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THE RHINELAND DURING THE FRENCH OCCUPATION, 1792-1793

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BY

OSCAR HEERWAGEN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1792 and 1793 French troops occupied the left bank of the Rhineland. The commanding officers made a concerted effort to establish a system of government and society similar to that which obtained, or which they hoped would obtain, in France. The attempt failed. Even before the troops were driven out of the Rhineland the majority of the population opposed the efforts of the French. The following paper aims to describe the activities of the French and the Rhinelanders during this period, and to explain in so far as possible why certain Rhenish groups favored and certain ones opposed the French and their ideology.

The basis for this paper is laid by the excellent collection of documents contained in the first two volumes of the "Quellen zur Geschichte des Rheinlandes im Zeitalter der Franzoesischen Revolution 1780--1801" edited by Joseph Hansen. These works make available in published form for the first time the more important materials in the archives of the Rhineland pertaining to this period. The documents contained in the first two volumes end with the summer of 1793, when the first attempt at dominion by the French came to an end. The author realizes that to obtain a complete picture of the Rhinelanders' reactions to the French, he should continue his study up to 1801. However, this early period is revealing because it shows the various forces at work in the Rhineland on the eve of the great revolution, and because it brings into relief the spontaneous reactions of the Rhinelanders to the French Revolution and its ideals.

This paper is particularly concerned to show the results of the meeting of two contrary worlds, the new France, and the old Rhineland.

To explain why a small minority favored the French, and why a large majority opposed them, it will be necessary to understand both internal and external factors in the Rhineland. The author hopes that this study will show why the conservative groups in the Rhineland kept their influence over the inhabitants despite the opportunity for change and reform offered to discontented elements by the French.

CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF THE FRENCH

Since 1789 the ideas of freedom and equality had found a large number of adherents in the Rhineland. The constitutional monarchy provided in France by the constitution of September 3, 1791, seemed to many people a desirable achievement. The dissatisfaction of individual social groups with their economic, social, and political conditions led some of the groups to demand an improvement of their own governments; the attempts for improvement, until the French declaration of war April 20, 1792, had imitated on a small scale the western example. The peasants were the first to show their discontent.

A part of the rural population in the Rhineland saw in the revolution a desirable aid in their struggle to free themselves from the personal and material burdens of a medieval feudal society. In the Electorate of Trier, where already in 1785 the Landtag was demanding an abolishment of clerical and aristocratic tax exemption, and also in the areas bordering France in the Palatinate, the peasants tried in the autumn of 1789 forceably to obtain advantages for themselves similar to those which the French had gained on August 4. Although the governments succeeded in immediately suppressing these uprisings, the discontent of the peasants was not diminished.[1]

In the Electorate of Cologne there were similar revolts.

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[1]Joseph Hansen (ed.), Quellen zur Geschichte des Rheinlandes im Zeitalter der Franzoesischen Revolution 1780-1801 (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1931-33), Vol. II, Introduction, p. 48. The abbreviation "R. Q." will be used in the remainder of the paper to refer to this work.

Since the spring of 1790 the Landtag, composed of representatives of the clergy, nobility, and cities, had become a center of stormy debate. The Third Estate was continually demanding a diminution of taxes paid by the peasants, and a just distribution of taxes among the entire population. However, the cathedral chapter, which organized the opposition to these demands, was strong enough to block their fulfillment. The hunting privileges of the aristocracy stimulated the peasants in the vicinity of Cologne to demonstrate in January, 1792, with the cry: "Es lebe die Freiheit!" Similarly the demand of the peasants in the territory of Aachen to have equal hunting rights with the citizens of the city of Aachen, was denounced by an official representative of the Aachen council as a striving for impossible human equality and as an expression of the fanaticism of a new-style sect.[1] In February, 1792, the elector of Cologne and his officials felt that the continuance of public peace was very uncertain in their territory. In April of the same year Max Franz, the elector, felt certain that if the French troops entered his territory and suggested to the peasants that they divide with them the estates of the aristocracy and the church, the peasants would be only too willing to agree.[2] The peasants in the Rhineland did not demand direct political reforms; they organized a few scattered political clubs which owed their existence to stimuli originating in near-by urban centers.[3] Probably the peasants would have been willing to support a general revolution.

The next expression of revolt, in chronological order, occurred in the cities. In the Imperial cities of Cologne and

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[1] Ibid., II, 8, 9, 278.

[2] Ibid., p. 51.

[3] Ibid., pp. 107 f.

Aachen, as in the territorial cities of Koblenz, Trier, Boppart, Mainz, Saarbruecken, etc., the old conflicts between the guilds and the councils, chiefly about financial administration, seemed to repeat the early events in Paris. Just as in the rural areas, the governments in these cities, with the aid of Imperial troops and decrees, suppressed the demonstrations without meeting the chief demands of the inhabitants. In Cologne the city council won a victory in the conflict over guild representation and the toleration of Protestants. During 1790 the guilds demanded that they should have the power to elect the members of the city council. But the council, a privileged bureaucratic organization, strongly opposed this demand and obtained from the German Emperor a decree against the guilds. Armed with this decree the council proceeded to arrest the leaders of the guild agitation. Already in 1785 the Protestants in Cologne had petitioned the council for the status of burgher. Since the Peace of Westphalia Protestant church services were forbidden in Cologne, and as only Catholics could join the guilds the Protestants did not have burgher status. The few Protestant families in Cologne were treated coldly by most of the inhabitants, not only because of their religion, but because the Protestants were wealthy merchants who competed with the poorer local merchants. Thus when the Protestants petitioned for equal privileges with the burghers, the guilds, church and city council strongly opposed their demand. The matter was referred to Joseph II who ruled in 1789 that the Protestant demands should be allowed. But the opposition was so strong in Cologne that the Protestants feared violence, and so withdrew their demands.[1] In Aachen, too, a conflict developed between two "parties," the old and the new, about the election of delegates to

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[1] Ibid., Vol. I, Nos. 156,225.

the city council. The old "party" had developed a corrupt political machine by purchasing the votes of enough guilds to assure their continuance in office; the new "party" among the guilds determined to undermine the power of the old party. In 1786 each claimed a victory in the annual elections. The new party forcibly ousted the old group and took control of the government; the old party set up its own government in a near-by town. For nearly five years the two governments continued to function while the case was before Imperial courts, and Imperial troops kept order.[1]

In most of the towns and cities the lower classes, encouraged by the example of the Paris masses, manifested their discontent.[2] In some of the Rhineland cities the poor were quite numerous, for example in Cologne, which was reported by travelers to be a city of beggars struggling for privileges. The popular slogan of the French since the end of the year 1791, "War on the castles, peace to the huts," appealed strongly to the lower classes, so long as they had no actual experience of what this might imply. Their dissatisfaction led to demonstrations in which the tricolor cockades were much in evidence. But these harmless demonstrations exhausted their sadistic impulses. Here and there they might plant a tree of freedom, but they made little objection when these were removed. In the music halls of Koblenz and Cologne the French popular song "Ça ira" was strictly forbidden, but now and then the song was played.

Of the three ecclesiastical states on the left bank of the Rhine, the Electorate of Cologne remained the most peaceful in 1789. The elector would have nothing to do with the French

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[1] Ibid., Vol. II, Nos. 41, 154, 170.

[2] Ibid., Vol. I, No. 41; Vol. II, No. 319.

emigrants and their military activities; this policy helped him, as favoring the emigrants would no doubt have led to a conflict between him and his subjects. The Electorate did not escape unrest; but the tension became somewhat less after 1791, probably because the "radical" professors, such as Eulogius Schneider and his colleagues, had in 1791 emigrated to Strassburg. The elector now strictly supervised the Reading Club of Bonn and attempted to suppress all reform writings.

In the Electorate of Trier the policy of the elector, Klemens Wenzeslaus, with respect to the emigrants led to the critical conflict between the government and its subjects. The elector aided and encouraged the French emigrants in Koblenz in the summer of 1791 in arming and training themselves for an attack on France by way of beginning the counter-revolution.[1] The Trier Estates, which, since the nobility had in 1729 become Imperial knights, was composed only of representatives of the clergy and the towns, now insisted upon playing an important part in the politics of their territory as "representatives of all the people." Duminique, the chief minister of the elector, believed already in November, 1789, that the leaders of the Estates were striving for a division of power between the elector and the Estates as in France.[2]

During the Landtag meetings in Koblenz from November 1791 until January 1792 the members continually warned the elector of their disapproval of his policy. Fearing a French invasion, they strongly criticized Duminique, and threatened to inform the National Assembly in Paris of their opposition to the elector's

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[1]The number of French emigrants on the left bank of the Rhine numbered in the summer of 1792 approximately 23,000. In Koblenz, with 6000 inhabitants, there were 5,000; in Trier, with 7,000 inhabitants, over 3,000.

[2]R. Q., I, 462.

policy.[1] The elector replied to this threat by denouncing the Landtag members as corrupted by the French propaganda, as disobedient and insolent. When France in December, 1791, threatened war on the Electorate of Trier, the excited citizens of Trier and Koblenz held the elector and his government responsible for the dangerous situation. Since Koblenz was generally accepted as the center of the enemies of France, many of the inhabitants prepared themselves with cockades which they planned would mitigate French hostility in case of an invasion. In the territory itself the nobility commonly believed that if the French should invade the territory a majority of the people would join with the French.[2] A decree of the elector on January 3, 1792, forbidding military maneuvers by the French emigrants did not calm the situation, for the decree was not enforced.

In the Electorate of Mainz the conflict between the elector and his subjects lacked an instrument of expression as there had been no meetings of the Estates since the 16th century. Despite the fact that the elector seemed to oppose the immigrants since November 1791 and even forbade them to have military drills, the Imperial ambassador at Mainz in January, 1792, wrote:

> The danger into which the elector has placed himself by his moral and material support of the French emigrants . . . . has engendered the hatred and distrust of his subjects. In case of an invasion by the French there would be most to fear from his subjects.[3]

The Rhineland princes had shown in the past that in their policies they were concerned chiefly with their own welfare. Since the Peace of Westphalia they had enjoyed virtual independence, but they relied upon the Empire to protect them against

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[1] Ibid., pp. 1070, 1083.

[2] Ibid., II, 18, 27.

[3] Ibid., p. 42.

German and non-German hostile states. This occasional loyalty was punctuated by coöperation with France, the guarantor of the Imperial constitution, in case this was to their advantage. This lame particularism was also subscribed to by many of the subjects of the princes; some of them even hoped to use the French, if they should invade, as a lever to force concessions from their governments. But the electors would neither correct these evils nor eliminate the causes of conflict between themselves and France. They were headed straight for war.

In the Rhineland, as in all of Germany, the Imperial cities were the centers of the republican ideal. The conservatives in the other territories thought that the inhabitants of the Imperial cities strongly favored democracy, that they were filled with the "republican insanity." "If the French come," wrote Johann v. Mueller on January 13, 1792, "they will without a doubt find great support among the people, partly due to the hatred of the nobility, and partly because of fear and love of new things."[1] When France became a republic it approached somewhat, so the Rhinelanders thought, the governmental form of these small city-states; when the French troops entered these cities many of the inhabitants at first had a friendly attitude towards them. However, the constitution of the German Imperial cities was very different from the French system. These cities no doubt had a degree of freedom; they enjoyed political self-determination. But their inhabitants were graded into privileged layers which did not permit equality of political rights. Soon after the French declaration of war they became painfully disillusioned.

On April 20, 1792, Louis XVI declared war against Francis II. The French plan of war, formulated by Dumouriez,

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[1] Ibid.

was directed from the beginning not only against Austria but against the entire Holy Roman Empire. One French army was to march through Belgium and with Liege as a center to enter the small states on the left bank of the Rhine; also, at the same time, another army was to be sent northward from Strassburg and Landau against Mainz. Thus the upper and lower Rhine regions should be occupied.

Although Dumouriez did not openly admit this intention, he hoped to make the Rhine the natural boundary of France. The reason for his secrecy is evident. Since May 1790 the French had repeatedly declared that they would not engage in a war of conquest. Dumouriez himself did not plan an annexation of the left bank of the Rhine, but he had in mind the creation of a number of small states closely bound to France, and serving as buffer states. There was little doubt in Paris that this plan would succeed, for the traditional decentralization and particularism of Germany would assure its easy realization.

Dumouriez miscalculated, however, on one point. He wished to keep Prussia neutral. But even before the declaration of war Austria and Prussia had agreed to present a united front in case of a conflict. Frederich Wilhelm II was even more eager than Francis II to combat the French Revolution, at least to prevent it from crossing the Rhine. However, Prussia did not declare war formally until July 27, and not until this date did France openly consider Prussia an enemy.

Meanwhile Austria tried to get the united support of the whole Empire, declaring that those who were not for her were against her. Dumouriez, on the other hand, tried his best to hinder unified action. The Rhineland governments were strongly opposed to the French Revolution, and the rulers would have been

only too glad to place troops at the command of a united front against France. For many years the military power of Germany had been concentrated in the East, in Prussia and Austria, and their politics were concerned chiefly in the East, not the West. But lack of troops was not the only hindrance to an effective opposition of the Rhineland princes against the Revolution. Probably nowhere else in the Empire was the traditional particularism so evident. On any common problems the Rhineland princes usually agreed to disagree. How these small states served in the past as political footballs for England, France, and Holland is well known; and the bribes paid them for this policy had not been used to strengthen or improve their government. Thus it was to be expected that the princes would be altogether adverse to any sacrifice for the defense of the whole or for any governmental centralization in the Empire.

It was this conglomeration of over a hundred and fifty small units in the Rhineland that Dumouriez planned to keep separated from Austria. He used various methods to achieve this aim: special agents were sent there, and promises that France would restore and create new liberties were freely made. Dumouriez hoped to make separate neutrality treaties with the larger German territories, which would isolate Austria and hinder her in sending reinforcements to Belgium. These treaties would have been contrary to the constitution of the Empire, and the governments could not accept them with much grace. A few small states did agree to the treaties, but most states either endlessly prolonged negotiations, or promised to remain neutral so long as France did not invade the German Empire. Thus even when a French invasion seemed likely, the Rhineland governments persisted in their attitude of particularistic pettiness, and Vienna

encouraged this policy as the wise one, at least until Austrian and Prussian troops should arrive.

