

Politics and Culture in French Revolutionary Church Reform: The Institutional Opposition to *Liberte,* *Egalite,* *Fraternite*

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This will be an example for any of you who may lose your possessions, your fortune, even your life if necessary, rather than abandon your faith, your religion and offend your God.¹

This is an excerpt taken from a statement made by J.A. Baude, a parish priest in late 18th century France, who in 1791 refused to swear an Ecclesiastic Oath to the National Assembly.² Baude addresses his parishioners and highlights the sacrifice he made to remain devoted to his faith and the institution of the Catholic Church.³ As a non-juring priest, the status and benefits he enjoyed were stripped from him by the National Assembly. Baude uses this as an example of what is to come to his parish when faced with the same choice he faced: new reform and revolution, or faith and devotion to the Church.

My research focuses on a connection between *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* and religious freedom for the populous in France between 1789 and 1791, in the context of the French Revolution. The motto, *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, translates to “liberty, equality, fraternity” but is better known for representing the spirit of the Revolution and goes beyond the meaning of those three individual words.⁴ The goal of my paper is to better understand the position of the non-clerical population, the laity, during the introduction of political reform on the Church. I want to understand where religion fit in to a citizen’s search for *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, or if it fit in

¹ J.A. Baude, “A Non-Juring Priest’s Declaration,” *Alpha History*, accessed May 15, 2022.

² The Ecclesiastic Oath was an oath that Catholic priests were made to swear in recognition that the Catholic Church is a subject of the State. Swearing the Oath meant you accepted the ongoing reform imposed by the National Assembly. Non-juring priests were those that refused to swear the Oath. Ecclesiastical refers to matters regarding a church or its clergy, especially as an established institution. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “ecclesiastical.”

³ The Catholic Church was the national church of France at the time and will be referred to simply as “the Church,” throughout the essay.

⁴ Jonathan Day, “*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*: The Meaning and History of France’s National Motto,” *Liberties*.

at all, because during the French Revolution, religion also took on a political element with the reformations to the Church. Often, choosing one meant opposing the other (church or reform). To uproot the Catholic Church would take time, cause division, and leave a fragile religious foundation in France. There is much to consider when trying to understand the complex interaction between the National Assembly, the Church, and eventually the laity in France at the time. However, to do so, we must also understand the motivations behind religious reform stemming from the National Assembly and understand the status of the Catholic Church in France leading up to the Revolution, including the factors that contributed to that status.

The historiography on church reform during the French Revolution ranges in specificity, with historians Timothy Tackett and Joseph F. Byrnes focusing on the Ecclesiastical Oath and the reasoning that clergymen used to either swear or oppose the Oath.⁵ Making them jurors or non-jurors, and from more extreme points of view, “refractory” vs “patriotic” members of the Church. Their studies dive into the mindset and perspective of those making the decisions, men with influence within the Catholic institution of France. In Tackett’s case, he links the clergymen’s decision to swear the Oath to how they viewed themselves in the world. Tackett believed that in cases where a bishop saw himself as a servant of God, he was less likely to swear the Oath because a servant of God was only to be influenced by the Pope and will of God itself. If a bishop saw himself as the servant of the people, then he was more likely to see that the state represented the people and was more likely to swear the Oath. Byrnes builds upon Tackett’s research and in 2014, Byrnes argues that for the members of clergy, the commitments they made are dependent on which Church they believed to be rightful, the Church of the Revolution or the one that had always been

⁵ Joseph F. Byrnes, *Priests of the French Revolution: Saints and Renegades in a New Political Era*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014) and Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986)

(New vs Old). In contrast, Suzanne Desan's research focuses on laity and the connection between religion and politics in a specific region of France.⁶ Desan focuses on Catholic revivalism between 1794 and 1799 in Yonne, Burgundy, a region to the Southeast of Paris. Beginning during the time of the Terror, Desan sought to understand the way the laity fought for religious practice, the effects religious struggle had on community power dynamics, and the long-term effects of religious activism. Desan argues that the laity sought self-practice rituals and took on religious engagement for themselves because of the extremely strict restrictions imposed on the clergy at the time.

