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The Early 'Republic of France' as a Cosmopolitan Moment

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Introduction

- 1 On 26 August 1792, two weeks after the fall of royalty and as elections for a Convention that would determine the new political regime of France were underway, in one of its last acts, the *Assemblée nationale législative* passed a decree granting French citizenship to eighteen British, American, Italian, German, Swiss, and Dutch publicists and politicians, reasoning that:

men, who, through their writings and courage, have served the cause of liberty and furthered the emancipation of peoples, cannot be regarded as foreigners by a nation made free by its enlightenment and its courage;
[...] if five years of residency in France are enough to grant a foreigner the title of French citizen, this title is more justly owed to those who, whatever the soil they inhabit, have dedicated their arms and their watch to the defence of the cause of the people against the despotism of the kings, to banish prejudices from the earth, and to remove the limits of human knowledge.¹
- 2 As Suzanne Desan aptly analysed, this decree tied together the different sources upon which the French Republic was founded: enlightened cosmopolitanism as expressed in the public sphere, the defence of universal human rights, and the legitimacy of fighting a defensive war against Prussian and Austrian invaders.² But perhaps more importantly, by passing this decree, the National Assembly's aim was to make sure that the future Republic would be framed as a universal project. In this sense, the French Republic was truly founded on 26 August 1792 (and perhaps not on 21 September) as a true cosmopolitical project, a *cosmopolitique*.³
- 3 One of those who first identified the influence of the Atlantic Republican tradition and its cosmopolitanism on the French Revolution was the Irish-born, liberal imperialist Edmund Burke. From its start, he denounced and opposed what he saw as the dangerous 'truly democratical' spirit behind the French Revolution. Burke was

frightened by the spectre of the English Civil War, the 'levelling' attack against property, tradition, and all established political and religious institutions.⁴ He articulated these fears in the highly influential pamphlet *Reflections on the Revolution of France* (1791) wherein the 'Revolution of France' was identified as the most recent incarnation of a larger and longer 'cursed' tradition of democratic republicanism, which was synonymous with the levelling he feared and abhorred.⁵

- 4 Recent historiography has shown that the French Revolution owed much of its initial impetus to transnational, transatlantic and trans-Channel developments.⁶ Likewise, since J. G. A. Pocock's seminal study of the Atlantic republican tradition, historians have complexified the genealogies of republicanism, demonstrating that France was not outside the circulation of republican ideas, which was accelerated in the second half of the eighteenth century, and that it was necessary to take into account other political traditions—from the Athenian model to the Salamanca school of natural rights and resistance against tyranny—that have informed the different strands of republicanism.⁷ Indeed, as Clément Thibaud recently pleaded, a 'polycentric' history of 'Atlantic republicanism' is needed to avoid the pitfalls of exceptionalism, diffusionist models and linear genealogies.⁸ However, it is the argument of this article that a coherent republican tradition existed, circulating across the Atlantic world, from which actors drew references and ideas that informed their worldviews and activities. To put it more clearly, we do not reify the idea of a single Atlantic republican tradition. Rather, we posit that republicanism was a reservoir of different ideas and languages, among which was an 'advanced' or 'radical' tradition, kept alive especially within the anglophone world since the English civil war of the seventeenth century. As Burke correctly identified, this tradition informed the French Revolution from its very inception but its apex came perhaps with the advent of the Republic in 1792.
- 5 We focus here on the English republican tradition, justified in this approach by the fact that among the eighteen recipients of French citizenship on 26 August 1792, ten were from the English-speaking world, and that, on 25 September 1792, another act, this time voted by the newly founded Republican Convention, extended the list of recipients to five other British (Thomas Cooper, John Horne Tooke, John Oswald, Thomas Christie, Joseph Warner), while American poet and diplomat Joel Barlow was naturalized French in January-February 1793.⁹ As we will demonstrate, several Irishmen also loomed prominently in this circle. Moreover, authors like James Harrington, Algernon Sidney, John Milton and Thomas Gordon were read and discussed in France in the pre-revolutionary years as well as during the Revolution.¹⁰
- 6 The American Revolution also figured prominently as a source of inspiration, with Thomas Paine bridging the English, American, and French scenes.¹¹ In the 1790s, Americans frequently looked to revolutionary activities in France and repression of political associations in Britain as a mirror of political realities at home. American historians too often treat the influence of the French Revolution on American politics as a foreign contagion of radicalism, a perspective which obscures the deep ideological connections between the American and French Revolutions, as well as the transnational character of the popular republicanism of the period. This republican tradition also included an antislavery strain, which linked the seventeenth-century fight for liberty against political slavery with the fight against chattel slavery. The momentous French emancipation decree of 1794 marked the culmination of a long struggle against unfree labour, erupting from below, in the Atlantic world and

proclaimed to all that the Republic shall extend to black people as well as white people. Neither French citizenship nor the 'rights of man' were to be bound by colour, at least for a time.¹²

- 7 This article therefore aims to observe the birth and development of the 'Republic of France' through a Burkean lens, though not with alarmist eyes, but as a radical cosmopolitan project, with deep roots in an Atlantic tradition where a number of actors from the anglophone world played key roles as perhaps their political history made them better equipped to identify the stakes behind the events of 1792 in France. They invested their energy, hopes and aspirations in France, viewing it as crucial to making the Republic of their dreams a reality, one that included all nations, even the entire world—the 'universal Republic' of the 'citizens of the world'. Rather than characterizing these figures as 'foreigners' recognized by the French Republic, reversing the perspective put forward by this thematic issue of *La Révolution française*, we suggest that, in a sense, it was France that was an outsider—'foreign' to the Atlantic Republic—until it fully entered the community in the late eighteenth century. The implications are manifold: as the revolutionaries themselves recognised that they were part of a larger political space, foreign issues were defined differently than they would later be (i.e. politically and not by birth), most notably after the conservative and reactionary turns of the second half of the 1790s on both sides of the Atlantic. To shed light on this brief 'cosmopolitan moment', first, the founding of the Republic in France in September 1792 will be examined through the lens of one prominent English republican, John Hurford Stone, allowing us to demonstrate that, to the heirs of the English radical republican tradition, it revived their political ideals. Second, it will be argued that far from being a regression from the cosmopolitan (Girondine) project, the Republic during the Montagnard Convention of 1793-1794 continued the experiment to build an inclusive, egalitarian political space in opposition to the British imperial model, identified as a crime against humanity by the French National Convention. Third, we will discuss how the backlash both in England and in the United States against this cosmopolitan project—and its eventual triumph—in 1794-1802, marked a retreat from universalism, thus explaining the prevalent confusion that persists to this day about the origins of nationalism.

'Citizens of the World' and the 'Cause' of the 'Republic of France'

- 8 The correspondence of John Hurford Stone is especially valuable in understanding the crucial months before and after the founding of the French Republic, particularly in regards to the status of foreigners and naturals. This chronological sequence, and particularly its centerpiece, the decree of 26 August 1792, has already been studied by historians, but, excepting Michael Rapport, few have used Stone's letters to his elder brother William, who had remained in London.¹³
- 9 Mostly dealing with business matters, sometimes written hastily, partly in illegible handwriting and with numerous uses of shorthand, these letters were seized by the English government on 3 May 1794 when the King's Messengers arrested William Stone at his home at Old Ford near London. This took place in the wake of the arrest, on 28 April, of the French-Irish spy William Jackson, with whom Stone had been associated, which initiated the crackdown against British and Irish radicals.¹⁴ These

letters provide an invaluable window into the circle of American, British and Irish republicans who identified as 'citizens of the world' and resided in France in 1792-1793. They participated in the establishment of the Republic there, displaying how, in the eyes of Stone and his fellow republican expatriates, the developments in France were part of a larger struggle.