Meanwhile the French threat did not seem so dangerous to the Rhineland. At the end of April, 1792, the French made their first march into Belgium, but Austrian troops easily repulsed them, and clearly revealed the poor condition of the French army. The princes of the Rhine took the defeat to mean that they had little to fear from the French, and acting accordingly, they stopped the reinforcement of small fortresses. Austria and Prussia were slowly mobilizing, hoping when they were ready to make a quick march to Paris. The entrance of the Prussian troops into the Rhineland was expected by the end of June, but the month passed and no Prussian troops appeared.

In July some of the princes, especially of Trier and Mainz, bound themselves to support Prussia and Austria with small armed contingents. The French representatives in these territories were asked to leave. Although these agreements were negotiated with the greatest secrecy, the French learned of them, and August 23 declared that the electors of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne would henceforth be considered as enemies.

When the united attack upon France finally began, it failed within two months. Dumouriez and Kellermann, at the head of the reorganized French army, successfully repulsed the attack at Valmy on September 20, 1792. In the meantime in France the course of the revolution had completely changed. There had followed in quick succession the insurrection in early August, the suspension of the King, and the fall of the limited monarchy. Supreme control fell into the hands of the revolutionary commune with Danton as virtual dictator, and Dumouriez replaced Lafayette as supreme commander of the army. When the National

Convention met on September 22, the first French Republic was proclaimed.

On September 9, French troops from Saarlouis invaded the southern part of the Electorate of Trier, entered Merzig and plundered an Austrian arsenal. The Austrians drove them out again, but towards the end of September the French returned. This time some of the French troops plundered parts of the city of Merzig, but after planting a tree of freedom, they soon departed. It seems that the chief effect of this invasion was the repercussions it had in the town of Trier, for here many people, especially of the upper classes, left for safer lands.

Since the middle of September, General Custine, at the moment in Landau, planned an advance on the Imperial city of Speyer, and from there northward toward Koblenz. In Speyer was located one of the best-stocked arsenals of the Austrians, and, as the exigencies of war had temporarily left this unguarded, it was a rare prize for Custine to gain. With little resistance, on September 30, 1792, Custine easily entered the city. The cathedral and the houses of the canons were plundered; Custine demanded payment of 30,000 florins from the city, and 50,000 florins from the cathedral chapter; however, for some undiscoverable reason, only the cathedral chapter had to pay its share.[1] A report of Count Schlik,[2] the Imperial representative at Wuerzburg, to the Imperial chancellor, indicates that the inhabitants of Speyer were not averse to the French invasion. Count Schlik condemned Speyer for being possessed with the republican fantasy, for wanting democratic government. The people, he wrote, had given no support to the Allied troops located there, and had

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[1] Ibid., p. 410.

[2] Ibid., p. 419.

kept the French well informed of the movements of German troops before and during the invasion.

A few days after taking Speyer, Custine sent one of his generals northward to take Worms, which surrendered on October 4, without opposition. A number of citizens went to meet the commander to inquire about their safety, and were assured that they had no bombardment to fear. But to the consternation of the inhabitants the commander publicly demanded at the Council Hall a money contribution within twenty-four hours and threatened to bombard the city if the sum was not paid. He required 400,000 livres from the bishop, 600,000 from the city, and 200,000 from the priests, a total of 1,200,000 livres. To raise this sum of money was a difficult task, as most of the wealthy had fled the city. It proved unnecessary to do so, however, for because of a false rumor that Prussian troops were marching in that direction, Custine withdrew his troops on October 7 from Worms.[1]

The occupation of Worms created the greatest fear in the territories and towns of the middle-Rhine, and a general flight of governments, nobility, and higher clergy ensued until the withdrawal of French troops from Worms. Nearly a week later, after Custine had learned that the rumor of advancing Prussian troops was false, his troops again entered Worms, but they soon left to march on to Mainz.

Meanwhile, in the first week of October, 1792, the French government decided upon a revised military program. Custine should march southward to Mainz, while Kellerman should proceed from the Saar by way of Trier along the Mosel to Koblenz where he was to meet Custine; Dumouriez should march through Belgium to Aachen and then to Cologne, which would secure the lower Rhine

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[1] Ibid., No. 187, p. 382, and pp. 403 f.

region. In accordance with this plan, on October 22, Custine entered the city of Mainz.

Mainz was the chief center of French activity during the first occupation, and most of the documentary materials are concerned with the events in this city. Already before Custine entered the city, the elector, the aristocracy, and higher clergy, and a large number of wealthy citizens had fled. The day after occupying Mainz, Custine issued a proclamation to the inhabitants denouncing the former government as despotic, and condemning any government not based upon the will of the people, on liberty, equality, and fraternity. Now, he said, the opportunity was offered the people to accept without coercion the blessings of liberty and equality.[1] On the same day Custine organized a Society of Friends of Freedom and Equality. All the inhabitants, regardless of what estate, were invited to attend and subscribe to the ideals of the society. Those who wanted to become members were required to take an oath to live free or to die. Custine thought that most of the adult inhabitants would immediately join, but this was not the case. At the first meeting only twenty persons took the oath. These members were drawn from the following occupations: 3 professors, 1 notary, 2 court councilors, 2 merchants, 1 French linguist, and 11 candidates or practitioners of jurisprudence, medicine, or philosophy.[2] No doubt one of the chief reasons for the poor result was the demand to take the oath. On October 24 a different policy was adopted. Every citizen, man or woman, could attend the meetings of the society, regardless of whether they took the oath and became members. So the meeting on that date had 200 in attendance. On this same day Custine

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[1] Ibid., p. 469.

[2] Ibid., p. 470.

himself appeared before the society and delivered an address setting forth the ideology to which the Germans were to subscribe:

> ". . . . It gives me great pleasure, as general of the French army, to see assembled here friends of the constitution, friends of the people, and friends of humanity. All people are one family, united through the eternal principles of reason and virtue. France was compelled by sad necessity to go to war, but the only purpose of the war for the French was to make future wars unnecessary, to punish injustice against France, and to familiarize the people, born in freedom, with their human rights. . . ."[1]

The members of the society decided that the meeting hall should be kept open evenings until 8 o'clock, so that citizens who wanted to discuss political problems would have the opportunity of doing so. In early November several leaders of the Club founded similar organizations in Worms and Speyer, with which the Mainz Club kept in close contact. In many of the surrounding villages trees of freedom were erected; in several instances the demand for a tree originated with the local priest; if three inhabitants desired a tree, the French troops provided it.[2] Shortly after its founding the Mainz Club began an active campaign of propaganda, with speakers, pamphlets, and newspapers, aimed at opening the eyes of the people to the benefits of the French system. In November, for example, a pamphlet entitled "Wie gut es die Leute am Rhein und an der Mosel jetzt haben koennen," was widely circulated among the peasants, assuring them that if they would join France their feudal burdens would end.[3] This was in conformity with the French policy of bringing the left bank of the Rhine within the boundaries of France; and this policy was soon advocated by the leaders of the Club.

Several days after the French occupation of Mainz the

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[1] Ibid., p. 479.

[2] Ibid., p. 532.

[3] Ibid., p. 531.

Imperial representative for this region reported that the inhabitants were divided into two groups, those who favored the French, and those who opposed them. He feared that the people were so disgusted with the old conditions that they would largely submit to and encourage the French, and that the leaders of this opposition to the old order of things were drawn from the dissatisfied professors, clergy, and several newly created aristocrats.[1] But the Club membership throughout the occupation by no means reflected a mass acceptance. Mainz at this time had about 22,000 inhabitants, and from this total, throughout the occupation, the highest number of members was 492. The active participating membership varied a good deal. The largest enrollment of new members occurred in November, and an increasing exodus began after early January, 1793. The list of members contains the names of five Catholic clergymen and three Jews. As nearly forty members are listed merely as citizens, it is impossible to determine exactly the occupational distribution. Professors numbered 16, merchants 27, doctors 8, lower school teachers 5, students and candidates[2] 38, and the remainder were distributed in groups ranging from one to eleven among various economic groups.[3] The professors of Mainz University were the leaders of the Club. Custine himself paid the expenses of the organization.

Immediately after organizing the Club Custine had to turn his attention to the much greater problem of governmental reorganization. The territory included in the archbishopric of Mainz on the left bank of the Rhine included only the towns of Mainz and Bingen with their environs. But the Imperial cities of Speyer

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[1] Ibid., p. 518.

[2] Divinity students reading for holy orders.

[3] Ibid., p. 534.

and Worms were also in Custine's hands. His aim was to secure for France the entire area from Landau-Speyer to Mainz-Bingen, and any government reform should set up a uniform administration in this area. In accordance with this policy Custine, two days after occupying Mainz, proclaimed that the burghers should have their choice in the matter of forming a new government; they could keep the old constitution, or accept bodily the French constitution, or make a compromise between these two alternatives. But he only called on the gilds for an expression of opinion as to the kind of constitution they desired.

Although the majority of the guilds did not wish the French constitution, they feared to antagonize Custine by an abrupt refusal.[1] On October 31, the guilds notified Custine that they preferred that

> both the guild constitutions and the other constitutions which are needful for the general welfare should be maintained. At the same time they are not opposed to some changes. They desire more equality in taxation and proper abolition of the deplorable absolutist abuses. But this should only be accomplished, if possible, with the unanimous support of the Estates, and after very careful deliberation.[2]

However, they themselves did not want to propose a new constitution nor suggest the changes that should be made, but declared that they would follow in every instance the suggestions of the merchant class, which was the wealthiest and most genteel.

The guilds did not have in mind a modern state constitution; they suggested the maintenance of the old plural "constitutions," and they probably were thinking in terms of the medieval conception

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[1] L. Kaess, Die Organisation der allgemeinen Staatsverwaltung auf dem linken Rheinufer durch die Franzosen waehrend der Besetzung 1792 bis zum Frieden von Lunéville (1801) (Mainz: J. Diemer, 1929), p. 25.

[2] R. Q., II, 569. The clergy and nobility owned nearly two-thirds of the territorial land and were exempt from taxation. In Kurmainz no Landtags were called since the 16th century.

of numerous guild constitutions. The guilds did not desire representation of the people in the same sense as the merchant class proposals (which we shall see immediately below), but according to the principle of guild membership.[1] That change should be brought about only with the unanimous support of all the Estates clearly shows that the guilds did not wish to abolish the clergy and nobility as separate Estates; they only desired that the clergy and aristocracy should bear their just share of the taxes. When they deplored the "absolutist abuses" they had in mind the absence of Estate meetings in Mainz for over a century, and only desired a voice in governmental matters. There is no evidence to show whether they wanted the Estates to meet as a single body or as three separate bodies.

The guilds opposed the adoption of the French constitution for a number of reasons. Many of the guild members felt that the French domination was only temporary, that if they subscribed to the French proposals they might be made to suffer for this after the French had gone and the former princes returned. Allegiance to the Catholic church influenced many guildsmen to oppose foreign troops who wanted to abolish their beloved church, and even the many holidays which, as Catholics, the guildsmen enjoyed. If the church and state were separated, and if the many other French reforms were established, Protestants could freely enter the territories, and these newcomers would have every advantage over the Catholic guildsmen. The Protestants would not have to observe the numerous Catholic holidays; also, the Protestants were feared because of their ability in large industrial undertakings on capitalistic lines which would tend to destroy the guilds. Much of the struggle in the Rhineland for many years against toleration

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[1] Ibid., p. 600.

of Protestants, which was carried on the name of the Catholic church, was really a struggle between the spirit of the old handicraft system and the new capitalistic tendencies.[1] The guilds preferred to maintain the isolated economic condition in the Rhineland rather than sacrifice their privileges. The economic life of the Rhineland in the 17th and 18th centuries, during the period of mercantilism, had frozen into a static pattern due to the particularistic political development. The Rhineland thus lacked the necessities for the development of trade and industry, that is, a large market and unhampered exchange.

One of the most important reasons for guild antagonism to the French was that the aim of the French was to establish a system of free-trade in the Rhineland, and this would mean the ultimate abolition of the guilds; craftsmen would become wage laborers; goods produced more cheaply elsewhere would have crowded out many of the more expensively home-made commodities. The guildsmen felt they had everything to lose and little or nothing to gain by accepting the French principles. As Sombart has said, the guilds generally wanted society to remain fixed in the traditional manner, they preferred even that no change of styles should take place; as distinct from capitalism the guilds desired that members should make enough income to provide only a fair livelihood; the mass accumulation of capital and wealth found little favor with the handicraft spirit. The guilds also preferred that there should be no change in technical methods of production, for this would only be to their detriment. Finally, the guilds for obvious reasons desired a fixed and stable population.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 60.

[2] W. Sombart, Der Moderne Kapitalismus (Leipzig, 1928), Vol. I, Part I, pp. 208 f.

Another privilege which the guilds wanted to keep was their favored political position. In both the Imperial cities and the territorial cities the guilds had in the past usually chosen the city government officials, either directly or indirectly. Although this privilege of the guilds had not been exercised for many years, or had become corrupted in most cities, the guilds now demanded this privilege, and felt that they were supporting a democratic system by allowing only the guilds to choose municipal officials.

Thus the guilds with all their privileges and their material and spiritual interests were strongly conservative, and when Custine asked them to choose their future constitution they were quite willing to shift the responsibility to the wealthy merchants who did not hesitate to make their proposals.

On November 8, the merchants of Mainz presented their proposals for a new constitution. The document is a product of the hand of the chairman of their guild, Daniel Dumont.[1] The merchant class at this time numbered 97 members, of which three were absent from the meeting on constitutional reforms. Only 13 voted for the French constitution. The remainder, 81 in all, refused a republican constitution, but favored a revision of the old constitution. The completed document by the majority was personally handed to Custine by Dumont, and the most important suggestions were the following:

> 1. That sovereignty in Mainz should rest in the hands of a group of representatives chosen by the citizens and Vohrnehmen, who should serve as a counter-balance to the prince. In all important matters the prince should depend upon the nation. The prince should not have arbitrary powers over

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[1] In Mainz the merchant guild, together with the handicraft guilds, elected the General Council for the city. In his youth Dumont had for a time studied to become a clergyman, and was well acquainted with the works of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, etc.

the property of the citizens and the income of the state.[1]

2. As the natives of Mainz are more capable of knowing their needs than anyone else, they alone should have the confidence of their fellow citizens. Therefore the former policy of bringing in outsiders and giving them official positions and special benefits should cease. The important positions in the government should be filled by a vote of the nation.[2]

3. To check the elected representatives from obtaining too much power by duration, the minimum period of a period of service should be two years, and an election should be held every two years.