Of the historiography available, I build upon the work of Peter McPhee and Eric F. Johnson. In alignment with my goal of understanding the National Assembly's church reform, McPhee seeks to understand the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1790, which was "rooted in the *ancient regime*."⁷ Meaning that he researches the influence that the old regime had on religious reform. Also, McPhee investigates the response to the 1791 Ecclesiastic Oath by the Church, the laity, and the State. McPhee argues that because of the religious identity and political culture of the *ancient regime*, they are implicit in the schism followed between 1790-1792 and eventually leading to the dechristianization in the remainder of the decade. Johnson on the other hand has a very centralized study that focuses on Avignon, a city that at the start of the French Revolution, was not yet a part of France. Johnson places an importance on the relationship between religious beliefs and political authority in Avignon in the first three years of the Revolution. It is important to point out that Avignon was a religious hub under papal authority and an "entry point into France for religious orders,"⁸ meaning that religious devotion ran deeper in Avignon than it did in other

⁶ Suzanne Desan, "Reclaiming the Sacred Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France," (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990).

⁷ Peter McPhee, "The Origins and Outcomes of Religious Schisms," in *A Companion to the French Revolution*, (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).

⁸ Eric F. Johnson, "The Sacred, Secular Regime: Catholic Ritual and Revolutionary Politics in Avignon, 1789-1791," In *French Historical Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007): 49-76.

areas of France. The Pope was the ultimate authority for both political and ecclesiastical matters. Johnson argues that the situation in Avignon was different because the Revolution held different meaning, with different challenges and objectives. Also, important to note is the fact that during the aftermath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, Avignon was a center of communication between the French clergy and the Roman Catholic Church. Highlighting the fact that church reform and the pressure on the laity by way of religious reform, was not as harshly felt as it was in other parts of France with less papal influence.

The National Assembly set up their reforms in a way that alienated the Church from its followers because in an era of reform, the best way to create change was to weaken the church by diminishing the control and influence they had over the population. By framing the Church as an institutional oppressor of the people, the National Assembly became responsible for the division between church and state that extended beyond church boundaries and reflected itself in the laity.

Before 1789, wealth was easily accumulated by the Catholic Church as they had consistent revenue streams. Their primary streams of income were land holdings and the tithe, but the Church also benefitted from the fact that they were not subject to state taxation like the rest of France. The first stream of income was often paid in rent and feudal dues to the local abbey and the second, a tax paid in *livres* or taken directly from the annual produce yield. For peasants forced to pay these dues, it made no difference which of the two their payment was labeled under. To them, what mattered was the total amount of resources being taken, the growing resentment they felt towards their creditors was all the same. It's important to point out, as historian John McManners has done, that the peasantry was crucial to the church's growth and advancement as a powerhouse institution in France. The Third Estate had perhaps a more vital role to play, "their role was to pay" according to McManners. He argues that "these folk not only support the Church: they constitute it and justify

its existence.”⁹ For a group to be so pivotal in adding to the Church’s economic power but have nothing to show for it, created a bitterness towards the Church that grew with every new fiscal benefit the institution gained.

In March of 1789, the peasant community of Lignère la Doucelle, a rural area to the west of Paris, petitioned for changes to the seigneurial dues they were to pay to the local lords. While these grievances were aimed at taxes to be paid not only for ecclesiastical lands, the third estate recognized that the church and its officials were benefiting in ways that no other group was benefiting. The community addressed specific changes to be made to those benefits. First, church members could only “take advantage of one position.”¹⁰ Church members holding more than one position were benefiting from the added sums of money that came with the multiple positions, regardless of the amount of work they did. The title of the individual, not the merit, carried the benefit. Next, the community argued that “future abbeys [should] all be placed in the hands of the king.” Going forward, the king should benefit from the abbeys the same way that abbots had been doing for so long. It was common for abbots to hold enormous influence because abbeys, for example, owned 14% of the lands around Paris as formally recognized religious institutions.¹¹ Lastly, “in towns where there are several convents belonging to the same order, there be only one” and convents with less than 12 residents were to be abolished. Of all the abolished convents, their resources and income were to be given to the king.

⁹ John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France: Volume 1: The Clerical Establishment and Its Social Ramifications*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). McManners presents an example where the 240 inhabitants in a village totaled a gross income of 11,000 livres. Of that total, the crown taxed 1,975 and the clergy took 2,400. While several examples show that the church taxed more than the crown in some instances, the crown still held a total sum of wealth larger than the Church’s. Important to note, it was a relatively small difference.