A Friend of the 'Revolution of France' in a Republican Conspiracy¹⁵

- 10 A coal merchant in London and member of Richard Price's Unitarian congregation, John Hurford Stone was also a friend of Joseph Priestley and shared Price's and Priestley's radical political ideas.¹⁶ Having sojourned in France from before July 1789 to December 1789, he probably witnessed the start of the French Revolution.¹⁷ In 1790, as a member of the London Revolution Society, he had presided over the reception of two delegates from the Jacobin Club of Nantes. He was also a member of the Society of the Friends of the People, signing its inaugural address.¹⁸ In 1792, after another sojourn in France in 1791, he frequented the London home of the French diplomat Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, along with the British radical Whig leaders Charles James Fox and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, as well as French liberal revolutionaries linked with the Duke of Orléans, including Madame de Genlis and her wards, Adélaïde, the daughter of Philippe Egalité, and Pamela, the putative daughter of the duke and of Genlis. He was also in correspondence with Girondin leader Jérôme Pétion.¹⁹ Stone and his wife, Rachel Coope, came to Paris on 18 April 1792, as Stone hoped to use his connections with the Girondins now in government in France to establish a sal ammoniac manufacture to furnish the armies of France at war with Austria and Prussia, linking his business interests with his political sympathies.²⁰ Stone was clearly a transnational friend of the French Revolution from its very beginning, much like Helen Maria Williams, whom he met in Paris (though he probably knew her before) and with whom he had a romantic liaison.²¹ Stone presided over the dinner at White's Hotel on 18 November 1792, attended by a circle of British, American, and Irish political expatriates, which was both a staged public event and a front for the more covert activities of the 'Society of the English, Scottish and Irish resident and domiciled in Paris' or, as it called itself from January 1793, the 'Société des Amis des Droits de l'Homme' (SADH), improperly known as the 'British Club'. On this occasion, in a series of rousing toasts, the SADH linked the defence of the Republic of France with the fight for universal emancipation, the 'universal Republic', including women and, in an indirect manner, slaves. This dinner was the culminating moment of a transatlantic and trans-Channel dialogue between radical clubs and it must be read together with the passing, the next day, of the (in)famous decree of 19-November (voted by the Convention under Grégoire's presidency), promising help and fraternity to all peoples who would rise up to claim their liberty.²²
- 11 During the 1796 trial against William Stone, his brother's allegiance to France was provided as evidence that William was, at the very least, flirting with treasonable practices. John's use of the pronoun 'we' to designate France and the French armies was seen as a proof that he had become 'devoted to the interests of the French, considering himself as the subject of France, considering himself as affected by all the interests which that Country had against this Country'.²³ Yet, this interpretation is partly fallacious because John was already using this pronoun before the war between France and England.²⁴ For instance, writing from the French army camp near Verdun on

14 October 1792 that, 'we are at this moment about to enter Verdun' and this was not an isolated case.

- 12 Stone's identification with France was not a defection from Britain to France. It must be interpreted in the context of his political creed. Comparing it with the address that the English, Scottish and Irish residents in Paris wrote to the Convention on 24 November 1792 and presented at the bar on 28 November shows that the use of 'we' by Stone did not signify his allegiance to France in particular but rather to the republican project—the Atlantic Republic. Composed by Irish journalist David Evans MacDonnel at the head of a committee of fifteen designated by all the guests at the dinner at White's, the address is nonetheless in John Hurford Stone's handwriting.²⁵ The beginning of the text of the address confirms the idea that France was fighting for a greater cause:

The British and Irish citizens now in Paris, animated by the sentiment of liberty which your principles have imparted to the French republic, assembled [...] to celebrate the brilliant successes of your arms, and were unanimously of opinion that it was their duty to offer to the representatives of so great a nation the tribute of their congratulations on events which essentially interest all peoples who aspire to be free.²⁶

- 13 The anglophone expatriates organised the dinner at White's in order to celebrate not French victories per se but the fact that the 'Republic of France' was to survive, thanks to the victory at Jemappes on 6 November, which would not have been possible had its armies lost, and with her, the horizon of expectation of the 'universal republic' that the guests called for with their finale toast.²⁷ Their use of the term 'citizens', rather than subjects, connoted an identification with a transatlantic republican project.
- 14 This idea is echoed in Edward FitzGerald's correspondence. Having followed Thomas Paine to Paris in October to see the Revolution for himself, he signed his letters 'Citoyen Edouard Fitzgerald', publicly renounced his aristocratic title, and interpreted the military victories of France as part of a broader global struggle when writing to his mother:

I am delighted with the manner they feel their success, no foolish boasting or arrogance at it, imputing all to the greatness & goodness of their cause and seeming to rejoice more at it on account of its effect on Europe in general than for their own individual glory. [...] All their pamphlets, all their pieces, all their Songs extol their success but as the effect of the principle they are contending for and rejoice at their success as the cause of humanity.²⁸

- 15 France's cause was the cause of humanity, and the anglophone 'foreigners' had gathered in Paris at this momentous occasion with a keen awareness of what was at stake. France was fighting for the 'cause of freedom' or the 'cause of humanity'. The address of the SADH to the National Convention was unambiguous:

It doubtless appertained to the French nation to enfranchise Europe, and we rejoice to see it fulfilling its great destinies. Let us hope that the victorious troops of liberty will lay down their arms only when there are no more tyrants or slaves.

Of all these pretended governments, works of the fraud of priests and coalesced tyrants, there will soon remain only a shameful memory. Peoples enlightened by your example will blush to have bowed servile heads so long under a yoke debasing for human nature.²⁹

- 16 The classical republican language is here mixed with Painite language in its reading of a struggle between the people and kings, aristocracy and 'priestcraft', highlighting the redefinition that republicanism was undergoing as it became increasingly democratic.

- 17 The letters of John Hurford Stone reveal that his circle of republicans had long waited for the events of 1792 to unfold. On 26 April 1792, commenting on the spirit of the people regarding the war, he noted their 'ardour' but ominously added: 'if a defeat should take place, I fear that not a little blood of the aristocrats would flow in this place'. In fact, the treason of the French Court, more particularly the behaviour of Louis XVI relating to the war against Austria and Prussia, was perceived as an opportunity to bring forth a republic in France. On 9 May, after the retreat of the French armies before Tournai on 29 April, he wrote to his brother:

You [illegible] have seen [in] the papers that the French met not only with defeat but with dishonor in the attacks both of Tournay & Mons [...]. Mr. Rabaut de St Etienne called on me. The mystery of the defeat is cleared up by the certain knowledge of the treason of the court. The King and Queen were much acquainted with the intended operations & the Austrian Court were soon informed. Some strong measures are about to be resolved & you must not be surprised to hear something very extraordinary soon [...] from all that I can see that France will not exist [as] a Monarchy if the campaign continues [until] the End of the Summer. I believe it is almost finished – for the Treason has been pretty effectual.

- 18 In the following days, on 16 May, Stone anticipated what would then happen:

The minds of the people are very ill [...] with respect to the King's perfidy. They are convinced of the treason the Tuilleries [sic] & little more is wanting to make them in their own language 'send away their King'.

- 19 On 24 May, he even hinted at a conspiracy aimed at overthrowing royalty in France:

You will see what was done in the Assembly yesterday. There is no possible doubt of the [Treason] of the Court & the determination is making with gigantic strides [three words crossed out] to its utter extirpation. It is a thing not publicly talked of & they want only a [favorable?] circumstance to put it into execution. The Court has not a single [like?] in the minds of the people.

- 20 Referring in this last letter to the denunciation by the deputies Jean-Pierre Brissot and Armand Gensonné of the Austrian Committee, in which the former minister Armand Marc de Montmorin was implicated, Stone appears as an intimate of the Girondins leaders, privy to their secrets, and calls them the 'republican party'.³⁰ This last point is by no means anecdotal, because it shows that Stone identified the Girondins as fellow republicans. The importance of this self-identification must be read in relation with the events since 1791, with the flight to Varennes of Louis XVI, which, as Raymonde Monnier has demonstrated, was the first true republican moment in France with a surge in the rhetoric of tyrannicide.³¹ Thomas Paine had then played a key-role in advocating a republic for France, placarding with general Achille Duchâtelet his proclamation of the republic in the streets of Paris, publishing the first and only issue of *Le Républicain* (with Condorcet, Bonneville and Lanthenas), and sparking a debate with the Abbé Sieyès.³² Paine's contribution to the founding of the Republic of France was therefore not merely one of a 'foreigner' or outsider to the French Revolution, quite the contrary. Thomas Paine and other 'foreign' 'apostles of liberty' were, in this regard, founding fathers of the Republic in France, a role that the election of Paine and Priestley at the National Convention in September 1792 would confirm.
- 21 In accord with Thomas Paine's view that, first with the American Revolution and then with the Revolution of France, an "age of revolutions" had appeared, the SADH address reveals that its signatories placed their hopes for a universal cosmopolitan republic in France.³³ As France was becoming a republic, it could then republicanise the whole of Europe, including the Three Kingdoms:

Our good wishes, citizen legislators, render us impatient to see the happy moment of this great change, in the hope that it will no sooner arrive than we shall see the formation of a close union between the French republic and the English, Scotch, and Irish nations, a union which cannot fail to ensure entire Europe the enjoyment of the rights of man and establish on the firmest bases universal peace.³⁴

22 Indeed, in another (secret) document, a memorandum Paine wrote with Edward FitzGerald in order to mobilise a revolution in Ireland, which would trigger revolutions in Scotland and England, Paine used the expression 'chain of revolutions', and France was to be the catalyst.³⁵ The cosmopolity at play here was therefore first the survival of the Republic of France, then its alliance with the revolutionised and republicanised Three Kingdoms which in turn would allow for a European and even world-project—a true universalism.