4. Taxes should be divided on the basis of the equality of all the citizens, and the unjust privileges of the clergy and nobility should be abolished.

5. The new French nation should incorporate these reform provisions into the forthcoming peace treaty, so that Mainz would be protected by France and so that the reform provisions would obtain the recognition of the Emperor and Empire.[3]

These proposals clearly express the desires of a rising middle class. The privileges of the nobility and clergy should be abolished and these two classes should have no more privilege and power than the middle class. The monarch, who was indispensable in a feudal social structure, should be limited by the elected representatives of the middle class who would protect the middle class property. In short, the middle class, which had felt itself limited by the privileged church and nobility, should become the dominant power in the state.

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[1] In the city of Mainz there were several classes of inhabitants. There were the full-fledged citizens, the landed-aristocrats who had a town-house, and the Beisassen, who had no rights of citizenship. It was this latter class which Dumont wanted to exclude from the right to vote. Also, he is probably following the French precedent of providing for "active" and "passive" citizens. The middle class should be supreme.

[2] Probably, in using the word "nation" Dumont did not have in mind our contemporary meaning of that concept. No doubt he referred to a specific geographical area. Evidently he identifies the middle class and the nation; the nation should elect officials, but only the middle class should have the franchise.

[3] R. Q., II, 571 f.

It is quite evident that the constitutional proposals of the merchants incorporated a good deal more than simply a few minor reforms. The monarch should remain the head of the government, membership in the Empire should continue, but the arbitrary power of the prince should be drastically limited. The idea of "Gottesgnadentum" was given the death sentence. Although this compromise constitution was severely attacked in the Mainz Club for going no further than the mere resurrection of Estate representation, this criticism seems too harsh, as the representatives, theoretically at least, were to represent the nation, that is, the middle class. The guiding idea of Dumont is probably that of Montesquieu for a limited monarchy. Perhaps, too, this majority report was the result of a compromise with the minority in the merchant guild who favored complete acceptance of the French system. The desire of the merchants and guildsmen to remain within the Empire, and to maintain a monarchy made it impossible for Custine to accept the proposals of the merchants. He had determined to make the country republican and to divorce it from the rest of Germany. So he did not reply to the merchants, and sought new methods whereby to realize his aims.

From the first Custine had to deal with the problem of what to do with regard to the old government officials in the towns and the territories, some of whom had remained at their posts to maintain order and carry on the traditional policies. After the French occupation these officials continued to govern in the name of the absent elector. Custine considered this situation temporary and provisional, as he hoped that the citizens of Mainz would quickly elect new officials on his terms. However, the officials almost unanimously opposed the adoption of Custine's plan of government, and made themselves very obnoxious to him.

They not only continued to uphold the old government traditions, but manifested, no doubt on purpose, their incapacity to provide the French army with foodstuffs, pasturage, and firewood.[1] Already on October 30, Custine ordered that in the future all government decrees should begin with the following title: "In the name of the French nation, and of the provisionally maintained officials." In early November he contemplated replacing the old officials, and offered to place Johannes v. Mueller[2] at the head of the new administration. But Mueller refused. On November 4, Custine declared that a new democratic constitution must be adopted, and that if the burghers did not act of their own will, he would himself provide them with one. He still hoped, however, that the burghers would follow the leadership of the Club members.

The members of the Clubs, who were on most intimate terms with Custine, favored joining the French Republic and accepting the French constitution. Following the example in France, the Clubs also favored legal equality of the town and rural communities. They wanted to abolish the superior status of the towns over the peasants. The clergy and the nobility should be equal before the law with all the other citizens.[3] But unfortunately the Clubists could find no significant class to follow their leadership.

The peasants, who perhaps had most to gain from the French domination, soon became strongly opposed to Custine. Already in the summer of 1789 many of the peasants saw in the French Revolution a desirable means of freeing themselves from the personal

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[1] Ibid., p. 598.

[2] Johannes v. Mueller was a noted historian. For many years he had been librarian in the University of Mainz. In 1788 he resigned this position to become a member of the Secret Council for the Electorate of Mainz.

[3] R. Q., II, 598.

and material burdens which had crushed them since the Middle Ages. Their attempts at that time to follow the example of the French peasants had led the governments forcefully to suppress the uprisings without eliminating the causes of peasant discontent.

The peasants in the Rhineland had a unique status in Germany. They had a large degree of personal freedom; most of the nobles' land was widely scattered and rented to peasants, and only a small number of the peasants were personally bound to the landlord on his estate. Many of the peasants personally owned their land; however, most of the peasants still had to pay obnoxious taxes and dues to the clergy and nobility, and many of the free peasants were in debt for their land. This does not mean to imply that the peasants in the Rhineland were on the whole much better off than their brothers in the East; poverty was very common, rents were often too high, and church dues too exorbitant. Thus the peasants welcomed the entrance of French troops because they hoped to be freed from crushing burdens.

When Custine entered the Rhine region he declared the peasants free and said that all feudal payments were abolished. After he entered Mainz, the peasants stopped paying the tithes and feudal dues. The result was, for example, that the Mainz university no longer received enough income to operate, and the professors received no salaries. Custine, whose army had to live off the country, was placed in a dilemma: if he maintained the old taxes, he would lose the support of the peasants; if he kept his promise to the peasants he would have to devise some new way to raise funds for his army. To establish a completely new taxing system was momentarily impossible. So he felt himself compelled to collect the old dues and taxes, and justified himself

by explaining that he had no power to abolish them. This action completely alienated the peasants and turned them into bitter enemies of the French.

Another important contributing cause for the peasant opposition was the action of the French soldiers. When they first entered the Rhineland everyone commented on how well-behaved and disciplined the soldiers were; but after several months this situation changed, and complaints and laments arose from all sides. In both the Mainz and Trier regions the soldiers plundered a number of farms, led women "astray," and took valuable objects from the churches and public buildings. As most of the peasants were ardent Catholics the attempt to compel them to take the French oath to liberty increased their hatred of the French. Thus when the French were retreating in the spring of 1793 the peasants made good use of rarm implements to prod the soldiers along. With the peasants and the guilds strongly opposed to the plans of Custine, there remained only a few minority groups who might possibly support his policy.

Most of the upper clergy and a few of the lower clergy had fled the occupied territory. But in early November the remaining lower clergy in Mainz, drawn largely from the lower middle class and peasants, presented their constitutional desires to Custine. They suggested that there were a number of compromises possible between the two extreme constitutions of France and the old Mainz system, and that one of these would be preferable to either of the extremes. They made no definite suggestion.

> We know that our kingdom is not of this world; our work is not with citizens' constitutions. But we will be satisfied with a new constitution to the degree that it is compatible with the pure Catholic religion.

They demanded liberty of the press, which, they said, would produce the most virtuous daughters of Godliness: truth and

freedom.[1]

These, then, were the negative reactions with which Custine was faced. Realizing that the people would probably not declare for French democracy, he decreed, November 19, that the former government was ended, and that all the territory in the command of his army was to be placed under a provisional administration consisting of ten members, mostly members of the Clubs. The provisional status was provided because Custine still hoped that the people would elect representatives on his terms. Professor A. J. Dorsch, a former priest who had recently been married, was declared president of the provisional administration. The new administration was to exercise jurisdiction over the land occupied by the French, consisting chiefly of the Electorate of Mainz and the Imperial cities of Worms and Speyer.[2] The seat of the new government was to be in Mainz.

It is surprising to notice how little the French principles were applied in this administration. A division of powers was completely disregarded; all legislative, executive, and judicial power rested in the same body. Even the former exchequer (Hofkammer) and the church administration, which stood in direct relation to the elector, had to obey the decrees of the new body. The administration had the power to dismiss any officials who showed anti-republican sentiments. Before any of its decrees became effective, they had to be sanctioned by a General Commissioner and Custine, and the seal of the Republic had to be stamped upon them. Thus the new officials were to express the will of the French Republic. Very few members of the new administration took any part in the business of government, for President Dorsch dealt

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[1] Ibid., p. 599.

[2] Ibid., p. 600; Kaess, op. cit., pp. 33 f.

with most matters personally. He felt himself to be the successor of the elector, and took up his quarters in the elector's palace.

On the same day the new government for the territory was proclaimed, Custine named new government officials for the cities of Mainz, Speyer, and Worms. Here also his choice of men confined itself chiefly to the members of the Clubs. Each of the towns was provided with a "maire" as well as a local procurator. All inhabitants were to obey the commands of the new officials. For the time being, however, the new officials were only to replace the higher posts of the former city governments, and the minor officials were allowed to keep their positions, subject to the higher officials.

The Club members, who felt secure under the French protection, decided to hold a plebiscite to determine whether the inhabitants were in favor of being annexed to France. The general administration in Mainz was to carry out the plan. Commissioners were given instructions and sent out to the various localities to supervise the vote. All of the inhabitants over 21 years of age, except bound servants, were to vote. At the same time the voters were to sign a protocol. Although this protocol is extremely vague on the matter of annexation to France, and although many voters though that annexation was not intended, it was the plan of the Clubs and the administration to attain this end. The protocol stated that delegates were to be sent to Paris to request that French representatives be sent to the Rhineland to advise the people on how to better their constitution and make it more similar to the French constitution. Whatever the people thought about annexation to France, the vote would indicate the temper of the people toward change and toward the French actions in the Rhineland.

In Mainz, where Mayor Macke undertook on December 17, in the name of the municipality to obtain the vote of the guilds and other inhabitants, the efforts met with little success. The merchants, led by Dumont, declared that they wanted only what they had suggested in their earlier proposals. The vote of the guilds was divided, but a majority opposed. Of the inhabitants not enjoying citizenship rights (Beisassen), only 34 voted in the affirmative. In Worms, where the governmental changes were still in progress, a vote was evidently not taken. Nor is there any indication that one was held in Speyer. In the smaller towns and villages the election seems to have met with more favor, although there is not sufficient evidence to decide. The commissioners of election travelled to the villages, planted trees of freedom, delivered speeches, and distributed literature.[1] The outcome of the voting everywhere was entirely contrary to the expectations of the Clubs. In the end the whole project collapsed, as the decree of December 15 from Paris had provided for new methods to be followed by the French generals in the occupied lands. This decree is so important that its chief provisions should be noted:

> 1. The generals in the occupied lands are to announce the abolition of the following: all government authorities, taxes, tenths, feudal constitutions, serfdom, hunting and fishing rights, etc.
>
> 2. They shall impress upon the inhabitants that the French are bringing them peace, aid, brotherly-love, freedom and equality. Then they shall immediately call together the inhabitants and have them vote for provisional governments. Security of persons and property are to be carefully protected . . . .
>
> 3. All former privileged persons whether citizens, military officials, aristocrats, or members of any privileged corporation, shall not have a voice in a new assembly; nor shall they be allowed to hold any governmental office.

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[1] R. Q., II, 654 f.; and Kaess, op. cit., pp. 46 f.

4. Although property and persons are to be guaranteed order and security, special care shall be taken in collecting taxes so that they do not fall largely upon the poor and working class.

5. As soon as the provisional government is established, the National Convention will name delegates from among its members to unite and advise in a brotherly manner with the new government officials.

6. The executive council of France shall delegate commissioners to cooperate with the generals and local officials in obtaining adequate provisions for the occupying army.

7. The whole provisional government shall end as soon as the inhabitants have declared their own sovereignty and independence, agreed upon freedom and equality, and created a free government of their own.

8. Any people which does not declare itself for freedom and equality and provide itself with a free and independent government, will be considered an enemy of France.[1]

Before this decree was officially announced in the Rhineland, another clause was added: "No one is to be permitted to vote or to hold office in the new government unless he has taken the oath of freedom and equality, and has in writing renounced any former privileges he may have had."[2] Although the decree did not declare for annexation, its acceptance would certainly have made the inhabitants dependent upon France.

On December 28 and 29 the decree, with an added proclamation by Custine, was printed in the Nationalzeitung of Mainz. Custine's proclamation praised the decree and commanded the provisional administration to make the necessary provisions for an election, in which the inhabitants who were males and over twenty-one years of age were to vote. The members of the Clubs were jubilant. They immediately sent their official thanks to the National Convention, but during the night of December 28 and 29, some unknown persons sawed down the tree of freedom.

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[1] R. Q., II, 645 f.

[2] Ibid.

As Mainz already had a provisional government, although certainly not an elected one, nothing stood in the way of sending there the delegates from the National Convention. On the first of January, 1793, three arrived: Ceubell, Haussmann von Kolmar, and Merlin von Diedenhofen. The commissioners came to carry out the provisions of the decree of December 15, and also to investigate the conduct of Custine. After the commissioners had arrived they did not carry out the decree immediately, but declared that they would have to wait until the delegates from the Executive Council arrived. These arrived February 1, 1793.

The preparation for the election proceeded rapidly; the amount of propaganda increased accordingly. The general elections were to be held on February 24, and a Mainz Convention should meet on March 10. Meanwhile the replacement of officials in Mainz progressed rapidly; many of the old officials voluntarily resigned. Custine installed a police system modelled after that of France, the duties of which were to a large extent to convince the people of the benefits of the French institutions. By the middle of February the preliminary arrangements for the election were completed, and the country was divided into electoral districts.

