

Histography of the french revolution critical thinking sample

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



Preface

The paper uses press excerpts for the year 1789 to highlight the perspectives held by different authors on the theme contained in these excerpts. This way, we are able to analyze the views of different authors on the French revolution that occurred precisely between the years 1789 to 1799. During this period, France witnessed numerous political, social, and economic changes. The nation went from being ruled by a monarchy to becoming a constitutional republic after the masses revolted against the monarchy rule blaming it for the increased taxes and cost of living. The events culminated with the execution of King Louis in the year 1792. A Histogramy analysis of the 1789 excerpts will help us discover the prevailing mood during the time among different factions. The reasons that caused the revolution, in addition to the freedom of the press and perspective of different writers at the time will come out clearly.

Histogramy Analysis

“ Here is the case of convincing Your Majesty, Sire, of the necessity of therefore remedying the greatest abuses that could slip into a government, incertitude, and fluctuation of principles. Here Your Majesty can deploy and manifest your greatest love for your people, for peace, for the well happiness of the nation and its own good; chain up, for the present and future generations, arbitrary commentators, based on the principles and the rights of the liberty of nations; fix these rights and principles and prevent forever doubt coming back to life, arbitrary authority rising up again, so that the nation's freedom has a base as stable as the order established over our

heads.”

The above excerpt of the year 1789 shows us that the royalists were opposed to the uprising that was being led by the Jacobins who wanted equality in political and economic spheres of life for all citizens of France. A royalist is defined as a person who supports a given monarchy as the head of the nation for a particular kingdom or a particular dynastic. The back then royalists are similar to the contemporary world conservatives. It should be understood that whenever massive political, social and economic changes take place in a nation, some group of people who feel the previous system was suiting them are likely to oppose these massive changes for fear that things might not work out smoothly for them. The Royalists held the view that the Jacobins who led the revolution were so radical in their approach of instituting changes. To this effect, they felt that the radicalism might result to more problems than before the revolution began. Notably, the royalists comprised of members of the upper class citizens. These were the factory owners, landowners and even the clergymen who felt the revolution was targeting them. For this reason, the royalists continued to campaign against the Jacobin led French revolution mostly relying on the press to air writings that glorified the monarchy system and criticized the ruthless revolutionaries who were accused of killing and persecuting the opposition members. For instance, the below excerpt shows how the Royalists tried to guard the reputation of the King of France.

“ Your rights, Sire, are so beautiful, so grand, so magnificent, and so sublime! King of one of the most beautiful and one of the greatest nations of the earth, your sacred person alone represents this nation; it alone makes

and presents the law. Father of a people who idolizes their King; head of justice, and, if I may say so, of religion! Master of war and peace, of the nomination of ambassadors, of graces, of jobs, of favors and military compensation, of merit of all types, of the inappreciable and all diving right, of granting amnesty, of spreading happiness, of the right of insignia, and the most beautiful of all, without doubt, not being able to do wrong.”

The above excerpt of the year 1789 highlights a perfect example of how the royalist media tried to glorify the monarchy system using propaganda before the revolution occurred. The above excerpt was coined down by the royalist press that sought to counter the growing criticism in France due to the increased cost of living because of rising of taxes. The growing dissents were directed towards the King Louis XVI who was viewed as being responsible for the suffering of the masses. The excerpts illustrate that during the year 1789, the press enjoyed a considerable level of freedom as compared to the years between 1792 when the King got executed, and the year 1797. For instance, one of the royalist writers put across the following to defend the leader of the monarchy to counter the growing dissidence over his leadership:

“ That the second article of this charter, which will be called the Charter of Louis XVI, guarantees the expressed liberty of individuals, without any longer fearing blows of authority, of caprice, or of signature; that the criminal of all types, who, in another time, would have been given the lettre de cachet are, himself, or his crime, carried in front of an [21] ad hoc national council, and that the just punishment is made, after a careful test, and the precautions that must precede the greatest lost that can be made to humanity, [the loss

of] individual liberty. That the third article of this Charter of the greatest, the dearest of kings, guarantees the liberty of the press and of conscience.”