¹⁰ “Attack on Seigneurial Duties,” *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité: Exploring the French Revolution*, accessed April 23, 2022. Any church member benefiting from more than one position must be made to choose a single position within a fixed period.

¹¹ McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, 99.

Logically, it made no sense for multiple convents of the same order to operate within the same jurisdiction, nor should convents with such few residents have the same benefits as larger ones. The third estate recognized this specific instance where the Church was finding every opportunity to tax as much as possible. It is clear from this source that by 1789, the third estate was choosing to create reform that aligned with the economic aspects of their life and challenged the temporal power of the Church. A second takeaway is that the peasants, at least in this rural community, were more than ok with the king benefiting from changes where the Church suffered. There was a central principal in the French Old Regime where the king's rule was supported by God's will. The Church and its clergy were the only group allowed to interfere in any way with the king's divine right. Attacking the king's right could be seen as an attack on the Church's judgement and influence, but would that mean that supporting the king meant the opposite? As the *Attack on Seigneurial Duties* suggests, that was not the case. The Third Estate wanted the king to benefit, but that only came at the cost of the Church's gains.

The Church's leadership was comprised of members of the groups most threatened by the growing revolution and held the most to lose. The upper ranks of the Clergy were of noble origin and as mentioned earlier, the Church was in possession of the largest land holdings in France. This prestige allowed them access to the king that few others could obtain. The relationship between the Church and the monarchy meant the Church could continue to take advantage of their perks. By 1789, with the spirit of revolution spreading fast, even the Church was not immune to change. Instead, it would be targeted in the next few years and the laity of the Third Estate would have to make the decision of choosing loyalty to their religious foundations represented through the church, or choosing the rights and freedoms offered to them through the Revolution.

Much of the initial reform pushed by the National Assembly was directed at the Catholic Church. The Church represented a pillar of the Old Regime and “in attacking the Church, [the National Assembly] helped to sap the foundations of the old Monarchy.”¹² On August 4, 1789, the National Assembly convened to initiate real change once and for all. They held a meeting that lasted into the next day, and from it came the decree of August 4. The decree had several significant limitations and, while not only aimed at the Catholic Church, the consequences would prove significant for the clergymen. The articles of the decree begin with the formal abolishment of the feudal system and the termination of seigneurial dues and tithes. As stated earlier, these three benefits were crucial in allowing the Church to amass the wealth that they did in the Old Regime. The significance of these articles is not only that they neutralize the clergy’s benefits, but that it brings down the clergymen’s status to a level on par with every other citizen. After the decree, every official of the Catholic Church would now be taxed the same as citizens of the Third Estate, and any citizen in the state could now hold a clerical position, regardless of the class into which they are born. Added motivation came from the thought that implementation of strict regulations on the Church and confiscation of its resources could lead to dissolving the national debt, which had increased between 8 to 12 billion livres by 1789.¹³ According to Michael P. Fitzsimmons, the 200-year-old status quo by which the Church operated in France was too engrained in societal culture for reform to ever be greeted with anything other than contempt by the clergy. Fitzsimmons concluded that although the National Assembly had a spirit of reform and progress in mind, it was received by many in the Church as “revolutionary anticlericalism,” and in turn the clerics’ decision

¹² J. M. O’Sullivan, “The Gallican Church and the National Assembly,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (1912): 52–64. The “Gallican” church refers to the Catholic Church in France before the French Revolution. It represents the institutional nature of the clergy and its ties to the Old Regime.

¹³ “The long and short reasons for why the revolution broke out in France in 1789,” Swansea University.

to seek the Pope's opinion on the matter was seen as a retaliation against the National Assembly¹⁴. This decree was only the beginning of the Assembly's plan to bring down the Church's institutional nature and reduce its influence over the Third Estate.