On February 18, Custine issued a proclamation which, besides setting the date for the election, contained an important article in regard to taking the oath. The article stated that all aristocrats, clergy, and former officials of the prince, and members of the Mainz University, if they had not already done so, were to take the oath of freedom and equality. This oath had to be taken in the city of Mainz by February 20, in the rest of the occupied land by February 23. All those in the above category were to sign the following written declaration: "I swear to be

faithful to the people and to the principles of freedom and equality, and I hereby renounce allegiance to former princes, bishops, courts, ... and also renounce all former privileges and rights . . . ." To conclude his proclamation Custine announced that he would consider as an enemy anyone who refused the oath, and that such persons would be sent from the land. In order not to arouse too much opposition among strong Catholics, the oath could be taken in milder form in certain regions, such as the bishoprics of Worms and of Speyer; here the oath merely stated that the undersigned renounced all privileges, and swore to remain faithful to the basic principles of freedom and equality.[1]

The necessity of swearing the oath aroused much fear among the majority of the people, but especially among those who were named specifically in the proclamation. For the rest of the citizens there was no specific demand that they take the oath, but failure to do so would incapacitate them for voting in the forthcoming election, and, according to the decree of December 15, this would make them enemies of the Republic. Most of the people do not seem to have had any clear idea of just what the oath implied. Some thought that acceptance of the oath would make it impossible for them ever to receive the old elector again; many were victims of a false rumor that taking the oath would bind them to enter the French army.[2]

On February 24, every district was to elect new governments. At the same time elections were to be held for the Rhine Convention, which was to meet on March 10. Every district should elect one deputy to this body, but towns with more than 5,000 population could elect from two to seven deputies. The Convention

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[1] Kaess, op. cit., p. 57.

[2] R. Q., II, 758.

should meet in Mainz, and become official as soon as fifty deputies were in attendance.

Several days before the election the degree of opposition to the oath and even to the election was manifested by a declaration on the part of the guilds and merchants of Mainz to the effect that they would not take the oath or appear at the elections. They insisted that the citizens did not have the power or the right to separate themselves from the German Empire. The guilds emphasized that they were satisfied with their previous position and condition and did not wish a new constitution. The merchants said that they had not lived like slaves before the French came, but in a happy, traditional, and peaceful condition; their taxes had been small, and "in what manner we would be happier under the French, no one knows." On February 21, a meeting was held of the representatives of the guilds, the town council, minor officials, and the clergy. Almost unanimously they declared against taking the oath. The day before, those groups who were specifically listed in the proclamation of February 18, almost unanimously refused to sign it.[1] In consequence of their adamant stand, Custine on February 22, declared that those who had not taken the oath as yet might lose their wealth and property, and be compelled to emigrate from the territory.[2]

In spite of this opposition the election was scheduled for February 24. The day before, as uprisings were feared, the army was commanded to hinder with force if necessary any meeting of a society or guild. Under penalty of the death sentence, all

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[1] On the evening of the 21st the citizens sent delegates to the French National Convention to plead for a postponement of taking the oath until after the fair at Frankfurt, or until the Prussian troops were farther away from the neighborhood.

[2] R. Q., II, 762 f.

citizens were ordered to give up to the military authorities any arms they might have. On the same day some of the individuals who had refused to take the oath by February 20 were forcibly ejected from the city. Dumont and a number of clergy were also expelled because they had advocated a postponement of the election; much of their property was also confiscated.[1]

On February 24 and 25 the oath was administered and the election occurred in six churches of Mainz. Out of some estimated ten thousand eligible voters in Mainz, only 375 took the oath and voted.[2] From this group of 375 the new municipal government was chosen, and delegates were also chosen to the Rhine Convention. During the next few months a number of citizens took the oath, but only because of the threat of force and the continual expulsion from the town of those who refused to swear.

In most of the other cities the opposition to the French plan was just as vigorous. Already in the middle of February the majority of citizens in Speyer sent a lengthy declaration to the French authorities stating their attitude:

> . . . . we are altogether satisfied with our old constitution and our former magistrates. Nothing would make us happier than the maintenance of this old constitution . . . . This constitution is as democratic and as free as could be imagined. We are not acquainted with feudal compulsion, we have no tolls, and no heavy burdens . . . . Even if we are compelled to elect new officials, we cannot find better ones than we now have.[3]

On February 21, a number of important leaders from Mainz arrived at Speyer in order to give a festive atmosphere to the oath-taking of the clergy on the 23rd and the elections called for the 24th. However, on the 23rd not a clergyman appeared; all had fled to

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[1] Ibid., pp. 762 f.; Kaess, op. cit., p. 60.

[2] R. Q., II, 764.

[3] Kaess, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

nearby regions.[1] A number of citizens requested the commissioners to allow a short period of grace for the election because the citizens wished to enter into further negotiations with the officials in Mainz. This desire was granted, and the election was postponed to March 4. But the Speyer delegates got no hearing in Mainz, and the vote was again delayed until March 8 and 9. When the elections were finally held they were very disappointing to the French and the Club members. Only 248 citizens voted for municipal officials; the two delegates to the Rhine Convention were chosen by only 342 voters.[2]

In Worms the opposition was just as strong. The clergy had fled. Cannons were placed in the streets and their use threatened unless the people responded properly. Finally from March 7 to 11 the elections were held. In all, about 250 persons voted, including a large number of Club members, Jews, and Beisassen.[3] In the rural regions the French were on the whole opposed even more vigorously. Fearing possible opposition, the French used troops to try to attain their ends, but in vain. The response in Winnweiler illustrates the rural reaction. When the villagers were called together and asked to take the oath, they cried, "Long live the Kaiser! To the devil with the French!"[4] Then they proceeded to drive out the French soldiers with pitchforks and other farm implements. A correspondent for a Cologne newspaper reported the peasant reaction in Falkenstein. He said that every peasant there now wore two pistols and a rifle, and carried a manure fork with which to throw the French soldiers

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[1] R. Q., II, 759.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.; Kaess, op. cit., pp. 60 f.

[4] R. Q., II, 761.

from the saddles; that over 6,000 peasants, all armed, were driving the French out of their lands.[1] However, a number of villages were later compelled to submit to the French plan. Because of economic advantages, a few villages near the French border gave full support to it, and even asked to be annexed to France.

The French used the time between the elections and the meeting of the Rhineland Convention to install the newly elected municipal governments and to act against those who had refused to take the oath. The usual procedure was to march the non-jurors, often in groups, across the Rhine where they had to depend upon the mercy of the inhabitants of the unoccupied territories; the property and wealth of many were completely confiscated. All guild meetings were henceforth forbidden.

With the elections over and the Convention constituted, the Mainz Club ended its existence. For some time already the Club had been disintegrating because of the continual disagreements among its members. Many of the Club members had lost hope and interest in obtaining freedom and equality in the Rhineland, and feared the return of the old conditions again. On March 16, the attempt was made to organize a new Club, but this Club never achieved any importance.

Meanwhile, the Rhineland Convention, which was to begin its official life on March 10, could not meet on the appointed date because of the delay in voting in certain towns and villages. On March 17 it convened for the first time, with only 64 delegates present. Many of the rural delegates were induced to come only by the threat of a heavy tax for every day's absence. Ultimately the number of delegates reached 130. For president they elected Professor A. J. Hofmann; for vice-president, Georg Forster.

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[1] Ibid.

Modelling after Paris, they formed committees, one each for instruction, justice, police, and finances. The procedure and order of business also followed that of the French Convention.

The Rhineland Convention had to determine the future legal status of its territories. On March 18, Forster, seconded by Dorsch, Wedekind, and Metternich, all four professors, issued a decree which was accepted by the Convention, to the following effect:

> 1. The whole territory from Landau to Bingen, which has sent deputies to the Convention, should now be a free, independent, inseparable state, with laws based upon freedom and equality.
>
> 2. The free people, the only legal sovereign of this state, declares through its delegates that all bonds with the German Kaiser and Empire are ended.
>
> 3. All the former princes, city councils, former officials of state and church, are declared out of existence forever.
>
> 4. If any of those persons named in paragraph 3 attempt in any way to obtain power again they shall be subject to the death penalty.
>
> 5. The decree shall be printed and made public in every locality designated in the decree.[1]

The decree created a republic on paper. Surrounded by German troops, occupied by the French, it could hardly be considered independent and free; nor could it correctly be called a state, for a state must at least have the power to execute its will, and this one could not. That the republic could not exist independently was recognized by the leaders of the Convention, and they, especially Forster, determined to have it annexed to France as soon as possible.

Between March 19 and 21, the Convention devoted its time to finding a solution of the problem of independence. On the 19th, three questions were placed before the Convention: 1. Should the republic be a self-sufficient independent unit? 2. Should

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[1] Ibid., p. 798.

the new republic place itself under the protection of France by means of a treaty? 3. Should the republic ask for annexation to France? The speakers in the debate were agreed that the republic could not exist independently. To place themselves under the protection of France did not seem secure enough to many delegates. Annexation to France seemed the only possible solution for assuring the existence of the republic. On March 21, the Convention declared by acclamation for annexation to France. A delegation conferred with the French Commissioners, who informed them that this move would be sympathetically viewed by the French. On March 21, the decree declaring annexation to France was issued.[1]

On March 22, a delegation of three was chosen to present the desires of the Convention to the French government at Paris. Forster, one of the three, wrote the petition. On March 30, the Paris Convention heard the Rhinelanders and decided by acclamation to accept the proposal for annexation of the eighty-eight towns and communities represented in the Mainz Convention. However, the French decree of annexation could not be carried out, nor could it even be announced in Mainz, for on March 30, the German troops besieged Mainz. Annexation was not achieved until the Peace of Lunéville.

After sending the delegation to Paris the activities of the Rhine Convention should have ended. As a part of France there was no more room for an independent assembly, and the laws and constitution of France were now in effect. But the Rhineland Convention continued to meet for several weeks, busying itself with sending out of the land those people who still refused to take the oath, and trying to create a provisional administration

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[1]Kaess, op. cit., pp. 77 f.

until France should take full charge. After establishing this provisional administration, the Convention dissolved. Since the first of May, Mainz had been under martial law, mostly because the French feared uprisings of the populace. The evictions from Mainz became more numerous, not only because of refusal to take the oath, but because of the rapidly decreasing supply of food. Of the 25,000 inhabitants of the city, about 15,000, including all but seven clerics, had left the city by July, when the French had to retreat.[1]

The provisional administration tried desperately to maintain itself, but factors beyond its control brought about its ultimate downfall. By the first of April the French army in the region of the upper Rhine was retreating before German troops, until Mainz was about the only stronghold that remained for the French. On March 31, French troops left Worms and Speyer. Both towns were immediately occupied by the advancing German troops, and the old officials returned to power. Mainz was finally evacuated by the French, July 23. By the end of July the old officials were back in power again, and the princes issued decrees backed by the Chancellor of the Empire nullifying all the acts of the French and their supporters in the upper Rhine cities and territories. Many of the former Club members were temporarily imprisoned; a few were given the immediate choice of becoming German citizens or leaving for France, and hardly a single one took the latter course.

In the short period of the first French occupation in the lower Rhine from December 1792 to March 1793, the French tried to establish a republican government in Aachen, similar to that of Mainz. The French efforts here were very similar to those in

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[1] R. Q., II, 852.

the Mainz region, but they were not so important.

The French army moved through the Austrian Netherlands toward Aachen in December, 1792, and occupied the city on the 16th. It was met by a few citizens with cockades on their hats. A number of citizens, fearing the displeasure of the French, had already left the city. Those who remained, and most of them did, were compelled by the French to decorate themselves with the tri-colored cockades, and to display the proper elation at the planting of the tree of freedom. The French commander, General Deforest, temporarily maintained the old officials in power, although it meant assuring himself of strong conservative opposition.

On December 26, the famous French decree of December 15 was published. Shortly after this, December 30, the old burgermaster, J. M. Kreitz, sent a memorandum to General Deforest declaring that the citizens of Aachen were happy and contented with their old form of government, which was and is, it said, more democratic than even the French government. The burgermaster insisted that their government was free and popular, and that it gave equality to the inhabitants. Before Deforest had time to answer this memorandum, he was suddenly replaced by Dampierre.

Dampierre immediately began executing the decree of December 15. On the day after taking command, he confiscated all church property.[1] On January 3, he called a meeting of the chief officials and representatives of the guilds. He read to them the provisions of the decree of December 15; in a speech he glorified the decree, declared the old council dissolved, and commanded an election on January 5, for establishing a provisional government and selecting delegates to an Aachen Convention. The counties (Grafschaften), now called the "sections," should serve as

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[1] Ibid., p. 678.

electoral districts for choosing the delegates to the Convention. The election should follow the rules and provisions of the French electoral law of August 19, 1792. Each of the eight sections should elect six representatives.[1]

Due to some delay, the election was not called until January 7, when all those eligible to vote were to meet in a designated church in their section. How strongly the inhabitants were opposed is shown in the fact that on this first day the voters did not elect anyone; only a few people met in each section and issued declarations stating that they preferred to live under their old constitution. This reply greatly angered Dampierre and the delegates from the French National Convention, and, feeling that Kreitz was responsible for this attitude, they placed him under house-arrest. Other officials were threatened with deportation to France unless they cooperated with the French. Intimidated by these threats, a number of the leading citizens, on January 10, finally voted, although one section held out until January 18, when under compulsion a few members of the section secretly elected their officials.[2]

Meanwhile Dampierre took steps to organize a Society of Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity. The Club had its inception on December 30, during a ball given by Widow Brammertz, when Dampierre mounted the orchestra stage and delivered an address declaring the need for such an organization. After concluding his speech, Dampierre was the first to sign his name to the membership list, and sixteen others who were present, some of them French officers, followed suit. On January 8 the Club was

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[1] Ibid., pp. 682-3. The city of Aachen had about 23,000 inhabitants.

[2] Ibid., pp. 692 f.

officially opened and met daily until the end of February. The meetings were open to the public. The president of the Club was the physician Dr. DeVivignis. All members, and these included women, had to take the oath to protect and support freedom and equality. Taking this oath, just as at Mainz, only served to arouse the greatest opposition. Perhaps the women offered some of the strongest opposition, not only to the oath, but to the French in general. Dampierre tried his best to win the favor of the women in Aachen. After the tree of freedom was planted, he invited all the women to attend a ball commemorating the occasion. But not one attended. A little later he invited them to another ball, and showed his military background by adding that the army would be used if they refused. Evidently the threat was not carried out. The women refused to attend French balls until the end of January when they received the personal invitation of French officers. Dampierre's experience was similar to Custine's in Mainz, where the majority of the women refused to attend French balls. No doubt this antagonism of the women to the French influenced many husbands, or vice versa. Just how much influence the women had on the abstinence during the elections is impossible to estimate.