23 This struggle between liberty and tyranny interested many foreigners who witnessed it. It was reflected at a more personal level between Stone and Colonel Barnaste Talerton. The Austrian and Prussian armies, led by the Duke of Brunswick, were fast advancing in France, and

there are some here who think that [Brunswick] will effect his passage – amongst them is Col. Tarleton. I dined with him yesterday & he [...] offered to give me a Guinea a day till they came, to receive fifty. I agreed. (10 September)

24 While this wager between two English gentlemen could seem to be merely anecdotal, it is in fact significant as these two men were radically opposed in their political philosophy: on the one hand, Stone was a Paineite democratic republican while Talerton was an infamous veteran of the American War of Independence who had fought at the head of his loyalist troops, and at the moment a Whig MP for Liverpool and an opponent of the abolition of slavery.³⁶ As the Republic was fighting for its very survival, the wager took on a new meaning. Writing from Verdun where he was hosted by Irish-born General Arthur Dillon, witnessing the campaign for himself, Stone explained it to his brother:

I have heard no account whatever from England of the reception which the news of the Prussian Retreat met with. I hope our continued success here has given different Views of our Courage & the Necessity of defending ourselves ag[ain]st any number of Foes. I am you know a little interested in this success. My wager with Tarleton is known throughout the whole Army, & the possibility of the Return of the Prussians is so little that Kellerman one day at dinner before the General Office of the Army offered me 1,000 louis d'or (our Pounds) to take it off my Hands as the wager is but for a distinct number of Times to be paid according to the Laws of Gambling. I did not accept it. (14 October)

25 Dining with the commanders of the French armies, Stone's bet on their success against a pro-slavery counterrevolutionary, at a critical moment and before the victory of Valmy, shows his commitment to the 'cause'—and how it endears him to the officers. Both at the global scale of a world struggle between liberty and tyranny and at the micro-scale of a wager between two Englishmen opposed in their sympathies, France therefore embodied the new champion of the Republic, i.e. a universal republic, supported by some, who were the heirs of the Atlantic republicanism, and opposed by others who perceived it as a bloody disruption of the political order

Interpreting the 10-August, the September Massacres, and the French Victories: Republican Propaganda and Ideological Clarifications

26 Public opinion in Britain and Ireland was therefore of a tremendous importance for all these republican patriots. They hoped that the peoples of England, Scotland and Ireland would sympathise with France because it was fighting for the cause of liberty. This is why the propaganda they aimed at their compatriots was essential. The Paine-Burke debate continued on both sides of the Channel, and when Burke denounced this transnational exchange of revolutionary ideas between corresponding societies, the republican patriots celebrated this 'commerce des lumières'.³⁷ Again, Stone's letters shed light onto these aspects.

27 Having come back to Paris just prior to the 10 August and the assault on the Tuileries that would eventually lead to the abolition of French royalty and the founding of the republic, he was worried about how public opinion on the other side of the Channel was informed of these events. Stone is especially angry at his acquaintance James Perry, the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, the newspaper of reference for all radicals and sympathisers with the French Revolution, which was also read by the Tories.³⁸ Perry should be his political ally in the ongoing propaganda war, and yet:

I should have been pleased to know what reception the News met with in England, though if I may judge from what I hear it could not be a very favorable one. Perry's first account is as infamously in fact as it is absurd in Reasoning. I have written to him to set them right, for I [am] astonished by what perversity he could have wandered so from the truth. (23 August 1792)

I cannot guess what public information you have in England, that you are not as fully apprized as we are of the Treasons of the Court – the list of Proscriptions, the payment of the Army at Coblenz [...]. Mr. Perry's correspondent [...] is a very silly fellow here. The defenders of the King, the Feuillants, 'knew of his maintaining troops at Coblenz & that he cherished the project of restoring all the abuses of the old Government' (see Morn. Ch. August 24th) after the variety of Oaths which he had taken to maintain the Constitution. Every reasonable person must now be convinced that he is a Criminal of the last order. (30 August 1792)

28 What is especially interesting is how Stone took care to ensure that his view of the events in France was displayed in the *Morning Chronicle*. The September Massacres led many erstwhile British sympathisers to distance themselves from the French Revolution and Stone tried to counter the negative image that was rapidly developing on the other side of the Channel. First, he attempted to justify what had happened:

I have written to the Morning Chronicle not so much to give them information of the Event or of the Causes & though I have been very free in my Censures & what I have written I shall be obliged to offer some Excuses [...]. I cannot surely justify these assassinations – yet I believe them necessary not much as a punishment to those who have suffered as an Example to others not to hazard a similar fate & thereby prevent a still [greater?] effusion of Blood.

I shall give Perry a letter or two more – I am glad the first I sent him had any effect but I had no intention he should publish it. I shall give a detailed account in the same manner next week which must be received by all my friends in London as if I had written individually to them. (6 September)

29 As his letters were evidently published in the radical newspaper, he expanded upon this idea in his next letter, explaining that the massacres were not a sudden burst of blind violence:

When I was here 4 Months since I was often told that the entrance of the Duke of Brunswick would be followed by the Murder of all the noted Aristocrats in the Kingdom & it is justified here that as the Court & those known supporters of all its measures & treasons are the cause of the calamities that were coming upon them, they at least should not have the satisfaction of seeing the triumph they had all along been preparing by their treason & treachery. I have written to Perry some account & made good excuses as I could but the measure will appear too savage to meet with any thing but reprobation. (10 September)

- 30 Stone's explanation was that the victims of the massacres were indeed traitors ('Conspirators') or 'criminals' (see below) who somehow deserve their fate, and that the fury of the people was justified. Stone doubted that this justification would be accepted in England, as he himself had trouble accepting what happened, blaming Robespierre and a 'detestable faction' for jeopardizing the soon-to-be republican government, writing that

Nothing however can excuse this exterminating mode which they have adopted & nothing I fear will so disserve the cause because the Government has decreed the means of bringing them to Punishment. You will see in my letter to Perry this horrible business has been neither the work of the Assembly, the national Guards, or the people [...]. The Fact is that about 110 or 150 have been the only perpetrators, the leaders of whom have been members of the commune council of Paris [...] who are the most desperate & determined enemies of all the constituted powers [...]. At the head of this detestable faction is Robespierre [...] who is not only the most ambitious of all men but also the most malignant [...]. (6 September)

- 31 Stone blamed Robespierre and the Commune not really for the massacres, which were necessary in his eyes, but for its disproportionate character, which could harm 'the cause'—proving that establishing a republic in France is possible. This is why Stone wrote to Perry (and through him to the English readership) his own first-hand account of the massacres to counter the images of anarchy and of a bloodbath that vindicated Burke's self-fulfilling prophecy, taking care to underline that it was only the work of a small cadre of individuals.
- 32 Indeed, another aspect upon which Stone insisted was the rationality and propriety (so to speak) of the proceedings. Of the 10-August, he wrote that, excepting the assault on the Tuileries, not a life was lost. 'I walk through the streets continually – am with the Mayor & the ministers & at the Nat[ional] Ass[embly] often, & am astonished at the Order & Peace which reigns everywhere' (20 August 1792). Likewise, he conveyed of the September Massacres: 'One would have thought that Paris on such a day should have presented dreadful scenes of outrage & Tumult. No such thing' (6 September). In so doing, Stone was trying to counter the ideological offensive that the English press launched against the regime in gestation, fixing the portrait of the French Jacobins and sans-culottes as bloodthirsty cannibals through powerful images which conjured up all the fantasies and nightmares prevalent in the English imagination.³⁹ This attempt at assuaging the fears of their compatriots is constant in the correspondence of the anglophone sympathisers as it related to the French Revolution.⁴⁰
- 33 Since the declaration of war, Stone had tried to convince the British public that they should side with France. He was anxious not to betray that perhaps those who supported France were a minority, which would damage his (and his fellow sympathisers') credibility in the eyes of the British public and of the French leaders. 'I see in the Morning Chronicle,' he noted, 'that no subscription are [*sic*] yet entered into to support the French. We should not be put forth such a sum as we could wish & the

smallness of it might betray our weakness' (9 May 1792). The 'friends of liberty' felt that they were a minority, and so they should convince public opinion to join their side. It really was an ideological and propaganda war, and the Republic was at the centre of the debate.

