isnard declared it was no longer the time for toleration of seditious priests and proposed their deportation to Italy. This measure was considered too harsh by Grégoire and Fauchet and the Legislative Assembly decreed instead on November 29, 1791 a new civic oath to the French constitution. Refusal of the clergy to take the new oath meant loss of their pensions and right to conduct public worship. On the advice of Talleyrand and the directors of the department of Paris, Louis XVI refused to sanction the decree for the new oath.

The English ministerial press relied increasingly on the views of their own correspondents at Paris who were sympathetic to the non-juring clergy; the opposition newspapers published extensive reports from the Legislative Assembly, which denounced the non-juring clergy for counter-revolutionary activity.

The opposition English newspapers made clear that, although they favored the constitutional clergy, they also believed in the English principle of religious toleration for the non-jurors. These newspapers in October 1791 agreed with Grégoire in judging the proposals to punish the non-juring clergy repressive. The *Morning Post* praised the moderation and good sense of toleration, as did the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Star*.¹ In mid-November the *Morning Chronicle* realized the necessity of a decree against the non-juring clergy, but it specified it should not limit their

¹*Morning Post*, Oct. 20, 1791, Nov. 1, 1791; *Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 29, 1791, Nov. 1, 1791; *Star*, Oct. 28, 1791, Oct. 31, 1791.

religious liberty.

As reports of religious disturbances in France increased, the opposition English press reluctantly supported some proposals in the Legislative Assembly to repress the non-jurors. In November 1791 the new correspondent of the *Morning Post* wrote that in the Vendée and Calvados an army of "wretched fanatics" armed with pikes and muskets were incited by refractory priests to murder the constitutional clergy. The *Morning Chronicle* claimed these stories exaggerated and thought that the violence on both sides had been suppressed without difficulty by the secular authorities. However, the *Morning Chronicle* one week later published in full Isnard's proposal to deport seditious priests to Italy and considered it an able and eloquent speech, while the *Star* condemned such a proposal as repressive.²

When on November 29, 1791 the new oath was decreed, the correspondent to the *Morning Post* voiced satisfaction but he deplored that non-juring priests celebrated mass in the palace of the Tuilleries while the decree awaited sanction from the King. The *Morning Chronicle* manifested its attachment to the principle of religious toleration by printing in full both Talleyrand's petition to the King not to sanction the decree for the new oath and the speech of the popular societies of the sections repudiating Talleyrand's petition and demanding the King's sanction.³

The ministerial English press, which now defended as a *bloc* the

²*Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 11, 1791, Nov. 16, 1791, Nov. 21, 1791; *Morning Post*, Nov. 11, 1791, Nov. 15, 1791, Nov. 22, 1791; also, *Argus*, Nov. 14, 1791 (few issues available); *Star*, Nov. 19, 1791.

³*Morning Post*, Dec. 15, 1791; *Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1791, Dec. 17, 1791.

non-juring clergy, opposed any measures against them.⁴ The *Times* and the *Morning Herald* attributed religious disturbances in France to the loyalty of the French people to their former priests who had refused the oath. Other ministerial newspapers, while not so enthusiastic about the non-jurors, shared the view that the French preferred them to the constitutional clergy.⁵ When the constitutional bishop Fauchet, rejecting Isnard's harsh proposal of transportation for non-jurors, advocated a new oath with loss of pensions for refusing it, the *Times* considered his speech that of a madman, while Isnard, on making his proposal, was described by the *Times* and later by the *Morning Herald* as if he were stricken with rabies from a mad dog.⁶ These newspapers and the *Public Advertiser* denounced the loss of pensions for the clergy refusing the new oath decreed November 29, 1791 as an injustice, because these pensions had been granted the clergy after the confiscation of their property.⁷ The ministerial English press expressed approval of Talleyrand's petition and praised Louis XVI for refusing to sanction the decree, while it considered proposals from popular societies to implement the decree without the King's sanction both unconstitutional and anti-monarchical. The provincial *Leeds Intelligencer* concluded that there was a distinct party in France which wanted no religion

⁴*Times*, Oct. 29, 1791; *Diary*, Oct. 29, 1791, Nov. 1, 1791; *Oracle*, Oct. 31, 1791; *St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 29-Nov. 1, 1791.

⁵*Times*, Nov. 11, 1791, Nov. 17, 1791, Nov. 29, 1791; *Morning Herald*, Nov. 26, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 2, 1791, Nov. 9, 1791, Nov. 10, 1791; *Diary*, Nov. 9, 1791; *Oracle*, Nov. 9, 1791.

⁶*Times*, Nov. 1, 1791, Nov. 14, 1791; *Morning Herald*, Nov. 22, 1791.

⁷*Times*, Nov. 28, 1791, Dec. 3, 1791; *Morning Herald*, Nov. 25, 1791, Dec. 7, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 7, 1791.

and no king.⁸

The War and the Clergy

In the early part of 1792, while other legislation and the war were debated by the Legislative Assembly, there was very little news in the English press on the ecclesiastical changes of the French Revolution. The King's veto of the decree for a civic oath to the constitution had resulted in a stalemate in religious affairs. News of counter-revolutionary activity within France merged with reports of allied troop movements on France's border. The week before the declaration of war on April 20, 1792, a new papal brief which praised the non-juring clergy and threatened to excommunicate constitutional priests received scant attention in the English press. The *Times*, now pro-papal, alone felt its thunder; the ministerial *World* ridiculed it while the *Star* and the French language newspaper *Courier de Londres* thought the Pope was still hesitant to precipitate a schism within the Gallican Church.⁹

When the war went badly for France, the Girondins who had formed the new ministry blamed the counter-revolutionary activities of the émigrés and non-juring clergy. The Legislative Assembly decreed on May 27, 1792 that priests accused of sedition by twenty active citizens in the same canton were to face deportation. The Girondin minister Roland was dismissed by the King after urging Louis to sanction the decree and one directed

⁸*Morning Herald*, Dec. 16, 1791, Dec. 28, 1791; *Times*, Dec. 17, 1791, Jan. 3, 1792; *Diary*, Dec. 28, 1791; *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 29, 1791, Dec. 30, 1791; *Leeds Intelligencer*, Jan. 2, 1792; *Oracle*, Feb. 7, 1792.

⁹*Times*, April 18, 1792; *World*, May 1, 1792; *Star*, April 27, 1792; *Courier de Londres*, April 27, 1792.

against the émigrés. On June 20, 1792, the *sans-culottes* of Paris invaded the Tuilleries to demand the King's sanction to both decrees. The King donned the revolutionary *bonnet rouge* but afterwards refused to withdraw his veto.

The ministerial English press predicted when war was declared that France would be defeated by the armies of Prussia and Austria. *The Times* prophesized that the forces within France upholding the non-juring clergy would triumph. *The Times* and the *Morning Herald* condemned the decree of May 27, 1792 for the transportation of seditious clergy.¹⁰ Other ministerial newspapers criticized the measures taken against non-juring priests when the decree for their transportation had not received the King's sanction.¹¹ The letter which Roland wrote the King after his dismissal, blaming Louis' veto for religious unrest in France, astounded *The Times*. It wondered how a dismissed minister dared publish such a letter to his monarch and *The Times* worried that some day English Jacobins would thus address George III. Other English ministerial newspapers disapproved of Roland's letter to the King.¹²

The opposition English press, directing its attention to the war between France and Prussia and Austria, did not condemn the decree of May 27, 1792 for deporting seditious priests. The *Morning Chronicle* seemed to support the Girondin minister Roland by printing his letter in full

¹⁰*Times*, May 10, 1792, May 11, 1792, May 18, 1792, May 21, 1792, May 22, 1792, June 4, 1792; *Morning Herald*, May 24, 1792, June 2, 1792.

¹¹*Lloyd's Evening Post*, May 28-30, 1792, June 13-15, 1792; *Oracle*, May 29, 1792, May 31, 1792, June 1, 1792; *World*, June 4, 1792.

¹²*Times*, June 20, 1792, *Morning Herald*, June 18, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, June 19, 1792; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, June 20-22, 1792.

to Louis XVI. The formerly cautious *Star* printed the opinion of its correspondent in Paris that the seditious non-juring clergy were to blame for the insurrection of the *sans-culottes* on June 20, 1792. The correspondent manifested republican tendencies in holding the King responsible for his refusal to withdraw his veto.¹³ By June 1792 the *Star* had shed its neutrality and non-commitment on ecclesiastical affairs in France to become the evening edition of the opposition newspaper, the *Morning Chronicle*.

The Downfall of the Monarchy and the September Massacres

The English opposition press was as monarchical as the ministerial press, if not as defensive of royal prerogatives. Regretting Louis' misfortune in the overthrow of the monarchy on August 10, 1792, the opposition newspapers also stressed the discovery of his treason with the enemy. Along with ministerial newspapers, it reported that the non-jurors were in danger of being massacred by mobs, that the Paris Commune prohibited ecclesiastical dress to be worn in the streets, and that a great many priests were put in prison.¹⁴ The provincial press of both factions carried identical reports of the downfall of the monarchy.¹⁵

¹³*Morning Chronicle*, June 18, 1792; *Star*, June 23, 1792, June 25, 1792.

¹⁴*Star*, Aug. 14, 1792, Aug. 15, 1792; *Morning Chronicle*, Aug. 20, 1792; *St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 14-16, 1792, Aug. 16-18, 1792; *Oracle*, Aug. 15, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Aug. 15, 1792, Aug. 17, 1792; *World*, Aug. 15, 1792; *Times*, Aug. 15, 1792, Aug. 18, 1792, Aug. 20, 1792; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, Aug. 20-22, 1792; *London Chronicle*, Aug. 14-16, Aug. 16-18, 1792.

¹⁵*Norwich Mercury*, Aug. 18, 1792; *Oxford Journal*, Aug. 18, 1792; *Newark Herald*, Aug. 22, 1792.

After August 10th, the Legislative Assembly declared that the decrees against the non-juring clergy and the émigrés which had been vetoed by the King now had the force of law. The ministerial English press condemned the internment and deportation of priests. *The Times* accused the French of exterminating the priests by shiploads at a time when it published with other newspapers reports from those emigrating from France that priests were deported, massacred, or drowned at Brest, Bordeaux, Marseilles.¹⁶ Two weeks later the *Public Advertiser* suggested that perhaps these stories were not true, writing, "Cruelties have been believed which never existed; horrors have been blazoned forth by Mr. Burke could never be proved."¹⁷

A few days later the English press reported the September massacres. News of those killed at the Abbaye and the convent of the Carmes reached the English ministerial press from escaping priests; some of them who were Irish told of priests being killed at the city's barriers.¹⁸ *The Times* repudiated any attempt to "explain" the September massacres on the grounds of fear of counter-revolution as the armies of the enemy marched towards Paris. Quoting contemptuously such an explanation appearing in the opposition's *Morning Chronicle*, *The Times* commented, "What! One hundred and seventy poor priests bring about a counter revolution!"¹⁹

¹⁶*Public Advertiser*, Aug. 22, 1792; *Times*, Aug. 20, 1792, Aug. 21, 1792, Aug. 24, 1792; *St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 16-18, 1792.

¹⁷*Public Advertiser*, Sept. 5, 1792, Sept. 7, 1792.

¹⁸*Oracle*, Sept. 6, 1792; *Times*, Sept. 7, 1792; *St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 6-8, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 8, 1792; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, Sept. 7-10, 1792; *World*, Sept. 8, 1792; *Diary*, Sept. 10, 1792.

¹⁹*Times*, Sept. 12, 1792.

The Times placed the blame for the massacre of the priests on the atheism engendered by the French Revolution.

Some of the English ministerial newspapers indulged in a gruesome relish of the details, many of which were not true. The *St. James's Chronicle*, praising the martyred priests for being steady in their principles in refusing to swear contrary to their conscience, reported correctly that Mr. Burke's worthy friend, the archbishop of Arles was killed, but incorrectly that 25,000 had been butchered in cold blood in Paris alone. And the *St. James* marvelled, "Still are the Prices, Priestleys, Paynes (*sic*) etc., suffered to promulgate such Revolution and Republican doctrines not only in diurnal and periodical publications, but in books, pamphlets and even in the *pulpits!* -- Let us hope it is not so in the established church."²⁰ The *St. James* claimed a naturalized Jew had led the ferocious democrats in the September massacres and the *Public Advertiser* identified him as Pierre Solomon Beilzet, proprietor of a Jacobin Tavern, *La Tête de Brutus*. The neutral *London Chronicle*, horrified by the massacres claimed not less than 4,000 were murdered and deplored the fate of the clergy.

The Times and the *Diary* dwelt on barbarities committed on the old cardinal de la Rochefoucauld before he was murdered. Fortunately for the cardinal he arrived safely in London within the fortnight, whereupon *The Times* congratulated him on his safety. *The Times* and the *Diary* indulged in graphic descriptions of priests forced to strangle each other, mobs roasting their victims while dancing around the fire, priests forced to eat each other's flesh, and so forth. *The Times* was gratified that many

²⁰*St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 8-11, 1792, Sept. 20-22, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 11, 1792; *London Chronicle*, Sept. 6-8, 1792, Sept. 8-11, 1792.

priests among the refugees crowding into London were known to admire the British constitution.²¹

Some of the English opposition newspapers shared this horror, although they attributed the fury of the Parisians to the threats in the *Manifesto* of the Duke of Brunswick, commander of the armies invading France.²² But the correspondent who wrote for both the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Star* could not excuse the massacres. He wrote of, "the disgrace and infamy with which we have covered ourselves . . . the deliberate murder of prisoners, priests and women without any visible or probable means of defence."²³ He considered the French government partly responsible in its tardiness in trying the prisoners accused of treason, and he praised the minister Roland for resigning to protest the massacres. In its following issue the *Morning Chronicle* attempted to explain the massacre as resulting from the public danger because Paris had filled with counter-revolutionaries, among whom were the non-juring priests, and that 160 or 170 of the most "intriguing" of these priests had been placed in the church of the Carmelites to await trial.²⁴ It was this opinion in the *Morning Chronicle* which was contemptuously quoted and attacked the following day by *The Times*.

The extensive coverage given to the September massacres in both the opposition and ministerial press indicated its importance in turning public opinion in England against the French Revolution. While the English

²¹*Times*, Sept. 12, 1792, Sept. 22, 1792; *Diary*, Sept. 11, 1792, Sept. 13, 1792; also, *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 11, 1792.

²²*Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 8, 1792; *Star*, Sept. 7, 1792; also, the *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 10, 1792.

²³*Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 10, 1792; *Star*, Sept. 10, 1792.

²⁴*Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 11, 1792.

reformers and the Dissenters were somehow held responsible for the massacres by the ministerial press, the *Morning Chronicle* defended itself by condemning the outrage. For the first time it praised the non-juring clergy, describing, "These virtuous ecclesiastics were at the font of the altars, addressing their praises to Heaven, when a band of cannibals forcing open the temple of the Lord, rushed forward and assassinated them."²⁵

In contrast, the opposition newspaper, the *Gazetteer*, refused to be horrified by the September massacres. It described the massacres from official reports of the commissioners sent by the Legislative Assembly to sooth the panic-ridden people. To the *Gazetteer* the tribunals of the *sans-culottes* meted out justice and kept firm control, even punishing theft by the executioners. The *Gazetteer* claimed the massacres were provoked by the aristocrats who were preparing an attack on Paris.²⁶ A few days later, the *Gazetteer* wrote:

It is curious to observe that all the violences committed in France are still imputed solely to the French populace as if they were the result of spontaneous and original barbarity unprovoked by any of those circumstances, which render all men turbulent and ferocious. . . . The massacres of the 2nd and 3rd instant we will admit to be criminal . . . but criminality is divisible.²⁷

The opposition newspapers reported figures of those massacred considerably lower than the 25,000 mentioned in the ministerial *St. James's Chronicle*. The *Morning Chronicle* underestimated somewhat, claiming 810 or 820 were killed, of whom 180 were priests, 230 counter-revolutionaries and the rest, ordinary criminals. The *Gazetteer* fairly accurately

²⁵*Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 24, 1792.

²⁶*Gazetteer*, Sept. 5, 1792, Sept. 10, 1792.

²⁷*Gazetteer*, Sept. 12, 1792.

reported 264 priests murdered in Paris, including those attempting to pass the barriers disguised as National Guards.²⁸

The provincial newspapers by and large reiterated the horrors of the September massacres as reported in the London ministerial newspapers. The murder of the French priests was charged to French atheism. The *Kentish Gazette* claimed 930 priests had been killed and remarked how truly Burke had prophesized; the *Glocester Journal* thought 12,000 was not exaggerated for the number of victims; and the *Norwich Mercury*, the *Oxford Journal* and the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* used the *St. James's Chronicle's* information concerning a naturalized Jew who led the Parisian democrats.²⁹

The September massacres did to most of the English provincial press what even the flight of the King failed to do: turned them completely against the French Revolution and the ecclesiastical changes. The horror felt in England at the exaggerated news of the September massacres put the opposition newspapers on the defensive concerning its former admiration

²⁸*Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 15, 1792; *Gazetteer*, Sept. 10, 1792. The neutral *London Chronicle*, June 20 - July 2, 1795, when there was much re-
crimination in France concerning the massacres, listed the numbers killed in various prisons; it claimed at St. Firmin, six priests died out of 150, at the Carmes, 120 priests out of 150, at the Abbaye (where many of the prisoners were priests) a total of 156 were massacred and 36 perished in the dungeons out of 284; the total given by the *London Chronicle* for the victims in all prisons: 1,143, remarkably close to estimates of modern historians.

²⁹*Kentish Gazette*, Sept. 11, 1792, Sept. 18, 1792; *Glocester Journal*, Sept. 17, 1792; *Oxford Journal*, Sept. 15, 1792; *Norwich Mercury*, Sept. 15, 1792; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Sept. 17, 1792; *Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle*, Sept. 15, 1792, Sept. 22, 1792; *Newcastle Courant*, Sept. 15, 1792; *Exeter Gazette*, Sept. 20, 1792; *Leeds Mercury*, Sept. 22, 1792.

for the ecclesiastical reforms in France. The ministerial English press magnified the crimes of the September massacres, perhaps to prepare its readers for war with the French Republic, but certainly to indict the opposition as English Jacobins and atheists.

The French Refugee Clergy in England

The ministerial English newspapers created a public opinion of great sympathy for the refugee French priests arriving in England following the September massacres. The English press the year before, when the non-juring clergy emigrated after the papal briefs, had not been favorable to them. In May 1791, the *Journal de Middlesex*, a French newspaper published in England, had reflected their unpopularity when it expressed dislike for the refugee French clergy, particularly the bishop of St. Pol de Léon, about whom it wrote,

*Les papiers Anglois ont dit qu'il avait reçu des bien faits de l'Eveque de Peterborough. Ne vaudroit-il pas mieux pour ces Messieurs obéir à la loi que d'aller mendier leur pain chez l'étranger?*³⁰

In September 1792, immediately after the September massacres were reported, waves of French refugees streamed into England. Committees quickly organized to aid them and placed advertisements in the English press.³¹ The ministerial English newspapers continued throughout the year and the following one to publish reports and carry advertisements of committees to

³⁰*Journal de Middlesex*, May 13, 1791.

³¹*Diary*, Sept. 10, 1792; *World*, Sept. 11, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 13, 1792; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, Sept. 14-17, 1792; *Times*, Sept. 14, 1792; *Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 14, 1792; *Star*, Sept. 15, 1792; *Gazetteer*, Sept. 18, 1792; *London Chronicle*, Sept. 15-18, 1792, Sept. 18-20, 1792.

aid the refugee clergy, chaired by members of Parliament. *The Times* announced that the Catholic gentry of England were heavily burdened by aiding the French refugee clergy. When the bishop of St. Pol de Léon was designated by a committee to distribute the money to the proper persons, *The Times*, *Lloyd's Evening Post* and the *Public Advertiser* described the bishop as indefatigable in relieving over ten thousand priests, most of whom arrived at his house on Queen Street to register their names. The *Public Advertiser* asked on October 30, 1792, as if to atone for its past criticism of the French hierarchy, "Had every French prelate imitated his example, who would have wished for any reformation in the church of France?"³²

Nevertheless, the ministerial newspapers revealed certain religious and political reservations in aiding the French refugee clergy. An advertisement on the front page of *The Times* hoped that neither religious nor political differences would shut English hearts against their fellow Christians, but on page two *The Times* worried that the great number of refugees would cause prices to rise, and also there might be undesirable persons among the refugees.³³ The *Public Advertiser* warned that the politics of many French refugees were untrustworthy; they were either despotic or democratic, especially "the lazy monks and intriguing friars." The following week the *Public Advertiser* and the *St. James's Chronicle* denied that the influx of refugees would cause a rise in prices and thought England had nothing to fear from the royalism of the French clergy. Carrying the same advertisement as *The Times*, which hoped neither political nor religious differences would shut English hearts . . . , the ministerial

³²*Times*, Sept. 14, 1792, Sept. 17, 1792; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, Sept. 14-17, 1792.

³³*Times*, Sept. 14, 1792.

newspapers manifested conflicting attitudes towards the French refugee clergy. It was noted that their influx coincided with swindlers and pickpockets, that Catholic worship in London was swelled by priests of motley appearance. A letter in the *Public Advertiser* complained of liberality to the French clergy while five thousand English curates lived in poverty. As if to answer it, the *St. James's Chronicle* deplored those so destitute of the milk of human kindness who thought money should be given only to the English poor. The neutral *London Chronicle* admitted that the poor in London were inconvenienced by the influx of refugee clergy but it supported their aid.³⁴

Although the opposition English press also carried advertisements to aid the French refugee clergy, they manifested even greater reservation than the ministerial newspapers. The *Star* made clear that the money was raised only to relieve the unfortunate priests and not to promote the views of "the ambitious," that is, political opportunists. The *Morning Chronicle* recommended subscription for their relief but at the same time questioned the wisdom of ten thousand Catholic priests remaining in England. It considered Spain and Italy a better place for them. A week later the *Morning Chronicle* described a turbulent scene of intolerance towards refugee priests on a London street and advised the ministry to send the thirty thousand priests away by winter.³⁵

The Times attacked what was no doubt the opposition *Morning Chronicle*

³⁴*Public Advertiser*, Sept. 15, 1792, Sept. 17, 1792, Sept. 19, 1792, Sept. 20, 1792, Oct. 13, 1792; *Diary*, Sept. 18, 1792, Oct. 12, 1792; *World*, Sept. 19, 1792; *St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 20-22, 1792, Oct. 13-16, 1792; *London Chronicle*, Sept. 13-15, 1792.

³⁵*Star*, Sept. 14, 1792; *Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 14, 1792, Sept. 30, 1792.

as a Jacobin newspaper receiving orders from France to defame the refugee priests in order to prevent the success of their relief and to excite the people to violence against them.³⁶ The cause of the refugee clergy became a weapon of the English ministerial press for labelling the opposition press as Jacobin.