After the last section had finally consented to elect provisional representatives, Dampierre proceeded with the installation of these officials. On January 15, the representatives were to take the oath of freedom and equality. They refused to take the oath in the French form, however, and changed it to suit their own political taste. Then it read as follows: "We swear to remain faithful and true to the Roman Catholic religion, and to support the freedom and welfare of the Aachen people with all

our power . . . ."[1] It became ever more evident that Dampierre, despite his use of force and threats, could not convince the inhabitants of the benefits he had to bestow. Evidently losing patience, he delivered a speech to the provisional representatives in which he told them that they were behind the times, that they were not enough advanced to see fully the true Godliness of the concept of liberty, and that they resembled a sick person who needed to undergo a painful operation to become healthy, but who had to be persuaded by a friend to do so.[2] Dampierre finally had his way; on January 17, the representatives were installed.

On January 22, the provisional administration, upon Dampierre's order, called the sections to meet for the purpose of electing a mayor and a judge, the latter for each section. But the people had to be compelled to participate in this election by the French troops. The newly elected mayor, Stephan Beissel, a needle manufacturer, had no taste for his new position, and only functioned when attended by several soldiers.

The election to the Aachen Convention, which was to replace the provisional administration, had to be called several times, as the inhabitants refused to vote. After veiled threats had failed, Dampierre assured the people that the delegates elected would be free to choose the kind of constitution and government they desired. This promise seems to have resulted in orderly election on February 12, and the Aachen Convention finally met on February 25. The official protocol of this convention is not extant; but its importance is perhaps secondary, as in only a week's time the French were compelled to evacuate Aachen. We

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[1] R. Q., II, 702.

[2] Ibid., p. 703.

do know that the delegates to the convention had no desire to separate themselves from the Empire; whether they intended to reform the old constitution is not known. It seems that the delegates were more concerned with obtaining a lowering of the beer tax than with any important political reform.[1]

On March 2, the Austrian troops drove the French army back into Belgium. A large number of Aachen inhabitants actively participated in chasing the French out of the city. Some engaged in street battles; others shot from the windows of their houses; and others manned two cannons. During the fighting in the streets a number of Frenchmen found safety in the hands of some Free Masons who hid them in their lodge house. Later those hidden in the lodge hall escaped by disguising themselves as monks.[2] Immediately after the evacuation, Mayor Beissel resigned and gave the keys of the city back to the former burgermaster, who began to replace the old officials.

Just as at Mainz, the problem arose as to what should be done with those who had joined the Club. Some of the Club leaders, such as the chairman, DeVivignis, and secretary, John Dautzenberg, left with the French. A few were placed under arrest to await official action by the city council. In April the hearings began, but it seems that little action was taken against the Clubists. The hearings dragged on until February, 1794, and, so far as the acts of the council show, the remaining Club members were freed without suffering any punishment.

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[1] Kaess, op. cit., p. 86.

[2] R. Q., II, 773 f.

CHAPTER II

THE PRO-FRENCH GROUPS

Probably there has never existed a society in which every group felt that it was receiving the maximum good. A degree of conflict seems to be historically inevitable, for the ideal of absolute equality seems doomed to the substance of things hoped for; and even if it were possible to obtain absolute equality in a society there would probably be a constant struggle to maintain that equality. However equality may be defined by various groups and individuals--and it probably has never been defined in such a way as completely to avoid inequality--it has inspired some of the most ferocious struggles in history. In the Rhineland there was much inequality, and it is not surprising that less privileged groups tried to obtain more justice for themselves. A small group in the Rhineland hoped to further the cause of justice by obtaining the French version of justice, but to their surprise this ideal justice was interpreted as injustice by the majority of the inhabitants.

Generally speaking, the strongest support of the French ideology came from three groups: the educated class, the peasants for a time, and a mixture from numerous occupational groups. The educated class had the best opportunity to become familiar with the philosophy of the Enlightenment, for the cradle of the Enlightenment was the schools. The peasants at first supported Custine, but when the old taxes and burdens continued, and the French added new ones, they became the strongest opponents of the French. The third group, referred to as the mixed group, included guild

members, merchants, new and poor aristocrats, lower clergy, and Beisassen. Unfortunately it is only the educated class which has left sufficient documentary material for the historian.

It is almost impossible to give any accurate quantitative estimate of the number supporting the French when they occupied the Rhineland. But from the documentary evidence one thing is certain: it constituted a small minority of the inhabitants. Why this was so will become more evident in the last chapter of this paper. In the early stage of the French Revolution before the foreign wars began the number of Rhinelanders giving their sympathy was relatively large; but as the revolution progressed, as violence became the order of the day, many early supporters became the strongest opponents of the French Revolution. By the summer of 1793, after the people had had first-hand experience with the French and their principles, the number of supporters seems to have been so small as to be almost insignificant. The only faithful group by 1793 was the small number from the educated class. It was the misfortune of this small group that it failed to connect with any group in the Rhineland large enough to maintain itself in power.

Why was this educated class the strongest supporter of change and the French? To answer this question one must investigate the ideas and principles which moved these men. Their allegiance becomes understandable when explained as an expression of the Enlightenment. Like-minded men banded themselves together into Reading Clubs and secret societies; teachers in lower schools and universities preached and taught the principles of the Enlightenment; princes and ruler, not wishing to be outdone by far greater rulers than themselves, gave their temporary support to the movement; and the copious literature of the Enlightenment

made continually more converts of those who were willing to read and believe.

In the Rhineland there were three organizations which promoted the movement for change, for enlightenment, and it was from the membership of these groups that the French during the occupation found their strongest supporters and leaders. These three groups or organizations were the Reading Clubs, the Illuminati lodges, and the Free Masons.

The most active organizations in disseminating the ideals of the Enlightenment were the Reading Clubs. These Clubs (formed in Mainz, Koblenz, Trier, and Bonn), served as meeting places for the more educated classes. The members had access to a wide range of newspapers and periodicals, including a large variety from foreign countries. In the 1780's a large number of small newspapers had been published in the Rhineland to satisfy the demand of this public. The press was diligently read and discussed in the Clubs and served to stimulate political opinion. The German papers which were most favored included the following: Wieland's Deutscher Merkur, Schloezer's Staatsanzeigen, Schubart's Chronik, the Hamburger Politische Journal, and the Frankfurter Staatsristretto. Of foreign papers, the Paris Moniteur ou Gazette Nationale became very popular; this paper was first published in 1789 and brought the most complete reports about the activities of the National Assembly.[1] Literary and ethical weekly and monthly publications supplied the theoretical basis for political conflicts; they popularized Kant's philosophy, and discussed basic political questions in the spirit of the Enlightenment. A few illustrations from contemporary sources on the organization and purpose of the Reading Clubs will show more clearly the importance

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[1] R. Q., Vol. I, Introduction, pp. 48 f.

of these organizations.

In 1781, a Reading Club was organized at Mainz for the purpose of providing "new publications of all kinds at less cost, and to enjoy the company of people interested in literary and political knowledge." The membership of the Mainz Club numbered in the years 1782-87 about 170; it grew in 1790 to 203. At the head of the Club was an annually elected director, who was usually a prominent enlightened government official or professor. A special hall was provided for lectures on the newspapers and journals, and a special room for discussion by the members. Both rooms were open from nine in the morning until ten in the evening. The number of publications subscribed to seems quite large for that period; they include 23 learned periodicals, 24 political magazines, and 41 general periodical publications. Almost every subject was treated in one or another of these publications.[1]

Aachen was one of the cities which had no Reading Club. But it had the famous Freiherr Frederich von der Trenck, who died in July 1794 on the guillotine in Paris. Trenck, an ardent disciple of Voltaire, was influenced as much by the German Enlightenment as by Montesqieu, Marmontel, and Rousseau. In the seventies he published a weekly paper in Aachen, which bitterly attacked absolutism and the Catholic church. The council of Aachen suppressed his paper in 1775. But a few years later S. Aubin organized a Reading Room, which was privately operated and kept newspapers from Germany, France, and England. Aachen also had a lending library, privately owned, which in some respects took the place of a Reading Club.[2]

Koblenz formed a Reading Club in December, 1783, for the

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[1] Ibid., p. 16.

[2] Ibid., p. 18.

purpose of spreading "Aufklaerung und Licht." The prospectus for the Club includes a list of things needed to make it a success: two geographical atlases, a wide variety of newspapers, and numerous scientific journals and handbooks. The Club induced the elector to open a public library, which was directly connected with the Club, and was administered by Professor M. M. Weckbecker.[1]

In Trier the Elector Wenzeslaus gave his permission for organizing a Reading Club in 1783. A partial list of the members shows that it included mostly professors, church and government officials. Besides the newspaper and periodical publications, the Club had a small library numbering about 150 volumes. It is interesting to notice some of the most popular books--works by Fesner, Gellert, Gleim, Kleist, Mendelssohn, Klopstock, Wieland, Herder, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Schlegel, G. Forster. French literature was poorly represented by works of Barthélemy, Buffon, Raynal, Mirabeau, and Lamotte. It is significant that books by Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu were lacking. Shakespeare, Fielding, and Tasso are listed in translations.[2]

Although Cologne had no Reading Club, it had a rental library opened in November, 1784, by J. Imhoff, a book dealer, who enjoyed an exclusive monopoly for the purpose. Shortly after its formation, the library contained 1,634 volumes, 1,513 German works, and 121 French and Italian works. The number of volumes rapidly increased: in 1786, 3,538; 1791, 7,102; 1793, 10,253. Most of the books dealt with literature, history, education, natural science, church law, and philosophy. Some of the more important French authors were Charron, Marmontel, Voltaire, Rousseau, Lafontaine; some of the younger German literature was

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[1] Ibid., pp. 35 f.

[2] Ibid., pp. 37 f.

represented by Gellert, Klopstock, Lessing, Wieland, Jacobi, Goethe, Schiller, Stolberg. That Voltaire was a popular author is shown in a pamphlet written in 1788 during the heated controversy about giving toleration to Protestants. The writer of the pamphlet suggested that it would be better for the city if the people would stop reading Voltaire and trivial and silly plays, and spend more time in reading a good cook book or a handbook on how to run a good home.[1] It is somewhat surprising to find such a wide range of literature available in Cologne, for travelers of the time describe it as the most backward, the most un-German and poverty-stricken city in Germany.[2]

Besides the Reading Clubs, there were secret organizations, like the Illuminati and Free Masons, which created an atmosphere favorable to the Enlightenment and a changed society. As was indicated before, the strongest supporters of the French were often members of these organizations. The Illuminati and Free Masons became closely related organizations, and can conveniently be treated together, for the study of one helps explain the other.

The Free Masons and Illuminati existed already in the Rhineland several decades before 1789. There is little evidence to show that they entered directly into political matters. But indirectly they played an important role, mainly because of the three chief principles of the Masons: that religion is largely a matter of morality, and not a mere acceptance of dogmas; that privileged classes should be abolished; and that the ideal of world citizenship should be promoted.[3]

The Illuminati order in Germany was founded in 1776 by

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[1] Ibid., pp. 77 f.

[2] Ibid., p. 78; and II, 277.

[3] R. Q., I, 56.

Adam Weishaupt, who was professor of law in the university of his native town, Ingolstadt. Although Weishaupt was educated by the Jesuits, he spent much of his later life in denouncing this order. The purpose of the Illuminati, according to the founder, was to combat vice, and to encourage understanding and character, science and virtue. In 1780 Weishaupt united his order with the Masons to the extent that membership in any of the three lower orders of Masonry were the minimum prerequisite for entrance into the Illuminati. After 1781 the order spread from Frankfurt a. M. to the numerous towns of the Rhineland, especially where Free Masonry was already established. The people usually attracted to the order were those in sympathy with the Enlightenment, little as there was of it in the Rhineland. The list of members shows representation from a wide variety of occupational groups, but the majority were professors, students, lower government and church officials.[1]

Masonry was by no means a unified system. It had the general ideal of an ethical realization of humanity freed from all social, political, and religious conflict, and encouraging all virtue and neighborly love. It wanted to "build a temple of humanity in which all nations will live in peace, happiness, and bliss."[2] The ideal was carried out differently in various localities. In Germany the higher degrees were reserved mostly for the aristocrats, and for the higher officials and dignitaries in Church and State. Perhaps it replaced the need once filled by the Templars; it encouraged the psychological pre-disposition among people of all times for mysteries.

But in the lower degrees the middle class citizens

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., Vol. I, No. 24.

predominated, and it was here that reform ideas found strong adherents. One illustration, the "Eklektischer Bund," a Masonic order, clearly shows this tendency. Membership in it was limited to the three lower degrees. It emphasized above all the ideals of freedom and equality. "In our society freedom and individual conviction must predominate, and reason must be honored." The organization officially denounced the existence of classes, and hoped that soon another basis besides tradition would be found for class divisions.

The spirit of the Enlightenment, which began in England and France, spread to Protestant North Germany where additions were made; it spread, too, since the disbanding of the Jesuits, into the Catholic lands of South Germany, and during the 1770's into the Rhineland. The literature of the French Enlightenment had a direct effect in the Rhineland. Much more influential was the German phase of the movement, which, however, contained in it the most significant contributions of France and England. The territorial rulers themselves, especially in the archbishoprics, seconded by their enlightened ministers, for a time gave their support to the movement. A number of eager converts were made who firmly believed in the goddess of reason; they believed implicitly that human society was destined to make continual progress, and that nothing could permanently stop this advancement. The agitation turned the minds of the people, who had been accustomed to complete political domination, to public questions. The problems of schools and education took precedence in domestic politics; enlightenment and education were considered the highest duties of the state; youth was now to be trained to become citizens of the state, and to work for the welfare of the whole. Some of the inhabitants now considered the state to be the highest

possible organization of human society, to have definite ethical duties to perform for the welfare of the inhabitants.[1]

Probably the most important means of disseminating the Enlightenment in the Rhineland was education. Just as the church educated its members, so the leaders of the Enlightenment realized that the spread and existence of their ideas depended upon ingraining them into the minds of youth. As the governments were temporarily favorably inclined, the leaders of the movement lost no time in reforming the education system along lines more suitable for their purposes. New universities were created and old ones reorganized. In 1786, the academy at Bonn was enlarged into a university; the faculties were reorganized in Mainz and Trier in 1784 and 1786 respectively, by engaging well-known followers of the Enlightenment. In the Electorates of Trier, Mainz, and Cologne, the governments appointed state school commissions in the 1780's; the members for these commissions were drawn from the civil service, and replaced the church monopoly of education. The lower schools were also reformed on enlightened lines.[2]

The teachers in these schools and the youthful generation educated by them soon had to choose between the liberal and the conservative political ideals. A part of them strove only to obtain freedom from the old and traditional authoritarianism, and demanded that everything in society and state should be ordered on the principles of reason. Another group tried to compromise between the old and the new; they considered themselves in harmony with the spirit of the century, without, however, denying their allegiance to the Catholic church.