- 34 That the Republic was the great ideological divide in the Atlantic world is exemplified in the dinner at White's on 18 November and the subsequent presentation of the address to the Convention: Stone, as president, staged it as a public event to send forth a powerful message, aimed at convincing the educated public in Britain and Ireland of the righteousness of the French Republic, to put pressure on the British government to ally with France (and probably to incite a change of ministry). In this regard, the news of the dinner and especially the list of toasts that were made at this occasion were of crucial importance.⁴¹ The *Patriote français*, Brissot's newspaper, was the first to report it and to publish the toasts on 21 November, followed in quick succession by several French, English and Irish newspapers in a remarkable level of trans-Channel echo.⁴² The dispatch published in the *Morning Chronicle* is the longest and most detailed among them. It was most certainly written by Stone himself. Recounting the jovial affair, he observed 'the glow of honest enthusiasm which burst forth in wishes for the universal happiness of mankind, from the hearts of the Prussian, Austrian, Italian, American, French, Hollander and English, who were assembled on this joyful occasion'.⁴³
- 35 Insisting on the cosmopolitanism of the dinner, and framing the war that France was waging as a fight between humanity and its persecutors, Stone then listed the toasts themselves, specifying that three songs were performed: 'Ca ira' after the first toast, the 'Marseillois Song' with a 'chorus accompanied by music', and 'Oh homme mon frère'. According to the *Patriote français*, a song in English was sung on the air of the Marseillaise, perhaps by none other than Helen Maria Williams.⁴⁴ Stone had occasions to hear these songs and to be convinced by the enthusiasm they raised when he witnessed the retreat of the Prussians from Verdun and the ceremonial entry of the French troops into the city. He wrote that it was
- an Entry with some Pomp. The Music[ians] are preparing their Pipes to Ca Ira & the Colours are flying on the Hills whilst the soldiers are singing the Song of the Marseillois, the popular song throughout France, & are prevented with difficulty by their Commanders from falling on the Enemy's Army sent over against them. (14 October).
- 36 In this light, the presence of the orchestra of the German Legion (which performed the music), the military trophies, and diverse nationalities represented among the guests sent a message: the entire world was fighting, physically or in spirit, alongside the French in the cause of humanity, and this sentiment was expressed in songs of true enthusiasm that made them irresistible. The dinner at White's was another battle that Stone and his fellow 'apostles of liberty' fought in the war for liberty.
- 37 One of the toasts at the dinner provoked a controversy on both sides of the Channel. The affair of the cancelled toast reveals the central issue behind the founding of the Republic of France in an Atlantic perspective as well as the underlying layers of meaning behind the republican ideology that informed the activities of the SADH. In the *Patriote français* of 21 November, which first reported the dinner at White's, the list of toasts was published, and several prominent figures were celebrated: Edward FitzGerald and Robert Smith—because of their renunciation of their noble title—, Thomas Paine—for his writings which the English Bench's Court had condemned as seditious—, the 'ladies of Great Britain [...] who distinguished themselves by their

writings in favor of the French revolution, H. M. Williams. Miss Barbault', the 'ladies of France who took up arms in the defence of the cause of liberty' (women-citizen-soldiers), and the 'patriots of England [...] Fox, Sheridan, Cooper, Barler [Barlow], Tooke, Mackintosh'.⁴⁵

- 38 This last was the cause of a rebuttal, written by John Oswald as secretary of the 'Société des Anglais, Ecosais et Irlandais réunis chez le restaurateur White', to the *Patriote français* on 26 November:

we did not drink this toast, as we could have not done so without falling into a striking absurdity. Assembled to celebrate the rapid progress of the eternal principles of liberty and equality, how could we even think of toadyism toward the leaders of any party? How could we pronounce the names of Fox, Sheridan and Mackintosh?⁴⁶

- 39 In doing so, the SADH clearly drew the battle lines of ideological warfare: on the one side stood the true patriots, defenders of liberty and committed to the republic; on the other side those who were compromised with a 'party', in this case who participated in the parliamentary monarchy of England. The SADH repudiated the British model of the 'balanced Constitution of King, Lords and Commons' as incompatible with liberty, thereby breaking away from 'classical' or rather Whig republicanism.⁴⁷

- 40 This public break had been preceded by a more private one a few weeks earlier, on the occasion of the decree of 26 August 1792. Two days earlier, Marie-Joseph Chénier, 'at the head of several citizens from Paris', had presented a petition to the National Assembly, which declared that they wanted to gather a 'congress of the entire world' in Paris, comprised of all the 'apostles of liberty'. The names of the 'citizens of the world, born on the fertile soil of the British isles and North America' that he proposed were: Paine, Maddison, Priestley, Mackintosh, John Horne Tooke, Wilberforce, James Napper Tandy, and William Bolts. Marc David Lasource and Claude Basire were reticent. François Chabot replied to their opposition:

[Priestley] and Wilberforce and others [...] have fought against the foreign powers in favour of French liberty; they fulfilled toward these powers an even greater mission: to propagate the principles of liberty in their Empire, and to teach to tyrants and to the people that insurrection is the most sacred of duties [...]. When Priestley was fighting for the French Revolution, for the Declaration of Rights, he exposed himself to the rage of the English despots. Everything speaks in favour of this cosmopolitan and therefore French man.

- 41 Guadet also counters Basire's arguments:

Does he [Basire] know that Wilberforce pleaded for the cause of the slaves with an energy that would make cupidity blush? Does he know that Priestley taught men the secret of their strength? Does he know, finally, that Thomas Payne taught nations the secret of the weakness of the kings?⁴⁸

- 42 Once more, the principles of cosmopolitanism are clearly outlined in this exchange: to be a 'citizen of the world' is to fight, whether through force of arms or of words, for liberty and against tyrants and kings, and to emancipate slaves. Republicanism, this ever-shifting place of debates, has received a new definition.⁴⁹ The Assembly decided that the list of future nominees would be examined by the Committee of Instruction. Two days later, the decree was passed. Horne Tooke, Napper Tandy and Bolts were not included among the recipients. There is no source which would shed light as to how the committee decided to include or exclude names and for what reasons. Perhaps the exclusion of Napper Tandy and Horne Tooke was decided in order to avoid antagonising England at a moment when the Brissotins still hoped to form an alliance

with its neighbour. Yet, on 27 August, John Hurford Stone, commented of the decree of 26 August:

The Assembly did a very silly & contemptible thing yesterday, in admitting Englishmen of [illegible] Quality as David Williams, Wilberforce, & Clarkson to the Rank of Citizenship. I arrived at [...] the Assembly after the Decree has passed, which certainly would not, had the Comm[itt]ee rec[eiv]ed the information I had to give them [...]. I should not regret the choice of [Priestley] & Mackintosh & possibly Payne – but the other names are contemptible indeed. They are wretchedly informed respecting characters in England, & from this sample, they will get themselves laughed at with you. I certainly shall not spare them here. One of the Comm[itt]ee men dined with me yesterday & went home full of terror for the disgrace they have brought on themselves for I represented one of their choice [Williams] as a Man of no Character but a bad one – in a very low rank either as to political or literary fame & avowed by no one – Another [Wilberforce] rejecting with indignation from his ministerial connections, all connection with them & another [Clarkson] as scarcely known in politics at all & what he had were very different from their own. Their choice of [illegible] Men of other countries is better. I went in this decree of theirs at some length as it will be the subject of conversation amongst you.

- 43 This extract is fascinating because Stone, if he is to be believed, revealed some behind-the-scenes discussions about what was at stake with the decree of 26-August. Stone enlightened his contact in the committee (was it Condorcet?) as to the political position of the 'English' recipients of French citizenship. His objection toward Williams was mainly personal, but what he wrote about Wilberforce and Clarkson was that, despite their credentials as antislavery activists, they were not republicans due to their connection with the British government. With this letter, the intention behind the decree of 26-August becomes clearer: it should have been a proclamation of the universal republic that now France was embodying and fighting for. However, according to Stone, the deputies made some mistakes and blurred their message with their poor choice for French citizenship: instead of celebrating their adherence to the democratic republic that was rising up in the Atlantic, they merely celebrated a somewhat 'consensual' reformist discourse that claimed to come from the classical Whig republican tradition, one which was compatible with the British monarchy. What Stone stresses here is that antislavery, while commendable, was not sufficient to wash away the stain of supporting a monarchy. The Republic was now defined as an antithesis of the monarchy,⁵⁰ even if or, perhaps even more so, when the latter wrapped itself in the ideology of the Commonwealth, which was seen as blurring the ideal of the republican project.