The *Morning Chronicle* answered the attack by accusing those who were not content to aid the French priests of using aid on the continent to émigrés in order to influence public opinion.³⁷ A letter appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* deploring an anonymous pamphlet, *The Case of the Suffering Clergy of France . . .*, because its author showed the priests as bigots, fanatics and political theologians. This work, generally attributed to Edmund Burke, had been praised by *The Times* and the *Diary*.³⁸

In a sense the ministerial press acknowledged the conflict in attitudes concerning the French clergy in England by deflating reports of their numbers. *The Times* asserted that the register of the bishop of St. Pol de Léon indicated they were not so numerous as previously stated. A new advertisement in the press claimed their number was under 1,500 in England and 1,000 on the island of Jersey. The number of French bishops in England on October 5, 1792 as reported in *The Times* was fifteen.³⁹ By the end of the year the *Public Advertiser* cited the authority of an eminent French bishop in London that there were 6,551 refugee

³⁶*Times*, Sept. 24, 1792.

³⁷*Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 3, 1792.

³⁸*Times*, Sept. 17, 1792; *Diary*, Sept. 18, 1792; *Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 13, 1792.

³⁹*Times*, Sept. 21, 1792, Sept. 25, 1792, Sept. 26, 1792, Oct. 5, 1792, repeated. See p. 178, Cone's figure is 8,000 French priests in England.

priests in London, in maritime towns, at Winchester, Southampton and Jersey, and according to the *St. James's Chronicle* there were eighteen French bishops in England.⁴⁰ Among them was the archbishop of Aix who, the *Public Advertiser* reported, was writing a history of religion during the French Revolution while staying at Burke's residence at Beaconsfield. The ministerial press praised Edmund Burke for organizing aid to the French clergy and for his personal philanthropy, while they urged the Anglican bishops to extend aid to their foreign brethren.⁴¹

A plan to remove many of the refugee French clergy from the capital to Winchester in Sussex was supported by the ministerial press. The royal palace at Winchester, which had been used to house prisoners of war, was refurbished for the refugee French clergy. The *St. James's Chronicle* protested that if the royal palace were offered the French priests, the English government could be considered interfering in the affairs of France. The *St. James* advocated shipping the priests to papal territories; other newspapers preferred them out of London.⁴²

On October 1, 1792 a new ministerial newspaper, the *Sun* made its appearance and espoused the cause of the French clergy even more fervently than *The Times*. The *Sun* attributed the success of the aid to the refugee clergy to the subscribers' attachment to the British constitution. Complaints that the French clergy were responsible for high prices in

⁴⁰*Public Advertiser*, Dec. 27, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 29 - Jan. 1, 1793.

⁴¹*Times*, Sept. 26, 1792, Oct. 5, 1792; *World*, Sept. 18, 1792, Sept. 22, 1792, Sept. 29, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Oct. 10, 1792, Oct. 12, 1792; *Diary*, Oct. 11, 1792.

⁴²*St. James's Chronicle*, Sept. 18-20, 1792, Oct. 30 - Nov. 1, 1792; *World*, Sept. 20, 1792.

England were, according to the *Sun*, the work of Jacobins. It disapproved of the new United Committee formed to aid both French laity and clergy because the clergy were entitled to more respect for their calling. The *Sun* claimed the United Committee was the work of the Dissenters who, by denying the priority of aiding the French clergy, were levelling religious establishments. The *Sun* also suspected that the French refugees who were not clergy were secret Jacobins, because they would have, if they were sincere royalists, joined the émigré army on the continent.⁴³ However, a letter in the *World* and the *Public Advertiser* in October praised the formation of the United Committee because many in Great Britain wanted to help French refugees, but not necessarily the clergy.⁴⁴

The English ministerial press in reporting the September massacres brought about a revulsion of public opinion against the French Republic. The refugee French clergy became the authority on ecclesiastical affairs in France and the *Times* credited them as its news source. The *Evening Mail*, under the same management as the *Times*, claimed that in France the monarchy had been overthrown by enemies of religion.⁴⁵

Most of the provincial newspapers echoed these sentiments. They

⁴³*Sun*, Oct. 3, 1792, Oct. 5, 1792, Oct. 15, 1792, Oct. 16, 1792, Oct. 18, 1792, Oct. 20, 1792, Oct. 22, 1792, Oct. 26, 1792.

⁴⁴*Public Advertiser*, Oct. 5, 1792; *World*, Oct. 18, 1792.

⁴⁵*Norwich Mercury*, Sept. 15, 1792; *Kentish Gazette*, Sept. 18, 1792; *Exeter Gazette*, Sept. 20, 1792; *Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle*, Sept. 22, 1792; *Newcastle Courant*, Sept. 22, 1792; *Oxford Journal*, Sept. 22, 1792, Sept. 29, 1792; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Sept. 24, 1792, Oct. 1, 1792, Nov. 4, 1792. The following year soldiers of a regiment quartered near Winchester rebelled against buying gloves knitted by the refugee clergy: see *Morning Post*, Nov. 2, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 9, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 19-21, 1793; *World*, Nov. 21, 1793; *Leeds Intelligencer*, Nov. 25, 1793.

had reported with much sympathy the pitiable condition of thousands of French refugees, including priests, arriving at Portsmouth, Brighton, Dover and elsewhere. These newspapers carried the advertisements of local committees to aid the refugee clergy. The *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* approved of the refugee French priests moving into the nearby royal palace. However, the *Oxford Journal* thought it wise that the priests were removed from the capital so as not to influence the tenets of the Anglican Church.⁴⁶

The opposition provincial weekly, the *Newark Herald* imitated the *Morning Chronicle* in suggesting that the thousands of Catholic priests in England go elsewhere. While supporting aid to the refugee clergy, the *Newark Herald* suggested, as did the *Morning Chronicle*, that the Anglican bishops yield one year's tithes to help their foreign brethren.⁴⁷

An atmosphere of hysteria against the French Republic prepared the country for war to uphold the British constitution in church and state. The same issues of the provincial newspapers which reported the September massacres announced that Thomas Paine, harassed by hostile demonstrations, left with a party of Englishmen to participate in the elections in France to the National Convention.⁴⁸

In December Paine was tried in *absentia* and outlawed for sedition. The ministerial press in December 1792 was alarmed by the French occupation of the Netherlands and the trial of Louis XVI for treason by the

⁴⁶*Times*, Sept. 19, 1792; *Evening Mail*, Oct. 1, 1792.

⁴⁷*Newark Herald*, Sept. 19, 1792; *Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 14, 1792.

⁴⁸*Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle*, Sept. 15, 1792; *Newcastle Courant*, Sept. 22, 1792; *Newark Herald*, Sept. 19, 1792; also *London Chronicle*, Sept. 18-20, 1792.

National Convention.⁴⁹ On December 1, 1792, the fear of an insurrection, presumably by English Jacobins, had caused George III to issue a proclamation for raising the militia. How real was the fear of an insurrection in Great Britain can be deduced from the ministerial *World*. Announcing the discovery of a revolutionary plan to destroy both houses of Parliament and the Horse Guards, the *World* wrote, "The destruction of the churches was no part of their plan, as has been mentioned. These buildings were to be preserved, and to be used afterwards by Dissenters exclusively."⁵⁰ Other ministerial newspapers that month denounced English dissenters for undermining the established religion.

During this period many Anglican dignitaries subscribed to the list of those aiding the committee for the refugee clergy, according to the advertisements appearing in the press.⁵¹ Extracts of a pamphlet *Thomas Bull to his Brother John* was circulated by the John Reeves loyalist association to counteract the "seditious" *Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine. The English press reported that opposition spokesmen in the House of Commons complained that the Reeves association's pamphlet, which appeared in extracts in some ministerial newspapers, was a libel against English Dissenters.⁵²

⁴⁹*Times*, Dec. 4, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 5, 1792.

⁵⁰*World*, Dec. 21, 1792; *Sun*, Dec. 3, 1792, Dec. 18, 1792; *St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 11-13, 1792, Dec. 22-25, 1792, Dec. 27-29, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 8, 1792, Dec. 10, 1792, Dec. 26, 1792, Dec. 31, 1792; *Morning Herald*, Dec. 12, 1792, Dec. 20, 1792.

⁵¹*Diary*, Dec. 1, 1792, Dec. 11, 1792, Dec. 18, 1792; *World*, Dec. 10, 1792, Dec. 26, 1792.

⁵²*Sun*, Dec. 17, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 18, 1792; *World*, Dec. 18, 1792; *Diary*, Dec. 21, 1792.

On December 26, 1792, the Alien Bill, giving the government the right to intern foreigners, was passed in the House of Lords. Lord Grenville during the debate praised the French refugee clergy but claimed that among the émigrés were dangerous men. Lord Loughborough maintained anarchy had triumphed in France with atheism publicly avowed, and that although refugees came to Great Britain of necessity, there were some who spread confusion. The English press acknowledged during debates on the bill that war with France seemed inevitable.⁵³

In the House of Commons, as one provincial ministerial newspaper wrote, Mr. Burke rendered himself conspicuous during the debate on the Alien Bill. Claiming that nineteen assassins came from France -- seven more than needed to murder the royal family -- and that thousands of daggers had been manufactured in Birmingham, Burke astonished the House of Commons, according to the *Glocester Journal*, by drawing a long dagger and throwing it on the floor to prove that passage of the Alien Bill would save the life of the King.⁵⁴

In this month of hysteria, December 1792, the leading Whig newspaper, the *Morning Chronicle* stood its ground. It ridiculed the Pitt ministry for fighting "phantom" windmills of insurrection and attacked the Reeves Association for libelling the Dissenters. Burke's dagger, it claimed, was no laughing matter but real enough as that used by the Jesuit who killed Henry IV of France.⁵⁵ The *Morning Post* declared the constant cries of "Church and King" smacked of *Jacobitism*, or high church Tory support

⁵³*Diary*, Dec. 22, 1792; *St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 27-29, 1792.

⁵⁴*Glocester Journal*, Dec. 31, 1792.

⁵⁵*Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 4, 1792, Dec. 13, 1792, Dec. 24, 1792, Jan. 1, 1793.

for the Stuart monarch during the English Revolution and its aftermath. The *Morning Post* again advocated the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and advised the Dissenters not to stop asking for their rights.⁵⁶ It had particularly unkind words for the pamphlets concerning John Bull and his brother Thomas (Paine), and for Edmund Burke who opposed the French Revolution and the repeal of the Test Acts but supported liberty for Poland and for Irish Catholics.⁵⁷

The provincial ministerial press in December 1792 became vehicles of propaganda against French atheism. Leading the countryside against Thomas Paine, they made burning his effigy a national pastime. Attacking Dissenters and reformers as infected by French atheism, they hounded opposition writers who went to prison. Some, such as the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Newark Herald*, remained friendly to the reformers. The printer of the latter newspaper was arrested that month for publishing an address of the reformers' Constitutional Society.⁵⁸ He spent four years in prison.

The English ministerial press in 1791 and 1792 condemned the decrees against the non-juring clergy as motivated by a hatred of religion and defended the French king's refusal to sanction them. The downfall of the monarchy and the September massacres which followed was a landmark for creating hostility to the ecclesiastical policy of the French Revolution

⁵⁶*Morning Post*, Dec. 25, 1792, Dec. 26, 1792.

⁵⁷*Morning Post*, Dec. 28, 1792.

⁵⁸*Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle*, Dec. 8, 1792; *Kentish Gazette*, Dec. 11, 1792; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Dec. 3, 1792, Dec. 10, 1792, Dec. 24, 1792, Dec. 31, 1792; *Leeds Mercury*, Dec. 29, 1792; *Newark Herald*, Dec. 5, 1792.

by descriptions in the press of atrocities committed to non-juring priests. Although certain reservations about aiding the refugee French priests indicated that anti-Catholicism was not dead among readers of the English ministerial press, the organization of aid to the French refugee clergy through the English press became powerful propaganda against the religious policy of the French Republic. By identifying English opposition with those responsible for the September massacres, the ministerial press labelled as atheistic any opposition to the government and prepared public opinion for war.

The opposition English press had reluctantly approved of the decrees to punish the seditious clergy in France. These newspapers were defensive about ecclesiastical reforms in France after the September massacres. They were forced to concede that the non-juring clergy had been barbarously treated, although they tried to explain the massacres as resulting from fear of enemy invasion. Only nominally supporting organized aid to the refugee clergy, the opposition press protested the political exploitation of this aid. Above all, the opposition newspapers objected to the hysteria against all who opposed ministerial preparations for war with the French Republic. As the Republic moved further toward secularization, the English press reacted strongly to this development.

CHAPTER IX
THE ENGLISH PRESS ON SECULARIZATION AND DECHRISTIANIZATION
UNDER THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

In the early days of the Revolution, both ministerial and opposition English newspapers welcomed some secularization in France as proof they lived in an age of Enlightenment overcoming the "superstition" of Roman Catholicism. In the first year of the Republic, starting September 22, 1792, ministerial English newspapers were critical of secularization in France, while the English opposition press continued to favor it.

During the trial and execution of Louis XVI on January 21, 1793, the constitutional Church faltered in its support of the Revolution and many of its clergy were suspected of royalist sympathies. Secular authorities took over some of the functions of the clergy as daily life in France became detached from the Church.

The English ministerial press took the stand that the war between Great Britain and republican France declared in February 1793 was a war to defend religion against atheism. The opposition English newspapers accused the ministerial press of using the religious issue in France as war propaganda. The opposition newspapers continued to rely heavily on official reports to the French Convention, while the ministerial press also used these reports but refuted republican viewpoints with those of their own correspondents.

The Religious Issue during the Trial and Execution of the King

The English ministerial press, in a virtual hysteria during the trial

of Louis XVI by the National Convention, viewed secular interference with religious life as proof of atheism. Towards Christmas in 1792 the authorities of the Paris Commune were reported present in the churches to see that midnight mass did not provide occasion for royalist disturbances. The ministerial *St. James's Chronicle* was happy to report that a mob "not yet ripe for atheism" beat up the authorities. But when the Convention rejected the proposal of the deputy Manuel to prohibit the religious festival of the Kings on the 6th of January (Twelfth Night) on the grounds that religious matters were beyond the legislative power, *The Times* concluded the French were "not yet ripe for atheism," and the *Diary* complained that Manuel incessantly nibbled at religion. A new ministerial newspaper, the *True Briton*, reported that the Paris Commune changed the fête of Kings to the fête of *Sans-Culottes*. The removal by the Paris Commune of the statues of kings in church portals was condemned by ministerial newspapers. The reports of the neutral *General Evening Post* were no different from the ministerial press.¹

The English ministerial press gave the trial and execution of Louis XVI extensive and emotional coverage which strengthened the image of a godless France. Louis' evident piety during the trial became more palpably Christian in the English press rather than Catholic, particularly when he was accused of protecting the non-juring clergy. His will was published in which Louis asked the pardon of God for having given his sanction to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, extorted by force.² At the

¹*St. James's Chronicle*, Jan. 1-3, 1793; *Times*, Jan. 5, 1793; *Diary*, Jan. 4, 1793; *Morning Herald*, Jan. 4, 1793; *World*, Jan. 5, 1793; *True Briton*, Jan. 7, 1793; *General Evening Post*, Jan. 3-5, 1793.

²*Morning Herald*, Jan. 16, 1793, Jan. 25, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*,

guillotine Louis was reported saying, "I die innocent; I pardon my enemies; I only sanctioned upon compulsion the Civil Constitution of the Clergy . . ." ³

The ministerial English press made much of Louis' confessor being an Anglo-Irishman, Mr. Edgeworth, a non-juring Catholic priest living in France who was also identified as M. de Firmont. The abbé Edgeworth de Firmont, as he was known in France, had been vicar general of the church of Paris and served the princess Elizabeth, sister of the King. The Convention allowed him to prepare Louis XVI for death by reading his will and testament and hearing mass. The English press reported Mr. Edgeworth murdered by the Jacobins after the execution of the King, and then reported his safe arrival in Great Britain. The *St. James's Chronicle* quoted Louis telling Mr. Edgeworth he could no longer confess to a member of the clergy in France. ⁴ The *Public Advertiser* and the *Diary* devoted much space to the sermon preached by Dr. Horseley, Anglican bishop of St. David's, on January 30, 1793, anniversary of the martyrdom of Charles I. Dr. Horseley said the French butchered their King because they were atheists. ⁵ The anniversary of Charles I's death became an important day of religious observance in England during the French Revolution.

In this period the secularization of life in France was accelerated.

Dec. 27-29, 1792, Jan. 19-22, 1793, Jan. 22-24, 1793, Jan. 24-26, 1793; *Oracle*, Jan. 25, 1793, Jan. 26, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Jan. 25, 1793; *Times*, Jan. 26, 1793.

³*Times*, Jan. 25, 1793. It is generally agreed that Louis spoke the first three words.

⁴*St. James's Chronicle*, Jan. 31 - Feb. 2, 1793; *Oracle*, Jan. 31, 1793, Feb. 7, 1793; *Morning Herald*, Feb. 4, 1793; *Times*, Feb. 5, 1793.

⁵*Public Advertiser*, Jan. 31, 1793; *Diary*, Feb. 16, 1793 published Dr. Horseley's sermon.

Secularized education, not yet acceptable in Great Britain where the state church supported the schools and universities, was to the English ministerial press a pernicious institution breeding atheism. During the trial of Louis XVI in December 1792, the Convention considered plans for secularizing the education of youth, which hitherto had been the function of the clergy. In the debate on December 14, 1792, a deputy Jacob Dupont proposed a thoroughly secularized education for the Republic on the ground that the overthrow of religion was a natural consequence of the overthrow of kings. Dupont's avowal that he was an atheist was treated by the Convention as irrelevant, but the ministerial English press gratefully seized it to equate secularization in France with atheism. Dupont's speech added grist to English ministerial propaganda in support of the Alien Bill, passed by Parliament at the beginning of January 1793 to intern foreigners suspected of subverting the British constitution. Lord Loughborough on December 26, 1792, referred to Dupont's atheism in the House of Lords in arguing for passage of the Alien Bill. In the House of Commons Edmund Burke cited Dupont's speech when he exhibited a dagger manufactured in Birmingham, presumably ordered by French atheist assassins.⁶

The ministerial *Diary*, which liked to publish speeches, proclamations and papal briefs, gave its readers a translation from the official French newspaper *Le Moniteur* of Jacob Dupont's address to the Convention on secularized education, including this avowal of atheism:

Nature and Reason these ought to be Gods of Man! These are my Gods! . . . Admire *Nature* -- cultivate *Reason*. . . . And you, Legislators, if you desire that the French People should be happy --

⁶*St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 18-20, 1792, Dec. 22-25, 1792; *Sun*, Dec. 26, 1792; *Times*, Dec. 27, 1792, Dec. 29, 1792; *Diary*, Dec. 27, 1792, Dec. 29, 1792; *World*, Dec. 29, 1792; *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 31, 1792.

make haste to propagate their principles, and to teach them in your primary schools, instead of those fanatical principles which have hitherto been taught. The tyranny of Kings was confined to make these people miserable in this life -- but those other tyrants, the Priests, extend their dominions into another, of which they have no other idea than of eternal punishments; a doctrine which some men have hitherto had the good nature to believe. . . . But the moment of the catastrophe is come -- all these prejudices must fall at the same time. . . . *We must destroy them, or they will destroy us.* . . . For myself! I honestly avow to the Convention -- *I am an Atheist!* (Here there is some noise and tumult -- but a great number of members cries out -- 'What is that to us -- You are an honest man!'⁷)

According to the *Diary*, this speech was applauded by everyone except two or three of the clergy, so that the *Diary* concluded that Dupont's opinions were those of the Convention.

English ministerial propaganda refused to relinquish the impact of Dupont's confession of atheism. The evangelist Hannah More with ministerial encouragement wrote a pamphlet entitled, *On Dupont's Atheistical Speech*. Thus, six months after the speech the *Diary* published in June 1793 a letter attacking the French atheist Dupont; the *St. James's Chronicle* and the *World* cited and quoted Hannah More's pamphlet to support the contention that the war being waged was to defend religion and that peace with a gang of atheists was impossible.⁸

At the outset of the Republic, the French secularized marriage and legalized divorce. The English ministerial press (with its columns filled with individual suits under the title *Crim. Carn.*) frowned on divorce on principle. As for example, provincial newspapers lamented in identical

⁷*Diary*, Jan. 4, 1793.

⁸*Diary*, June 3, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, June 6-8, 1793; *World*, June 14, 1793. An advertisement of the United Committee to aid the refugee French clergy on May 18, 1793 in the *Morning Chronicle* and May 20, 1793, in the *Diary* thanked Hannah More for donating the profits of her pamphlet.

words, "That last blow to decency has been given by the French philosophers and marriage, that odd, old, exploded indissoluble shackle is slipped off."⁹

Before the end of 1792 it was reported that the Convention encouraged the secularization of the clergy through marriage, despite the disapproval of some constitutional bishops, such as Grégoire and Fauchet. Clerical marriage should have been acceptable to the English press since the Anglican bishops in the sixteenth century reformation had sanctioned it. The ministerial press was amused that Fauchet circulated a pastoral letter to his priests denouncing their marriages, because Fauchet -- who was considered half an atheist for his support of the clerical oaths -- was according to these newspapers notoriously deficient in sexual morality. By the end of the year the marriage of the French clergy was to them yet another proof that France had no religion, especially after the popular societies considered marriage of priests proof of their republican civism.¹⁰

The opposition English newspapers during the period of the trial and execution of Louis XVI did not criticize secularization in France. They supported Charles Fox and the minority in Parliament who opposed the Alien Bill as preparation for war with France. The *Morning Chronicle* ridiculed Burke for exploiting Dupont's speech on secularized education to prove France was atheistic, and the *Morning Post* quoted a speech in

⁹*Oxford Journal*, Sept. 8, 1792; *Norwich Mercury*, Sept. 8, 1792; Wheeler's *Manchester Chronicle*, Sept. 22, 1792.

¹⁰*Public Advertiser*, Dec. 28, 1792; *Morning Herald*, Dec. 29, 1792; *Times*, March 1, 1793; *Oracle*, March 1, 1793. The *Evening Mail*, Oct. 1, 1792, reported Fauchet expelled from the Jacobin club for keeping a mistress.

the French Convention critical of English propaganda on Dupont's speech.¹¹ This newspaper and the *Star* indicated their support of secularization in France by printing in full Manuel's address on secular education to the Convention and his attack on the priests for preventing divorces. Early in 1793 the opposition press increasingly criticized the Anglican church and its control of universities. The *Morning Chronicle* reminded its readers of the Elizabethan statutes prohibiting at the universities Catholic seminarians. A new opposition newspaper, the *Courier*, called for the outright abolition of the tithes of the Anglican church.¹²

However, the trial and execution of Louis XVI distressed the English opposition press as much as the ministerial newspapers. The *Gazetteer* published a report identical with the ministerial *Oracle*, deploring the execution of Louis XVI. The *Morning Chronicle* disassociated English reformers and the opposition from the "diabolical trial." of Louis XVI. The opposition newspapers published the will left by the King, asking pardon of God for sanctioning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. But these newspapers did not prolong accounts of the execution of Louis XVI as did the ministerial press. Only the opposition *Star* expressed interest in the King's Irish confessor, Mr. Edgeworth, and identified him also as M. de Firmont.¹³

¹¹*Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 2, 1793; *Morning Post*, Jan. 21, 1793, reported a French deputy saying of the English, "Into what monsters have they not scandalously transformed us? . . . Now, to the feeble and ignorant, as by principle atheists; and why? because one member made an ingenuous confession of his own atheism"

¹²*Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 1, 1793; *Courier*, Jan. 1, 1793; *Morning Post*, Feb. 1, 1793, Feb. 7, 1793; *Star*, Feb. 8, 1793.