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[1] Ibid., Introduction, pp. 8 f.

[2] Ibid., Nos. 3, 16, 30, 37, 44, 46, 47, 48. No doubt there was a reorganization of the traditional curriculum, but the documents do not show the actual reforms.

The Enlightenment had barely become effective in the Rhineland when the French Revolution began. Almost immediately the princes became strongly opposed to the movement and nullified the progress which had been made. A number of enlightened teachers were dismissed, and feeling themselves betrayed, they became bitter opponents of the princes, and despaired at bringing about a peaceful change in Germany. Several professors broke completely with the past and emigrated to France, from where, in the next few years, many returned to play a leading part in the public life of the Rhineland.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL IDEAS OF THE PRO-FRENCH GROUP

After following the course of the Enlightenment in the Rhineland, we turn to a presentation of the ideas of the leaders of the movement on the eve of the French Revolution and during the French occupation. It should be remembered that these men dared not express too radical views on society and the state prior to the French occupation. During the occupation the leaders of change and enlightenment concerned themselves mostly with discussions of the state and its relationship to society and the welfare of man. But before 1792 they centered their attention on the broader aspects of the Enlightenment, such as a better society and reforms in education. A few illustrations will show what some of the leaders had in mind.

One of the clearest expositions of the Enlightenment is that by the Kurator of Bonn University, Franz Wilhelm Spiegel, in a speech in November, 1788, on the occasion of the installation of a new rector. Spiegel defined the Enlightenment as "the degree of insight which every man needs for his own destiny." But man's destiny must be considered from two sides: as man and as citizen; in either role he strives for the greatest possible happiness. Religion is basic and necessary in a good society, but it should not become a means of keeping the people in darkness. Every individual has his specific duty to perform in the state, and the highest duty is to realize the good; to do this the people must be educated as to what the good includes, so that all can work together for the general good. Only those who are enlightened

have the capacity to see the truth and to live accordingly, and probably the mass of the people will not have this capacity for some time to come; but the spread of this ideal should be the aim of those who have seen the light.[1] This enlightenment will be different for each class; for example, the laboring man should learn the value of his environment as a member of his class; he should not strive for a higher position, but realize himself within his class. If the laborer is removed from his caste he becomes unhappy, and this is not enlightenment. Thus the caste state (Ständestaat) is the highest ideal to strive for.

The enlightened prince also has his duties. The prince who thinks that the people of his state bound themselves together for the welfare of only one individual must think that his subjects are insane. People bind themselves together for the general welfare and happiness of all, and it is the duty of the prince to see that this condition continues, and that the liberties of the people are not abrogated. The nobility, clergy, and laymen each have their particular duties to society, and as individuals and as groups they should strive for the general welfare, and not for their own selfish ends. The enlightened citizen as such will see that he will have to surrender part of his natural freedom in order to attain the greatest good. He will see that if every individual followed his own desires the result would be anarchy. If he finds that those in authority are not perfect but subject to making mistakes, he will remember that officials are men and not gods.[2]

Eulogius Schneider, professor of literature at Bonn University, became one of the most famous fighters for the ideas of the

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[1] Ibid., p. 332.

[2] Ibid., pp. 328 f.

Enlightenment. Already in April, 1789, when he was called to Bonn University, he publicly declared his views in his installation address. The son of a vineyard peasant, educated by the Jesuits in theology, he became acquainted with the philosophy of Wolff, which marked the beginning of his antagonism to the traditional order. Later he became well acquainted with Rousseau, and his writings constantly reflect this influence.

Schneider begins his address with a sound condemnation of the old order. He denounces the old theology as biased, purposeless, and extremely dry; it stimulated blind allegiance to human authorities, and encouraged endless and meaningless distinctions. The old order cared little for a basic knowledge of modern languages, for geography and history. Darkness ruled in the schools until the Jesuits were disbanded in 1773 and the light was allowed to enter; only this permitted the gold of Christianity to be discovered; only this freed the people from the thick shell of scholasticism. As in religion, so in philosophy a praiseworthy change occurred, and philosophy became what it should be: a true guide on the path of life. Thanks to all these changes the youths in the schools now study worthwhile subjects, such as mathematics, natural history, physical geography, and practical philosophy.

However, Schneider deplores the slow progress of the Enlightenment in the Rhineland. The Catholics have remained far behind the Protestants in this respect. All the best translations and most good books are the products of Protestant scholarship. The chief reason for this backwardness in the Catholic countries is that the field of education has not been reformed; this is largely due to the bad influence of the earlier Jesuits who were responsible for the idea that the Latin language was

the chief discipline of education. The useless and mechanical study of Latin stultifies the mind, and the aesthetic loses all power over the souls and minds of the young.[1]

Thus we see that the broader aspects of the Enlightenment had ardent exponents in the Rhineland. As was indicated above, after the French occupation most of the enlightened leaders of thought turned their attention to political theory.

The most extensive literature on politics was found in Mainz. After the French occupied this region freedom of speech and press, so long as it was favorable to the French, obtained. Nearly all of the expressions of the enlightened ideas came from members of the Mainz Club, and the majority of vocal members of the Club were members of the university at Mainz. These Mainz Clubists belonged to those German intellectuals who, despite the excesses in the early period of the French Revolution, and that despite the victory of the Mountain party of Jacobins, held firmly to the belief that freedom was cheaply purchased even at such a price. In the republican-democratic constitution adopted by the French representatives they saw the best possible one for mankind and accepted the government it provided as the best form attainable. They demanded this form of government for their own land just at the time when the military and constitutional weakness of Germany became most evident; they hoped to enjoy a government based on freedom, equality, and humanity. To attain this end they did not care to emigrate to France and enjoy its existence only in their own persons; but, convinced that their fellow citizens had the same needs, they did not shrink from aiding the French in every possible manner. No doubt they thought this aid was justifiable treason against the elector of Mainz and the Holy

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[1] Ibid., pp. 346 f.

Roman Emperor.

It was with awe and wonder that the progressively-minded intellectuals of the Rhineland watched the French people, "nourished for nine hundred years in barbarism and slavery," free themselves from the old bonds of absolutism, watched them transform the old state into a reasonably free national state.[1] They thrilled at the determination with which the French people attempted to obtain self-determination; and how they placed the concept of "nation" on a higher level. The state in France could thus express the culture of a total nation, and it was to this principle that many outside France clung religiously, and ascribed to it a world-saving mission. By "nation" they did not consider the modern implications of nationalism, but referred to a group of people in a certain geographical area who would participate in creating a common culture. In Germany the particularism of the princes made a unified state almost impossible, and kept the mass of the people from feeling themselves to belong to one totality. In Germany any group bound together under a particular political bond was considered to be a nation; and the term "Vaterland" merely expressed the geographical location of such a group, no matter how small this may have been.[2]

Since the Enlightenment movement entered into the Rhineland about 1770, the feeling of belonging together was greatly stimulated, for this brought the Rhineland into sympathetic

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[1] R. Q., Vol. II, Introduction, p. 64.

[2] Ibid., pp. 64-65. The concept "nation" was used almost as frequently in Germany as in France and England; but in these latter countries there were no numerous small states. In the Rhineland about 1790 Cologne referred to itself as the "Nation der Reichsstadt Koeln," and even the territorial city of Mainz thought itself a nation paralleling the French nation. It was only incidentally that the terms "nation" and "Fatherland" were applied to all the German people, or to the geographic area in which they lived.

relationship with northern Germany. But this sentiment was confined to a few individuals and groups of literary friends. In 1784 August von Schall, an enlightened chamberlain at Bonn, defined the German nation as a large organism "whose members were all necessary and active; and this action is directed towards the general and public welfare, if the people only become enlightened."[1] The absence of modern nationalism was proven by Forster and some of his colleagues when they did not hesitate to renounce Germany to join the French.

Of course these men could easily find justification for this action. They thought that all their duties to the elector had automatically ended after his secret and sudden flight on October 4, 1792. Meanwhile the German Empire remained too inactive to please the impatient Club leaders. These men saw the true purpose of the state in a moral self-realization of its citizens, which could only be attained in a spiritually and politically free society. In accordance with the doctrine of social contract the Clubists viewed the state not as a group creation, but as a purely numerical unification of individuals. Believing firmly in the principle of world citizenship it made little difference to these men in what language the ideas of freedom and equality were disseminated. Just so long as the youth would be trained in the spirit of the Enlightenment ideology, they felt their ideal would be realized. But there were many Rhinelanders who disagreed with this view, and even some of the milder progressives did not believe that the French democratic-republican constitution and the ideology with which it was haloed was applicable to all areas and all conditions.[2]

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[1] R. Q., I, 83.

[2] Ibid., II, 772.

Although the idea of a unified German nation played no significant part in the consciousness of the people, there was, despite many dissatisfactions and conflicts, a feeling of community among the subjects of the small states and through this in turn a kind of Empire patriotism. This patriotism, coupled with the opposition of the Catholic Church to the French idea of the church, was so strong that all attempts at this time to separate the small Rhineland states from the Empire were met with a hostile opposition. Only the Clubists favored severing from the German Empire. These Clubists, on the basis of their personal experience with the absolutist and church state, felt that its mere reform was impossible, and wished to be free of its bonds. In the Empire they saw only a historical malformation, the demise of which was demanded in the interests of humanity.

While the Clubists' passion against the Empire rose from week to week, they overlooked the fact that the French were following an external policy of pure force, and that internally the ideal of freedom was degenerating into the tyranny of the Jacobins and the Terror. Also, the Clubists overlooked that they manifestly were not speaking for all of the population. When Custine arrived in Mainz, they assured him that all the people of Mainz, Worms, and Speyer were in complete agreement with the Clubs, and that the people demanded nothing more than that they would be freed by the French from their former slavery.[1] The Clubists told the French that the people in the Rhineland would gladly and of their own free will accept the French constitution; moreover, at the behest of the French, the Clubists did not hesitate to do things which were altogether condemned by the inhabitants. It was generally known that the French, when they were faced with

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[1] Ibid., p. 542.

the opposition of the inhabitants, did not hesitate to try to spread their "freedom" with fire and sword, to get the people to take the oath while cannons cast their shadows in the street. But the Clubists were the victims of their own hopes.

The Clubists did not strive for a unified German nation. This ideal was hindered in the enthusiastic intellectual circles not only by the traditional particularism, but also by the conception sponsored by the French of a future world-republic, which would re-incorporate in modern form the medieval idea of a European universal empire. Many of the intellectual leaders in Germany felt they were working in the service of humanity, and as such they believed themselves to be representatives of a cosmopolitan citizenship, which seemed to them to be a higher and better achievement than a mere isolated national state.[1] Professor Forster in Mainz, for example, wanted to become what he felt the French had become: simply a "man." In November, 1792, he strongly defended the proposition: Ubi bene, ibi patria. He saw the real purpose and end of the state, not in encouraging national culture and national power, but in the ethical and moral self-realization of the individuals within the state. This view clearly shows the influence of the German Enlightenment which believed that real freedom could only be realized as a result of a higher morality; and thus it followed that moral self-realization was only possible in the land where mental freedom was encouraged, where there was a proper respect for reason.

This moral idealism shows the influence of Kant's philosophy, the guiding star of these men in political and theoretical matters. Professor Wedekind announced and formulated the ethical imperative for the Mainz Club, October 30, 1792, when he declared:

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[1] Ibid., p. 533.

"We must always act as though our action was to become a universal law, because one man has just as much right as any other man." The Clubists were convinced that virtue could only be realized in a spiritually free state, that this condition would lead to the happiness of all the citizens, and that to bring about this condition and to maintain it was the highest duty of the state.

No doubt these men remembered that prior to 1789 the enlightened despotism had for a short time encouraged spiritual freedom, and, in the sense of these men, opened the way for ethical self-realization. But when the princes after 1789 undertook to suppress the Enlightenment, the intellectual leaders in Mainz supported the republican form of state. In the Club they loudly denounced the wastefulness of the elector, his disastrous policies, and the shameful desertion of this "step-father of the people surrounded with his horde of aristocrats," of this "waster."[1] Just as the republicans in France, they said, had deposed their king because of his debauchery, wastefulness, and exploitation, so in Mainz they saw in their former government only a mis-government, supported by the nobles and clergy, and expressing itself as a tyranny of the monarch and the church. They felt themselves faced with the choice of supporting a despised prince and his reactionary state on the one hand, or of choosing to support France, which to them was the center of Enlightenment, of mental and moral freedom.[2]

If the old state was such an evil, then what kind of state did these Clubists desire? Was it similar to that which the French had in mind? The earliest and best expression of the political

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[1] Ibid., p. 535.

[2] Ibid.

ideas of the Clubists and those with which most of the intellectual members agreed, is found in the speeches of Wedekind delivered October 27, 28, and 29, 1792:[1] "For ten years I have striven to become a good republican and a free man . . . . when I finally had the great misfortune to be called here into the service of the elector." He demanded the abolition of the power of the princes, especially that of the church princes. His views on the church and religion were very emphatic:

> It is extremely dangerous when the church and the government are not kept separate . . . ., if they are not, moral compulsion will result, and the people must believe what the lords desire . . . .; the ruler will encourage the people to believe that he is a true successor of the apostles, that he is installed by God . . . . and that the people must blindly follow him. /A free state is only possible after abolishing the/ weeds of monarchy; every government headed by a prince is a failure; kings are of no value; the welfare of the prince and the welfare of the people can never be the same; /and finally/ freedom arises from the dead bodies of tyrants.[2]

The Clubists believed that the new constitution prepared by the Convention would adequately protect human and civil rights. If the people of Mainz should, in order to secure their freedom, become incorporated into France, they would become French citizens, and as such they would send delegates to the National Convention and participate in the benefits of the new French constitution. It is quite evident that already from the beginning the leading Clubists aimed to separate from Germany and become a part of France. Eulogius Schneider, who was still in Strassburg, sent a public request on November 2, 1792, to the republicans of Mainz, Worms, and Speyer in which he pleaded: "Declare yourselves for France and enter into our family; preach loudly the doctrine of freedom; build a national assembly in Mainz or Worms;

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

for you can only achieve something by uniting with your neighbor."[1]

So the Clubists came to see in the annexation to France the only guaranty of the sovereignty of the people, of freedom and equality for the citizens. Wedekind was continually explaining to the Club what was meant by freedom and equality. Custine in early November defined freedom to mean "that the people are subject only to the law which the people themselves have provided." Several days before this Wedekind had declared to the Club:

> Freedom is found in obedience to the law, for the content of which every citizen has contributed, and in case a law is found to be evil it can be removed by the support of all the citizens. For obedience to the law, so long as it is in force, is a proof of self-respect; whoever acts against the laws is in contradiction with himself so long as he is a citizen of a state.[2]

Wedekind also defined equality as "the capacity to enjoy the greatest amount of happiness according to our natural predispositions." Equality implies, he said, that the nobility and all special favor or privilege be abolished, that all reasonable people have an equal part in the making of laws either directly or indirectly through their representatives. However, equality does not mean that all people should have the same amount of property. Otherwise the necessity to labor for achieving something would be neglected; the rich father would have to be

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[1] Ibid., p. 536.