The 'Cause': the Revolutionary Definition of Republican Citizenship

- 44 It is significant that the British and Irish residents in Paris identified the newly founded Republic of France, and the war it was waging, as the 'cause of liberty', or simply the 'cause'. All these anglophone 'foreigners' thereby identified themselves as French citizens, calling themselves and each other 'citoyens'. For all intents and purposes, they acted as French citizens or, more accurately, they considered themselves as 'citizens of the world', and France was the place where they could live up to this ideal. As Irishman and SADH member Henry Sheares testified:

We have just been honoured with the title of French citizens this morning. We came off of guard which we mounted at the Convention. On Sunday, we mount guard on the King & Queen, & are to escort him for trial to the Convention.⁵¹

- 45 This testimony reveals two crucial points on the newly founded Republic of France. First, it confirms that all those who participated in this global struggle for liberty were recognised as fellow patriots and, as such, worthy of French citizenship. More accurately, as 'citizens of the world', they could not be regarded as foreigners in France and were 'citizens' in a land of freedom. Citizenship, as the building block of the sovereign nation that France was erecting, was completely separated from any notion of naturality. In this regard, to be a republican entailed one to be French, and to oppose the Republic rendered one a stranger to the newly-founded nation (as did Louis XVI with his treason). Second, with the 'second revolution of 10-August' and the fall of royalty, the definition of the republic was undergoing a profound change, becoming incompatible with aristocracy and royalty, an idea that Henri Grégoire articulated, as president of the National Convention when he responded to the deputation of the SADH, addressing them as 'co-citizens of the world', engaged in a common struggle of liberty against kings, whom he had earlier defined as 'monsters to the physical order'.⁵²
- 46 The election of Paine, Priestley and Anarchasis Cloots as deputies to the National Convention whose duty was to decide first what would be the new regime in France and then to produce a new constitution is a testimony to this 'cosmopolitan moment'.⁵³ In the same spirit, Bertrand Barère, on 19 October 1792, invited 'all the friends of liberty and equality to present [to the National Convention], in any language, [...] the means they thought proper to confer a good constitution to the French Republic'.⁵⁴ SADH member, American poet, abolitionist and diplomat Joel Barlow responded on 7 November 1792, pleading for what Sophie Wahnich has termed 'nomad citizenship', which would make French citizens 'citizens of the world'.⁵⁵ In his *Lettre à la Convention nationale*, Barlow lamented the fact that, in the 1791 Constitution, a French national would lose his nationality if he became naturalised in another country.⁵⁶ All these foreigners tried to build a 'global' or 'nomad' citizenship, to be 'citizens of the world'. From then on, republican patriots could not be considered as foreigners in France, and the Atlantic republican exiles had, at long last, found a place where they belonged, as world citizens in the new Republic of France.
- 47 These anglophone patriots all came from a British imperial 'periphery public sphere' where they felt alienated from their original country as 'colonial outsiders' (Irishmen and Americans), as women (Helen Maria Williams, Mary Wollstonecraft), as of mixed origins (Henry Redhead Yorke, descendant of a plantation manager and a freed slave in Antigua and Barbuda).⁵⁷ To them, France became the new centre of the Atlantic Republic. In other words, as British identity, in the context of the war with France, was more and more focused on its English, protestant, masculine components, it forced these fringe second-grade citizens to create another, more inclusive, political space, which they found in France as the embodiment of the Republic.⁵⁸
- 48 In this regard, in 1792, with the advent of the 'Republic of France', the French were no longer strangers to the Atlantic Republic but vanguards, taking their place among the cosmopolitan family. The decree of 26-August can therefore be read as a declaration of intent addressed to the world and more specifically to the Atlantic republican world. John Hurford Stone personifies this transmission but also demonstrates how the message could be blurred by not breaking away as clearly as it ought to have with

royalty. The war against England clarified these ambiguities: if republicans, as defenders of liberty, were 'French' citizens of the world, those who opposed this aggrandisement of the 'circle of civilization' (as Paine referred to it, thereby wishing that all governments become republican) were deemed foreigners—and, in a context of war, enemies.⁵⁹

The Republic: A Cosmopolis at War Against Empire and Slavery

- 49 It is a common misconception to think that cosmopolitanism characterised the first phase of the French Revolution (from 1789 to the Girondine Convention), whereas the advent of the Montagnards would be synonymous with a downward spiral descent into 'nationalist' and chauvinist politics with the 'Terror'. This misconception comes from an anachronistic reading of the period, bereft of attention to the context. It is therefore a misnomer to use the word 'nationalism' to describe the supposed politics of the revolutionary government during the 'Terror', much as it is misleading to consider that the Girondine government's cosmopolitanism was more 'open to the world' than the Montagnards'. It is true that the war prompted the successive French governments to adapt their policy toward foreigners to the changing context, especially with the war against England. Several decrees were voted, which targeted foreigners, and yet republican citizenship continued to be defined as a cosmopolity. To put it more bluntly, despite the surge in xenophobia expressed in this long list of decrees and despite anti-English sentiments due to the war, citizenship did not become defined as an exclusive project, and the republic was not nationalist. As the recent historiography clearly demonstrates, the suspicion and persecution against foreigners did not start with the Montagnards, though it was intensified. At the time of the founding of the Republic in France and with the war against England, the front lines, much like the definition of citizenship, were never 'national' (in its later ethnic sense) but rather political and, as such, both external and internal, which explains why the politics of the time were so ruthless in repressing internal enemies in a time of war when political orthodoxy narrowed and was harder to prove.⁶⁰
- 50 The hypothesis formulated here is that the period known as the 'Terror' was a moment of transformation from a cosmopolitan to an internationalist republic. Because of the context of war, the new guiding principle was *réciprocité*. Externally, France supported and was friend with fellow republics, with peoples who were trying to emancipate themselves, but was wary of subjects from enemy countries.⁶¹ Internally, the true foreigner was the stranger, the one who removed himself from the Republican City, the émigré, the 'brigand', the traitor, the member of a faction who threatened the burgeoning nation with civil war in relation with external war.

A Republic at War Against *lèse-humanité* Criminals

- 51 During the 'revolutionary government' of 1793-94, the Convention voted a series of decrees that have been misread because they were often analysed separately whereas they form a coherent set.⁶² The infamous decree against British subjects is one of them, and Saint-Just's report of 16 October 1793 on this decree was interpreted by Marianne Elliott as laying 'to rest the myth of international brotherhood'.⁶³ Quite the opposite,

Saint-Just responded in a scathing tone against those who either proposed to cancel or to extend the law against the English to all foreigners in the name of cosmopolitanism and to avoid the 'nationalisation' of the war against England. He explained that these measures should only target those who were actually suspect because of their ties—either political or economic—to the British government and were intent on destroying the French Republic. Extending the law would dilute its meaning and convince the people of its illegitimacy.⁶⁴

52 The same logic was used by Robespierre on 11 January 1794, when he rallied the Jacobins against the English: since they did not rise up against their government, they were complicit in its war on France, especially since their political system allowed them to express their opinions.⁶⁵ It again informed Barère's report on the infamous decree of 7 Prairial Year II (26 May 1794) which forbade French soldiers 'to make any English or Hanoverian prisoner' because Englishmen were guilty of the crime of 'lèse-humanité' (crime against humanity) by warring against a nation fighting for its natural rights, trying to reinforce political slavery, rendering them strangers to all mankind. The expression of crime of *lèse-humanité* had been used before at the Convention during the debates that led to the abolition of slavery and the granting of French citizenship to the former slaves of Saint-Domingue on 16 Pluviôse Year II (4 February 1794). Many have noted that the Pluviôse abolition was opportunist, a mere manoeuvre against the British who occupied Saint-Domingue at this time. Yet, these measures, taken together, are consistent, especially when contextualised: the French Republic under the Montagnards was defining itself with the abolition decree alongside the famous speech by Robespierre on 'terror and virtue'. The fight against political slavery (as embodied by kings and tyrants) was linked with the fight against chattel slavery (as embodied by the plantations) and both were at the core of the republic and the universal citizenship that was defined alongside it in these crucial two days.⁶⁶ Both ills and crimes of *lèse-humanité* had a common origin—Empire. Here it is possible to identify a common thread with the SADH, whose members had already linked together the war against tyrannies with the abolition of slavery, two different forms of imperialism and colonialism, a thread that was already apparent in the 26-August Decree in its choice of recipients, and which was central to the activities of the SADH.

53 Here again, John Hurford Stone offers tantalizing evidence that English republicans were enthusiastic about what the Republic of France embodied, even during the 'Terror'. In late 1793 and early 1794, Stone took part in the planning of the mission, ordained by the French revolutionary government, of Irish Anglican reverend William Jackson to England and Ireland to assess the possibility of a French invasion and how it would be received there. Despite his hostility toward Robespierre, in a letter written to John Horne Tooke, brought to England by Jackson, Stone expressed how France continued to be the champion of all mankind:

And now my Patriotic Friend let me offer you my warmest and most heartfelt Congratulations at the immense Prospect of Public Happiness which is opening before Us. You are amongst the small Number of those who in the Worst of Times have never despaired of the Cause of Liberty [...]. I feel forward with Transport of Joy to the Moment when [...] the barriers, parties of Ministerialists & Oppositionists, Dissenters, Churchmen, Nobles, Priests & Kings shall [give way] to the divine Reign of Equality without which there may be a Confederation but not Society, a Government but no People.⁶⁷

54 The fight for independence in the United States, the fight for slave emancipation in France (a form of independence in 18th-century language) and for the establishment of a democratic republic, the fight against royal armies threatening to crush this fragile project, against tyrants, and against the British Empire, the fight of Irish patriots to form an independent nation, of slaves for their own emancipation, of Native Americans for their own independence, of the inhabitants of the small island of Joanna that John Oswald met in 1782—all these fights were one, and it had a name: the Republic.⁶⁸ It is this republican tradition, which stretched back to the English Civil War, imbued with the doctrine of natural rights as a common inheritance to all humanity, but which also underwent key transformations with the abolitionist language of the eighteenth century, that provided a common language between the English, Scottish, Irish, American, French, Italian, Belgian, Dutch, Prussian patriots who were gathered at White's, and which was still at work in 1794.⁶⁹

Cosmopolitanism in the Antislavery Movement

55 The republicanism that France then embodied served as a beacon across the Atlantic and was particularly influential on the antislavery movement during the 1790s. In the young United States, democratic republicans looked to France as a measure of their own progress. Bolstered by the uprising of enslaved people in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, they rallied around calls of universal freedom and an Atlantic republic that was open to those of all colours.