¹³*Gazetteer*, Jan. 25, 1793; *Morning Post*, Jan. 26, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 25, 1793, Jan. 26, 1793; *Star*, Jan. 26, 1793, Feb. 5, 1793.

The English ministerial press made propaganda for the war by considering the French Republic's appropriation of the valuables of the churches a profanation. The armies of the French Republic occupying the Austrian Netherlands stripped the Catholic churches of wealth in accordance with the decree of December 15, 1792 to provide for the cost of liberation. The English ministerial papers reported that the clergy of Belgium, including eight hundred landowning abbeys, opposed this decree. The *Oracle*, now ministerial without reservations, predicted that the friendship of the Brabanters with the French would be short lived since the former, "shrink with horror from the contamination of atheism."¹⁴ After Great Britain was at war with France in February 1793, the *Oracle* verified that the Brabanters hated the French liberators who had offended their religious sentiments. The *St. James's Chronicle* described the French as "atheistical Goths" who planned to demolish the cathedrals of the Netherlands and impiously disrobed the figure of the Virgin, leaving on her nothing but the *bonnet rouge*.¹⁵

General Dumouriez, planning to betray the Republic to the enemy, issued a proclamation on March 11, 1793, annulling the decree of December 15th in Belgium and ordered the plate returned to the churches. The ministerial press was forced to acknowledge Dumouriez' order and a decree of the Convention which prohibited the profanation of churches. *The Times* wrote that the decree could not be implemented because the Convention countenanced the iniquity. The *St. James's Chronicle* had no difficulty

¹⁴*Oracle*, Jan. 17, 1793; *World*, Jan. 15, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Jan. 17-19, 1793, Jan. 29-31, 1793.

¹⁵*St. James's Chronicle*, March 12-14, 1793; *World*, Feb. 14, 1793; *Oracle*, March 25, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, April 3, 1793.

explaining Dumouriez' order to return the silver plate to the churches because it claimed the plate had already been sent to France. The *St. James* considered Dumouriez a hypocrite for speaking respectfully of religion when his recent defeats placed him in a precarious position. The *Public Advertiser* thought that Dumouriez had learnt from the mistake France made in confiscating ecclesiastical property.¹⁶ After Dumouriez was reported to have defected to the Austrians in April 1793, *The Times* commented on the ecclesiastical policy in Belgium:

It is asserted that the French have lost all idea of a Supreme Being -- but the fact is not so; they worship *Fraud* as a deity. . . . The French say that the priests robbed the public under the mask of religion, and that therefore all ideas of God were abolished. To this we may add, that the French robbed the Belgians under the idea of Liberty, and therefore Republicanism should be extirpated.¹⁷

The opposition English newspapers, intent on peace with France, did not join the ministerial press in accusing the armies of the French Republic of profaning the churches of Belgium. The source for much of the news in opposition newspapers was official reports to the Convention which attributed the adverse reaction in Belgium to the aristocratic party who were faithful to the "Romish" religion. According to one report published in the English opposition press, the Republic of France had respect for religion and the decree of December 15, 1792 was directed at the riches of the clergy who ought not, for religion's sake, to be so richly endowed. The correspondent to the *Morning Chronicle* considered

¹⁶*Times*, March 26, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, March 30 - April 2, 1793, April 2-4, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, April 6, 1793, April 10, 1793, April 12, 1793.

¹⁷*Times*, April 29, 1793.

the clergy and the nobility the defenders of the ancient constitution of Brabant more than the people.¹⁸ After war was declared between France and Great Britain, the opposition press praised Dumouriez' order to return the silver plate to the churches of Belgium and the decree prohibiting the profanation of churches.¹⁹

The English provincial newspapers adhered to positions of their party faction in reporting ecclesiastical affairs in France. The ministerial *Leeds Intelligencer* disapproved of French atheism and the profanation of churches in Belgium.²⁰ However, it agreed with the strong opposition weekly, the *Leicester Herald* in protesting the ambassador sent by the Pope to England with a plea to save the Roman church.²¹ Provincial opposition newspapers deplored the execution of Louis XVI as much as the ministerial press. But they refused to label secularization in France as atheistic. The *Cambridge Intelligencer* and the *Sheffield Register* later refuted Hannah More's pamphlet attacking Dupont's atheistic speech which claimed France's cruelty to the émigré priests was unparalleled in history. These English provincial newspapers recalled the massacres of Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572.²²

¹⁸*Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 15, 1793; *Star*, Jan. 14, 1793; *Morning Post*, Jan. 12, 1793, Jan. 15, 1793.

¹⁹*Morning Chronicle*, March 22, 1793, March 25, 1793; *Star*, March 25, 1793.

²⁰*Leeds Intelligencer*, Jan. 21, 1793, March 18, 1793, April 8, 1793.

²¹*Leicester Herald*, Jan. 12, 1793; *Leeds Intelligencer*, Jan. 14, 1793.

²²*Manchester Herald*, Jan. 26, 1793; *Leeds Mercury*, Feb. 2, 1793; *Cambridge Intelligencer*, Aug. 17, 1793; *Sheffield Register*, Aug. 23, 1793.

The Decrees against the Refractory Clergy

The treason of Dumouriez in March 1793 which endangered republican France faced with the armies of a coalition of five countries (Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Holland and Spain) and at the same time the royalist, Catholic rebellion in the Vendée in western France called for measures to suppress counter-revolution. The Convention decreed on March 13, 1793 death for priests involved in recruitment disturbances such as sparked the rebellion in the Vendée, and death to priests found in the Republic after being sentenced to transportation. On April 23, 1793 the Convention decreed that all priests who had refused the oath to liberty and equality of the Republic were to be deported to Guiana.

Supporting the war against republican France, the English ministerial press emphasized first the royalist aims of the Vendée rebellion and only secondly its Catholicism. *The Times* had its own correspondent who reported from Nantes, obviously one with close ties to the royalists. He wrote of the insurgents who, protesting the levy of men in March for the republican army, demanded freedom of worship for refractory priest in their churches. Other ministerial newspapers came to terms with the Catholic crusade in the Vendée.²³ As the *St. James's Chronicle* wrote in June 1793:

The counter-revolutionists of France call themselves the Christian army, and fight under the sign of the Cross, a sign which, although we are not addicted to superstition, is to the full as agreeable as that of the guillotine, which seems to be everywhere in a state of permanent activity.²⁴

²³*Times*, April 18, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, April 6-9, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, April 8, 1793.

²⁴*St. James's Chronicle*, June 1-4, 1793.

Throughout the summer of 1793, the ministerial newspapers published news of the Vendée rebellion as a religious crusade from royalist sources, although the *Oracle* also printed republican reports denouncing the fanaticism of the rebels.²⁵

The ministerial newspapers condemned the decrees of the Convention in March and April which aimed to punish the refractory clergy, and they expressed horror at the guillotining of priests. *The Times* attributed their persecution to the Republic's difficulty in recruiting for the army. The ministerial newspapers were shocked at the resolutions of the popular societies, the Cordeliers and the Jacobins, threatening the priests if patriots perished at the hands of the enemy, and also the decision of the Paris Commune early in June that no priest could become a public functionary unless he was married.²⁶

After the Jacobins controlled the Convention in June 1793, some of the constitutional clergy were accused of following the bishop Fauchet in Calvados in instigating federalist revolts against the government in Paris. On July 13, 1793, Marat was assassinated by Charlotte Corday in a federalist plot involving Fauchet. Terror reigned during the summer of 1793 in the repression of rebellions at Marseilles, Lyons, Toulon and Bordeaux, as well as in the Vendée. The Constitution decreed by the Jacobins in July 1793, which established the principle of religious liberty,

²⁵*Times*, July 5, 1793, Aug. 16, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, July 4-6, 1793; *London Packet*, July 3-5, 1793, July 31 - Aug. 2, 1793, Aug. 14-16, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Aug. 15, 1793; *Diary*, Aug. 16, 1793; *Oracle*, Aug. 15, 1793, Sept. 2, 1793.

²⁶*Times*, March 6, 1793, March 23, 1793, April 17, 1793, April 18, 1793, May 11, 1793, May 13, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, April 16-18, 1793, May 11-14, 1793; *Diary*, May 18, 1793; *Oracle*, May 14, 1793, June 20, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, June 20, 1793.

was set aside for a provisional government of the *Committees of Public Safety and General Welfare* whose members were chosen from the Convention. Using terrorist measures, the Republic succeeded in suppressing federalist and royalist rebellions and expelling foreign enemies from France during the fall and winter of 1793.

The law of Suspects of September 17, 1793 codified the prosecution of crimes against the Republic. The decrees of October 20 and 21, 1793 ordered death for priests found guilty of bearing arms against the Republic on the signature of two witnesses, and transportation for priests denounced by six citizens from the canton.

The ministerial English newspapers supported the federalist revolts inspired by the Girondin faction purged from the Convention because these revolts merged with royalist rebellions. The Girondins had manifested considerable anti-clericalism during the past, but the ministerial English press inferred that French priests favored the federalists who were moderate in religious matters.²⁷ So intent were the English ministerial newspapers on depicting the National Convention as godless that some of them had difficulty in acknowledging that the new constitution recognized the Supreme Being and the principle of religious liberty.²⁸

The ministerial press was horrified by the *sans-culottes'* cult of the martyrdom of Marat after he was assassinated on July 13th. After lauding Charlotte Corday as the heroine of all times, the ministerial

²⁷*Times*, June 10, 1793 attacked Isnard as anti-clerical, but favored federalists on July 1, 1793, July 18, 1793; *London Packet*, July 15-17, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, July 18-20, 1793.

²⁸*Times*, July 10, 1793, July 17, 1793, July 19, 1793; *London Packet*, July 5-8, 1793, July 17-19, 1793; *Oracle*, July 18, 1793; *Morning Herald*, July 18, 1793.

newspapers called the club of Cordeliers "blasphemous wretches" because they led a procession for the dead Marat, chanting, "Oh, heart of Jesus! Oh, heart of Marat!" According to these newspapers, Marat was on the way to supplant the Antichrist (the Pope) in the religion of the Jacobins.²⁹

The purely civic ceremony in Paris on August 10, 1793, anniversary of the downfall of the monarchy, during which the constitution was acclaimed by the populace, antagonized the *St. James's Chronicle* because patriotic fervor had replaced religion.³⁰ The repression under the Terror of the counter-revolutionary activities of priests in September and October 1793 was attributed by the English ministerial press to the Republic's hatred of religion. For the most part these newspapers published the detailed reports of the Revolutionary Tribunal in France which specified who of the condemned were priests and the nature of their crimes.³¹

During the spring and summer of 1793, the attitude of English opposition newspapers was that French atheism was a fiction manufactured by the ministerial press which was subsidized by the Treasury to support the war. The *Morning Chronicle*, refusing to uphold the rulers of the Netherlands as defenders of religion, claimed that Liege, ruled by a prince bishop, was not a good Catholic government fit for praise from Edmund Burke, but a gambling spa.³² The opposition press continued to rely on the Convention's

²⁹*London Packet*, Aug. 5-7, 1793; *Oracle*, Aug. 10, 1793; *Diary*, Aug. 10, 1793.

³⁰*St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 22-24, 1793.

³¹Some of these reports: *London Packet*, Sept. 20-23, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1793; *Oracle*, Sept. 23, 1793, Oct. 15, 1793, Nov. 14, 1793; *Times*, Sept. 25, 1793, Oct. 8, 1793, Oct. 9, 1793, Oct. 14, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 10-12, 1793.

³²*Morning Chronicle*, April 3, 1793.

official reports denouncing counter-revolutionary activities and the fanaticism of priests. Critical of English intervention in the Vendée, these newspapers stressed the Catholic nature of the rebellion. According to the *Morning Post*, the crusade against the patriots of Nantes was conducted by two bishops wearing mitres and carrying crucifixes in their hands and pistols in their pockets. "What infidels must the *sans-culottes* be," it added with sarcasm.³³

The opposition English press devoted much space to the new constitution of the National Convention which granted religious liberty.³⁴ And although these newspapers disliked Marat's bloodthirstiness, the *Morning Post* was one newspaper which refused point blank to eulogize Charlotte Corday, while it accused Burke of adding a new saint to his rosary.³⁵ The opposition English newspapers were reluctant to criticize ecclesiastical affairs under the French Republic because the Foxites wished to end a war fought on the pretext of defending religion.

The provincial *Leeds Intelligencer*, a ministerial newspaper, supported the rebellion in the Vendée as a religious crusade, and regarded the decrees which punished refractory priests justification of Burke's prophecy for the French Revolution. It published the lists of those condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal.³⁶ The opposition provincial newspaper, the *Leicester Herald* was critical of the rebellion in the Vendée and blamed the refractory priests for recruitment disturbances. It,

³³*Morning Post*, July 17, 1793; *Star*, May 30, 1793, July 3, 1793.

³⁴*Star*, July 16, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, July 16, 1793.

³⁵*Morning Post*, Aug. 14, 1793.

³⁶*Leeds Intelligencer*, Aug. 1, 1793, Sept. 9, 1793, Nov. 11, 1793.

with other provincial newspapers advocating constitutional reforms in England, had much praise for the new constitution of the National Convention which granted religious liberty.³⁷

Dechristianization under the Terror

The adoption of the French republican calendar astounded the ministerial English newspapers. *The Times* recognized at once its dechristianizing character when it wrote,

It is natural to expect that an Assembly which has applauded a public profession of atheism, [Dupont's] should strive to efface every vestige that might tend to recall the idea of the Divinity. This the National Convention executed in its decree of the 20th of September, decreeing a *new division of the year*. The Convention has suppressed the commencement of the vulgar era, which took its date from the Birth of Christ in all Christian nations. It has done the same with the Sabbath, devoted among all men to the worship of God.

These measures verify the prognostications of many people at the beginning of the Revolution, who declared that it would end in the abolition of every form of religion. The present Legislators of France exceed the wishes of the famous Mirabeau, who only proposed to *decatholicize* France.³⁸

What also disturbed *The Times* was that the French calendar assumed the republican era would last forever. The *St. James's Chronicle* and the *Public Advertiser* thought the republican calendar imitated the Jews in starting the year in September and predicted the new calendar would create confusion by eliminating religious observances. The *Oracle* had a more original explanation, writing, "Sunday we hear is abolished in France!

³⁷*Leicester Herald*, March 30, 1793, July 13, 1793; *Cambridge Intelligencer*, July 20, 1793; *Sheffield Register*, Sept. 6, 1793, Sept. 13, 1793.

³⁸*Times*, Oct. 7, 1793.

Right! The assassin can have no day of rest."³⁹

There was apparently some admiration for the new calendar in enlightened circles because *The Times* disclaimed its originality. According to *The Times*, this was the old calendar of the Greeks described by the Abbé Bartholême in the 31st chapter of his *Travels of Anarcharsis the Younger*. *The Times*, more than any other English newspaper, was shocked that the French dared to overthrow Sunday and substitute unintelligible names for familiar ones of the calendar.⁴⁰ The ministerial press made much of the problems of the republican government in enforcing the abolition of Sunday. When the Convention refused to prohibit religious ceremonies on Sunday while the Paris Commune ordered the shops to remain open, *The Times* and the *London Packet* concluded that even the Jews in most countries enjoyed more religious liberty in observing their sabbath than Catholics in Paris.⁴¹

The ministerial *Oracle* revealed a startling reversal of attitude when the Convention extolled the victims in the 1760's of intolerance in decreeing to re-establish the memory of La Barre, beheaded for having insulted the crucifix, and Calas, a Protestant broken on the wheel after being accused of murdering his Catholic son. Until the downfall of the monarchy in France, the *Oracle* prided itself on its enlightened tolerance, but now it criticized the decree because it claimed that La Barre had been taught impiety by Voltaire. Baldwin's *London Weekly Journal*, under

³⁹*Oracle*, Nov. 2, 1793; *Times*, Oct. 19, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 22-24, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Oct. 25, 1793.

⁴⁰*Times*, Nov. 6, 1793, Nov. 8, 1793.

⁴¹*Times*, Nov. 30, 1793; *London Packet*, Nov. 29 - Dec. 2, 1793.

the same management as the *St. James's Chronicle*, concluded that the French had always been irreligious, the nobles, the gentry and even some of the clergy.⁴²

Both the ministerial and the opposition press gave detailed coverage to dechristianization by reprinting in full the reports of the representatives on mission and the popular societies to the Convention. When Fouché, deputy to the central and western departments of the Republic, secularized burials in Nevers by decreeing that they must be in isolated places with the inscription of the gates of the cemeteries, "Death is an Eternal Sleep," the *St. James's Chronicle* and *The Times* praised at first the requirement that burials be isolated from inhabitants. Being very English, these newspapers claimed Fouché stole the idea of Death as **eternal** sleep from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.⁴³ *The Times* quickly changed its mind and condemned secular burials as atheism. The soul was believed immortal long before the Christians, so said *The Times*, and now not in France where people died as animals. *The Times* doubted if mankind would ever conquer fear of death and adopt this new French philosophy. It deplored that the victims of republican France were deprived the consolation of a future life. The *Public Advertiser* and other ministerial newspapers thought the French republicans feared the punishment of the hereafter.⁴⁴

Fouché was only one of the Convention's deputies who engaged in dechristianization. One of the most active was André Dumont, on mission in

⁴²*Baldwin's London Weekly Journal*, Oct. 26, 1793; *Oracle*, Nov. 29, 1793.

⁴³*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 26-29, 1793; *Times*, Oct. 28, 1793.

⁴⁴*Times*, Oct. 30, 1793, Dec. 17, 1793, Dec. 27, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 2, 1793; the *Times*, Dec. 25, 1793, claimed Plato and Cato believed in the soul's immortality.

the Somme, a priest who had lately abjured what he described as "the religion of slaves." Dumont's dechristianization was reported more extensively in the English press than that of Fouché in Nevers or even Lequinio and Laignelot at Rochefort.⁴⁵ Other representatives on mission discontinued dechristianization earlier than Dumont; at least most of the reports to the Convention ceased to mention dechristianization after Robespierre denounced atheism late in November 1793. Lequinio and Laignelot were reported in the English press extending dechristianization to the Protestants and persuading the Jews to renounce expectation of the Messiah.⁴⁶

When Carrier, deputy to the western army of Nantes where the rebellion of the Vendée was being suppressed, reported to the Convention that ninety non-juring priests had drowned in the Loire. *The Times* had this comment from its correspondent:

In the departments, as well as at Paris, our revolution continues to be cemented with blood and invigorated by the new system of destroying every vestige of public worship; at the same time plundering, proscribing, and murdering the clergy. . . . It was in this manner that they acted relative to 90 unfortunate non-juring clergymen. They were heaped together in a boat on the Loire, near Nantes, and the boat was afterwards sunk and not one escaped.⁴⁷

The following week the *St. James's Chronicle* published a letter from Nantes which claimed that fifty-eight priests were drowned.⁴⁸

⁴⁵For dechristianization by Dumont alone, see: *World*, Oct. 16, 1793, Nov. 14, 1793; *Oracle*, Nov. 6, 1793, Nov. 27, 1793; *Times*, Nov. 12, 1793, Nov. 27, 1793, Dec. 23, 1793, Dec. 24, 1793, Dec. 25, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 13, 1793; in opposition newspapers, *Star*, Oct. 15, 1793, Nov. 1, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 6, 1793, Nov. 27, 1793; *Gazetteer*, Nov. 13, 1793, Dec. 4, 1793, Dec. 25, 1793.

⁴⁶*Times*, Nov. 15, 1793, Dec. 7, 1793.

⁴⁷*Times*, Dec. 14, 1793.

⁴⁸*St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 21-24, 1793.

To the English ministerial newspapers, the persecution of the refractory clergy was the same as dechristianization.

The readiness of the constitutional clergy to depretize was inexplicable to these newspapers. The *Oracle* thought the priests were renegades who resigned from their functions because they did not dare to defend the Terror from the pulpit. The *London Packet* believed that the priests, by renouncing their religion, received pensions for doing nothing. To the *St. James's Chronicle* they were simply wretches who blasphemed.⁴⁹

The English press had reported in October 1793 that some of the *fau-bourgs* of Paris changed their time honored ecclesiastical names for patriotic ones, as for instance, the section of *Croix-Rouge* became *Bonnet Rouge*.⁵⁰ In November the Paris Commune was described by English ministerial newspapers as well on the way to dechristianization when it ordered the destruction of religious images and substituted busts of Marat, while church ornaments were taken to the mint and exchanged for *assignats* to relieve the poor. As the sections one by one recognized no other worship than that of liberty and equality, the Commune was reported denying certificates of civism to those who visited non-juring priests and the Cordelier club called for an end to the salaries of the constitutional clergy.⁵¹

⁴⁹*Oracle*, Nov. 21, 1793, Dec. 7, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 19-21, 1793, Nov. 28-30, 1793; *London Packet*, Dec. 18-20, 1793.

⁵⁰*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 15-17, 1793; *Times*, Oct. 16, 1793; *World*, Oct. 17, 1793.

⁵¹*Public Advertiser*, Nov. 21, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 5-7, 1793, Nov. 16-19, 1793; *Times*, Nov. 15, 1793, Nov. 16, 1793, Nov. 20, 1793; *London Packet*, Nov. 18-20, 1793.

The English press reported how Gobel, the constitutional bishop of Paris, and eleven of his vicars came to the Convention on 17 Brumaire (November 7, 1793) to abjure the Christian religion and that other ecclesiastical deputies followed his example. According to the ministerial newspapers, the deputies welcomed this distraction because they had just heard a proposal for a statement of the personal fortune of each member.⁵² The *Oracle* and the *St. James's Chronicle* also reported that Gobel returned to the metropolitan church of Notre Dame and, wearing the red cap of liberty, smashed the statues of saints adorning the church. There is no evidence of such an action on Gobel's part.⁵³

The English ministerial press had for so long denounced ecclesiastical developments in France as atheism that dechristianization when it came was somehow not astonishing. The *St. James's Chronicle* thought the fêtes were meant to amuse the minds of the slavish multitude in France and apologized for staining its pages with the "impious" details. On November 10, 1793, a procession from the Commune filed into the hall of the Convention with Chaumette and a young woman dressed as Liberty, and announced that the church of Notre Dame was consecrated to Reason. When the goddess of Liberty was seated next to the president of the Convention who gave her the customary fraternal embrace, the *St. James's Chronicle* seemed more astounded by her behavior than by the procession itself.⁵⁴ One month

⁵²*Oracle*, Nov. 19, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 21-23, 1793; *Times*, Nov. 19, 1793, Nov. 20, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 19, 1793; *World*, Nov. 19, 1793.

⁵³*Oracle*, Nov. 20, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 21-23, 1793.