[2] Ibid., p. 537. The idea of freedom was glorified by the Clubists with a number of songs and poems; they hoped that in this manner they could popularize their ideas among the inhabitants. A poem of November cried "Auf zur Freiheit, mein Brueder, Nehmet eure Rechte wieder, Schuettelt eure Fesseln los!" A constitutional celebration in December was the occasion for this demand: "Jedes Haupt zur Schindergrube, Das sich neuen Fesseln bot . . . . Lasst die Fuerstenknechte kommen, Kaempfen sie im Hundesold." A number of poems and songs had as their theme a denunciation of the princes. But these emotional expressions do not seem to have become popular among the inhabitants, and it is quite likely that they remained "pep" songs for members of the Club.

forbidden to leave to his children his accumulated wealth and property, and this would violate freedom. To have an equal division of goods and property, he thought, would mean that all of us must rob someone else.[1] Most of the members of the Mainz Club emphatically insisted upon the protection of personal property. Forster defended strongly private property; he even refrained from joining the Club at first because he feared that the principle of equality would be carried too far.[2] Professor A. J. Dorsch, in the opening address to the Worms Club, demanded that all laws be equally applied to all the subjects of the state, no matter if these subjects were rich or poor, nobles or citizens. All citizens must contribute to the expenses of the state according to the amount of wealth and property they possess; and every position in the government must be open equally to all citizens. But, Dorsch said, equality, which is the highest attainment of the state, refers only to the equality of rights, not to the equality of goods and property. A good government must secure to each citizen the sanctity of his property, as well as the products of his labor and industry. If the hard and diligent worker has to divide his property and wealth with a lazy and shiftless individual, all stimulus to achieve good things will be throttled at its birth. This equality of goods and wealth is a pure chimera.[3] The continual emphasis of these men on property seems to imply that there must have been a group in the Clubs which favored an equal division of property. There was no general agreement among the members of the Club, and bitter arguments were frequent. The Clubists manifestly feared the interpretation

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[1] Ibid., p. 538.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

of equality by the lower classes, and hoped to forestall any possible demand for equal division of wealth and property. No doubt there was a conservative and radical wing among the Clubists.

The declarations of the Clubists on the duties of the state in particular matters concerned themselves especially with the interference of the government in economic affairs. Forster in 1790 in his "Ansichten vom Neiderrhein" claimed that the secret of a good state administration was to be found when the government kept out of economic affairs. Wedekind in November condemned the close relation of the government and the guilds; he declared that the only duty of the government in economic affairs was to see that no selfish man interfered with his honest efforts to make a decent living. All efforts of the government to further trade and commerce and industry fail, either as such, or in their results. The guilds too are an ancient evil which has endured too long, he wrote; in old times they obtained privileges because of the lack of local craftsmen; although that condition no longer exists, the privileges continue.[1] But the Clubists soon found that the guilds would never accept the French system so long as this threatened to destroy the guild privileges. It was this knowledge which prompted Dr. G. W. Boehmer, son of the famous jurist at Goettingen, G. L. Boehmer, and a member of the Worms Club, to declare in a speech to the guilds that if they would accept the French constitutional system, he personally would guarantee that a provision would be made for the continued existence of the guilds, at least until the members would see that it was to their own advantage to break their guild bonds.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 539.

[2] Ibid.

In their doctrines concerning economic life the Clubists were in agreement with the principle of free trade proclaimed by the Girondists; in Germany they also agreed with such men as W. von Humboldt. But in the matter of education they differed with Humboldt. While Humboldt insisted upon keeping the education of the young out of the hands of the state, and wanted to leave the matter to the family, the Clubists demanded that the state control education as one of its most important functions. They wanted to continue the policy of education which the princes had encouraged in the years immediately before the French Revolution. Forster wrote in December, 1791, that "all education must in its very nature be closely related to the political constitution." Wedekind denounced the reactionary policy in Germany, especially in the Rhineland, against the enlightened principles of education; he denounced the "satanical principles, the hellish proposition," which is now generally heard, that the people should not learn too much, that the subject should remain as ignorant as it was possible to keep him. Reason alone should be the guide in education; it was the duty of the state to provide for the dissemination of enlightenment. The enemies of the Enlightenment, he declared, are rascals who would keep the people in ignorance so as to ride upon their backs as upon horses, for the people would tolerate no riders if they were enlightened.[1]

The Clubists strongly supported the principles of a constitutional government based upon the equality of the law for all citizens, and upon the ideal of the protection of individual rights. With these convictions it is not surprising that the Clubists saw France altogether in the mirror of the first years of the Revolution when freedom had not yet been contaminated by

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[1] Ibid., p. 540.

the Jacobins. Filled with the desire for realizing their own ideals, they underestimated or overlooked some of the most blatant evils of the revolution.

After seeing in a general way some of the theories of the Mainz Clubists, we may turn to a brief description of one of the most prominent leaders in this period in order to reveal more clearly the unique nature of some of the spiritual movements in the Rhineland.

Georg Forster became one of the outstanding leaders in the Mainz Club. He was born in the year 1754 in the neighborhood of Danzig. After completing his university training, he took a world cruise with his father, Rheinhold Forster, who was professor of natural science at Halle. In 1779, Georg Forster became professor at the Collegium Carolinum at Kassel. From 1784 to 1787, he served as professor of natural history at the Polish University of Wilna. Then followed a short period at Goettingen. Although a Protestant, he was called to Mainz University in October, 1788, to serve as librarian.

Like most of the followers of the Enlightenment in the Rhineland Forster reveals a good deal of dilettantism. It was largely an accident that he became concerned with political matters. Certainly his early inclinations were not directed towards politics. How little he understood political matters is shown in his discussion of Burke's book on the French Revolution. The mere fact that Burke opposed the revolution was sufficient ground for Forster to condemn him and his book. Hashagen says that although Burke's book was the best analysis of the revolution, there was and is no worse discussion of this work than that by Forster.[1] Forster wrote in December, 1790, that Burke's

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[1]Justus Hashagen, Das Rheinland und Die Franzoesische Herrschaft (Bonn, 1908), p. 340.

"Reflections" were such "elendes Gewaesch" that he would not even consider their translation. But the dilettantism of Forster was probably valuable for the historian, for as such he was most susceptible to the diverse influences of the time, and his writings show the effects of these influences.

Just as most of the followers of the Enlightenment in Germany, Forster vigorously denounced the princes and despots both before and, with increased vigor, after the outbreak of the French Revolution. When Forster heard the news of the murder of Gustav III, his only remark was "Thus the king of Sweden is also dead." After Custine had taken Mainz, Forster became the editor of the Mainzer Zeitung, in which his articles emphasized that any attempts of the princes and priests to better the lot of humanity were all equally worthless.

In the literature on state theory in Germany in the 18th century this hatred of princes was closely related to the hatred of the nobility. This was the case with Forster, too, long before the French Revolution. He declared in 1784 that the nobility is a "pure phantom of the human imagination." He came to Mainz with these convictions and lost no opportunity to denounce the aristocracy, especially for their exclusiveness and their lack of enlightened education. This ignorant aristocracy, he wrote, must be replaced by the more noble and better middle class.[1]

The almost complete lack of national feeling among the Mainz Clubists is clearly illustrated by Forster. He prided himself upon his cosmopolitanism. Already several days after the taking of Mainz he loudly declared the Rhine to be the natural boundary of France, and in the Rhineland Convention he centered most of his efforts upon annexation by France. Just as he praised

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[1] Ibid., pp. 344 f.

cosmopolitanism, so he glorified freedom and equality, although he never was quite certain just what he meant by these concepts. Hashagen says that the stream of events had made Forster into a Frenchman, although it seems that pecuniary interest played a larger part in his conversion to republicanism than is generally admitted.[1]

Forster must certainly have had the opportunity freely to study the works by some of the most important French writers. Yet it is surprising how little he was really influenced by them, despite the fact that he so loudly proclaimed the French ideology. He could have found more than enough stimulation for his views from Montesquieu, but in his works he hardly cited him at all. For Voltaire he showed more enthusiasm. While in Wilna he and his wife together read the "Essai sur les Moeurs," but his understanding of Voltaire seems to have been very superficial. He was acquainted with Rousseau's popular writings and doctrines on the happy state of nature, but he dismissed Rousseau as too utopian. Probably he had read the "Contrat Social," for he writes on one occasion about the volonté génerale.[2]

To defend his ideas of freedom, Forster does not rely upon French writers, but upon Englishmen and Americans. While on a visit to Paris in the 1770's he met Benjamin Franklin and referred to him as the "most distinguished philosopher in the western world!" Forster had the greatest respect for Thomas Payne's The Rights of Man, and the writings of James Mackintosh--probably he admired them both because of their opposition to Burke. Above all Forster admired William Godwin's Enquiry on Political Justice, in which he found much the same ideas as his

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[1] Ibid., p. 349.

[2] Ibid., pp. 350 f.

own.[1]

Forster's judgments on the French Revolution have been justly described by Hashagen as hesitant, non-political, philosophical-historical, individual-psychological, and shallow. During the early stages of the revolution Forster expressed the fear that the revolution was progressing too rapidly. In October, 1789, he compared Mirabeau to Catiline. In June, 1792, he announced in his letters that he supported the Jacobin party; but with the advent of the Terror his enthusiasm suddenly waned.

Forster used the French Revolution almost entirely to prove the practicality of his philosophic ideas. He tried especially to discover the philosophico-historical determinism of events in France. The revolution, he said, is "un de ces grands coups du sort inscrutable qui regit l'univers"; the powerful will of God, independent of man, is guiding it; it expresses the justice of nature, the iron necessity of time. This fatalism probably convinced Forster of the uselessness of any counter-revolution. Hashagen says that the influence of the revolution upon Forster was very great, at times even blotting everything else from his mind by the power of the events; but it never dominated him entirely for any length of time.[2]

For what reform was Forster striving? What was the purpose of the state? An answer to these questions will show how much he depended upon German writers. Let us see first what functions, according to him, did not belong to the state. It was not to smooth out the contradictions in society, not to establish the constitutional desires of the people; least of all was the state to embody national power as such. But the real purpose, as it

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[1] Ibid., p. 352.

[2] Ibid., p. 356.

was claimed by the German Enlightenment going back to Aristotle, was only the single one of the moral perfection of the individual. There is nothing in this political theory which allows for the existence of large corporate organizations or groups within the state; it is only concerned with the individual as such; and it might well be called the individualistic view of the state. This is the usual appeal of people or leaders at a time when they wish to overthrow the old institutions which have failed to perform their proper functions or which have become vested interests.

Forster's political theory would soon become the cornerstone of the "new capitalism" because of its adherence to and insistence upon the sacredness of private rights and property. However, his theory is braced all along with an enthusiastic moralism which he felt would be easily realized once the curse of the old fetters was gone. Purely material ends have little room in such a theory of state. We are assured that when the state has been reformed, and when the individuals have become perfected, the state has fulfilled its purpose.

In the work Ueber die Beziehung der Staatskunst auf das Glueck der Menschheit, Forster's enlightened doctrine of the purpose of the state is presented at great length. The state must assure those gifted with reason and moral responsibility the free use of their reason, but at the same time this freedom must be limited so as to avoid mistakes. The best way to serve this moral purpose of the state is intellectually to recognize particular and simple truths. Upon this fact the real value of education is based. But in the course of historical development there has been decadence in the political and moral fields, and the greatest crime against the state is opposition against the basic concepts of moral being. No government or constitution

has the right to exist if it robs the citizens of the possibility of moral progress.[1] The chief cause of the French Revolution was the sad decline of morality. Something can even be said for absolute monarchy if it serves the general purpose of the state, and he praised Joseph II for this.[2]

Freedom, too, is closely related to Forster's idea of the moral state; for only in case the state fulfills its general purpose does the individual realize his moral perfection. Freedom obtains only when both of these are in harmony. In reply to the question upon whom the responsibility rests most heavily for the realization of the general principle, the state or the individual, Forster says that the individual has most responsibility. He expects far more from the inner improvement of the individual than from the best government. Freedom can only be realized within the individual: "where the mind is, there is freedom; the more fully we share in life, the more free we become." Although it is doubtful whether the mass of the people will ever rise to this moral perfectionism, those who have and can realize it should never give up hope that this is possible.

Two elements of Forster's political theory stand out in clear relief: the moral purpose of the state, and some form of moderate constitutionalism. These two ideals he clung to throughout his later life, and probably it would not be doing him justice to claim that in this respect, too, he was a dilettant. Just as

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[1]For the same reason Forster honors Franklin of America. No doubt the American Revolution would have occurred despite Franklin's existence. But America owes Franklin the following virtues: "moral freedom, a holy respect for reason of every individual, and the recognition of the duty of everyone to respect the convictions of each individual." It is not unlikely that American historians would beg to differ on this matter with Forster.

[2]Hashagen, op. cit., pp. 365 f.

Kant was the chief influence for engendering and disseminating the Enlightenment in Germany, especially in the universities, so Forster took his moral ideal from the works of Kant. Although he rejected much of Kant's science, he gladly accepted Kant's ethics and the moral imperative.