56 In September of 1792, Léger-Félicité Sonthonax landed in Saint-Domingue to enforce the decree by the French National Assembly guaranteeing equal political rights to the free people of colour in the colony.⁷⁰ Just months later, another revolutionary and member of the French abolitionist society 'Les Amis des Noirs' embarked for the Americas: Edmond-Charles Genet, first ambassador from France. Genet arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, with an ambitious mission: to mobilise American citizens for action in a world war—a conflict which, per his framing, pitted the liberating forces of revolutionary democracy against a league of despotism and monarchy. He was greeted in Charleston and throughout the slaveholding South with grand festivals, enthusiastically attended by wealthy coastal planters and backcountry yeomen alike.⁷¹ This reception is surprising given Genet's vocal abolitionism and commitment to radical democratic revolution. He often referred to the multitude of émigrés from Saint Domingue who had fled to the United States, with enslaved captives in tow, as royalists who refused to respect the 'equality of skin' he recognised.⁷²

57 Shortly after Genet's arrival, to the dismay of these slaveholding émigrés, the National Convention in Paris proclaimed the emancipation of all slaves in the French colonies—ratifying the August 1793 general emancipation proclamation of Sonthonax.⁷³ A letter from the 'citizens of color of Philadelphia' to the National Convention praised Sonthonax and the Commissioners for 'breaking our chains' with 'the immortal Decree wiping out all traces of slavery in the French colonies'.⁷⁴ While the commission in Saint-Domingue rallied former slaves, Genet and his delegates throughout the United States assembled a cosmopolitan 'Legion of the Republic' to defend against counter-revolutionaries and take the offensive in spreading democracy throughout the hemisphere. Invasions of Spanish Florida and Louisiana as well as British Canada were on France's agenda.⁷⁵ Moreover, several Democratic-Republican societies were founded

throughout the nation, gathering American supporters of cosmopolitan republicanism together, including ardent abolitionists.⁷⁶ The New York Democratic Society expressed this support in quasi-religious terms:

We take a pleasure in avowing thus publicly to you, that we are lovers of the French nation, that we esteem their cause as our own, and that we are the enemies... of him or those who dare to infringe upon the holy law of *Liberty*, the sacred *Rights of Man*, by declaring, that we ought to be strictly neutral, either in thought or speech, between a nation fighting for the dearest, the undeniable, the invaluable Rights of human nature, and another nation, or nations wickedly [...] endeavouring to oppose her in such a virtuous, such a glorious struggle.⁷⁷

- 58 The French decree of 4 February 1794 fulfilled the highest hopes of republican abolitionists and the deepest fears of slaveholders—that the French Revolution's fundamental principles of liberty and equality were to be applied more broadly than most had imagined possible just a few years prior. The Convention's act embraced the cosmopolitan vision of the radical republicans, applying not just to France but to all human beings. Danton audaciously announced that 'until now our decrees of liberty have been selfish, and only for ourselves. But today we proclaim it to the universe.' Revolutionary France framed emancipation as the culmination of a process that began with the abolition of royal privilege and ended with a wholesale rejection of 'aristocracy of the skin'.⁷⁸ Of course, the Convention had wavered on abolition in the early years of the Revolution, but, nevertheless, the decree was unprecedented and framed the abolition of slavery as the logical extension of cosmopolitan and republican convictions.
- 59 Many American abolitionists, including free blacks, took their cue from Paris and insisted that the process of emancipation in the United States accelerate. The Convention of American Abolition Societies affirmed the cosmopolitan reach of the French decree, resolving 'to endeavor to free negroes from St. Domingo retained here as slaves, contrary to the decree of the National Convention of France'.⁷⁹ Federalist William Dunlap, a delegate at the convention from New York, recalled that another delegate, Robert Paterson, praised France and called for a 'sudden and total abolition of slavery as it respects the Southern states'. According to Dunlap, the influential political leader and abolitionist Benjamin Rush agreed and conveyed 'with admiration Condorcet's expression of "Perish our West India Islands rather than we should depart from the principles of justice!"'⁸⁰ The declaration was increasingly perceived as having international ramifications.
- 60 Democratic newspapers focused on the extension of citizenship rights to people of colour and emphasised the cosmopolitan nature of the French approach. The *New York Journal*, for example, printed a transcript of the proceedings at the Convention, including the claim that the 'people of colour' were destined to 'become good republicans'.⁸¹ Another northern paper captured the magnitude of the event, observing that the 'most affecting scene took place, each Member with eager haste ran to clasp in his embrace the deputies of St. Domingo while tears of joy ran down their cheeks. A female Negro who was present [...] fainted with joy.'⁸² The *General Advertiser* reported that the decree had 'avenged both nature and humanity of two centuries of crimes'.⁸³ The papers warned of plots in France to subvert the decision and denounced 'secret assemblies of colonists, whose design it is to restore and cement slavery'.⁸⁴ The decree was framed as another blow to monarchy, aristocracy, and arbitrary power. In a period marked by sweeping change and a reordering of society, France's policy of immediate

emancipation based on universal natural rights followed the logic of cosmopolitan republicanism.

- 61 The French decree and the steadfastness of democrats emboldened some abolitionists in the United States to push for revolutionary change rather than moderate reform. An editorial in Philadelphia's *General Advertiser* applied this logic of universal natural rights regardless of colour to the American scene, declaring that 'every Negro in America is this moment of right, a freeman'.⁸⁵ France's proclamation was applauded as a harbinger of things to come—a sure sign that the flame of liberty would spread and the project of the Enlightenment would continue to progress. 'The liberation of the slaves in the French islands by the memorable decree of the National Convention', per the democratic *Kentucky Gazette*, 'introduced an important change in the condition of about a million of human beings and their offspring.'⁸⁶ Many Americans continued to view the French Revolution as an extension of their own and took pride in every perceived advancement in human freedom.
- 62 Fourth of July celebrations in 1794 presented an opportunity to fuse the principles of America's *Declaration of Independence* with those of the French Revolution and its bold stance on slavery. Democratic-Republican newspapers from July of 1794 included resolutions from clubs that 'the soil of America be consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation' and a call for the 'speedy extinction of that species of slavery which disgraces our country—degrades too many of our fellow citizens—and gives lie to our declaration of Independence'.⁸⁷ Another declared that the revolution would only be fulfilled when all people are able to enjoy 'their natural rights and privileges' and 'slavery [is] abolished throughout the world'.⁸⁸ The Baltimore Republican Society reportedly toasted 'The national convention of France, and an emulation of their virtues by the American congress' as well as to 'Universal liberty and extinction of monarchy'.⁸⁹ This was not simply a rhetorical flourish, as some members of the Society chose to manumit those they had held in bondage in the spirit of republican freedom.⁹⁰
- 63 Like in Maryland, democratic societies throughout the South exhibited the pervasive influence of French political culture. While slave rebellions in the Caribbean caused anxiety among large slaveholders in the region, support for the French Revolution was especially fervent among backcountry smallholders, most of whom owned no slaves.⁹¹ Even in the port cities support was high. Charleston hosted one of the largest democratic clubs in the United States and was the site of numerous parades and celebrations.⁹² One resident later recalled that, in 1794, the 'Sans-culottes and their principles had great ascendancy in Charleston—when the tri-colored cockade of France was the great badge of honour, and *Ca Ira!* and Marseillaise hymn the most popular airs—and "Vive la republique Francaise!" the universal shout'.⁹³
- 64 In accord with this enthusiasm, the French consul reported that, in South Carolina, he had enlisted almost 4,000 men in a 'Republican Army' that was raised for a planned attack on St. Augustine by land. He described the supporters of France in the region as 'very different from the gentlemen who we have known only too recently; all the good farmers and not the pompous planters'.⁹⁴ This description lends credence to the notion that some may have been inspired by both revolutions to free their slaves and perhaps turn against the institution. From 1790 to 1800 the free-black population in South Carolina rose from 1,801 to 3,185—the largest rate of increase for any population group in the state per U.S. Census records.⁹⁵ This increase may be attributable, in part, to the prevalence of radical republican beliefs in the region during this time.

65 Letters from large planters and Federalist elites during this period point to growing nervousness over democratic politics in the region. Nathaniel Russell from Charleston wrote to Ralph Izard with concerns that the 'diabolical decree of the national convention' would have 'evil consequences' in the United States. 'We are to have a meeting of the citizens', Russell announced, to discuss 'a circumstance the most alarming that could happen to this country'.⁹⁶ By November of 1794, Izard was worried that allying with the French would bring more republican radicals to America, 'who would Fraternize with our Democratical clubs, & introduce the same horrid tragedies among our Negroes, which have been so fatally exhibited in the French Island'.⁹⁷ The backlash against the promise of universal emancipation of the French Revolution would prove to stifle antislavery activism in the South, throughout the United States and the Atlantic world.