⁵⁴*St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 19-21, 1793, Nov. 21-23, 1793; *Times*, Nov. 20, 1793; *Oracle*, Nov. 21, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 21, 1793; *London Packet*, Nov. 20-22, 1793.

after this event, *The Times* referred to the prostitute goddess. She could not have been a prostitute, because it was well known that Chaumette had repeatedly denounced women of the town as devotees of religion.⁵⁵

Both ministerial and opposition newspapers printed the same official report from France which acclaimed the civic festival dedicated to the cult of Reason on the second *decadi* of Brumaire, year II (November 10, 1793) as an occasion of joy.⁵⁶ Denunciations soon followed in the ministerial press but not in the opposition newspapers. The ministerial newspapers had difficulty grasping that the Commune was substituting a republican religion of morality for Christianity, and the *St. James* and the *London Packet* seemed sincerely puzzled that Chaumette opposed Christian vice with republican virtue. They wrote,

The atheists of France reckon it most religious to be without any religion. On these terms, Satan and his fallen host might join them. Morality and religion are a sure support, when they go hand in hand. But where has been the instance when morality alone has been to be trusted?⁵⁷

These newspapers concluded that atheism could not be permanent, that the oppressed multitude in France would seek consolation in religion.

The opposition English press, waging a campaign for a negotiated peace with republican France, refused to be shocked at dechristianization,

⁵⁵*Times*, Dec. 21, 1793. Chaumette was reported complaining that prostitutes were bribed by priests to commit treason; *Times*, Nov. 28, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Dec. 4, 1793; *Oracle*, Dec. 4, 1793, Dec. 5, 1793.

⁵⁶*Times*, Nov. 19, 1793, Nov. 20, 1793; *London Packet*, Nov. 18-20, 1793; *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 21, 1793; *Oracle*, Nov. 21, 1793; *World*, Nov. 21, 1793.

⁵⁷*St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 5-7, 1793; *London Packet*, Dec. 6-9, 1793.

yet never defended it in its reports.⁵⁸ These newspapers had shown an enlightened interest in the republican calendar despite its elimination of Christian holidays. The *Gazetteer* admired the calendar and criticized those who abused the Convention for changing the names of months and days. According to the *Gazetteer*, the only part of the calendar to which a Christian could take offense was substituting the *decadi* for Sunday, but philosophers knew that names of months and days were arbitrary, that the calendar of the Jews, Greeks, Mohammedans, *et al.*, had undergone changes, and also the Roman calendar which had been adopted by the Christians. The *Gazetteer* analyzed the derivations for names of months and days to prove that the Christian calendar was not even Christian.⁵⁹ Only the opposition press reports from France and sometimes the *Oracle*, dated official news according to the republican calendar, but not consistently.

The *Morning Chronicle*, after reporting that in France the churches were transformed into temples of Reason, had the audacity to point out that some of the art in Westminster Abbey was inspired by pagans. The *Gazetteer* joked about secularized burials in France. The *Morning Post* deplored that the Anglican clergy preached politics from the pulpit which made their churches as un-Christian as republican temples.⁶⁰ During this period the opposition English press kept up a barrage of criticism of the unreformed Anglican Church as part of the establishment.

⁵⁸*Star*, Nov. 18, 1793, Nov. 20, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 19, 1793; *Morning Post*, Nov. 19, 1793; *Gazetteer*, Nov. 19, 1793.

⁵⁹*Gazetteer*, Nov. 26, 1793.

⁶⁰*Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 27, 1793. The paganism in Westminster Abbey was specified as Hercules with his club, Minerva with her owl, and Neptune with his trident; *Gazetteer*, Nov. 30, 1793, joked about the Quaker in Glasgow who, when told "Death is Eternal Sleep" preferred to go to Hell; *Morning Post*, Dec. 18, 1793.

Typical was the satirical Canto XII in the *Morning Post*:

I believe in the mysteries of this Glorious Temple, as expounded to me by the prophet Edmund. I believe in God Almighty as by law established. . . . I believe in the unity of church and state. I believe in the independence of the three estates of the King representing *himself*, Lords representing *themselves* and Commons representing *themselves*. I believe that the Swinish Multitude are born only to labour and be governed, and I believe that standing army, national debt, revenue, tax gathering, pensions, places, ecclesiastical patronage, tithes, bribes, tests, information, penalties, and press gangs, most consistent with true glory.⁶¹

The opposition English press actually defended the French Republic on the appropriation of wealth of the churches in the period of dechristianization. In contrast to the condemnation of the ministerial press, the opposition newspapers treated the matter with levity. The *Gazetteer* commented that the French now estimated their saints by their weight. The *Morning Chronicle* claimed towards the end of 1793 that the French followed the example of the priests throughout the ages in making use of saints and relics to fill the treasury, and it maintained that the bullion amassed from the spoils of the churches was not exaggerated. If the French had not sent the ornaments of the churches to the mint, the priests would have converted them into a fund for the enemy, so the French, wrote the *Morning Chronicle*, took good care to melt down the opposition.⁶² The *Morning Post* applauded, "The conversion of silver saints of France from a state of useless pageantry to that of a more productive nature."⁶³ The *Gazetteer* and the *Morning Chronicle* pointed out that the clergy in Flanders

⁶¹*Morning Post*, Nov. 9, 1793.

⁶²*Gazetteer*, Nov. 14, 1793, Nov. 23, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 22, 1793, Nov. 30, 1793, Dec. 6, 1793.

⁶³*Morning Post*, Nov. 30, 1793.

conveyed their plate to the mint (on loan) to aid the coalition armies against France, and commented, "We only lament that the holy treasure in both countries is not employed to a better purpose to assist men in cutting each other's throats."⁶⁴

However, it is significant that the opposition English press, after Robespierre condemned atheism late in November, expressed approval of the reopening of the churches in Paris for Christmas.⁶⁵ These newspapers wished to remove the religious issue from the war propaganda of the ministerial press. The *Morning Post* depicted the refugee abbé Calonne piously weeping with Pitt over "the bleeding miseries of mankind." The *Morning Chronicle* opposed the continuation of war with France in order to re-convert it to Christianity and restore the domination of the Pope.⁶⁶

The ministerial provincial press echoed London ministerial newspapers in deploring dechristianization in France. The *Manchester Mercury* and the *Leeds Intelligencer* were shocked when the republican calendar abolished Sundays and secular burials deprived the soul of heavenly consolation. The *Manchester Mercury* felt vindicated because it had been criticized for depicting the whole Convention as advocates of Dupont's atheism. The ministerial provincial newspapers condemned the decrees which punished counter-revolutionary priests.⁶⁷

⁶⁴*Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 9, 1793; *Gazetteer*, Dec. 10, 1793.

⁶⁵*Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 17, 1793, Dec. 28, 1792; *Star*, Dec. 17, 1793; *Gazetteer*, Dec. 27, 1793; *Sunday Reformer*, Dec. 29, 1793, this newspaper, almost unavailable, seems anti-ministerial.

⁶⁶*Morning Post*, Nov. 29, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 13, 1793.

⁶⁷*Leeds Intelligencer*, Nov. 4, 1793, Nov. 11, 1793, Dec. 9, 1793; *Manchester Mercury*, Nov. 5, 1793, Dec. 3, 1793, Dec. 10, 1793, Dec. 17, 1793; *Exeter Gazette*, Dec. 12, 1793.

An advertisement in the *Manchester Mercury* of the committee to aid the clergy of France thanked the public at large, and the Anglican clergy in particular, for their Christian charity which reflected "the highest honour on the Church of England and the Protestant religion." Among the signers were Edmund Burke, William Wilberforce, who was known for his efforts to abolish the slave trade, and the Duke of Portland, the nominal leader of the Whig opposition. During the period of dechristianization in France, the *Leeds Intelligencer* praised the French clergy in the palace at Winchester for showing their gratitude by making gloves for English soldiers.⁶⁸

The opposition provincial newspapers were disinclined to praise the Anglican clergy. In the provinces the influence of the religious Dissenters was stronger on the opposition newspapers than on the London opposition press. The *Cambridge Intelligencer* and the *Sheffield Register*, both published by Unitarians, reported fully the dechristianization in France. However, the *Cambridge Intelligencer* differed from London opposition newspapers in finding the republican calendar offensive. It also expressed dislike of André Dumont and his dechristianization.⁶⁹ Manifesting a non-conformist distrust for all established religions, the *Cambridge Intelligencer* wrote,

The conduct of the French in abjuring all religion too evidently proves that they never had *any*. Where religion has once been seated in the understanding and in the heart, it can never be totally abjured. Mere *national* religion, as it is

⁶⁸*Manchester Mercury*, Nov. 30, 1793; *Leeds Intelligencer*, Nov. 25, 1793.

⁶⁹*Cambridge Intelligencer*, Nov. 2, 1793, Nov. 9, 1793, Nov. 16, 1793, Nov. 23, 1793, Dec. 7, 1793; *Sheffield Register*, Nov. 15, 1793, Nov. 29, 1793.

termed, varies, rises or falls with the fashion of the day, but real *personal* religion endures to eternity.⁷⁰

The *Cambridge Intelligencer* was critical of the Anglican clergy for not aiding the unemployed factory workers instead of the "Popish" clergy and also for attacking religious Dissenters. In its next issue it denied that the war was in defense of religion. The opposition provincial newspaper, the *Sheffield Register* was more responsive to the radical views of the local reformers. It did not criticize ecclesiastical affairs in France, but it printed the same lament that the holy treasure in Flanders and in France was put to use to finance cutting throats, which appeared in the London opposition newspapers.⁷²

In the beginning of 1793 the English ministerial press used as war propaganda the French profanation of the churches in the Austrian Netherlands. In the reports of the execution of Louis XVI, which were given extensive coverage, the ministerial newspapers stressed the King's piety. After war was declared in February 1793, the ministerial press accused the opposition newspapers of supporting French atheism because they urged peace with France and defended French ecclesiastical policy in the Netherlands. The rebellious Vendéans were extolled in the ministerial press as royalists and defenders of their ancient religion.

Throughout 1793 the English ministerial press depicted the secularization of life in France as atheistic. Dechristianization when it came in the fall of 1793 was to the ministerial English press the final proof

⁷⁰*Cambridge Intelligencer*, Nov. 30, 1793.

⁷¹*Cambridge Intelligencer*, Dec. 14, 1793, Dec. 21, 1793.

⁷²*Sheffield Register*, Dec. 13, 1793.

of atheism. The spoliation of the churches in France to pay for the war and the abjuration of the constitutional clergy proved to these newspapers they had been right.

The opposition newspapers refrained from interpreting secularization in France as atheism and the laws punishing refractory priests as motivated by hatred of religion. They defended the appropriation of the wealth of the churches in France as utilitarian. The Vendéan rebels were thought to be superstitious. Refusing to be shocked at either dechristianization of the cult of Reason, the opposition newspapers attacked the Anglican clergy for sanctioning the war.

The peak of dechristianization in France was reached at the end of November, 1793. The Republic, fighting both foreign war and civil war in the Vendée, repressed the refractory clergy as agents of sedition. As dechristianization ceased, the ministerial press continued its accusation of atheism but the opposition press denied the charge.

CHAPTER X

THE ENGLISH PRESS ON ROBESPIERRE'S SUPREME BEING

Although in December 1793 the English press was aware that Robespierre had repudiated atheism and dechristianization, it served the ministerial newspapers to castigate France as godless and unworthy of a negotiated peace. Opposition newspapers welcomed Robespierre's defence of the freedom to worship because it eliminated the religious issue as war propaganda. However, reports from France of dechristianization in the provinces continued for some months in the English press, so that Robespierre's religious policy seemed meaningless. In this period the ministerial press blamed Robespierre personally rather than the republican government.

Robespierre's Deism versus Atheism

The English press reported Robespierre's speeches to the Jacobin club and the Convention towards the end of November 1793, denouncing atheistic manifestations for reviving fanaticism and being unworthy of the legislature. Danton, who had returned from political retirement, supported Robespierre and expressed distaste for anti-religious excesses. On the 16th Frimaire (December 6, 1793), two days after the revolutionary government set aside the constitution, a decree drawn up by Barère and Robespierre guaranteed freedom of worship. The Paris Commune was reported complying with the Convention's decree. The churches of Paris were reopened for Christmas and crowded with worshippers.

At the Jacobin club Hébert, assistant procuror of the Commune, was denounced for having questioned in his journal, *Le Père Duchesne* the

assertion in the Jacobin *Journal de la Montagne* of the existence of a Supreme Being. Hébert became a Jacobin in good standing by declaring he believed in God and Jesus Christ, the founder of popular societies. Chaumette underwent similar scrutiny at the Jacobin club. The triumph of Robespierre's policy of religious liberty over the Commune's dechristianization was evident.

The English ministerial newspapers acknowledged Robespierre's repudiation of atheism by calling him a hypocrite. According to them, Robespierre only affected moderation after he was sated with the plunder of the churches. They suspected that Robespierre's grip on power was slipping; that was why he complained of the lack of moderation in the Paris Commune and why he came to the defence of Barère, whom the Jacobins had criticized, by pretending to tolerate religion.¹ It was thought that Robespierre was aware of disturbances in the departments of France and the adverse public opinion abroad resulting from atheism. Said the correspondent at Paris to *The Times*, "We are therefore again allowed for some time to adore God in his temples. But in order to detach us, little by little, from our religion, the head of some revolutionary priest every now and then falls under the revolutionary axe . . ."2

The reports of the Revolutionary Tribunal condemning priests among others for counter-revolutionary crimes, and the dechristianization continuing in the departments enabled the English ministerial press to label Robespierre a hypocrite and claim that France was still atheistic.

¹*Public Advertiser*, Dec. 3, 1793; *Oracle*, Dec. 4, 1793; *St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 10-12, 1793; *London Packet*, Dec. 18-20, 1793; *Times*, Dec. 12, 1793; *Sun*, Jan. 3, 1794.

²*Times*, Dec. 24, 1793, Dec. 27, 1793.

As late as February 1794 a particularly virulent anti-religious masquerade was reported in Bourg-en-Bresse.³ Robespierre's speech in December, claiming that republican France worshipped a purer Supreme Being than other nations incensed *The Times* which reminded its readers that the French enforced atheism by guillotining their priests.⁴

Other ministerial newspapers shared these opinions on Robespierre's religious policy but betrayed some puzzlement. When the churches in Paris were reported open again and more crowded than ever, the *St. James's Chronicle* and the *Oracle* commented, "What weather cocks are the French!"⁵ The Convention's decree in December which guaranteed religious liberty did not satisfy the English ministerial newspapers. The *Oracle* complained that the decree showed lack of respect for religion by not establishing a dominant church, and it wrote of the French, "They commit it to choice and have no coercive means to make men pious and orderly."⁶ The *Evening Mail* expressed the Burkean belief that there could be no religion in France separate from the throne and only when monarchy was restored could religion flourish again. The *St. James's Chronicle* had doubts whether they had religion in France when there was no established clergy and comedians

³*Public Advertiser*, Feb. 11, 1794, reported that following an ox and cart representing Equality were three asses with placards: one read, "I am more useful than a king"; the second, "I am more respectable than a priest"; the third, "I am more chaste than the Pope."

⁴*Times*, Dec. 20, 1793, Dec. 21, 1793.

⁵*St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 19-21, 1793; *Oracle*, Dec. 21, 1793; Baldwin's *London Weekly Journal*, Dec. 28, 1793.

⁶*Oracle*, Dec. 18, 1793: in the same issue it criticized the Anglican Church for its 5,597 livings which provided the clergy with less than 50 pounds a year.

from the theatres served as priests.⁷

The English ministerial newspapers could not do otherwise than belittle Robespierre's policy of religious liberty because it was a threat to their support of a war in defence of King, Church and aristocracy. *The Times* scornfully referred to "one of our Anglo-Frenchified papers" which maintained that France would tolerate Christianity once peace was made with the coalition powers. *The Times* was attacking the leading opposition newspaper, the *Morning Chronicle*, which repudiated a war waged to re-establish Roman Catholicism. *The Times* criticized Charles Fox for claiming that the atheism avowed by Dupont in the Convention in December 1792 was only the raving of a madman because, the *Times* asserted, despite Robespierre's new decree, the whole Convention was atheistic and worshipped a philosophy without acknowledging God as first cause.⁹ The purpose of this attack was made clear a week later when *The Times* wrote,

No man can be a true friend to his country who could wish to make peace with the regicides of France and thereby leave their own country exposed to the future intrigues of so formidable a cabal which holds out an equalization of property to the mob and denies the existence of a Supreme Being.¹⁰

Lord Auckland, supporting the speech from the throne to Parliament in defence of the war as a war of religion, was quoted in the English press in January 1794 as rejecting a separate peace with a nation which

⁷*Evening Mail*, Jan. 1-3, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, Jan. 7-9, 1794.

⁸*Times*, Dec. 14, 1794, Dec. 17, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 13, 1793.

⁹*Times*, Jan. 2, 1794, Jan. 7, 1794.

¹⁰*Times*, Jan. 13, 1794.

denied the existence of a deity.¹¹ When Lord Stanhope moved in the House of Lords on January 23, 1794 to recognize the French republic, he denied the Jacobins were atheists and blamed, as Robespierre did, lack of belief in France on its aristocracy and clergy. The bishop of Durham was reported so offended by Stanhope's remarks that he declared he would not allow religion to be insulted. *The Times* wrote with some sarcasm that Stanhope claimed the Convention adored God and that Stanhope could prove it.¹²

On February 17, 1794, a member of the opposition, the Marquis of Lansdowne, moved in the House of Lords a proposal for peace with France. The answer of Lord Grenville was critical of a noble lord (Stanhope) for not believing that the rulers of France were atheists. Also opposing the motion for peace, the Earl of Carnarvan's speech was paraphrased in the neutral *London Chronicle*, "There was no religion in France to be dependent upon in which civil society was interested; the Deity by name they had degraded, denied his existence; they tolerated him, then admitted him as a member of the Jacobin club."¹³

When the Unitarian minister Joseph Priestley, whose house and scientific laboratory in Birmingham had been destroyed in the "Church and King" riots of July 1791, preached a farewell sermon before leaving England for America in the spring of 1794, the ministerial press was vindictive in justifying his harassment. The *St. James's Chronicle* not only condemned him for his hostility to established religion but for his

¹¹*Times*, Jan. 22, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, Jan. 21-23, 1794; *London Chronicle*, Jan. 21-23, 1794.

¹²*Times*, Jan. 24, 1794; *Morning Herald*, Jan. 24, 1794; *London Chronicle*, Jan. 23-25, 1794.

¹³*London Chronicle*, Feb. 18-20, 1794; *Evening Mail*, Feb. 14, 1794.

praise of the "deists, atheists, heathens" in France.¹⁴

Hysteria against atheism and Jacobism reached a crescendo at this time with the publication of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. Paine was a political refugee from Great Britain who, after becoming a deputy to the French Convention, was in prison as a member of the purged Girondin faction. The *Age of Reason*, probably written to put its author in the good graces of the Robespierrists who controlled the Convention, became anathema to the English ministerial press. It was denounced as brutal paganism, downright atheism sapping the foundation of all piety; also, that Paine's rational deism was nothing new, a reiteration of a century of English deism. The *Sun* was particularly offended that Paine had depicted Christ as a virtuous reformer and revolutionary.¹⁵

Opposition English newspapers had published in December 1793 the same official reports from France of Robespierre's repudiation of atheism as the ministerial press, along with the news of dechristianization continuing in the departments. Although these newspapers never praised Robespierre (while not attacking him personally) and thought he was politically motivated in defending liberty of worship, they approved of his religious policy. The *Gazetteer* thought Robespierre knew it was unwise to make enemies of the adherents of "superstition." The *Morning Post* praised the French for following the founder of Pennsylvania in not establishing a church but tolerating all sects which maintained their own

¹⁴*St. James's Chronicle*, March 13-15, 1794.

¹⁵*Sun*, March 19, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, March 18-20, 1794; *Star*, March 19, 1794, unlike the opposition press, expressed disapproval of Paine's *Age of Reason*. The neutral *General Evening Post*, March 18-20, 1794, also disapproved.

pastors.¹⁶

The opposition newspapers seized the opportunity to snipe at the politically privileged Anglican Church in its comments on the new religious policy in France. After the churches of Paris reopened for Christmas, the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Sunday Reformer* humbly recommended to the Anglican bishops they shut some of the deserted churches in London for a short time as a means of better attendance in the future.¹⁷ The opposition press defended the Protestant Dissenters accused of disloyalty, particularly when the Anglican bishop of St. David's, Dr. Horseley attacked the Dissenters while showing much compassion for the French refugee clergy.¹⁸

The opposition press in December 1793 ridiculed ministerial propaganda that the war was fought to defend religion. The *Morning Chronicle* wrote, "The Treasury papers find themselves frequently obliged to vary the grounds which they defend the present war. . . . It turns out to be a war in order to convert the French to Christianity and restore the domination of the Pope."¹⁹ The *Gazetteer* expressed gratitude that the Jacobins had declared their belief in the Supreme Being, because the English ministerial newspapers lost one of their "pathetic lamentations."²⁰

The provincial ministerial press found room in its four pages

¹⁶*Gazetteer*, Dec. 4, 1793; *Morning Post*, Dec. 5, 1793.

¹⁷*Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 28, 1793; *Sunday Reformer*, Dec. 29, 1793; the *Star*, Dec. 21, 1793, remarked as the ministerial press, "What weather cocks are the French!"

¹⁸*Gazetteer*, Dec. 25, 1793; *Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 27, 1793.

¹⁹*Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 13, 1793.

²⁰*Gazetteer*, Dec. 26, 1793.

crowded with local and London news to report episodes of dechristianization in France and to be shocked that atheism had replaced the Deity. Robespierre's condemnation of atheism made little impression. These newspapers supported the war with France and were scornful of the assertions of opposition spokesmen in Parliament that it was not a war of religion. Paine's *Age of Reason* was downright paganism.²¹

The opposition newspapers in the provinces were even more forthright than the London opposition press in denouncing the war and defending Robespierre's policy of religious toleration. The *Cambridge Intelligencer* was no admirer of the National Convention with "its paroxisms of madness" but it praised its "lucid interval" of religious toleration. It considered the clause in the decree of December 6, 1793 that specified that no religion should dominate in France worthy of the National Assembly of 1789-1791. The *Cambridge Intelligencer* refuted those writers who called the war one of religion when the Roman church in France was estimated to have cost France annually twelve millions sterling and was nothing more than "a school for atheism, infidelity and vice." As a dissenting newspaper, it was critical of Dr. Horseley, the Anglican bishop who praised the religion of the refugee French clergy while casting doubt on the Christianity of the Dissenters.²² The correspondent from Paris to the *Sheffield Register* had no reservations on the religious policy of the National Convention and in Robespierriest phrases extolled the consolation that religion infused in human hearts. Early in 1794 the *Leicester Herald* gave much space to Priestley's farewell sermon and his reasons for leaving

²¹*Exeter Gazette*, Dec. 12, 1793; *Leeds Intelligencer*, Jan. 20, 1794; *Oxford Journal*, Jan. 25, 1794, March 22, 1794.

²²*Cambridge Intelligencer*, Dec. 21, 1793, Dec. 28, 1793.