CHAPTER IV

THE OPPONENTS OF THE FRENCH

By far the great majority of the inhabitants in the Rhineland already opposed the French when the latter entered the area, and the majority even of those who favored them at this time soon became antagonistic during the occupation. It will be the purpose of this chapter to describe why the three most powerful groups in the Rhineland, the princes and their officials, the clergy, and the nobility, opposed the invaders and could keep the allegiance and support of the less privileged classes despite their discontent and desires for mild or extreme reforms.

The princes in the Rhineland were determined to maintain at all costs the old order. They were ardent and continuous supporters of the old constitution of the Holy Roman Empire. It was the best guaranty of the status quo, and it assured the princes an income from an almost medieval economy, the abolishment of which might threaten their existence.[1] Above all the Catholic princes wanted to keep the old Imperial constitution, for it guaranteed the hierarchical and class traditions of the Middle Ages. The attitude of the princes is well expressed in the

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[1] R. Q., I, 22 f. A few princes were desirous of introduing economic reforms, chiefly by bringing in Protestants to practice new types of industry. But the guilds and the church strongly opposed any such attempt. The guilds opposed it chiefly because they feared for the business which they might lose in competition with the much more efficient and modern Protestant industrialists. The church was opposed because they would harbor no competition with the monopoly on the minds and pockets of the inhabitants. In the face of this opposition the princes soon gave up their hopes for a more remunerative economic order, because the church especially was too strong an aid in maintaining the old order.

following words:

> What possible advantage could we derive from a centralized political capital? About all we would get would be a large standing army which might from time to time expand our boundaries, but which would add nothing to our income, welfare, and happiness.[1]

The expressions of discontent and revolution only signified to them the utter destruction of their power and personal grandeur; anything which threatened their privileges was anathema.

By far the greater number of officials functioning in the old system strongly opposed the French and the revolution for much the same reason as the princes: their official positions would be jeopardized if any governmental change was made. The officials had been educated in the tradition of absolutist government, and their allegiance to this system grew almost in proportion to the danger which threatened the traditional order.[2] The princes certainly, and most of the government officials, had little to gain and everything to lose. The officials of the Imperial cities subscribed to many of the same views as the officials of the other states. In the Imperial cities the constitutions, centuries old, providing for limited popular participation in electing government officials, had largely become a dead letter, and government power had passed into the hands of a few proud and wealthy families.[3] Any change which threatened the power and position of the princes and the officials was strongly opposed by them; they even disapproved of the loss of power by the princes in the neighboring states. Material interests, custom, and allegiance to the Catholic church, which was the most ardent

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[1] R. Q., II, 478 f. Spoken by Frh. v. Spiegel, president of the Court Council for the Electorate of Cologne, in November, 1789.

[2] Hashagen, op. cit., pp. 294 f.

[3] Kaess, op. cit., pp. 14 f.

opponent of the French, assured the strongest opposition among these groups.

Closely allied with the conservative interests and ambitions of the princes and their officials was the nobility. It is self-evident that the nobility should oppose the French who threatened to confiscate the land[1] and property and to abolish their political and social privileges. Of first importance was their exemption from taxation. So long as the old constitution was maintained, and so long as the church and the princes supported this exemption, they felt secure in this privilege. But if the caste-state were abolished, as the French planned, the nobles, who had a monopoly on the most lucrative positions in the church and in the government, would lose their position as the most privileged class in the state.

The nobility in the Rhineland, even more than in the neighboring larger states, had become an expensive luxury. In Prussia or Austria, the nobles held important army and government positions, and frequently performed very efficiently in this capacity. But in the Rhineland there was no standing army, and in the civil service most of the actual work was performed by the middle class officials. Even in the highest positions in the church, it is quite likely that the work would have been better performed by another class. Thus the nobles were doing little or no useful work, but were getting most of the income. The nobles would certainly oppose anything which threatened this luxurious status.

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[1] H. Aubin et al., Geschichte des Rheinlandes von der aeltesten Zeit bis zur Gegenwart (Essen an der Ruhr, 1922), I, 246; II, 129. There is some difference of opinion on how much land the nobles possessed at this time. In the Electorate of Cologne in 1669, the clergy owned 28 per cent of the land, and the aristocracy 29 per cent; in the Electorate of Trier in the 18th century the clergy had one-fifth, the nobility one-seventh, both together one-third. Roughly estimated, probably one-half of the land in the Rhineland was in the hands of the clergy and nobility.

In justice to the Rhineland nobility, their unique position in Germany should be noted. In Eastern Germany the nobility had evolved large unified landed estates upon which the landlord served as a small king, receiving all feudal dues, exercising justice and police power over the peasants. Peasants, as free land-owners or renters, were few. In the Rhineland the peasants had just as little political power as in the East, but they had for the most part obtained their personal freedom. The nobles' land was widely scattered and was usually rented to the peasants; only a small number of peasants lived as serfs on the landlords' estates. Thus the nobles, as in the East, had the first position in the state, but the economic and legal basis of their privileges was very different.[1]

Even though threatened with extinction, the Rhenish nobles did little more than talk about their opposition to the French. In the areas where the French troops entered most of the nobles scampered out of the land to safety. After the outbreak of the French Revolution the nobles denounced the chimera of equality, and warned against the new ideas of change which the townsmen were "drinking like sweet poison." Although the privileged aristocracy in any land is nearest to tradition and furthest from rationality, the Rhineland nobles developed a kind of rational justification for their position. They insisted that if personal conviction was to become the guide to action, anything could be justified, even revolution and murder of princes.[2] The nobles, just as the clergy, wanted to maintain the historical differences of the Estates. Each Estate, they claimed, just as the members of the human body, contributes its part to the preservation of

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[1] Ibid., I, 243.

[2] R. Q., II, 234 f.

the whole.[1] Both the clergy and the nobility considered their privileges as personal property which could only be taken from them with their consent.

Thus it becomes quite evident why the princes, the aristocracy, and the clergy had a mutual interest in maintaining the old order. Although absolutism had become supreme in Germany, especially in Prussia and Austria in the 17th and 18th centuries, in the Rhineland, with the exception of the Electorate of Mainz, the caste-state continued to exist, with its representation of nobility, clergy (in the ecclesiastical states), and burgher. The princes did not dare to oppress the Estates because their support, especially in tax matters, was far too desirable.

Another group which strongly supported the old order and opposed the French was the officialdom of the Catholic church. The interests of the church were closely bound up with those of the princes and the nobility; common interests, such as land-holding, freedom from taxation, the continued existence of the caste-state, provided sufficient basis for a common front. Ideals like freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and toleration, were utterly distasteful to the churchmen, who had been and remained the strongest opponents of toleration and enlightenment in the Rhineland. The struggle against these innovations had united the majority of the clergy into an "old guard" which was determined to maintain at all costs the status quo.[2] In this determination it appealed to and received the ardent allegiance of the majority of the inhabitants of the Rhineland, most of whom were poorly educated and altogether immune to the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

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[1] Ibid., p. 332.

[2] Ibid., Vol. I, Introduction, p. 51.

The Catholic Church declared open warfare against the French Revolution and those who supported the revolution. The medieval arrangement of church life, which encompassed the whole life of the people, had been given new life and validity in the Rhineland during the counter-Reformation. And now during the revolution the clerics considered it their highest duty to stimulate opposition among its adherents.[1] Because the church saw its very life at stake it advocated faithfulness to the old constitution and glorified the clerical-feudal caste-state. This opposition of the church to the French stirred up among the masses, who were guided by their feelings and emotions, was strengthened by the emigrant French priests and nobles who appealed to many of the people as martyrs for the cause of Christianity.[2] Besides its own numerous facilities for advocating this policy the church was greatly aided by at least a part of the press, such as the Gasette de Cologne and especially by the Neuwieder Politischen Gespraechen der Toten.[3]

Thus the power and prestige of the Catholic Church had a wide influence upon the mass of the Rhinelanders, for, with the exception of a handful of Protestants in some of the cities, all of the inhabitants in the occupied regions were habitual Catholics. If the French had confined themselves to a purely political revolution it is quite likely that they would have had more success in the Rhineland. But the French wanted to do more than this: they wanted to re-shape the whole life of the people; the people must learn that anything which smacked of the old order was of no value; only the new, the product of reason, was worth living

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[1] Ibid., p. 385.

[2] Ibid., Introduction, p. 51.

[3] Ibid., p. 52.

and dying for. The mass of the Rhinelanders, no matter how indifferent most of them may have been in political matters, were deeply shocked by this doctrine of complete change because it would change the daily habits of people who depended almost entirely upon habit as a guide to action; and social habits are harder to break than armies are to defeat. To oppose the church in the Rhineland almost always presaged defeat; as Hashagen expresses it: "the state on the Rhine which has the church on its side is safe and secure."[1]

The princes, nobles, and clerics used numerous methods and devices to maintain their dominant position and to suppress any attempt for reform by the less privileged groups, such as the peasants, guilds, and intellectuals. In the first place the princes, nobles, and clerics had control of the organs of government and could compel obedience with force of arms; if the local police and small militia did not suffice, troops could be obtained from the Holy Roman Empire. We have already seen how the demonstrations and uprisings of the peasants and townsmen shortly after 1789 were suppressed in this manner.[2]

But the direct use of force was usually not necessary to obtain obedience. The form of government placed most power into the hands of the princes, aristocrats, and clerics. The Estates met and voted separately. In the Electorates of Trier and Cologne, the Third Estate demanded the abolition of tax exemption for the nobles and clergy, but the first two Estates refused to permit this.[3] In the Electorate of Mainz the government issued a decree, September 10, 1790, which made it a crime to speak

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[1] Hashagen, op. cit., p. 128.

[2] See above, chapter i.

[3] R. Q., Vol. I, No. 40.

against religion, morality, and government.[1] In the same month Elector Klemens Wenzeslaus ordered the clergy, in view of the revolutionary spirit entering from France, to emphasize in their preaching the Godliness of peace and obedience to the government.[2] During and after 1790, the princes, strongly supported by the church, began a systematic suppression of the Enlightenment. In the Electorate of Trier the schools were again placed under the supervision of the church; the curriculum and the relation of teachers to students were most strictly supervised.[3] In Mainz in the summer of 1791, the elector dismissed A. J. Dorsch, the enlightened clerical professor of philosophy.[4] A number of professors at Bonn University were asked to leave by the elector because they were "dangerous Protestants."[5]

The government and clergy had another powerful instrument of control in the newspapers. The development of newspapers in the Rhineland was far behind that in France, especially after the outbreak of the revolution; and even in Germany the Rhineland newspapers were considered among the poorest in the whole Empire.[6] Most of the newspapers contained no general articles reflecting the views of the writers, but were filled with numerous news items, or, as they might better be called, "announcements." The newspapers here were never used in this period for purposes of agitation, as in France. However, even in printing these itemized "announcements" the political views of the editors would

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[1] Ibid., p. 677.

[2] Ibid., p. 678.

[3] Ibid., Nos. 207, 237, 248.

[4] Ibid., No. 295.

[5] Ibid., p. 533.

[6] Ibid., Introduction, p. 37.

and could become evident; if by no other way than by what was and was not printed.

The political views of the Rhineland press were influenced above all by the drastic censorship placed over them. Since this censorship came from two sources, the government and the Catholic Church, it is not surprising that with few exceptions the newspapers generally expressed official policy. They had to remain quiet about political demonstrations and disturbances in their particular areas. If one had to depend upon the newspapers for information one would conclude that there was perfect harmony in the Rhineland before 1793. The newspapers, for example, said nothing about the demands of the Third Estate for just taxation in the Electorates of Trier and Cologne in 1790-1791. In their reports on the events of the French Revolution the Rhineland press at first took an impersonal attitude. Some of the papers, written by enlightened editors who frequently were members of some Reading Club, poured the "good oil" of the views of the Third Estate into their papers. They said that the legal and social conditions in France did not harmonize with the intellectual development, that the transformation of the Estates into equal citizens was a welcome change, and that the ideas of freedom and equality would lead to improvement. But it was not long before the governments checked these expressions in the press.

Thus by having in their control the instruments of social and political domination, the princes, nobility, and clergy were enabled to withstand the demands of reform, and even to keep the allegiance of the vast majority of the inhabitants during the French occupation. The guilds supported the old order because it guaranteed them their corporate existence and their privileges, and because they were under the protecting wing of the Catholic

Church. The peasants, if Custine had not taxed them, would probably have accepted the French ideals.

In the winter of 1792-1793 the inhabitants of the Rhineland were made fully aware of the implications of the French Revolution. A Rhinelander wrote in the spring of 1793 that "in our towns the universal medicine, an acquaintance with republicanism, has completely healed the revolutionary fever."[1] This was especially true in the cities which were occupied for a time by the French. But here too, as elsewhere in the Rhineland, the occupation had not transformed the traditional Empire patriotism into nationalism. The inhabitants of the electoral states were made fully aware by the flight of the princes, clergy, and nobility, how much they depended economically upon the courts of the princes and upon the nobility and clergy.

When Max Franz, elector of Cologne, returned, April, 1793, to Bonn, he was greeted with loud cheers. In the Electorates of Mainz and Trier the inhabitants urgently requested the princes to come back as quickly as possible. When the princes of these two territories did so, they were greeted upon entering the towns with cheers; their horses were unhitched from their coaches, and their coaches were drawn through the streets by members of the guilds. When Robespierre and his group began the Terror in June, 1793, and the guillotines were kept bloody by the Revolutionary Tribunal, the Rhinelanders felt that they were far better off than in the land of French "freedom." When the stream of emigrants from France, both lay and ecclesiastical, in the summer of 1793 found refuge in the Rhineland, the press vividly pictured the terrible brutalities in France and aroused still more the hatred of the Rhinelanders for the Revolution. The excesses in

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[1] Ibid.

France against the Christian religion after the murder of Marat in July, and the actions of the Cult of Reason in November, 1793, were more than enough to scare off the believers in the Rhineland, and even the "free thinkers" here began condemning the revolution. Of course there were a few people who were "avowed Jacobins, and who still adhered to the swindling humbug."[1] But by the end of the year, 1793, the demand was almost universal for a return to the old conditions.

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[1] Ibid., Introduction, p. 38.

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