The Atlantic Conservative and Nationalist Backlash, 1795-1802

66 While the American Revolution challenged the British model of governance from across the Atlantic, the founding of the French Republic shook the Atlantic political world to its core. John Cartwright echoed the thoughts of many when he proclaimed in a letter: 'The French, Sir, are not only asserting their own rights, but they are advancing the general liberties of mankind.'⁹⁸ Increasingly, in both Britain and the United States, people were embracing the political identity of 'citizen'. British subjects had long expressed the 'rights of Englishmen' as their birthright. These traditional liberties were often said to derive from an ancient English constitution. Ultimately, however, British subjects were still subject to sovereign kingly authority and political participation could be severely restricted. Developing notions of citizenship in France and the United States emphasised positive privileges and civic responsibility, which offered greater emphasis on political participation. These notions of citizenship often extended beyond the geographically confined region or particular claims to rights to a cosmopolitan formulation of universal rights and duties.

67 Defenders of tradition were quick to respond. A pamphlet war over the political consequences of the French Revolution soon broke out in Britain and, later, in the United States. Conservatives defined themselves by their opposition to the cosmopolitan and universalist Republic. One of their main arguments was to demonstrate that the partisans of the rights of men were men of no country, devoid of any political allegiance, foreigners in their own country. The cosmopolitan republic provoked the birth of nationalism. At the heart of this political conflict was the issue of slavery. By encompassing all human beings within their republican project, the cosmopolitan radicals raised the hostility of the defenders of the imperial, slave-based order.

Atlantic Counter-Revolution as Anti-Republicanism and Anti-Abolitionism

68 As he had identified the 'Revolution of France' as a transnational project, Burke was quite logically among the first and most forceful to denounce the republican undercurrents emerging in 1792. He anxiously monitored developments across the

Channel, such as the massive demonstrations in Paris held on 15 April 1792, which celebrated French-English-American fraternity with displays of the flags of the three nations and the bust of Sidney triumphantly carried by the crowd of 200 to 300,000. The revellers were gathered to celebrate the visit in Paris of Thomas Cooper and James Watt from the Manchester Society for Constitutional Information to the Jacobin Club. Horrified, Burke railed in Parliament on 30 April against Paine (who had just published in February the first part of *Rights of Man*), Cooper and Watt:

Mr. Paine had been called a stranger, a foreigner, not an English man, a Frenchman, nor an American. In short, he seemed to be a man who knew just enough of all countries to confuse and distract all, without being of the least use to any. There were in this country men who scrupled not to enter into an alliance with a set in France of the worst traitors and regicides that had ever been heard of — the club of the Jacobins. Agents had been sent from this country, to enter into a federation with that iniquitous club, and those agents were men of some consideration in this country; the names he alluded to were Thomas Cooper and James Watt [...]. There were clubs in this country, who bound themselves, by a federation with those regicides, to approve their conduct and act in concert with them. He likewise could name others who avowed similar principles; for instance, Mr. Walker of Manchester. [...] They must necessarily, in order to succeed in their object, unite themselves with some of the worst men in the kingdom.⁹⁹

- 69 Burke's scathing exhortation linked Paine's cosmopolitanism with other British 'radicals' through their desire of alliance and federation with France. Referring to the Jacobins as 'regicides' (in April 1792!), he cast the British visitors as anti-royalists as well, and therefore the 'worst men of the kingdom' conspiring to destroy the monarchy in England as well as in France.
- 70 Burke's identification of this threat must be taken seriously, as he exemplifies the deep anxiety that haunted the British élites, who feared the return of the radical republicanism associated with the mid-seventeenth-century Revolution in England. This fear had already been rekindled by the American Revolution and the subsequent founding of a republic in the New World that was actively antagonistic toward monarchy and aristocracy.¹⁰⁰ So, even before the French Republican Convention sentenced Louis XVI to death, and as soon as the National Assembly adopted the Declaration of Rights on 26 August 1789, Burke had identified the threat that this 'Revolution of France' posed for the benevolent (in his eyes) British imperial order. It is also Burke who was pivotal in the parliamentary debates surrounding the Alien Bill on 26 December 1792, which was passed in early 1793, along with the creation of the secret Alien Office, tasked with watching over the collusion of French and domestic 'Jacobins'.¹⁰¹ With the crackdown against 'radicals' in the wake of the Jackson episode and the 'Treason Trials', the British government targeted the cosmopolitan/international republicans as traitors, passing the Gagging Acts of 1795, forcing the 'radicals' to abandon their rhetoric of universal rights in favour of the ancient rights of the 'free-born Briton'.
- 71 Anti-French rhetoric emerged as a political weapon to be wielded by conservatives on both sides of the Atlantic and helped to shape the trajectory of antislavery politics. Democratic-Republican candidates in the United States were frequently labelled 'Jacobins' by political opponents. As early as 1792, John Adams wrote of Federalist fears of 'Jacobins in this Country who were pursuing objects as pernicious by means as unwarrantable as those of France'.¹⁰² This was a loyalist tactic common in Britain with echoes in conservative circles in the United States as well. Arthur Young typified the

backlash in Britain, warning that 'any reform at all *on principle*, would be a sure step to all that followed reform in France, — Jacobinism, anarchy, and blood', and cautioning Britain to avoid 'bringing forward the many-headed monster in clubs of riot'. Emancipation was numbered by Young as one of the dangerous French 'innovations'.¹⁰³

- 72 Conservatives in Britain often lumped moderates like William Wilberforce together with democrats like Thomas Paine, Joseph Priestley, and Thomas Cooper to pit members of a diverse coalition against one another. A popular pamphlet from a British loyalist (which Paine himself responded to) demonstrates the effort to connect Jacobinism with abolition. The writer exclaimed that abolitionist radicals were motivated to attack 'the Commerce of this Country' by 'Fanaticism and the Spirit of Party', that 'the JACOBINS of ENGLAND, the *Wilberforces*, the *Coopers*, the *Paines*, and the *Clarksons*', as well as 'the dupes who are flattered into mischief' by these radical leaders, viewed abolition as a 'means of establishing such a Government as best suited their wild ephemeral theory'. The author was adamant about 'classing the promoters of the Abolition and the Republicans together', arguing that the activities of democratic radicals in Manchester and 'in the Society calling itself, Friends of the People' was clear evidence. Loyalists argued that antislavery activity was a sign of more radical, even revolutionary, tendencies among democratic society members.¹⁰⁴ Burke, an early leading light in the antislavery movement, wavered significantly during the French Revolution. In his *Reflections*, for example, Burke disparagingly compared the French rebels to 'a gang of Maroon slaves suddenly broke loose from the house of bondage', and unfit for liberty.¹⁰⁵
- 73 These political tactics were readily shared by conservatives in the United States, as partisans on both sides of the Atlantic engaged in a dialogue about how best to prevent revolutionary disorder. Historians have noted that British conservatives drifted away from antislavery positions during the 1790s, but few have paid attention to the influence of a transatlantic anti-Jacobin discourse on the American abolitionist movement.¹⁰⁶ In Britain, conflating abolitionism and democratic radicalism served as a powerful rhetorical weapon in the heated atmosphere of war with revolutionary France. William Wilberforce recognised its potency, observing in a letter that: 'It is certainly true, and perfectly natural, that these Jacobins are all friendly to the Abolition; and it is no less true and natural that this operates to the injury of our cause'. Moreover, he expressed concern regarding Thomas Clarkson's vocal support of the French Revolution, predicting that it would 'be ruin to our cause'. 'I am very sorry for it', Wilberforce continued, 'because I see plainly advantage is taken of such cases [...] to represent the friends of Abolition as levellers'. Though he admitted, 'levellers certainly are friends of Abolition', he insisted that the converse need not always be true. He lamented that some in parliament voted against his abolition bill as 'not to encourage Paine's disciples'.¹⁰⁷ His brother-in-law Thomas Clarke concurred, lamenting that 'People connect democratical principles with the Abolition of the Slave Trade and will not hear it mentioned'.¹⁰⁸ The argument even made an impact in the House of Lords, where, in 1793, the earl of Abingdon reportedly made some 'animated observations on the principles and characteristics of the French nation, and a variety of arguments to support the opinion, that the idea of abolishing the slave trade is connected with the levelling system and the rights of man'. After receiving some rebuke, he insisted that 'if proofs are wanting, look at the colony of St. Domingo [...], see what the rights of man have done there [...]. There you will see [...] fountains of human blood.'¹⁰⁹