Great Britain. The provincial opposition press were incensed that in the House of Lords the Anglican bishops piously supported the war as a religious crusade.²³ The *Cambridge Intelligencer* published a poem, satirizing these bishops:

Strange difference, in truth, appears,
and most men think it odd,
'Twixt Bishops in the House of Peers
and in the House of God.

Among the Peers they gravely rise,
and vote that War shan't cease;
But in the church with upturned eyes,
they loudly pray for Peace.²⁴

The Suppression of Factionalism and the Decree Honoring the Supreme Being

Towards the end of March 1794, an alleged insurrection of the Hébertists who protested economic hardship in Paris and suspected corruption in the Convention, was crushed by the Committee of Public Safety. The Revolutionary Tribunal arrested and condemned Hébert and his followers, among whom were some foreigners who had promoted dechristianization. Gobel, the elected bishop of Paris, was arrested for having abandoned his episcopal post, while Momoro, the president of the Cordelier club, and his wife who was reputed to be one of the goddesses of Reason, were guillotined with Chaumette and others of the popular societies. The Jacobin club in Paris was purged of Hébertists.

The beginning of April 1794, the faction led by Danton and Camille Desmoulins, whom the Hébertists had denounced as the Indulgents for wishing to moderate the Terror, was crushed by the Robespierrists. Denouncing

²³*Sheffield Register*, Jan. 3, 1794; *Cambridge Intelligencer*, March 1, 1794; *Leicester Herald*, March 29, 1794.

²⁴*Cambridge Intelligencer*, March 8, 1794.

the followers of Danton as corrupt conspirators, Saint-Just and Barère of the Committee of Public Safety also accused them of rejecting the immortality of the soul to undermine the Republic founded on religion and morality. From the fall of Danton until late in July 1794, Robespierre became the dominant figure in France.

The English ministerial press, because it was intent on waging war to restore the monarchy in France, admitted with reluctance that atheism was officially disowned in the Republic. *The Times* and the *Evening Mail* were reminded, when Robespierre and Barère spoke of morality and religion, of the Devil quoting Scripture. These newspapers compared Robespierre to Oliver Cromwell who, they claimed, had quoted Scripture to become a dictator, and depicted Robespierre as a hypocrite affecting religion in a threadbare coat, lodging in a furnished room and dining on cold meat so that he might not be thought a dictator. Robespierre's religion was no religion because he had dispensed with the clergy's upkeep.²⁵ The *Oracle* concluded that the French rulers who had formerly professed atheism returned to the Deity because they realized how objectionable was their atheism. The *Sun* was more down to earth: Robespierre needed sanctions for republican morality because the tradesmen in France shut their shops on the *decadi* and indulged in every vice.²⁶

The ministerial English press needed such arguments to retain the religious issue for war propaganda in the tide of republican victories. On April 4, 1794, Lord Stanhope again claimed in the House of Lords that

²⁵*Times*, April 12, 1794, April 21, 1794; *Evening Mail*, April 11-14, 1794, April 18-21, 1794.

²⁶*Oracle*, April 25, 1794, May 2, 1794; *Sun*, May 8, 1794.

religion was a pretext for continuing the war. He questioned the propriety of interfering in the internal government of France to restore the monarchy by citing a sermon preached by the bishop of Norwich that war was the greatest of social evils, and reading from the book of Samuel that it was an offense to God to impose a monarchical government on a people. The English press reported that Stanhope so infuriated the Anglican bishops on the benches that they moved the expunging of his speech from the Journal.²⁷

Shortly afterwards, Edmund Burke was successful in urging passage of a bill in the House of Commons for an émigré corps in the army which provided for dispensation of Anglican communion for military commissions. Lord Grenville, ministerial spokesman in the House of Lords, was reported claiming that the war was not between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism but between Christianity and atheism. Richard Sheridan, who spoke for the opposition in the Commons, objected to a corps of French Catholics in the army while excluding English Catholics from serving as officers. He tried in May 1794 to secure ministerial support for removing civil disabilities for Dissenters, Catholics and Protestants, but without success.²⁸

In May 1794 Thomas Hardy, Horne Tooke and others of the London Corresponding Society were arrested for forming a convention to subvert the British constitution. In Scotland similar trials held between October 1793 and March 1794 had resulted in the conviction of the leaders

²⁷*Sun*, April 5, 1794; *Times*, April 5, 1794, April 8, 1794; *London Chronicle*, April 3-5, 1794.

²⁸*Times*, May 9, 1794, May 27, 1794; *Morning Herald*, May 27, 1794; *Star*, May 9, 1794; *London Chronicle*, May 24-27, 1794.

of these societies to fourteen years transportation to Botany Bay and the execution of Robert Watt. On May 16, 1794, the prime minister read in the House of Commons a report of the Committee of Secrecy which Burke had helped prepare. Pitt accused the reformers' societies of conspiracy to sweep away the barriers of government, law and religion. On May 17, 1794, the House of Commons moved the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act.²⁹

On May 30, 1794, the opposition led by the Duke of Bedford in the House of Lords and Charles Fox in the Commons, met defeat in proposing a negotiated peace with France.³⁰ *The Times* was angry enough at the motion for peace to publish a poem entitled, "Citizen Robespierre's Terms for Peace as proposed to the Duke of Bedford," which suggested that George III would wear the *bonnet rouge* and alluded to Robespierre who disowned God and adored the Devil.³¹

Nevertheless, the ministerial press was well aware in its reports that Robespierre had moved a decree on May 7, 1794 for the public cult of the Supreme Being.³² *The Times* printed Robespierre's speech of May 20th affirming his belief in the Supreme Being and the English press reported in detail the festival held on June 8, 1794, using official news sources from France which praised it.³³ The ministerial newspapers

²⁹*London Chronicle*, May 17-20, 1794.

³⁰*London Packet*, May 30-June 2, 1794; *Morning Chronicle*, May 31, 1794.

³¹*Times*, May 30, 1794.

³²*Times*, May 20, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, May 20-22, 1794; *Morning Herald*, May 21, 1794; *Oracle*, May 21, 1794; *Sun*, May 21, 1794; *Evening Mail*, May 19-21, 1794; *London Chronicle*, May 27-29, 1794; *Star*, May 20, 1794; *Morning Chronicle*, May 21, 1794.

³³*Times*, June 5, 1794, June 19, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, June 17-19,

modified their accusation of atheism in France to discredit Robespierre's Supreme Being. *The Times* commented that the French were once more religious because there was no meeting of the Convention on the day of the festival of the Supreme Being, but the *Oracle* concluded there was nothing really new in Robespierre's cult, that the Virgin and her saints were supplanted by Reason, Poverty, Heroism and Love. In its following issue the *Oracle* accused Robespierre of honoring pagan goddesses.³⁴ The hymn to the Supreme Being written for the festival was offensive to some English newspapers because they claimed it made God an accomplice of the regicides. The *Morning Herald* printed the entire hymn, part of which read:

When the criminal rage of the last Capet
Was hurled from an impure throne,
Crushed beneath our blows,
Thy invisible arm directed our courage,
Thy thunder marched before us. . . .³⁵

Robespierre's Supreme Being blessed the republicans and therefore to the English ministerial press was not God at all. After the Convention attributed the attempt to assassinate Robespierre on May 24th to a conspiracy of Pitt, it moved that the armies of the Republic were to show no mercy to British prisoners taken in war. *The Times* considered this decree of barbaric ferocity worthy of Robespierre's Supreme Being. Again *The Times* declared that this strange republican cult was not a true religion and if France were to become religious again it must restore the

³³*Morning Herald*, June 21, 1794; *Oracle*, June 21, 1794; *General Evening Post*, June 17-19, 1794; *London Chronicle*, June 21-24, 1794; *Evening Mail*, June 20-23, 1794; *Star*, June 24, 1794; *Morning Chronicle*, June 20, 1794.

³⁴*Times*, June 19, 1794; *Oracle*, June 23, 1794, June 24, 1794.

³⁵*Morning Herald*, June 25, 1794; *General Evening Post*, June 24-26, 1794.

throne inseparable from the altar.³⁶ The *Oracle* also concluded that the Supreme Being was not God. The *Evening Mail* reported dissatisfaction expressed in the Jacobin club with the cold indifference met at the decadary festivals compared to the crowded holidays of the old religion.³⁷

To the English ministerial press there was little difference between atheism of the Hébertists and the Supreme Being of Robespierre. *The Times* claimed that Robespierre had actually collaborated with Hébert on a treatise advocating atheism, while Gobel had received a pension for abjuring his religion.³⁸ The *Sun* and the *True Briton* clung to their Burkean opinion that the French eradicated religion and morality by doing away with prejudices, and a letter writer to the *St. James's Chronicle* found the sudden piety of the French questionable. The neutral *General Evening Post* concluded that Robespierre had staged a "puppet show" to impress the multitude with the Supreme Being after there were no more rich abbeys and bishoprics to plunder.³⁹

When on July 7, 1794, the Convention amended the decree honoring the Supreme Being to acknowledge the immortality of the soul, *The Times* was overwhelmed by the contrast of this decree to the Convention's applause of Dupont's atheism. In an ingenuous article entitled "French Consistency," *The Times* compared the Convention's decrees for religious liberty

³⁶*Times*, July 1, 1794, July 4, 1794.

³⁷*Oracle*, July 8, 1794; *Evening Mail*, June 20-23, 1794.

³⁸*Times*, July 16, 1794. It was not true that Robespierre was ever an atheist; he also opposed the suppression of salaries of the constitutional clergy. It was true that priests who abdicated during the dechristianization were provided with pensions.

³⁹*Sun*, July 17, 1794; *True Briton*, July 17, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, July 19-22, 1794.

and the Supreme Being with the supposed decrees of the Convention to put to death all priests performing the mass and to recognize no God except Reason.⁴⁰

The ministerial press continued to support the war, even after the French won a decisive victory at Fleurus on 8 Messidor, year II (June 26, 1794). In July 1794 the Whig faction led by the Duke of Portland entered into a coalition with the Pitt ministry in order to prosecute the war which they viewed as a crusade to crush Jacobinism. The *True Briton* on July 5th announced Burke's retirement from public life and praised him. The *Times*, perhaps to encourage the continuation of the war, announced that Robespierre's assassination or execution was imminent and devised an inscription for his tomb, "He was Christian, atheist or deist, as best suited the diabolical principle of his mind."⁴¹

During the period of Robespierre's dominance in France, April through July 1794, the opposition English press approved of his religious policy, although it did not admire Robespierre. In April 1794 the *Morning Chronicle* was pleased that the new religious policy of the Convention was free of an established church on one hand and "licentiousness" on the other.⁴² The *Star* and the *Morning Chronicle* carried that month an interesting story of "fanatics" in Paris attempting to shut the shops for Easter Sunday, and the council of the Commune advising the citizens to wait for the Convention's report on the Supreme Being which would satisfy

⁴⁰*Times*, July 28, 1794, Aug. 12, 1794: news of the fall of Robespierre had not yet reached the English press.

⁴¹*Times*, July 21, 1794.

⁴²*Morning Chronicle*, April 19, 1794.

their religious needs.⁴³

The opposition English newspapers were less interested in Robespierre's cult of the Supreme Being than its political consequences in removing the stigma of atheism from the French Republic. The *Star* published in full Robespierre's speech at the festival of the Supreme Being when he set fire to the figure of atheism.⁴⁴

Wanting above all a negotiated peace with the French Republic, the opposition press attacked ministerial intransigence based on religion. The *Morning Chronicle* ridiculed the ministerial *Sun* which published a call to the established clergy of Great Britain to take up arms while warning them that jealous sectarians (Dissenters) and atheists in England threatened the King, the Church, and the revenues of the clergy. The *Morning Chronicle* considered this a carnal call to the sword rather than the spiritual arms of the Gospel.⁴⁵ The *Morning Post* derided the reasons given in the ministerial press for continuing the war, some of them based on Robespierre's expected death.⁴⁶ The opinion expressed in the ministerial press that the French peasants were inspired by their religion to restore the monarchy was deflated by the opposition newspapers. The *Morning Chronicle* criticized the faction in the coalition ministry advocating the landing of 30,000 men on the coast of Brittany with a French prince of the royal blood (the Comte d'Artois) and "as many priests as can be

⁴³*Morning Chronicle*, April 29, 1794; *Star*, April 30, 1794.

⁴⁴*Star*, June 28, 1794.

⁴⁵*Sun*, July 8, 1794; *Morning Chronicle*, July 19, 1794.

⁴⁶*Morning Post*, July 5, 1794.

collected."⁴⁷

Despite Robespierre's belief in the Supreme Being, the provincial ministerial newspapers continued to talk of atheism in France. In May 1794 the *Nottingham Journal* carried a heartrendering story of children being marched out of the convent of St. Omer when it was closed by the Republic and how the nuns were insulted by French soldiers. In August 1794, (news of Robespierre's downfall had not yet reached the English press because French military victories in the Netherlands had cut off sources of information) the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* and the *Leeds Intelligencer* wrote of the plunder of churches and praised a new pamphlet on ". . . the Impiety and Irreligion of the French."⁴⁸

The opposition *Cambridge Intelligencer*, although pleased with the Convention's policy of religious toleration, expressed distrust of Robespierre's proposal for the cult of the Supreme Being as an essential part of the constitution, even though its moral deism dispensed with the need of a priesthood. With evident sarcasm it compared the gentle Robespierre with some professedly pious Christians in the Pitt ministry. This provincial newspaper was shocked to hear in June 1794 that the Convention decreed to give no quarter to British prisoners of war, and it condemned the "pious" Robespierre for speaking in the name of religion and morality. In contrast, the *Leicester Herald*, whose publisher had spent the previous year in prison for distributing *The Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine, quoted Robespierre after the attempt to assassinate him, giving thanks to God that he was worthy of "the pignard of

⁴⁷*Morning Chronicle*, July 5, 1794, Aug. 6, 1794; the expedition was favored in the *True Briton*, July 12, 1794.

⁴⁸*Nottingham Journal*, May 17, 1794; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Aug. 4, 1794; *Leeds Intelligencer*, Aug. 4, 1794, Aug. 11, 1794.

tyranny."⁴⁹ By July 1794, the *Sheffield Register* was no more. Its publisher, Joseph Gales had been implicated in a charge of treason to arm local Jacobins with pikes and he had fled to America. Wrote the ministerial *St. James's Chronicle*, "Thursday last expired to the great grief of all the Jacobins in the neighborhood the *Sheffield Register*."⁵⁰

The Ninth of Thermidor and the Supreme Being

Robespierre in a speech to the Convention on July 26, 1794 named a new conspiracy and claimed that the followers of Hébert and Danton had plotted against him ever since he proclaimed the Supreme Being. On the following day, the 9th of Thermidor, July 27, 1794, Tallien and other enemies of Robespierre ridiculed him as pontiff of the new religion. When Robespierre was captured in the hall of the Commune later that day, there was a story in some English newspapers that a *sans-culotte* approached him, lying in blood, and said, "There is a Supreme Being!"⁵¹

Neither the ministerial nor the opposition English press wasted much time mourning Robespierre. Immediately afterwards, the remarks of the Thermidorians were reported ridiculing Robespierre's Supreme Being.⁵² *The Times*, the *Morning Herald* and the *St. James's Chronicle* extracted from an anti-clerical pamphlet from Paris, "He spared the priests because

⁴⁹*Cambridge Intelligencer*, April 12, 1794, June 14, 1794; *Leicester Herald*, June 14, 1794.

⁵⁰*St. James's Chronicle*, July 8-10, 1794.

⁵¹*Morning Herald*, Aug. 22, 1794; *London Packet*, Aug. 20-22, 1794; *Times*, Aug. 29, 1794.

⁵²*Times*, Aug. 20, 1794, Aug. 26, 1794; *Morning Herald*, Aug. 21, 1794, Aug. 30, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 19-21, 1794; *Star*, Aug. 20, 1794; *Cambridge Intelligencer*, Aug. 23, 1794.

he could convert them into instruments to favour his power."⁵³ The *True Briton* derided the opposition English newspapers for admitting Robespierre was a tyrant after he was dead, and having wanted to make peace with him. It claimed that Thomas Paine had written the *Age of Reason* to please Robespierre who had changed his atheistic views to tolerate religion.⁵⁴

It was true that the *Morning Post* wrote that Robespierre had become a tyrant, and this newspaper welcomed the reversion of power to the Convention which was expected to restore freedom of speech in France. The *Morning Post* predicted France would flourish again and considered a negotiated peace with the Republic more feasible.⁵⁵

It was events in the war early in 1794 which caused the ministerial press to continue its attacks on religion in France. In order not to negotiate with France whose victories expanded republican frontiers, the ministerial press refused at first to concede that Robespierre had repudiated atheism. When Robespierre, after the suppression of the rival factions, proposed in May 1794 the cult of the Supreme Being which was decreed by the Convention, the English ministerial press refuted the sincerity of Robespierre's belief.

May 1794 was a month of mounting tension in Great Britain with the arrest of the leaders of the English reformers for conspiracy to commit treason followed by the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. In July

⁵³*Times*, Aug. 29, 1794; *Morning Herald*, Aug. 30, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, Aug. 30 - Sept. 2, 1794.

⁵⁴*True Briton*, Aug. 27, 1794, Aug. 28, 1794, Sept. 1, 1794.

⁵⁵*Morning Post*, Aug. 15, 1794, Aug. 16, 1794, Aug. 18, 1794, Aug. 25, 1794.

1794, after France won a decisive victory, the faction of the opposition led by the Duke of Portland and influenced by the views of Edmund Burke entered into coalition with the Pitt ministry in order to prosecute the war.

The English ministerial press retained the issue of French atheism by casting doubt that Robespierre's Supreme Being was God. The moral deism of the republican cult was criticized because it demanded no established priesthood. While anticipating news of Robespierre's assassination in July 1794, the English ministerial press hoped for the restoration of Roman Catholicism in France as the religion of the monarchy to replace the Supreme Being.

The English opposition press welcomed Robespierre's cult of the Supreme Being because it removed atheism as a pretext for the ministry's war. Robespierre's toleration of religion won approval rather than the cult of the Supreme Being. That the moral deism of this cult dispensed with the need of an established clergy appealed to the opposition press whose target was the subservience of the Anglican bishops to the Pitt ministry. Weakened by the opposition faction of the Duke of Portland who entered the ministry, the press of the Foxite opposition decried the waging of the war as a religious crusade.

CHAPTER XI
THE ENGLISH PRESS AND THE THERMIDORIANS'
SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

After the downfall of Robespierre on the 9th of Thermidor, the English ministerial press hoped for the restoration of the monarchy in France. These newspapers disapproved of the Thermidorians for their anti-clericalism in the past and persisted in this attitude despite the release of priests and nobles imprisoned during the Jacobin Terror. As long as the Thermidorians adhered to a republican government, the English ministerial press urged continuation of the war. In contrast, English opposition newspapers stressed the moderation of the Thermidorians towards priests and religion. While the French armies won stunning victories in the Netherlands and along the Rhine, the opposition press demanded peace with the Republic. Peace would have meant a change of ministry in Great Britain to the Foxites.

The Thermidorian Reaction and Religious Moderation

Immediately after Robespierre's downfall, *The Times* claimed the Thermidorians were the same members of the Paris Commune who had perpetrated the September massacres against priests and others. It accused Collot d'Herbois and Billaud Varenne of having proposed to put priests and nobles in boats to blow them up with gunpowder. Although *The Times* admitted that anti-clericalism had abated, it thought persecution of priests and nobles would be resumed. The *True Briton*, having accused the opposition press of being traitors for urging peace with the tyrant

Robespierre, justified the war with France because it considered the Thermidorians enemies of property and religion. The *Sun* and the *True Briton* opposed the Thermidorians' new system of education for making republicans and atheists of their youth.¹ The *True Briton* predicted a royalist restoration in France and directed attention to the rebellion in the Vendée where royalists worshipped the true God.²

When the French Convention decreed on September 18, 1794 the end of salaries paid to the clergy, the *St. James's Chronicle* commented how Burke had been right when he prophesized after the revenues of the church were seized, that the clergy would be insulted with paltry pensions, then deprived of them. The *True Briton* deplored that the "pitiful allotment" given the poor French clergy had been suppressed.³

The *Oracle* in the fall of 1794 showed signs of rebellion. Having run into financial difficulties the previous year, it had merged in March 1794 with the *Public Advertiser*. In October 1794, the *Oracle and Public Advertiser* reverted briefly to earlier views admiring the ecclesiastical reforms of the French Revolution. It accused *The Times*, the *True Briton* and "its absurd offspring," the *Sun* of contradicting its assertions. The *Oracle* considered the clergy in France treacherous and denied that atheism in France was caused by the French Revolution.⁴ The rebellion of the *Oracle*

¹*Times*, Aug. 29, 1794; *True Briton*, Sept. 6, 1794, Sept. 12, 1794; *Sun*, Sept. 11, 1794, Sept. 12, 1794. *The Times*, Oct. 1, 1794, attacked Sunday schools in Great Britain for teaching the Rights of Man.

²*True Briton*, Sept. 12, 1794, Oct. 1, 1794. On Oct. 21, 1794, it praised Burke who had retired from public life and been awarded a royal pension.

³*St. James's Chronicle*, Oct. 4-7, 1794; *True Briton*, Oct. 8, 1794.

⁴*Oracle*, Sept. 29, 1794, Oct. 17, 1794.

was short-lived, and in all likelihood reflected the need for ministerial subsidy. After the 9th of Thermidor, when Lequinio attacked Robespierre's cult of the Supreme Being, the *Oracle* concluded that the Thermidorians were anxious to be rid of "so troublesome an encumbrance as the soul."⁵

The English ministerial press published anti-clerical articles appearing in French journals, probably in order to discredit the Thermidorians. Quoting from an anti-clerical pamphlet, *Le Veritable Portrait de nos Legislature*, they commented on the religious policies of the Thermidorians. The abbé Sieyès was criticized in the French article for the decree of May 7, 1791, granting religious liberty to non-juring priests. Grégoire, Merlin of Thionville and Treilhard were praised for opposing clerical interests in the past, while Reubel, lauded as a patriot, was criticized for his unfortunate aversion to citizenship for the Jews although he had espoused freedom for men of color.⁶ The *Morning Herald* published an article written in 1792 by Condorcet, purged and condemned as a Girondin in 1793. Condorcet had accused Robespierre of attracting so many women as followers because they considered the Revolution a religion and Robespierre its priest.⁷

⁵*Oracle*, Oct. 21, 1794. On Nov. 10, 1794 the *Oracle* refused to approve of the marriage contracted by the ministry for the Prince of Wales with Princess Caroline of Brunswick in exchange for payment of his debts, and insisted that he was secretly married to the Catholic Mrs. Fitzherbert, by whom he had many children. The *Oracle* claimed that the ministry's new ally, the Pope, had granted a dispensation in conjunction with the King who was head of the Anglican church. In March 1795 the *Oracle* supported Earl Fitzwilliam, a coalition Whig who was recalled as viceroy of Ireland because he favored a Catholic Relief bill.

⁶*Oracle*, Sept. 30, 1794; *Morning Herald*, Oct. 1, 1794; *London Packet*, Sept. 29 - Oct. 1, 1794.