In August 1789, the National Assembly formally passed seventeen articles of legislation known as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen¹⁵. To thousands of Frenchmen, this document represented the very foundation of the French Revolution. Article 3 reads, "No body and no individual may exercise authority which does not emanate expressly from the Nation." On the surface, this does not necessarily stand out as a direct attack on the Church. However, the distinction between *body* and *individual* is important because it refers to an organized body, an institution, such as the Catholic Church who used a built-up reputation and wealth to exert an authority over the population for centuries. Now, when you understand that this Declaration provided civil liberties to citizens in a way they had not seen before, you can begin to see how specific details within the declaration could be problematic for the Church. Especially when considering that the Church would be in violation of these civil liberties had they been previously in place. Newly formalized civil liberties included the right to religious freedom, fair taxation, and public office appointments. These three liberties stood out because of what they meant to the Church. The first would allow citizens the opportunity to seek spiritual guidance elsewhere, especially in the coming years when the division inside the Church would become much more prominent and its effects would leak out and begin to affect the laity's religious practices. As noted earlier, communities of peasants and members of the Third Estate were beginning to demand changes regarding how they were being taxed, with specific challenges aimed at the privileges of

¹⁴ Michael P. Fitzsimmons, *The Night the Old Regime Ended: August 4, 1789, and the French Revolution*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ National Assembly, "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, 26 August 1789," *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité: Exploring the French Revolution*.

the Church¹⁶. The Catholic Church would not have gained the wealth and influence they gained in the centuries leading up to the Revolution had there been stricter tax regulations in place.

The right to public office, regardless of birth status was one of the more critical changes passed by the National Assembly. The *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* allowed laity in the Third Estate the opportunity to gain positions in the clergy never before realized. To build upon that, one of the conditions in the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* opened up the selection of church officials to be made by an election committee. This was significant because not only did members of the selection committee not have to have an official connection to the church, but they also did not even have to be Catholic¹⁷. This would directly infringe upon the Pope's power because, the Pope had sole control of appointing members of the clergy. Falling in line with institutional systems previously in place, officials were able to build up their own individual wealth as well as adding to the Church's. After these reforms, with the power of appointment stripped from the Pope and selections more likely to be made based on merit, church officials would be held to a higher level of accountability. Church officials would now also be considered state agents and public officials as opposed to religious officials, hence the term "patriotic" priests used to label those that swore the Oath. Cahiers from early 1789 show us that members of the Third Estate had begun to voice their displeasure with matters of public office¹⁸. A parish cahier from a community in Aix-en-Provence, a city in southern France, lists grievances with the lack of opportunity that the lower communities had in reaching a certain status compared to the nobility, "the nobility empties the royal treasury, the Third Estate fills it up." Their primary argument was that in depriving a group of people as large as the Third Estate the opportunity to serve in office was a

¹⁶ Petitioners, "Attack on Seigneurial Duties."

¹⁷ Malcolm Crook, "Citizen Bishops: Episcopal Elections in the French Revolution," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 4 (2000) 955-976

¹⁸ "Cahiers—A Parish Cahier," *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité: Exploring the French Revolution*.

disservice not only to them, but to the nation itself, “To deprive a State of the genius that could enlighten, instruct, and defend it, is a crime toward the nation.”

The next step came in 1790 with the passing of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. On July 12, the National Assembly passed the constitution containing four titles, each with varying articles describing in detail the changes to be made to the institutional status of the Catholic church¹⁹. The titles limited the number of bishops from 135 to 83 by decreasing the number of districts that required a bishop. Next, the power to appoint bishops and priests into office was taken from the Pope and instead an electoral process was implemented that opened the election committee to be made up of individuals regardless of their class status or religious distinction, meaning that electoral committee members did not have to be Catholic. Lastly, the location and jurisdiction of bishops and priests was called into question. The law requiring church officials to remain in the territory where their parish was located and not be absent too long from that location led me to believe that officials were spending too much time away from parishes. Perhaps that they were even living full time in other areas. It makes sense that a church official be held accountable to remain near the locals that he serves. When you put this in the context of the laity and the rest of the Third Estate being pressured between supporting the Church or supporting reform, seeing that Church officials take advantage of their positions makes it easier to push for revolution.

Now with the foundation provided by the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* and the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*, the citizens’ goals were much more realistic. They could seek to foster change and improvements in the nation that affected not only their political and economic lives, but, just as importantly, their religious lives as well. In 1790, Parisian journals and newspapers argued both for and against the ongoing changes to the institutional nature of the

¹⁹ “Civil Constitution of the Clergy, 1790,” *Hanover Historical Texts Project*.