The royalist writer is trying to defend the king for his tolerance of different views held by different his supports and opponents. During this time, the media/press enjoyed considerable freedom. The opposition was also allowed to air views that criticized the monarchy because the age of enlightenment changed the perception of the majority and helped define how they wanted to be ruled. At this point, the King could not employ the state machinery to counter the growing dissents because majority of the citizens shared similar desires of wanting a change of governance. The mixed feeling between the two opposing factions can be confirmed in the excerpt where it is stated:

“ Over there, I see one hundred writings that attest to the grandeur of my king; and here others that perpetuate the [23] the glory of the nation; there, I see a continuation of patriotic actions, that will warm the souls of the old, enflame those of the young, and prepare for the innocent childhood, new patriotic torches, which its young heart will one day illuminate.”

The freedom of the press was held to be crucial by some of the newspaper editors of the time. However, it seems this was not the case as stated by one of the press writers that the words conscience and press have been unjustly and for too long been banned in France. For instance, in the case of the Haitian revolution that saw the black slavery population unite against the French army and triumph over it was a very significant event in the history of the world. However, to this day, there are very few documented facts about the blacks' triumph of the war. Prejudices are among the factors. Back then, blacks were viewed as savages who lacked intelligence. Therefore, it was felt

that reporting the triumph of the Haitian slaves over the French army would be an embarrassment. One of the writers in the 1789 excerpts writes an open letter in the newspaper to the King. He seeks to enlighten the King that if France was governed by wise laws at the heart of its free, happy, and rich people, then the King had nothing to worry about dangers of an uncontrolled press since the people would cherish him. The editor notes that the consequence of having freedom of the press is glory and honor to the nation. A ruler who neglects this freedom is a weaker human being. Furthermore, the editor goes on to demonstrate his views that an editor who writes falsehoods with the objective of hurting a targeted group is himself likely to cause harm to himself. This is because he might face a libel charge for his misgivings and be punished for slander by a tribunal of Justice. The king of France was able to issue a signed *lettres de cachet* containing orders that could not be appealed. A person could be imprisoned without trial with a *lettre de cachet*.

We can therefore conclude that freedom of the press was not that widespread during the time of the revolution. The faction that found itself in power would favor those newspaper editors who ran stories that talked positively about their leadership. Though there was no organized state machinery to counter the opposing newspapers to the prevailing leadership, it should be noted that those editors who were found to ran stories that painted the leadership badly risked being imprisoned. When the Jacobin led revolution took hold of the government, it should be noted that some former Royalist newspapers morphed into different names but they continued to print writings that were opposed to the leadership of the Republican

constitution. For example, the emerged Parisian Jeunesse newspaper was opposed to the radical revolutionary changes. The members who made up the readership were the moneychangers, the wholesale merchants, bankers and employees of the government. They were opposed to the Jacobin revolution and held the view men can never be equal because they have different talents at their disposal.

“ The royalist journalists seem to have benefited from the lack of organization in the Republic’s regressive machinery”

The Parisian Jeunesse took advantage of the fact that the republican constitutional government lacked an organized department to deal with opposition/royalist paper. In addition, the police force charged with responsibility of dealing with those found to have written negative material about the revolutionary government was also corrupt and could be compromised easily by the newspaper owners. The other prominent royalist newspapers included the Bulletin national, the Quotidience, and the Vieux Cordelier. For instance, the Bulletin national defended openly some Royalist political figures opposed to the revolution. For instance, “ when Danton, then known to be incorruptible spoke against the excesses of the de-Christianization campaign during the late 1793, the Trois Decedes commented that his speech was strongly reasoned and shone with beautiful eloquence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the French revolution was a war led by political leadership. The deep involvement of the church in the running of government activities led

to radical changes in religion as the revolution took place. The focus of this paper has been the freedom of the press during the revolutionary period. We have seen that the press engaged in printing sensitive material against the government due to lack of a well-organized structure to prevent this. Truth is the press did not have the freedom to print sensitive material against the government. For instance, the king of France was able to issue signed lettres de cachet containing orders that could not be appealed. A person could be imprisoned without trial with a lettre de cachet for writing a sensitive story about the king. Also, the revolutionary government imprisoned, and in some cases executed newspaper editors for running chilling stories against the regime.

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