⁷*Morning Herald*, Sept. 6, 1794.

Meanwhile, the columns of the press in October 1794 were filled with the trial of English leaders of the Corresponding and Constitutional societies advocating reform, who were accused of subversion of the British constitution. Despite a public opinion aroused by ministerial cries of treason, Thomas Hardy was acquitted by a jury on November 5, 1794, to the acclaim of an immense crowd. *The Times* had published on September 6th a spurious issue, the *New Times*, dated fictitiously June 10, 1800, depicting Great Britain as a democratic republic with a British National Convention whose deputies were the reformers (names misspelled to evade libel laws) tried for treason. In this spurious issue, Rev. Jerimiah Joyce, a tutor in Lord Stanhope's household and one of the prisoners on trial, was "reported" to be the minister of the national church who celebrated in the temple of Reason, *ci-devant* St. Paul's, a festival for the happy destruction of Parliament.⁸

With its columns filled with reports of the trial of the reformers for conspiracy, *The Times* late in October 1794 asked, "In what does French liberty consist?", and answered, "In putting to death those who expressed a wish for the restoration of religion and a belief in the Supreme Being."⁹ *The Times* denounced the peace demanded by the "anti-constitutionalists" (the English opposition) who it claimed wished to fraternize with France in order to import republicanism. It published a call signed by a True Briton which read, "Be not deluded by the vision-

⁸*Times*, Sept. 6, 1794. It carried an "advertisement" for a new opera entitled "The Mitre in Jeopardy, or the Triumph of Civism over Religion" which it claimed was directed by citizen Priestley with the role of archbishop of Canterbury played by citizen T. Paine.

⁹*Times*, Oct. 22, 1794.

ary hopes of peace. . . . I conjure you, Britons, by the memory of your ancestors, and by your sacred religion and just laws, not to sheath the sword at this awful crisis."¹⁰

The opposition newspaper, the *Morning Post* condemned the hysteria during the English treason trials and an alleged plot to assassinate George III by an eighteen year old member of the London Corresponding society named by an informer.¹¹ The *Morning Post* was grateful to the large crowd that was sympathetic to the prisoners and it hoped that a British jury would not sentence without full conviction of guilt. The *Morning Post* rejoiced when Hardy was acquitted.¹²

Perhaps encouraged by the acquittal, a ground-swell for peace grew in Great Britain while the French won more military victories. When Parliament was prorogued in November 1794, it was thought that the ministry had entered into negotiations for peace since the other powers in the coalition at war with France were considering a settlement. *The Times* admitted the rumors of peace but questioned the moderation of republican Thermidorians. The *St. James's Chronicle* conceded the Thermidoreans' moderation in the occupation of the Netherlands where the established religion and the clergy were under the protection of the French government. The *True Briton* remarked on this moderation but was doubtful that a

¹⁰*Times*, Oct. 24, 1794, Oct. 29, 1794. When the jury returned the verdict for Hardy of not guilty, the *Times*, Nov. 6, 1794, considered the mob's acclamation excessive. The *True Briton* that day reported that Hardy was followed by butcher's boys and the rabble had drawn his coach and that of his counsel, Erskine.

¹¹*Morning Post*, Oct. 21, 1794, Oct. 24, 1794. Nothing came from investigation of this plot.

¹²*Morning Post*, Oct. 25, 1794 through Nov. 7, 1794.

general peace would be permanent, and the following week it denied the possibility of peace. The *Morning Herald* regretted that the other states in the coalition were willing to submit to terms from "the hands of religious usurpers."¹³

When the Thermidorians in the Convention put Carrier on trial, the English press had ample proof of the Thermidorians' moderate policy towards the refractory clergy. Carrier had been the Jacobin representative on mission to Nantes for the suppression of the rebellion in the Vendée. The Thermidorians accused Carrier of committing atrocities on helpless inhabitants of the Vendée, including the refractory priests sentenced to deportation who were put on boats that sank in the Loire.¹⁴ The trial and execution of Carrier in December 1794 furthered the Thermidorians goal of crushing Jacobinism. It also prepared the ground for the amnesty offered to the rebels in the Vendée who were promised religious liberty for their refractory priests.

This amnesty was bad news to the ministerial newspapers which rejected peace with the republican Thermidorians in the hope of a royalist restoration. However, *The Times* and the *St. James's Chronicle* were pleased that the terms of the amnesty manifested a great change of heart in France towards refractory priests.¹⁵ The Burkean *True Briton* refused to acknowledge the possibility of peace and urged that all French in British pay

¹³*Morning Herald*, Dec. 1, 1794; *Times*, Nov. 7, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 13-15, 1794; *True Briton*, Nov. 21, 1794, Nov. 26, 1794, Dec. 8, 1794.

¹⁴*Times*, Dec. 8, 1794; *London Packet*, Dec. 5-8, 1794; *Morning Herald*, Dec. 18, 1794.

¹⁵*Times*, Dec. 20, 1794; *St. James's Chronicle*, Dec. 18-20, 1794.

be disembarked on the coast of Brittany to unite with the rebels or Chouans in the cause of royalty and religion.¹⁶

It was reported that throughout France, and particularly in the Franche Comte, émigré priests were returning to resume secretly their ecclesiastical functions.¹⁷ The English press published the complaints of some members of the Thermidorian Convention concerning religious unrest caused by illegally returning priests. The ministerial newspapers continued to castigate the Thermidorians as "Septembrizers" and former terrorists.¹⁸

The report of Grégoire from the Committee of Public Instruction, urging repair of damage to art, including religious art, committed by revolutionary vandalism, was used by the *Morning Herald* and the *Oracle* to condemn republican religious sacrilege.¹⁹ Grégoire's proposal late in December 1794 to guarantee liberty of worship for Catholicism was not considered by the Convention which moved a decree on decadary festivals. On January 26, 1795, Pitt rejected in the House of Commons a proposal for peace with the Thermidorians, claiming they denied Grégoire's proposal for tolerance.²⁰ When the Duke of Bedford the following day moved for the opposition a proposal for peace in the House of Lords, Lord Grenville's reply was to question whether a treaty would be honored

¹⁶*True Briton*, Dec. 22, 1794, Dec. 27, 1794.

¹⁷*Morning Herald*, Dec. 22, 1794; *London Chronicle*, Dec. 20-23, 1794; *Star*, Dec. 24, 1794.

¹⁸*Times*, Jan. 9, 1795, Jan. 15, 1795; *Morning Herald*, Jan. 16, 1795; *Sun*, Jan. 16, 1795.

¹⁹*Oracle*, Jan. 21, 1795; *Morning Herald*, Jan. 30, 1795.

²⁰*Oracle*, Jan. 27, 1795, Jan. 28, 1795.

by a republican government not bound by religion, and he also referred to Grégoire's proposal to the Convention. Dr. Watson, the bishop of Llandaff spoke in favor of Bedford's motion by denying that the war was in defence of religion.²¹

The opposition English press hailed the denial of the bishop of Llandaff that the war was a religious war. Since the fall of Robespierre, the opposition newspapers welcomed Thermidorian toleration as a necessary prelude to peace. In October 1794 the *Morning Chronicle* was furious with the ministry for refusing to negotiate and published a letter tinged with sarcasm, asking, "How can we treat with atheists, with men who slaughter priests, profane temples and despise religion, with everything belonging to it except morality?"²² In November 1794, encouraged by the acquittal of Hardy, Horne Tooke and others, and by evidence of Thermidorian moderation, the *Morning Post* wrote that even the ministerial press saw the need for peace but that the present government of France would not treat with the Pitt ministry. It urged Englishmen to look to Charles James Fox to restore their liberties and meanwhile hold meetings to petition for peace.²³

The bishop of Llandaff's speech against the war so impressed the *Courier* that it published it in full weeks after the other newspapers merely paraphrased it. The *Courier* thought it a melancholy fact that so many Anglican clergymen other than the bishop supported the war. The new opposition newspaper, the *Telegraph* censured the bishop of Durham for his

²¹*Sun*, Jan. 28, 1795; *Times*, Jan. 28, 1795; *London Chronicle*, Jan. 27-29, 1795.

²²*Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 1, 1794.

²³*Morning Post*, Nov. 15, 1794, Nov. 18, 1794.

defence of the war and attacked Anglican bishops with annual revenues of £12,000 who never preached.²⁴ The *Morning Chronicle* carried the complaint of William Lambton, a member of the opposition in the House of Commons, who presented the petition for peace from Durham and blamed the clergy there for intimidating the tradesmen to sign a counter-petition.²⁵ This newspaper published an address by the "Rev. J. B." answering those who thought the French deserved to be extirpated in a war of religion.

It is impossible for any observing man, who is at all conversant with what passes about him, not to notice the unusual animosity . . . both against the French and against all who differ from the fashionable opinion. . . . 'But this is a war of Religion. The French are a nation of Infidels, the enemies of all religion; and therefore deserve to be extirpated from the earth.'

A War of Religion! O ye pious crusaders! . . . But is it possible that the accusations against our enemies may not be exactly true? Nobody suspects them to have much piety, yet, as bad as they are, the freedom of every description of worship is protected by all the force of the nation; they have left religion to take care of itself and work its own way by the native power of truth, just as it was forced to do for the first three hundred years after Christ without either emoluments or penal statutes in its favour.²⁶

The provincial ministerial newspapers rejected peace with the Thermidorians and were convinced that a royalist restoration in France was imminent. They refused to concede the Thermidorian policy of moderation towards priests.²⁷

²⁴*Courier*, Feb. 20, 1795, Feb. 21, 1795; *Telegraph*, Jan. 30, 1795, Feb. 14, 1795, also published a letter questioning justification of tithes.

²⁵*Morning Chronicle*, Feb. 18, 1795.

²⁶*Morning Chronicle*, Feb. 20, 1795.

²⁷*Leeds Intelligencer*, Sept. 15, 1794; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Oct. 13, 1794, Dec. 22, 1794, Dec. 29, 1794; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, Jan. 3, 1795; *Norfolk Chronicle*, Dec. 13, 1794, Jan. 3, 1794, Jan. 31, 1795.

The opposition *Cambridge Intelligencer* hailed November 5, 1794, the day of the acquittal of Thomas Hardy for treason, as a day of deliverance. It was grateful to Providence that on that day also (1688) Englishmen had been delivered from a "popish faction." The *Leicester Herald* rejoiced that the bishop of Llandaff denied that the war was one of religion and it also printed the bishop's speech, while the *Cambridge Intelligencer* deplored that the clergy supported the war. The editor of the *Cambridge Intelligencer*, Benjamin Flower, in a letter signed by himself (unusual in those days) maintained that the French in the countries they conquered, whether Catholic or Protestant, granted security of personal property and liberty of conscience. In February 1795 this newspaper reported that a petition for peace in Norwich was signed in four days by 5,575 persons, including the wealthy and respectable, "*et mirabile dictu!*" no less than seven clergymen.²⁸ Early in March 1795 the *Cambridge Intelligencer* claimed that five hundred petitions for peace had been presented to the House of Commons, and wrote:

Let the insulted British nation reflect that their five hundred petitions have been treated as waste paper. Then let them ask seriously whether a complete reform of Parliament is not absolutely essential for the salvation of the British empire. The vote, however is not so insulting to man, as it is to God. . . . This is the House of Commons which has squandered sixty or seventy millions of national treasure in the prosecution of a war in defence of our religion.²⁹

The Thermidorian Separation of Church and State

After the Thermidorians had set free many priests imprisoned during

²⁸*Leicester Herald*, Feb. 6, 1795; *Cambridge Intelligencer*, Nov. 8, 1794, Feb. 7, 1795, Feb. 14, 1795, Feb. 21, 1795, Feb. 28, 1795.

²⁹*Cambridge Intelligencer*, March 7, 1795.

the Jacobin Terror, public opinion in France favored the resumption of Catholic worship. Although *The Times* conceded the moderates gained ground in France, it avoided giving credit to the Thermidorians. Along with other ministerial newspapers, it reported that the émigré priests returned to France were received with enthusiasm while everywhere busts of Marat toppled from their "revolutionary altars."³⁰ The *Oracle*, maintaining that the Thermidorians scorned Grégoire's proposal for Catholic worship in preference to the decadary festivals, thought they had blundered because the great mass of people conformed to religion. This newspaper concluded that the moderate party in France was in a dilemma for they knew that the re-establishment of religion was imminent but they dreaded the renewed power of the clergy.³¹

The decree of 3 Ventôse, year III (February 21, 1795) moved by the moderate Boissy d'Anglas was the solution of the Thermidorian Convention to the political unrest resulting from the return of émigré priests and the re-emergence of Catholic worship. This decree separated church and state by guaranteeing against disturbances in the public exercise of religion held in privately acquired places; the public was neither to pay the clergy nor furnish churches. *The Times* reported this decree in a negative manner, complaining of its prohibition of exterior religious manifestations, such as the ringing of church bells or the clergy wearing distinctive dress outside of places of worship.³² In this issue *The Times*

³⁰*Times*, Feb. 6, 1795, Feb. 10, 1795, March 2, 1795; *Sun*, Jan. 26, 1795, Feb. 6, 1795; *London Chronicle*, Jan. 24-27, 1795, Feb. 5-7, 1795

³¹*Oracle*, Feb. 10, 1795, Feb. 12, 1795.

³²*Times*, March 6, 1795; also, *London Chronicle*, March 5-7, 1795, March 7-10, 1795.

took comfort that the Third Estate, defined as the burghers, landed proprietors and prosperous tradesmen, remained firmly attached to monarchy and their ancient religion. *The Times* admitted that some feared the return of the émigrés whose property had changed hands -- but not the priests.

The *Oracle* took a more sanguine view of the decree of 3rd Ventôse and also reported that the newspapers in France now favored peace. Other ministerial newspapers gave the decree scant attention. However, the *Oracle* would have none of peace, nor would *The Times*. Both acknowledged the rumored amnesty accepted by the rebels in the Vendée in exchange for religious liberty. These newspapers urged that the French émigrés embark on the coast of Brittany to help the Chouans restore the monarchy.³³

Although *The Times* refused to admit the religious liberty granted by the Thermidorians, it claimed that Roman Catholicism had emerged triumphant since the decree of 3rd Ventôse. *The Times* rejoiced that the sacred vessels buried underground by pious hands began to reappear, that books which contained the liturgy of the church, condemned to the flames, according to *The Times*, by Robespierre, Hébert and others, were re-published and that several communes, despite the prohibitions of the new decree, reclaimed their churches. Although non-juring priests now conducted Catholic worship in the villages, if not the towns, *The Times* considered the re-emergence of Catholicism not due to the Thermidorians who, it claimed erroneously, worshipped the goddess of Reason.³⁴ The *Oracle*

³³*Oracle*, March 6, 1795, March 9, 1795, March 11, 1795, April 3, 1795; *Times*, March 9, 1795, March 16, 1795; *Morning Herald*, March 7, 1795; *Sun*, March 6, 1795.

³⁴*Times*, April 11, 1795, April 14, 1795, April 16, 1795.

cited from Paris newspapers that on Sundays the shops were shut as before the Revolution and solemn mass was celebrated publicly with former nobility in attendance. According to the *Morning Herald*, bread was very dear in Bordeaux but mass was celebrated by the multitude.³⁵

An insurrection at the beginning of April 1795 caused by the scarcity of bread was blamed by some Thermidorians on the royalist priests who influenced the peasants to hoard supplies. On the 1st Prairial, year III (May 20, 1795) the *sans-culottes* in Paris rose again against the Thermidorian Convention to demand "Bread and the Constitution of 1793!" The insurrection was crushed with difficulty. This very serious challenge to the Thermidorians was reported in the English press at the end of May at the same time that William Wilberforce, who had hitherto supported the war, proposed a new motion for peace. The ministry defeated the motion in the House of Commons on the ground that the *sans-culottes'* insurrection proved the instability of the Republic.³⁶

The re-emergence of Roman Catholic worship throughout France occurred despite a new decree banishing illegally returned priests and émigrés. Taking advantage of the liberty of the press granted by the Thermidorians, newspapers which were more or less royalist hailed the return of Roman Catholicism. Ministerial English newspapers cited the opinions of French royalist journals by name, particularly the *Courier universel*, while the opposition English press referred to both republican and royalist French newspapers. The same news served opposite viewpoints. The royalist French periodicals supporting Roman Catholicism proved to the English

³⁵*Oracle*, April 21, 1795; *Morning Herald*, April 24, 1795.

³⁶*Oracle*, May 28, 1795, May 30, 1795.

ministerial press the growing strength for the restoration of monarchy. The English opposition press considered the reopening of the churches an indication of the religious toleration and moderation of the Thermidorian Republic.³⁷

The deputy Lanjuinais, a former Girondin from Brittany and a Catholic believer, blamed the *sans-culottes'* insurrection on atheism and moved a new decree on 11 Prairial, year III (May 30, 1795), broadening the religious liberty granted in the decree of 3rd Ventôse by allowing all sects to share the use of the churches. Even *The Times* admired the decree of 11 Prairial because the churches were restored to the communes. *The Times* pointed out that former refractory priests need now only to make a passive declaration of submission to the laws of the Republic, so that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy no longer had legal authority.³⁸ The *Oracle* praised the Thermidorians' new decree which it thought would lead to more stable government by inculcating principles of morality. As the *Oracle* observed, "It was the principle of atheism that inhumanized France and caused such rivers of citizen blood to flow."³⁹ However, the *Oracle* criticized the Convention for not allowing Catholic worship in the churches when it fell on the official observance of the *decadi*.

There was very little reporting in the English press of the atrocities committed in southern France by quasi-religious bands called companies

³⁷For examples of reports based on French journals in May 1795, see *Times*, May 22, 1795, May 27, 1795; *London Chronicle*, May 26-28, 1795; *Courier*, May 25, 1795, May 27, 1795; *Morning Chronicle*, May 26, 1795.

³⁸*Times*, June 8, 1795, July 16, 1795; *London Chronicle*, June 9-11, 1795

³⁹*Oracle*, June 8, 1795, June 9, 1795, June 10, 1795.

of Jesus or the Sun. The Thermidorians had been too busy suppressing the Jacobins, particularly at Toulon, to worry about the royalist White Terror which, after all, was directed against the Jacobins. The English ministerial press implicitly approved of the massacres of Jacobin prisoners at Lyons and elsewhere to avenge the reign of Terror, for it was clear these assassinations prepared for the restoration of royalty. The *Oracle* claimed the department at Lyons intended to send troops to Paris on the pretext of helping the Convention crush the *sans-culottes* but actually to restore the monarchy.⁴⁰ In July *The Times* quoted with no hint of disapproval a letter from Montpellier that massacres by the company of Jesus occurred there and at Avignon and Lyons.⁴¹ During the summer of 1795 *The Times* was shocked at the condition of the refractory priests detained on three ships at Rochefort, described as "almost naked, eaten with vermin, infected with a scorbutic disease." It condemned the Thermidorians for cruelty to these priests which was comparable to Carrier's.⁴²

The death of the Dauphin in prison announced in June 1795 and the reactivation of the Chouan rebellion brought forth a call in the ministerial press for British troops to aid the embarkation of French émigrés and clergy on the coast of Brittany in the name of Louis XVIII, brother of the guillotined king.⁴³ The *Oracle*, perhaps to inflate the hopes for royalism, estimated the number of émigré clergy as 138 bishops and archbishops, 64,000 curates and vicars, and 200,000 friars, not counting the

⁴⁰*Oracle*, June 11, 1795, June 12, 1795, June 20, 1795.

⁴¹*Times*, July 28, 1795.

⁴²*Times*, July 9, 1795, July 13, 1795, Aug. 27, 1795.

⁴³*Oracle*, June 16, 1795, June 20, 1795; *Times*, July 6, 1795.

nuns who had also emigrated. This estimate, ridiculously high even for the total clergy of the *ancien régime*, implied that all the clergy had emigrated from France, when in fact less than 25,000 priests were émigrés and less than one third of them in Great Britain.⁴⁴

Letters in the English press by way of Jersey, a British island near France where refugee priests lived in great number, announced that the bishop of Dol with twenty priests landed near St. Brieuc and the people received them in their newly reopened churches; the letters claimed thousands of émigrés were soon to land at Quiberon Bay near Vannes.⁴⁵ The *London Chronicle* published in July 1795 some interesting correspondence discovered by republican authorities between a curé in Brittany and the bishop of Dol, in which the curé complained of the schism among priests on making the declaration of submission to the laws of the Republic.⁴⁶ By publishing this correspondence, the neutral *London Chronicle*, which had muted its approval of ecclesiastical reforms in France since the downfall of the monarchy, revealed a distaste for the British expedition of French émigrés and priests.

Rumors of the disaster met by the expedition filtered into the ministerial press belatedly. The *Sun* and the *Morning Herald*, searching the French journals for news, expressed grave concern in August 1795 with the

⁴⁴*Oracle*, June 22, 1795. The entire clergy of France on the eve of the French Revolution numbered about 130,000; about half were secular, the other half, including nuns, were the regular clergy. See chapter III, f. n. 1, and on emigration, chapter VII, f. n. 7, 8.

⁴⁵*Oracle*, June 25, 1795; *London Chronicle*, June 18-20, 1795, June 20-23, 1795. *Oracle*, June 27, 1795, praised Burke for denouncing the French Revolution earlier than other writers.

⁴⁶*London Chronicle*, July 9-11, 1795

account of the military execution of the bishop of Dol and his clergy. *The Times* at last confirmed the news of the execution of hundreds of émigrés, writing, "They died with great firmness and resignation; and in the full persuasion of the justice of their cause."⁴⁷ The English ministerial press did not prolong accounts of the tragedy because it was a blow to the Pitt ministry.

The English opposition press had deflated the high hopes of the ministerial press for a royalist insurrection in Brittany and the Vendée. The opposition newspapers approved of the Thermidorian decrees guaranteeing liberty of worship by the separation of religion and the state. The *Morning Chronicle* welcomed the decree of 3rd Ventôse (February 21, 1795) and also the amnesty with religious freedom offered to the rebels in the Vendée. Denying that the inhabitants fought there for the restoration of monarchy, the *Morning Chronicle* claimed that "superstitious" peasants had rejected the Civil Constitution of the Clergy while the monarchy existed, and although the chiefs of the Vendéans linked the cause of the monarchy with that of religion, royalism was subordinate in the rebellion. According to the *Morning Chronicle*, now that the Thermidorians had assured the free exercise of religion, the Vendéans would lay down their arms. The new opposition newspaper, the *Telegraph* was scornful in April 1795 of the Chouans' "manufactory" of religious articles in England financed by the Pitt ministry to export "superstition" to Brittany. The *Telegraph* also welcomed the amnesty accepted by the rebels in the Vendée.⁴⁸

⁴⁷*Times*, Aug. 1, 1795, Aug. 3, 1795, Aug. 12, 1795; on Aug. 22, 1795, the *Times* still doubted the death of the bishop of Dol and his clergy; *Sun*, Aug. 11, 1795; *Morning Herald*, Aug. 11, 1795; *London Chronicle*, July 30 - Aug. 1, 1795, Aug. 11-13, 1795.