Church. Specifically, the aspect of the Civil Constitution that sought to confiscate church lands and use them to decrease and eliminate a substantial portion of the French national debt. On March 30, journal *La Gazette de Paris* published their support for the Church and its ability to keep their lands, status, and overall influence. All while simultaneously criticizing the National Assembly:

*the nation's justice must necessarily grant to the clergy the means of effecting this operation, which would immediately provide for the deficit in the finances ... People, it is you that we wish to convince, since no part of the nation has suffered as much as you. See how they [the National Assembly] have contributed to your misfortune, instead of accepting the offer that would have cured so many ills.*²⁰

The journal is referring to the fact that church officials offered to assist in relieving some of the nation's financial hardship by paying "a quarter" of its wealth for 20 years. They also highlight in the source that the National Assembly is too caught up in trying to attack the Church that it has lost sight of their initial goal of helping improve conditions for the population. Before this, *La Gazette* speaks to the significance of the church and of religion in general by arguing that any absence of the two would lead to vulnerability in the safety and peace of the realm. Speaking on the fact that in times of need, the Church and its officials have always provided support to struggling communities. They give the Church the benefit of the doubt, meaning that they rely on the Church's sympathetic nature and fulfillment of their Catholic duties, while the National Assembly seeks to confiscate resources and distribute none of them to those that truly need them. In contrast, radical Parisian newspaper *Les Revolutions de Paris*, printed their support for stricter legislation and limiting the power of the Church. Their issue reads, "THE REIGN OF THE PRESTS HAS PASSED. If the clergy were less concerned with their past glory and wealth, if they did not wish to foment civil war at any possible price, they would no longer resist the lawful will

²⁰ "A Paris Journal Opposes Church Lands Seizures (1790) in *La Gazette de Paris*," *Alpha History*.

of the nation.”²¹ The specific language used in this piece emphasizes my argument that the people of France were beginning to see the Church as an institutional oppressor and they recognized that the wealth held by the Church was used in opposition to the Catholic gospel. The end of their *reign* is shouted with excitement. A reign that saw much of the population subjected to wrongful taxation and limitations on civil liberties. The *will of the nation* is especially important in this excerpt because it shows that people were now feeling represented, and that the “nation” was a unified body of people in a revolutionary mindset with newly minted civil liberties, and for the Church to resist reform was to resist the people themselves. There was an understanding in the distinction between those liberties and an expected religious devotion.

While the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* sought to formally make the Catholic Church an agent of the state, making it and its officials subject to state law, it did not have nearly the same effect on diminishing the Church’s institutional nature as the Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791²². The Ecclesiastic Oath created tension within the Church itself and seeing that disfunction further diminished the trust that the laity would have in its trusted religious officials. The *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* was passed on July 12, 1790, but the clergy expressed so much opposition to it that on November 27, 1790, the National Assembly put forth a requirement that all the Church’s officials swear an oath of loyalty to the state. In effect, any official swearing this oath also indirectly agreed to the changes being made to the Church’s infrastructure and order. Revolutionary historians Timothy Tackett and Joseph F. Byrnes have studied the effects that the Civil Constitution had on the clergy as individuals, and they also study the justifications and psychology that went into the decision. Tackett makes is a point of emphasis that just because

²¹ “A Paris Newspaper on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790) in Les Revolutions de Paris,” *Alpha History*.

²² The Ecclesiastic Oath was passed by the National Assembly as a response to the backlash they were receiving from un-cooperative clergymen.

some clerics may agree in their decisions, the reasons for their decisions are not uniform or monolithic and concludes that while their reasonings are not all the same on either side, the two sides do share a similarity.²³ Specifically, those clergymen who opposed the Oath tend to see themselves as a “servant of God” and thus see the Civil Constitution as the State wrongfully imposing their jurisdiction on matters of faith. On the other hand, Tackett argued that those clergymen who agreed with the Oath tend to see themselves as a “servant of mankind” and are subject to fulfilling their patriotic role in society, as the state deems fit. Byrnes builds upon Tackett’s work in 2014 and focuses on the idea that their “priestly commitment” is the deciding factor behind their behavior.²⁴ The commitments they made are dependent on which Church they believed to be rightful, the Church of the Revolution or the Church of the Old Regime, in other words the Constitutional vs the Gallican. Byrnes concluded that the divide created by the National assembly within the Church was too much of a divide to remedy because older clerics were creating issues within local dioceses.

While they highlight the effect on the bishops and priests, I argue that the formation of the Constitutional Church by way of the Ecclesiastic Oath had a more profound effect on the laity and the members in the surrounding parishes.²⁵ It is one thing to have internal tension between “refractory and patriotic” officials, but the fact that the Church held so much significance in the lives of the people meant that the disfunction going on within the Church, was causing opposition outside of it.²⁶ These reforms against the Church were alienating devout French citizens and

²³ Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791*.

²⁴ Byrnes, *Priests of the French Revolution: Saints and Renegades in a New Political Era*.

²⁷“Constitutional Church,” Oxford Reference. The Constitutional Church refers to the Church established during the French Revolution, because of the changes and reforms by the National Assembly and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The Clergy were those that swore the Ecclesiastic Oath and is referred to as “Constitutional” because it is known to be the state’s reformed church.

²⁶ Refractory and Patriotic priests were common terms used by John McManners and other historians in distinguishing clergy based on if they swore the Ecclesiastic Oath. Refractory priests did not swear the Oath, Patriotic

creating a group of people that sided against the Revolution. Armond-Gaston Camus, a contributing author of the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* and member of the National Assembly foresaw a possible division among the laity.²⁷ Camus attempted to reassure the laity and the Third Estate that there would be no division within the Church and thus, there would be no need for themselves to overreact. Camus was wrong as the division caused between juring and non-juring officials was too much for the effect not to be felt by the citizens of France.

The Church, the State, and the laity had to deal with the separation caused by the legislation issued in 1789 and 1790. In 1791, the Legislative Assembly had replaced the National Assembly.²⁸ A governing body that drafted a constitution and, from its point of view, abolished institutional inequalities of the *Ancient Regime*. Presumably, the Revolution was thought to be over. That was not the case, as in 1792 hostility against the nonjuring priests of the Old Regime reached new heights. The Legislative Assembly voted to deport any priests that had not sworn the Oath, or priests that later retracted it.²⁹ The spirit of the Revolution was alive and well. While the changes initiated years earlier by the National Assembly were met by both support and opposition, by 1792 reform had turned radical. It was no longer enough for the Church to be an agent of the State or for citizens in the laity to have declared rights and a constitution.

In September of 1792, outraged by radical propaganda, food shortages, and a growing fear of Prussian invasions, mobs of Parisians marched into a prison holding refractory clergymen and slaughtered nearly three hundred former clerics.³⁰ The mob received news that the Prussian army

priests did and were considered “patriots” by the National Assembly. Joseph F. Byrnes refers to them as “Saints and Renegades.”

²⁷ David C. Miller, “A.-G. Camus and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy,” in *The Catholic Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1990): 481–505.

²⁸ “The Legislative Assembly,” *Alpha History*.

²⁹ “The Assembly Deports Non-Juring Priests,” *Alpha History*.

³⁰ Nicolas–Edme Restif de la Bretonne “The September Massacres,” *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité: Exploring the French Revolution*.

would gather support from groups of Parisians who opposed the Revolution, the refractory clergy was a prime target. The mob of people wanted to make sure that didn't happen. This would eventually prove to be only the beginning of an increased radical nature for the Revolution. Stemming from the National Assembly's legislation, the Church was portrayed as the ultimate enemy. An institutional oppressor that had shown throughout history and through recent reactions that its best interest did not always align with the population's. This sentiment of animosity held by the population and expressed in the documents I've studied would carry over into an era of the Revolution known as the Terror. An era beginning in 1793 that saw a dechristianization in France that took religious reforms to the extremes and would not be resolved until the following decade.³¹ The laity above all carried the brunt of the effects in their transition to obtaining *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*.

³¹ William Roberts, "Napoleon, the Concordat of 1801, and Its Consequences," in *Controversial Concordats: The Vatican's Relations with Napoleon, Mussolini, and Hitler*, ed. Frank J. Coppa, (Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 34-80.

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“*Eh ! bien mon fils, j'avais raison de dire, qu'il falloit mieux être citoyen - qu'abbée : [estampe]*.” 1790, etching, 16.5 x 24.5 cm, in *Images of the French Revolution*, <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/frenchrevolution/catalog/mk124wp0561>

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