⁴⁸*Morning Chronicle*, March 16, 1795; *Telegraph*, April 4, 1795, April 6, 1795, April 8, 1795.

In May 1795 the *Morning Chronicle* countered the call for an expedition in the ministerial press with,

We have often had occasion to remark that the insurgents in La Vendée cared but little about the forms of Government, provided they were left in quiet possession of their homes and their religion. . . . The people of La Vendée took up arms for two reasons, first, their religion; that is secured to them -- second, exemption from being called upon to serve in the army; they are to remain quiet at their homes. Never did they take up arms for a King.⁴⁹

After the Chouans had reportedly laid down their arms, the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Telegraph* in June criticized the Pitt ministry for planning a diversion in Brittany. Perhaps tongue in cheek, the *Morning Chronicle* announced that the bishop of Dol was to assist the expedition with his prayers as well as his knowledge of the countryside.⁵⁰

Late in July 1795 the *Morning Chronicle* concluded that the expedition to France was in such disrepute that none in the ministry would acknowledge it.⁵¹ The opposition newspapers made the most of the disaster of the British expedition of French émigrés in order to embarrass the Pitt ministry and to press for peace with the Thermidorian Republic. In August the *Courier* quoted an eye-witness who had last seen the bishop of Dol standing on the shore, awaiting his fate. The *Morning Chronicle* published the letter of an English gentleman visited by two priests before they left London on the expedition; one priest told him their goal was to recover the church lands in France and restore the power of the clergy. The failure of the expedition proved to the *Courier* and to the

⁴⁹*Morning Chronicle*, May 11, 1795.

⁵⁰*Morning Chronicle*, June 4, 1795; also, *London Chronicle*, June 4-6, 1795; *Telegraph*, June 5, 1795.

⁵¹*Morning Chronicle*, July 27, 1795.

Telegraph that the French Revolution was supported by the people and that the English had all along fought not armies but an armed nation.⁵²

Ministerial newspapers did not give up hope of a royalist restoration preached by the Roman Catholic clergy in France. While minimizing the attempts of Grégoire and the former constitutional bishops of "propping their tottering churches," *The Times* praised the Roman Catholic priests. Everywhere one went in France, according to *The Times*, on August 17, 1795, one saw immense crowds at churches.

We hear the religious chants of the Roman Catholic service; an immense multitude obstructs every entrance to the church and everyone is eager to re-establish the altar which a twelve month back he demolished with his own hands. The vows of marriage are pronounced at their feet, and parents hasten to them with their new born children. The French are no more that insolent people who at the height of their prosperity insulted God himself.⁵³

In August 1795 *The Times* reported that the Pope had distributed medals in France with his effigy on one side and on the reverse, himself seated on the throne graciously receiving the French émigré clergy. *The Times* stressed that everywhere in France the Sunday superceded the *decadi*; the non-juring priests alone had the confidence of the people so that the constitutional clergy had to retract their oaths.⁵⁴

In August 1795 the opposition *Morning Chronicle* appreciated as much as *The Times* the reopening of the churches in France. It too reported that from Paris to Marseilles Sunday had swallowed up the *decadi* and people were happy that the religion of their

⁵²*Morning Chronicle*, Aug. 8, 1795; *Courier*, Aug. 1, 1795, Aug. 5, 1795; *Telegraph*, Aug. 1, 1795, Aug. 5, 1795.

⁵³*Times*, July 29, 1795, Aug. 17, 1795.

⁵⁴*Times*, Aug. 15, 1795, Aug. 20, 1795, Sept. 8, 1795, Sept. 12, 1795.

forefathers was restored to them.⁵⁵ Treating with sarcasm the proclamation of Louis XVIII who asked the blessings of religion for a crusade to restore the monarchy, the *Morning Chronicle* questioned French monarchical piety by recalling the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) and the massacres of St. Bartholomew eve (1572). It also published the answer of the Pope to a letter of Louis XVIII with the comment that the Pope was more liberal than the Whigs of the previous century would have expected, because instead of insisting on the divine right of kings, the Pope claimed that God alone would decide on who was to rule France.⁵⁶

The provincial ministerial newspapers took heart from the return of émigré priests and the re-emergence of Catholic worship in France. They supported the Pitt ministry's rejection of peace with the Thermidorian Republic. The *Kentish Gazette* praised the victims fallen in the expedition at Quiberon Bay who were "fighting for the religion of their forefathers," and echoed *The Times* in remaining confident that the religious upsurge in France would lead to the restoration of the monarchy.⁵⁷

In contrast, the opposition *Cambridge Intelligencer* felt confident that Christianity would flourish in France after the decree of the 3rd Ventôse separated "statecraft and priestcraft."⁵⁸ This newspaper was amazed that the Pitt ministry attempted an invasion on the coast of

⁵⁵*Morning Chronicle*, Aug. 21, 1795.

⁵⁶*Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 2, 1795, Sept. 7, 1795.

⁵⁷*Manchester Mercury*, Feb. 3, 1795, April 21, 1795; *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, April 20, 1795; *Kentish Gazette*, May 29, 1795, June 9, 1795, July 28, 1795, July 31, 1795. The *Kentish Gazette* appeared twice a week.

⁵⁸*Cambridge Intelligencer*, March 14, 1795.

France and expressed sarcasm that it was for the honorable purpose of restoring religion and order. It criticized George III and the Protestant clergy of England for wanting a "popish" king in France, and compared this expedition unfavorably to the assistance given in Queen Elizabeth's reign to the Huguenots in France. The *Cambridge Intelligencer* approved of the Thermidorians and their new constitution which it thought similar to that of 1791.⁵⁹ Condemning a war in defence of religion, it declared, "The Deity of mercy and the Deity of destruction are in truth very distinct and different Beings."⁶⁰

The Religious Issue at the End of the Thermidorian Convention

In September 1795, when the Thermidorians submitted a new constitution providing a bi-cameral legislature with high property qualifications for members to be ratified by a plebiscite, they put a check on the royalist priests so as to insure a republican transition. The Convention passed a decree on September 29th requiring priests to acknowledge popular sovereignty as well as the laws of the Republic, and on October 25th it called for the enforcement of rigorous measures already passed against seditious priests.

Alarmed by these moves, *The Times* thought the strength of re-emerging Roman Catholicism had caused the Convention to persecute the priests, although it admitted these measures were only vexatious. *The Times* considered the anti-clericalism of the Thermidorians compared to the Jacobins'

⁵⁹*Cambridge Intelligencer*, June 20, 1795, July 4, 1795, July 11, 1795.

⁶⁰*Cambridge Intelligencer*, July 18, 1795.

as that of the emperor Julian to Nero.⁶¹ The turbulence protesting the two thirds ruling decreed by the Convention in the election of a new legislature (two thirds had to be chosen from the outgoing Convention to insure a republican majority) was seen by *The Times* as an unfavorable omen for the Republic. The religious unrest was interpreted as support for a royalist restoration. *The Times* in September 1795 maintained that the people in France preferred the refractory clergy because the constitutional priests were licentious.⁶² In October, *The Times* complained of a new system of Terror against religion in France and a "perfidious submission" demanded of the clergy. It also deplored the peace treaty signed by the Catholic king of Spain with the Republic which provided that the émigré clergy in Spain were to be sent back to France.⁶³

At the end of the Thermidorian period, after the failure of the royalist uprising on October 5, 1795, *The Times* refused to acknowledge the triumph of the Republic and it urged continuation of the war. *The Times* cited the argument of Edmund Burke in claiming that it was against human nature for the French to live in a democracy. *The Times* wrote of the French,

Although tender and humane yet they love the most bloody spectacles, have witnessed the murder of a king on a scaffold. . . . Although full of respect for religious worship they have denied the Divine Being, trampled underfoot old insignia of his service, and at one and the same time have affected Atheism, Idolatry and Deism. . . . Did not the democrats, who composed the left side of the Constituent Assembly, precipitate France into anarchy . . . by proclaiming the *Sovereignty*

⁶¹*Times*, Sept. 4, 1795, Sept. 5, 1795, Sept. 8, 1795.

⁶²*Times*, Sept. 19, 1795, Sept. 25, 1795.

⁶³*Times*, Oct. 6, 1795, Oct. 9, 1795.

of the People . . . by removing from their sight all the objects of divine service ever before held sacred; by attacking religious principles with wild declamations or sarcasms still more dangerous.⁶⁴

The opposition press in October 1795 refused to indict the Thermidorians as terrorists who persecuted the priests. The rigorous measure of the Convention, claimed the *Morning Chronicle*, was necessary because of the armed intervention of Great Britain, but the Convention during the electoral period remained tolerant and moderate. The *Morning Chronicle* called attention to the republican French commissioner arriving at Dover who came with propositions for peace, and it referred to the brother of the late King of France as the Pretender to the French throne.⁶⁵

When it was reported that the royalist insurrection in Paris was confined to some primary assemblies and easily suppressed, the *Morning Chronicle* questioned foreign intervention by subversion. It published some "Queries for Kings and Bishops" on whether it was honorable to conquer by fraud. The *Gazetteer* pursued the same criticism of a religious crusade when it revealed that the English had paid much money to the bishop of Nancy to form a corps on the continent of six thousand French émigrés.⁶⁶

The ministerial press, disappointed that the 9th of Thermidor did not lead to the restoration of monarchy in France, denied that the republican Thermidorians were moderates and claimed they were the same men who were anti-clerical in the past. Unable to come to peace terms after

⁶⁴*Times*, Oct. 16, 1795.

⁶⁵*Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 6, 1795, Oct. 9, 1795.

⁶⁶*Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 16, 1795; *Gazetteer*, Oct. 30, 1795.

French victories made concessions to Britain unlikely, the ministerial press continued to denounce the religious policy of the Thermidorians. The re-emergence of Roman Catholicism following the decrees of February and May 1795 which encouraged religious worship by separating church and state, indicated to the English ministerial press growing strength for a royalist restoration.

The White Terror against former terrorists and republicans in southern France, incited by returning émigré priests with British financial backing, received little notice in the English press, both ministerial and the opposition, because the Thermidorian Convention gave it scant attention in its official reports. After the failure of the expedition of French émigrés and clergy to Quiberon Bay, the English ministerial press relied on the activities of the royalist priests in France to undermine the Republic, rather than negotiate a peace which would have brought down the Pitt ministry.

The English opposition press also welcomed the downfall of Robespierre on the 9th of Thermidor. These newspapers pointed to the Thermidorian leniency towards priests and called for immediate negotiations with republican France. The opposition press approved of the Thermidorian decrees in 1795 separating religion from the state, not only as political expediency but in principle. These newspapers were critical of the Anglican bishops who enjoyed large revenues awarded by the ministry, seemingly in exchange for their support of a war in defence of religion.

The re-emergence of Catholicism in France in 1795 was to the English opposition press proof of the religious toleration of the Thermidorians. The opposition newspapers made the most of the failure of the expedition of émigrés and clergy at Quiberon Bay in order to show the futility of

appealing to religious sentiments in France for the restoration of royalism. The opposition press urged peace with France which would have meant in Great Britain a new ministry, the Foxites instead of the wartime Pitt ministry.

CHAPTER XII
CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE
ECCLESIASTICAL CHANGES OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION

The ecclesiastical affairs in France were important in the English press in formulating opinions on the French Revolution. Three periods marked changes of opinion: from 1789 to the spring of 1791; from mid-1791 through the autumn, 1792; from the beginning of 1793 to mid-1795.

At the beginning of the first period, the English press in 1789, responsive to political factions with respect to other issues, welcomed the surrender of ecclesiastical privileges in France because it believed in a Church subordinate to the state. The Protestantism of the English press was aroused against the Catholic hierarchy of France who were unwilling to extend religious toleration.

The decrees of the National Assembly in August 1789 for reform of the clergy influenced the English press of all factions to call for similar reforms of the Anglican Church. Praise of the English press for the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* of 1789 and its article enunciating religious liberty influenced the controversy in Great Britain on repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts which had imposed civil disabilities on religious Dissenters.

The confiscation of ecclesiastical property in France was justified in both the ministerial and opposition press by the need of the National Assembly to avert bankruptcy. In November 1789 the principle voiced in the National Assembly that ecclesiastical property remained at the dis-

posal of the nation was not shocking to either the ministerial or the opposition press, although the Anglican Church owned property. The suppression of monasticism in February 1790 which followed the confiscation of ecclesiastical property found full favor with the English press. Thus, the ecclesiastical reforms of 1789 in France met general approval in all English newspapers.

The views of Edmund Burke condemning the ecclesiastical policy of the National Assembly were already known in the English press in February 1790 when Burke, who belonged to an opposition faction, differed publicly from Charles Fox, spokesman for the opposition. The defeat of Fox's motion to repeal the Test Acts on March 2, 1790 resulted from the need of the Pitt ministry to retain the Anglican clergy as a political ally at the expense of the votes of the Dissenters. Although Burke opposed repeal in the debate because he thought it would lead to confiscation of ecclesiastical property in Great Britain, the English ministerial press did not in 1790 adopt his views on ecclesiastical changes in France. In the spring of 1790 the English press of all factions remained hostile to the French hierarchy for inciting civil warfare in southeastern France between Catholics and Protestants. Anti-papalism in the English press was reinforced by suppression of rebellion in papal Avignon.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy decreed in July 1790, found approval in the English press of all factions. It favored the generous provisions of salaries for the lower clergy and, in general, popular election of the clergy. *The Times*, a ministerial newspaper, admired the salaries but disliked the election of the clergy which deprived the French monarchy of ecclesiastical patronage. After Louis XVI sanctioned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in August 1790, the resistance of

the French hierarchy was not favored in the English press and its attitude continued to be critical of them.

Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, defending monarchy, church and aristocracy, was published in November 1790 and hailed by all ministerial newspapers. Burke's views were expected by the ministry to sow dissension among the opposition factions. However, his condemnation of the ecclesiastical decrees in France did not influence the ministerial press until the middle of 1791. The majority of newspapers praised the French clergy who took the oath to the constitution after Louis XVI sanctioned the decree for the clerical oath in December 1790. News of a papal brief early in 1791 which condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy reinforced the opinion of the English press favorable to this constitution.

It was in April and May 1791 that a significant change occurred in the English ministerial press towards the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. It was first expressed after the French king attempted to go to St. Cloud in order to take Easter communion from non-juring priests.

Significantly it was at this time that Pitt met defeat on a vote concerning his belligerence toward Russia. Forced to reverse his foreign policy, Pitt made overtures to members of the opposition factions. In May 1791 Pitt offered Burke support in a debate on a constitution for Canada at which time Burke finally broke with the Foxites over his views on the French Revolution. Within a year other members of the opposition individually joined the Pitt ministry.

In mid-1791 the English ministerial press united to condemn ecclesiastical affairs in France. When Louis XVI attempted flight on June 21st, the ministerial press appealed to the strong monarchist sentiment in Great

Britain to condemn the French Revolution. Since the King made evident by his flight that he favored the non-juring clergy, the English ministerial press from that time on used Burke's views to support the non-jurors and oppose the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

The opposition press repudiated Burke and continued to support the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The neutral press was somewhat less favorable to ecclesiastical affairs in France than before. The provincial press took their cue from London, but many of the provincial newspapers which later supported the ministry clung to their approval of the National Assembly and its ecclesiastical decrees.

After Louis XVI's flight, opinions in the English press on ecclesiastical affairs in France became sharply divided by party lines. The English reformers who attended the second anniversary dinner of the French Revolution on July 14, 1791 in London were attacked in the ministerial press as infected by "French atheism," while the opposition press hastened to affirm the respectability of the dinner and the toasts which were in the English tradition of 1689. The ministerial press condoned violence against Dissenters in Birmingham, because it considered those who had celebrated there the French Revolution's second anniversary as enemies of Church and King. The opposition press censured the ministerial newspapers and high churchmen as bigots for inciting the Birmingham mob to riot.

When war was declared by France on Austria and Prussia in April 1792, the Pitt ministry intended Great Britain to remain neutral. The English ministerial press deplored the decrees punishing the non-juring clergy in France for sedition. These decrees were reluctantly accepted by the opposition newspapers which regarded religious toleration in the Whig

tradition. However, the opposition press favored revolutionary France against the "despotism" of Austria and Prussia, and conceded the need in France to curb the refractory clergy.

After the downfall of the monarchy on August 10, 1792, and the September massacres, the ministerial newspapers reached a high point in hostility against ecclesiastical affairs in France. In depicting the horrors of the September massacres, exaggerating and falsifying facts, they attributed the assassination of non-juring clergy in the prisons to the hatred of religion. Aid to refugee French clergy in Great Britain, organized through the English press, intensified feelings against "atheistic" France. However, reservations expressed in ministerial newspapers about allowing the French refugee clergy to remain in London revealed that anti-Catholicism was only dormant.

The September massacres put the English opposition newspapers on the defensive. Some of these newspapers for the first time praised the non-juring clergy whom they considered barbarously treated, although the opposition press tried to "explain" the September massacres as the result of mass panic. Attempts to deflate the stories of atrocities toward priests drew upon the opposition press itself the charge of atheism. When the opposition newspapers protested the political exploitation of aid to the French refugee clergy, they were accused of being Jacobins in French pay.

The neutral newspapers no longer defended the ecclesiastical decrees in France after the September massacres. The provincial press which supported the ministry outdid the London ministerial newspapers in denouncing the opposition as French atheists. Provincial newspapers of the opposition which defended the French Revolution underwent harrassment and repression.

The September massacres were a landmark in creating a hostile English public opinion towards ecclesiastical affairs in France. The ministerial press was not only defensive of the British constitution of mixed monarchy but justified repressive measures against English reformers and those in the opposition who supported religious developments in France.

After the National Convention decreed in September 1792 that France was a republic and the French won victory in the Netherlands in November, the English ministerial press prepared its readers for war. The irreligion of the French became a major reason for waging the war. The ministerial press stressed the piety of Louis XVI during his trial and execution in January 1793. Before war was declared in February these newspapers made war propaganda out of the profanation of churches by the French when they occupied the Austrian Netherlands. The rebellion in the Vendée was described as a royalist crusade to restore religion. The secularization of life in France in the first year of the Republic was attributed to atheism. When Marat was assassinated in July 1793, the English ministerial press noted the cult of his martyrdom among the *sans-culottes* and condemned it as blasphemy. The ministerial press was appalled by the dechristianization in Paris and in rebellious areas in the departments. When the Paris Commune held a festival for the cult of Reason on November 10, 1793, these newspapers considered the ceremony final proof that the French were atheists.

The English opposition press claimed the ministerial newspapers used the ecclesiastical affairs in France as a pretext for war. These newspapers considered the actions of the French forces in Belgium as utilitarian, not irreligious. They defended the secularization of life in France as enlightened and showed particular interest in the Republic's

plans for education. The opposition newspapers refused to denounce dechristianization in France. Imbued with deistic beliefs and philosophic abstractions, most of these newspapers found nothing shocking about the cult of Reason celebrated in Paris.

The ministerial press pronounced Robespierre a hypocrite when towards the end of 1793 he condemned dechristianization as a plot to discredit the Republic. Ministerial newspapers refused to concede there was religious toleration in France because they wished to continue the war while the French won victories on the continent. After Robespierre proposed in May 1794 a religion of morality and civic virtue -- the cult of the Supreme Being -- and the Convention later recognized the immortality of the soul, the ministerial newspapers were hard put to it to justify the charge of atheism against the French Republic. The ministerial press claimed that the festival in honor of the Supreme Being on June 8, 1794 was a cult for regicides and the true religion of France was that of the monarchy, Roman Catholicism. The ministerial press found philosophical deism equally objectionable with dechristianization.

From May through July 1794 -- the period when Robespierre dominated French politics -- was one of mounting tension in Great Britain while France won decisive victories. In May the leaders of the English reformers were charged with conspiracy to commit treason and the *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended. In July, after the victory of the French at Fleurus, the faction of the opposition influenced by Burke's views and led by the Duke of Portland entered a coalition with the Pitt ministry in order to prosecute the war. The ministerial press hailed the coalition and the war as a religious crusade.

The opposition press called for a campaign for peace with the French

Republic. It pointed to Robespierre's policy of religious moderation to claim that religion in France was only a pretext for war. These newspapers approved of Robespierre's rejection of an established clergy for his civic religion and censured the Anglican bishops for their support of the war and their subservience to the Pitt ministry.

The English press of all factions welcomed the downfall of Robespierre on the 9th of Thermidor (July 27, 1794). The ministerial press denied that the republican Thermidorians were moderates. When the salaries for the constitutional clergy were ended in September 1794, the English ministerial press claimed the Thermidorians were the same men who had been anti-clerical in the past. The Convention's decrees of February and May 1795 which separated the state from the church and advanced religious liberty in France, were begrudgingly praised by the ministerial press, but it considered the re-emergence of Roman Catholicism at this time proof of the growing strength for the restoration of the monarchy. After the failure of a British expedition of French émigrés and clergy at Quiberon Bay in July 1795, the English ministerial press relied on the activities of émigré priests who returned illegally to France to overturn the Republic. In Britain at this time the ministerial newspapers were increasingly favorable to English Catholicism.

The opposition newspapers (relieved that Robespierre was dead because ministerial propaganda had attacked him personally), pointed to the leniency of the republican Thermidorians to priests and called for peace negotiations. The re-emergence of Catholicism in France was proof to the opposition press of the moderation of the Thermidorians. The failure of the émigré expedition at Quiberon Bay indicated to these newspapers the futility of appealing to religious sentiment to overthrow the Republic.

The opposition press, weakened by the defection of the Portland Whigs, could no longer hope to change English public opinion toward the religious policy of the French Revolution. Even after some of Britain's allies deserted the coalition of war against France in 1795 and made peace with the Republic, the Pitt ministry was determined to continue the war. The opposition press in calling for peace acknowledged the political isolation of the Foxites in Parliament and the hostile public opinion disseminated by the ministerial newspapers and the Anglican clergy towards the religious policy in France.

The hysteria generated during the French Revolution by the ministerial press was in part responsible for a period of reaction in Great Britain. The charge of French atheism played an important role. It had little justification in 1790 when Burke voiced it in his *Reflections* because the National Assembly had reorganized the clergy without altering Catholic dogma. The English press, both ministerial and opposition, recognized this fact. French atheism had little reality at any time during the French Revolution because no responsible organ of the French national government sponsored atheism. The brief flurry of dechristianization in the fall of 1793 was officially disowned by the Convention before the end of the year. Robespierre and the Thermidorians maintained liberty of worship.

The English ministerial press in 1791 manipulated for domestic consumption a false issue of atheism in France in order to divide the factions within the opposition. In 1792 the ministerial press cried French atheism so as to turn public opinion against the English reformers and isolate further the Foxite opposition. It retained the issue of French atheism after 1793 to wage a war against the French Republic from which the Pitt ministry hoped for territorial and commercial advantages.

The war which the ministerial press preached as a crusade to crush atheism crushed English dissent. The reading public who had professed an enlightened religious attitude derived from English deism now swore blind loyalty to Church and King. In the countryside the lower orders were warned by Evangelical tracts and provincial newspapers against irreligious philosophy from France. The British government, united as a party on Tory principles, could count on popular support against an ineffective opposition party and harassed reformers.

English newspapers instilled a pride in unreformed British institutions which sustained nationalist sentiment throughout the war against the French Revolution and Napoleon. In a large part due to the reaction of the English ministerial press to the ecclesiastical changes of the French Revolution, it was over a generation before the British constitution removed the disabilities of Catholics and Protestant Dissenters and also underwent moderate parliamentary reform.

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS, 1789-1795

Issues of newspapers were discovered in libraries not listed in standard bibliographies. Some collections appear to have been lost or incorrectly catalogued in libraries. Newspapers available for this study are marked by an asterisk. If newspapers can be read in London, other libraries in Great Britain are not listed; otherwise, libraries in Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester and Birmingham. For provincial newspapers, local libraries are listed if not available in London.

Key to Libraries with English Newspapers, 1789-1795

BrP	Birmingham (Eng.) - Public Library
C	Cambridge (Eng.) - Cambridge University Library
C-S	San Francisco, Cal. - California State Library, Sutro Branch
CSmH	San Marino, Cal. - Henry Huntington Library
CU	Berkeley, Cal. - University of California Library
CtY	New Haven, Conn. - Yale University Library
DLC	Washington, D. C. - Library of Congress
ICN	Chicago, Ill. - Newberry Library
ICU	Chicago, Ill. - University of Chicago Library
IU	Urbana, Ill. - University of Illinois Library
L	London (Eng.) - British Museum Library
LE	London (Eng.) - London School of Economics Library
LGU	London (Eng.) - Guildhall Library
LLL	London (Eng.) - London Library
MB	Boston, Mass. - Public Library
MBAt	Boston, Mass. - Boston Athenaeum Library
MH	Cambridge, Mass. - Harvard University Library
MP	Manchester (Eng.) - Public Library
MR	Manchester (Eng.) - John Rylands Library
MdBJ	Baltimore, MD. - Johns Hopkins University Library
MdBp	Baltimore, Md. - Peabody Institute Library
MiU	Ann Arbor, Mich. - University of Michigan Library
MnU	Minneapolis, Minn. - University of Minnesota Library
MoU	Columbus, Mo. - University of Missouri Library
NN	New York, N. Y. - Public Library
NNC	New York, N. Y. - Columbia University Library
NNCU	New York, N. Y. - City University of New York
NNHi	New York, N. Y. - New York Historical Society Library
NcD	Durham, N. C. - Duke University Library
NjR	New Brunswick, N. J. - Rutgers University Library
O	Oxford (Eng.) - Bodleian Library
OU	Columbus, Ohio - Ohio State University Library
PPL	Philadelphia, Pa. - University of Pennsylvania Library

PU Philadelphia, Pa. - University of Pennsylvania Library
 TxU Austin, Tex. - University of Texas Library
 V Richmond, Va. - Virginia State Library
 WHi Madison, Wis. - University of Wisconsin Library

* - newspapers available for this study
 f. c. - microfilm or reproduction
 () - some omissions in that year's collection
 sc. nos. - scattered numbers. Widely scattered numbers are not listed

DAILY NEWSPAPERS	AVAILABILITY
<i>Argus</i> , Mr 1789 - My 1792, cont. as <i>Argus of the Constitution</i> , 1792	L sc. nos. Ap 1789 - N 1791* F 28 - Mr 17 1792
<i>Courier and Evening Gazette</i> , O 1792-1795	CtY (1794) (1795)* ICU sc. nos. 1794-1795 BP J1-D 1795 L sc. nos. 1793-1795*
<i>Daily Advertiser</i> , 1789-1795	CtY 1789-1795 f. c. ICU 1789-1795 f. c. MH 1789-1795 f. c. MoU 1789-1795 f. c. lacking Je 1790 NNC 1789-1795 f. c.*
<i>Diary or Woodfall's Register</i> , Mr 1789-Ag 1793	C-S (1789) (1790) CtY (1789-1790) (1793)* ICU sc. nos. 1789-1792* MBAAt (Ap 1789-Je 1790)* NcD (1789-1791) 1792 WHi (1789) sc. nos. 1790-1791 C (1789-1792) L (1789) 1790-1793* O (1789-1792)
<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i> , 1789-1795	CtY (1789-1791) (1793)* ICU sc. nos. 1791-1792 MdBJ sc. nos. 1791-1792 NNHi sc. nos. 1789-1791, sc. nos. 1795 PPL (1789-1793)* LLL (1789-1793) L (1789-1793)
<i>General Advertiser</i> , cont. as <i>Patriot and General Advertiser</i> , 1789-Ag. 1790	L (1789-1790)* O (1789-1790)

Morning Advertiser,
F 1794-1795

*Morning Chronicle and London
Advertiser, 1789-1795*

Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser,
1789-1795

*Morning Post or Cheap Daily Adver-
tiser, 1789-1795*

Oracle, Bell's New World,
Je 1789-F 1794, cont. as
Oracle and Public Advertiser,
Mr 1794-1795

NN F 10 1794*
TxU sc. nos. 1794-1795
L sc. nos. 1794-1795

CtY sc. nos. 1791-1793,
My 1794*
DLC sc. nos. 1791-1795
ICU Mr-My 1789 (1792-1795)
MB Ap 1794-1795*
MdBj sc. nos. 1791-1792
MnU sc. nos. 1790-1793
NNHi sc. nos. 1794-1795*
NcD Ja-Mr 1789, 1794-1795 f. c.
C 1793-1795
L sc. nos. 1789-1790, 1791
(1792) 1793-1795*
MR sc. nos. 1792-1794
O sc. nos. 1789 (1793-1795)

CtY sc. nos. 1789 (1790)
sc. nos. 1791 (1792-1795)*
ICU (Mr-Jl 1789)(N-D 1790)
(Ap-Je 1791) Je-Ag 1792,
S 1794-Ag 1795
MdBj sc. nos. 1790-1792
NN sc. nos. My-Je 1790,
Ja-Ag 1793
NcD sc. nos. 1789-1792
L (1789-1790)(1792-1795)*
O sc. nos. 1790-1791,
sc. nos. 1793-1795

CtY (Ja-My 1789) sc. nos. 1790
(1791-1795)*
DLC sc. nos. 1791
ICN Jl 1794-1795
ICU sc. nos. 1789-1795
MdBj sc. nos. 1791-1792
NN sc. nos. 1795*
NcD sc. nos. Mr-Je 1791
PPL 1789, 1791-1793*
C sc. nos. 1789-1795
L (1789)(1791) sc. nos. 1792,
(1793-1795)*

CtY (Jl 1789-1790) 1791*
ICU sc. nos. 1789-1790, My-Ag 1792
MBAt sc. nos. 1790*
MdBj sc. nos. 1790-1791 (1792)
L Je-D 1789, Je 1791-F 1794,
1795*

Public Advertiser,
1789-F 1794

ICU Mr-My 1789
MdBj sc. nos. 1789-1792
NjR sc. nos. 1791-1792
L 1789-1794*

Public Ledger, 1789-1795

L 6 issues, 1795

Star (includes *Stuart's Star*)
1789-1795

C-S S 1793-1795
CtY (1789) sc. nos. 1791
(O 1792-J1 1794)*
DLC sc. nos. 1791 (Je-D 1793)
(O-D 1794) (N 1795)
ICU (1789) (Ag-D 1790) Ap-Je 1791,
sc. nos. 1792-1795
MBAt sc. nos. 1789-1793
NcD sc. nos. 1791-1795
NNHi J1-D 1793, Ja-My 1795*
C D 1792-1795
L (1789-1795)*
O sc. nos. 1789-1792 (1793-
1795)

Sun, O 1792-1795

CtY Ap-D 1793 (Ag 1794-1795)*
DLC 1792-1795*
ICU (Ag 1794-Ag 1795)
MH (1792-1795)*
MdBj (J1 1794)
NN sc. nos. 1794 (1795)*
TxU sc. nos. 1794-1795
BP 1792-1795
L (1793-Je 1795)*
O sc. nos. 1793-1795

Telegraph, D 30 1794-1795

ICU sc. nos. 1795
MBAt (1795)*
L (1795)

The Times, 1789-1795

CU 1789-1795 f.c.
CtY (1789) F-Je 1790, sc. nos.
1791-1795
DLC 1789-1795 f. c.
ICU 1789-1795 f. c.
MB 1789-1795 f. c.
MBAt (Je-D 1790) sc. nos. 1793-
1795
MH sc. nos. 1789-1795
MdBp 1789-1795 f. c.
MnU 1789-1795 f. c.
NN 1789-1795 f. c.*
NNC (Ag-D 1792) sc. nos. 1793-
1795
NNCU 1789-1795 f. c.*
NcD 1789-1795 f. c.

<i>(The Times, 1789-1795)</i>	OU 1789-1795 f. c. C 1789-1795 f. c. (1791-1795) L (1789-1795)
<i>True Briton, Ja 1793-1795</i>	ICU (F-D 1795) NcD sc. nos. 1793 L 1793, J1 1794-1795* MR sc. nos. 1793 O (Ja-My 1793)
<i>World, 1789-Je 1794</i>	CtY (1789-1790) My 1792* ICN (1789-Je 1794) ICU (Mr-J1 1789) MdBj (1789-1791) Ja 1792 NN sc. nos. 1794* L 1789-1791 (1794) 1793-1794*
TRI- AND SEMI-WEEKLY LONDON PRESS	
	AVAILABILITY
<i>Courier de Londres, s. w.</i> 1789-1795 preceded by <i>Courier de</i> <i>l'Europe</i>	CtY (1789)* C-S S-N 1790 MBA t sc. nos. 1791-1792* NNHi (N 1789)*
<i>English Chronicle and Universal</i> <i>Evening Post, 1789-1795</i>	CtY (1789) (1793)* L J1 1789-N 1791, sc. nos. 1792-1793 O (1789-1792)
<i>Evening Mail, 1789-1795</i>	C-S D 1794-1795 CtY (1789) (1792-1794)* DLC (1794-1795)* MH O 1793-F 1794 O sc. nos. 1790
<i>General Evening Post, 1789-1795</i>	CtY (1789-1794)* DLC (1792-1794) ICU sc. nos. 1789, sc. nos. 1794 (1795) MBA t Je 1789-N 1790* MnU 1791-1795 L (1789-1795) O sc. nos. 1792-1794
<i>Journal de Middlesex, ?-1791-?</i>	MBA t (Ap-My 1791)* L 2 issues Ap 1791

- Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle*, 1789-1795
 ICU (Ja-Je 1791)
 MB N 1791-Ap 1794, 1795
 MnU (1790)
 L (1790) 1791-1795*
 LGU 1789-1795
 O (1789) (1795)
- Lloyd's List*, s. w., 1789-1795
 L 1790-1795*
- London Chronicle*, 1789-1795
 C-S sc. nos. 1789-1792, Ja-Je 1793
 CU (1789-1795)
 CtY 1789-1795*
 DLC Ja-Je 1789, 1790-1795
 ICN 1789-1790
 IU 1789-1791
 MB Ja-Mr 1789, 1793
 MBAt (1790-1791) 1793 (1794)
 MiU (1792)
 MnU 1789-1795
 NN 1789 (1790) 1791-1792, J1-D 1793, Ja-Je 1794*
 NNHi 1789-1795*
 NcD Ja-Je 1789, 1790-1795
 PPL J1-D 1793
 PU Ja-Je 1791
 TxU (1790-1795)
 L (1789-1795)
 LGU 1789-1795
- London Evening Post*, 1789-1795
 CtY (1789)*
 ICU sc. nos. 1789-1793
 L sc. nos. 1789-1792 (1793)*
- London Gazette*, s. w., 1789-1795
 CSmH (1789-1795)
 CtY (1790)
 MB 1789, 1792-1795
 MBAt 1789-1795
 MnU (1789-1795)
 NN 1789-1795*
 TxU sc. nos. 1789-1795
 L 1789-1795
- London Packet*, 1789-1795
 CtY (Ja-Mr 1789) (1792-Ja 1795)*
 MBAt F 1794
 L (1791-1795)*
 O (1789) sc. nos. 1793-1794
- Middlesex Journal*, 1789-1790
 No issues known for this period

<i>St. James's Chronicle</i> , 1789-1795	CtY (Je-J1 1789) (J1 1790- Mr 1794)*
	ICU sc. nos. 1789, sc. nos. 1791- 1795
	NcD sc. nos. 1790-1792
	L 1789-1795*
<i>Whitehall Evening Post</i> , 1789-1795	L 1789-1791 (F-Je 1792) 1793*
	O (1789-Ag 1790) (Ag 1791- J1 1793)

WEEKLY LONDON NEWSPAPERS

AVAILABILITY

<i>Ayre's Sunday London Gazette</i> and Weekly Monitor, 1789-1795	CtY N 21 1790* MH (1789-1791) MR (1793)
<i>Baldwin's London Weekly Journal</i> , 1789-1795	NN J1 27, O 26, D 28, 1793* L J1 3 1790
<i>The Craftsman</i> , or <i>Say's Weekly</i> Journal, 1789-1795	CtY (1789)* L sc. nos. 1790-1793*
E. Johnson's <i>British Gazette</i> and Sunday Monitor, 1789-1795	C-S sc. nos. 1791 CtY (1790-1791) Ag 1795* DLC J1-D 1791 NNHi (1789-1795)* V (1792-1793) sc. nos. 1794 L (1789-1791) 1792-1795*
<i>London Recorder</i> and Sunday Gazette, 1789-1795	L sc. nos. 1791-1793
<i>The Observer</i> , D 1791-1795	NN D 4 1791 f. c.* V sc. nos. 1793 L 1791-1795
<i>Sunday Chronicle</i> , 1789-Je 1790	L 2 issues
<i>Sunday Reformer</i> and Universal Register, Ap 1793-1795	L sc. nos. 1793*

PROVINCIAL PRESS	AVAILABILITY
Adam's <i>Weekly Courant</i> , Chester, 1789-1793, cont. as <i>Chester Courant</i> , 1793-1795	CtY sc. nos. 1795* L 1789-1792 Chester (Eng.) Office of <i>Chester Courant</i>
Aris's <i>Birmingham Gazette</i> , 1789-1795	CtY 1793* BP 1789-1795
<i>Bath Chronicle</i> , 1789-1795	L 1789 Bath Municipal Library
<i>Bath Herald</i> , 1792-1795	Bath Municipal Library
<i>Bath Journal</i> , 1789-1795	NN Ag 29 1791* L D 31 1792, Ja 7 1793 Bath Municipal Library
<i>Bath Register</i> and General Advertiser, 1792-1793	No issues known
<i>Berrow's Worcester Journal</i> , 1789-1795	Worcester (Eng.) - Office of <i>Berrow's Worcester Journal</i>
Bonner & Middleton's <i>Bristol Journal</i> , 1789-1795	Bristol Public Library
Brice's old <i>Exeter Journal</i> , 1789-1795	CtY (1789-1790)*
<i>Bristol Gazette</i> and Public Adver- tiser, 1789-1795	L 1789, sc. nos. 1790- 1795 Bristol Public Library
<i>Bristol Mercury</i> , 1790-1795	Bristol Public Library
<i>British Chronicle</i> or Pugh's <i>Hereford Journal</i> , 1789-1792 cont. as <i>Hereford Journal</i> , 1793-1795	NcD sc. nos. 1793-1795 Hereford Public Library Gloucester Public Library
The <i>Briton</i> , Newark, 1793-F 1794	L 1793-1794 BP 1793-1794
<i>Cambridge Chronicle</i> and Journal, 1789-1795	C 1789-1795
<i>Cambridge Intelligencer</i> , 1793-1795	CtY J1 1793-1795* C 1793-1795 NcD (J1-D 1793) 1794 (1795) Cambridge (Eng.) Public Library

<i>Chelmsford Chronicle</i> , Chelmsford, 1789-1795	CtY (1789-1793)*
<i>Chester Chronicle</i> , 1789-1795	CtY (1791)* L (J1 1791-1792) Chester (Eng.) Office of <i>Chester Chronicle</i>
<i>County Chronicle</i> , Lewes, 1789-1795	LLL Ag 1794-1795
<i>Coventry Mercury</i> , 1789-1795	L (1789-1795)
<i>Derby Herald</i> , 1792	Derby (Eng.) Public Library
<i>Derby Mercury</i> , 1789-1795	L (1789-1795) Derby (Eng.) Public Library
<i>Devon & Exeter Gazette</i> , ?1792-1795	CtY Ag-S 1792, D 1793, Je 1794*
<i>Dorchester & Sherborne Journal</i> , ?1792-1795	DLC 1792-1794
Felix Farley's <i>Bristol Journal</i> , 1789-1795	L 1789-1795* Bristol Public Library
<i>Gloucester Gazette</i> , 1789-1795	Gloucester Public Library, 1792-1795
<i>Gloucester Journal</i> , 1789-1795	CtY (1789) 1791-Ap 1793* WHI 1789-1795 L 1789-1790
Gore's <i>General Advertiser</i> , Liverpool, 1789-1795	No issues for period
<i>Hampshire Journal</i> , Winchester, 1790-1792?	Winchester Public Library 1790-Ja 1791
<i>Hull Advertiser</i> 1794-1795	MdBJ J1 1794-1795
<i>Hull Packet</i> , 1789-1795	Hull (Eng.) Public Library D 1794-1795
<i>Ipswich Journal</i> , 1789-1795	ICU 1795 L 1789-1793, 1795
Jackson's <i>Oxford Journal</i> , 1789-1795	CtY Ag 1791, Je 1792-1795* DLC 1793-1795 L (1789-1790) sc. nos. 1791- 1794 O (1789-1795)

- Kentish Chronicle*, Canterbury,
1789-1795
CtY Je 1791*
ICU 1789-1790
L 1789-1795
- Kentish Gazette*, Canterbury,
1789-1795
CtY (1789-1792) O 1793, Ap 1794*
(1795)
L 1789-1792 (1793-1794) 1795
- Leeds Intelligencer*, 1789-1795
CtY Ja 1792, 1793-1795*
L (1789-1791) 1792-1795
- Leeds Mercury*, 1789-1795
CtY 1790-1792*
NN F 2, O 26, N 2, 1793*
Leeds (Eng.) Public Library
- Leicester Herald*, 1792-1795
Leicester Public Library
MR sc. nos. 1793-1795*
- Leicester Journal*, 1789-1795
NN sc. nos. 1790*
O (1789-1795)
Leicester (Eng.) Public Library
- Lincoln, Rutland & Stamford
Mercury*, 1789-1795
CtY 1794-1795*
L 1789-1794
- Liverpool Weekly Herald*, 1789-1792
No issues known
- Liverpool General Advertiser*,
1789-1795
Liverpool (Eng.) Public Library
- Maidstone Journal and Kentish
Advertiser*, 1789-1795
DLC D 31 1793
Maidstone (Eng.) Public Library
- (Wheeler's) *Manchester Chronicle*,
1789-1795
CtY 1792*
MP 1789-1795*
- Manchester Herald*, Mr 1792-Mr 1793
L 1792-1793
MP 1792-1793*
- Manchester Mercury and Harrop's
General Advertiser*, 1789-1795
CtY 1795*
MP 1789-1795*
- Newark Herald*, O 1791-1794,
cont. as *Midland Mercury*,
1795
CtY 1791-1793*
Newark-on-Trent (Eng.) -
Gilstrap Public Library
- Newcastle Advertiser*, 1789-1795
LE 1795
Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Eng.) -
Public Library
- Newcastle Chronicle*, 1789-1795
CtY 1789, Ag 1790 (1793)*
ICU (1795)
L 1789-1795

- Newcastle Courant*, 1789-1795
CtY (1789-1793), Ap 1795*
MH 1794
L 1790, 1792
LE (1795)
- Norfolk Chronicle*, or
Norwich Gazette, 1789-1795
CtY 1791-1795*
L 1789-1795
- Northampton Mercury*, 1789-1795
L 1789-1795
- Norwich and Bury Post*, 1789-1795
C sc. nos. 1789-1795
- Norwich Mercury*, 1789-1795
CtY 1789-1792*
C (1789-1795)
L Ag 1789-1790
- Nottingham Journal*, 1789-1795
L 1789
Nottingham (Eng.) Office of
Nottingham Journal
NN My 17, 1794*
- Oxford Mercury*, 1795
CtY Ag 1795*
- Portsmouth Gazette*, J1 1793-1795
L 1793-1795
- Preston Journal*, 1789-1795
No issues available
- Preston Review*, Je 1793-Mr 1794
Preston (Eng.) Harris Public
Library
- Salisbury & Winchester Journal*,
Salisbury, 1789-1795
CtY 1789-1791 1795*
Devizes (Eng.) Wiltshire Archeo-
logical Library
- Salopian Journal* and Courier of
Wales, Shrewsbury, Ja 1794-1795
L Ja 29, 1794
Shrewsbury (Eng.) Public Library
- Sheffield (Public) Advertiser*,
1789-Ja 1793, cont. as
Sheffield Courant, 1793-1795
Sheffield (Eng.) Public Library
1790-1792 (1793-1794)
- Sheffield Register*, 1789-Je 1794
cont. as *Sheffield Iris*
1794-1795
CtY 1789*
DLC Je 1789-My 1791
MR sc. nos. 1793-1794*
Sheffield University Library,
1790-1794
Sheffield (Eng.) Public Library
1794-1795
- Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 1789-1795
BP sc. nos. 1794-1795

- Staffordshire Advertiser*, 1795
 NN Ja 3, 1795*
 BP sc. nos. 1795
 Stafford (Eng.) Public Library
- Sussex Weekly Advertiser*,
 Lewes, 1789-1795
 Brighton (Eng.) Public Library,
 L (1789-1792) Ja-Ag 1793,
 Je-D 1795
 LLL (1789-1795)
- Swinney's Birmingham & Stafford
 Chronicle*, 1789-1795
 BP sc. nos. 1789-1795
 MR sc. nos. 1792-1794*
- Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*,
 1789-1795
 No issues known
- Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*,
 1789-D 1793, cont. as
*Billinge's Liverpool Adver-
 tiser*, Ja 1794-1795
 Liverpool (Eng.) Public Library
 (1789-1793) 1794-1795
- Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 1789-1795
 CtY Ag 1792*
 Wolverhampton (Eng.) Public
 Library, S 1789-Je 1793
- Woolmer's Exeter & Plymouth
 Gazette*, 1791-1795
 Exeter (Eng.) Office of
Devon & Exeter Gazette
- Worcester Herald*, 1794-1795
 Worcester (Eng.) Public Library
- York Chronicle*, 1789-1795
 O 1793-1795
 York (Eng.) Public Library,
 1790-1795
- York Courant*, 1789-1795
 L 1789-1795
- York Herald*, 1790-1795
 MR Mr 2, My 11, 1793*
 York (Eng.) Public Library
 1790-1793
 York (Eng.) Office of *Yorkshire
 Herald*
- Yorkshire Journal*, Doncaster,
 1789-1795
 Doncaster (Eng.) Office of
Doncaster Gazette
- Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire &
 Lincolnshire Gazette*, 1794-
 1795 cont. as *Doncaster
 Gazette*, 1795
 Doncaster (Eng.) Office of
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