- 74 Likewise, in the United States, conservatives drew on this readily available set of idioms to attack radical democrats and abolitionists. As dissidents from Britain arrived in America, fleeing anti-Jacobin repression under the regime of William Pitt the Younger, they were greeted affectionately by democrats who were well informed of their struggles and celebrated their antislavery credentials. A group in New York City welcomed Joseph Priestley and his compatriots as 'friends to the Equal Rights of Man' who would help to perfect 'a system of such beauty and excellence' which remained 'tarnished by the existence of slavery'.¹¹⁰ Antislavery advocates cut across party lines, but many of the most radical abolitionists in Britain were affiliated with the democratic societies. Thus, as anti-Jacobinism emerged as an effective discourse to be deployed against reformers, the antislavery cause was tarnished in turn. The polarised partisanship of the period served to divide the movement at a crucial time—undermining the effectiveness of some of slavery's most vocal opponents in both Britain and the United States.
- 75 The vocal counter-revolutionary movement gained traction in the United States by the mid-1790s, as Federalists voiced concerns over revolutionary 'excesses' in France and the cosmopolitan worldview of the radicals. Prompted by the arrival of Priestley, Arch-Federalist William Cobbett, himself a recent émigré from Britain, took the opportunity to employ anti-Jacobin rhetoric gaining currency in Britain.¹¹¹ Central to Cobbett's argument was the assertion that the universal and cosmopolitan ideals of the Revolution were dangerous. He argued that Enlightenment philosophers, such as Priestley, led common people astray through sophistry and possessed no loyalty to country. While he had no love for the crowd, the chief figure to blame for disorder was 'the modern philosopher' who is 'ten thousand times more to be feared than the [...] assassin'.¹¹² These modern thinkers, he counselled the ordinary American, should be greeted with mistrust and disdain. 'A man of all countries', Cobbett reasoned, echoing Burke, 'is a man of no country'. He singled out transatlantic abolitionists who had migrated to America in particular. 'These gentlemen are hardly landed in the United States', he wrote, 'before they begin to cavil against the Government'. His message was clear, although ironic: practical Americans should keep their guards up against foreign agitators.¹¹³
- 76 The culmination of abstract philosophy, for Cobbett, was the French emancipation decree. Blasting Priestley for his radical democratic views, many of his most scathing attacks were related to colour and slavery. Cobbett viewed France's emancipation proclamation as further evidence that their sister republic should not serve as a model for the United States and expressed fear of cosmopolitan republicanism. In August of 1794, he wrote that 'in the abolition of negro slavery, for example, the Governments of the United States have not rushed headlong into the mad plan of the National Convention'. 'They have,' he continued, 'in spite of clubs and societies, proceeded with caution.'¹¹⁴ Cobbett sought to demarcate between the revolution in France and that in America. His insistence on moderation foreshadowed the tactics of American antislavery advocates in the early nineteenth century who emphasised order and an aversion to revolutionary violence as justifications for pragmatic reform.¹¹⁵ After noting that the United States had wisely avoided emancipating slaves after the Revolution, he applauded the government for ignoring the many 'toasts and resolutions of popular societies' calling for action like France on the slavery question. A disciple of Burke, he quoted him directly, observing that 'the Americans' avoided

calamity by not running 'into the absurdity of France, and by seizing on the rights of man'.

- 77 Cobbett struck at what he saw as the roots of radical democratic and revolutionary abolitionist activity—the Painite principles of 'the Rights of Man' and the conception of a universal republic. Recognizing that these radicals, in combination with their French allies, could bring about actual revolutionary change, Cobbett admonished the democratic society members in New York who had reached out to welcome Priestley. 'If they', he warned, 'had been landed in the southern States, they might have lent a hand to finish the great work so happily begun by Citizens Sonthonax and Polverel', a nightmare for Cobbett. He warned that they 'have caught the *itch* of addressing, petitioning, and remonstrating, in their own country'. 'Let them not attempt spreading their disorder', he added, 'they ought to remember, that they come here "to seek freedom and protection" for themselves, and not for others.' Cobbett feared the zeal of the radical immigrants to spread their reformist message throughout the United States, potentially destabilizing the young government in the process. 'When the people of these States are ready for a total abolition of negro slavery', he insisted, 'they will make a shift to see the propriety of adopting the measure without the assistance of these northern lights.'¹¹⁶ Appealing to a nascent sense of American pride and simmering xenophobia, Cobbett hoped to persuade citizens of the new republic to reject outsiders and preserve domestic institutions—slavery included.
- 78 Tellingly, his pamphlet, published in 1794, was received tepidly by the public and as inflammatory and anti-republican by democrats. Cobbett recalled that 'there were, in Philadelphia, about ten thousand persons, all of whom would have rejoiced to see me murdered' and resented intimidation by 'the sans-culottes in America'.¹¹⁷ His work did, however, plant a seed of anti-Jacobinism that would germinate by the latter half of the decade. The British *Anti-Jacobin Review* applauded him in 1798 as having 'more essentially contributed to give a proper tone to the public spirit in America, than all the efforts of the well-disposed part of the native Americans' and for stemming 'the impetuous tide of democracy which threatened to overwhelm the American States'.¹¹⁸ Through his periodicals, the *Political Censor* and the *Porcupine's Gazette*, as well as his numerous pamphlets, the prolific Cobbett challenged what he called the 'seditious discourses and treasonable insinuations' of democrats throughout the 1790.¹¹⁹
- 79 Many of Cobbett's themes and arguments were repeated to much acclaim in a work from England that was reprinted in multiple editions in the United States. Bryan Edwards' *Historical Survey* (1797) blamed the violent rebellion in Saint-Domingue on radical abolitionists. He claimed that it was 'not the strong and irresistible impulse of human nature groaning under oppression' that led to the uprising, but that slaves were 'reluctantly driven, by the vile machinations of men calling themselves philosophers [...] whose pretenses to philanthropy were a gross mockery of human reason, as their conduct was an outrage on all the feelings of our nature, and the ties which hold society together!'¹²⁰ Cobbett's *Porcupine's Gazette* would popularise such views as the presidential election approached at the end of the decade. In typical sardonic tone he referred to members of the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania as 'butchers, tinkers, broken hucksters, and trans-Atlantic traitors' and connected the clubs nationwide to the antislavery movement.¹²¹

Counter-Revolutionary Conspiracy Theories

- 80 The antislavery cause was also caught up in a popular panic regarding conspiracy theories related to Freemasons, secret societies, and the Illuminati.¹²² These accusations came primarily from the clergy. In the first years of the Revolution, mainstream American clergymen had been broadly in support of the French Revolution and measured in their assessments of popular politics.¹²³ In 1794, this sentiment began to shift and, by 1796, most of the mainstream clergy was in full attack mode. New Englander Jedidiah Morse, formerly an ardent supporter of the French cause, warned from the pulpit in 1798 that the United States had been invaded by agents of a secret society with the intent to destroy all existing political and religious authority.¹²⁴ He proclaimed that 'fraud, violence, cruelty, debauchery, and the uncontrolled gratification of every corrupt and debasing lust and inclination of the human heart' were spreading throughout the world because of the French Revolution and the democratic politics it had spawned.¹²⁵
- 81 The intellectual *tour-de-force* and apex of this counter-revolutionary movement was achieved by the Abbé Augustin Barruel who weaved these different threads of reactionary thoughts together to first coin the word 'nationalism' in 1797. In his denunciation of the 'Conspiracy of the Sophists of impiety and anarchy', Barruel puts the word 'nationalism' under the pen of the 'Hierophant-Weishaupt', the founder of the 'Illuminati Sect'. Barruel quoted from a document he had supposedly translated from the German, in which the Hierophant used the word 'nationalism' to designate the tendency of men to retreat from the great family of mankind, from cosmopolitanism, into nations and empires, thereby giving rise to suspicion against foreigners. Then, the Hierophant denounced patriotism as an expression of localism and 'national preference' against cosmopolitanism.¹²⁶ This very adroit manoeuvre enables Barruel to invent a word, 'nationalism', to deride and caricature a political project, the democratic republican nation, as an 'illuminated' cosmopolitan delusion, one linked with antislavery, atheism and anarchy. Barruel seeds confusion and perverts the sense of the words "cosmopolitanism", "nation" and "patriotism". Not incidentally, Barruel corresponded with Burke in London at the time of the writing of his seminal counter-revolutionary work and they both agreed on the existence of an anti-Christian, masonic and cosmopolitan conspiracy. As a matter of fact, Burke's fear of the progress of the Revolution, which he saw as the consequence of the anti-religious, 'radical' Enlightenment, while not new in 1797, had been nurtured by a circle of counter-revolutionary émigrés who lived in London from July 1789 onward.¹²⁷ These conspiracists linked the supposed illuminati with the activities of the United Irishmen.¹²⁸
- 82 Barruel was, in a sense, right: the republican tradition indeed linked popular sovereignty, democracy, the fight of 'slaves and oppressed' against 'tyrants and despots', with antislavery. But in shedding this tradition in the light of a conspiracy against order and religion, a conspiracy culminating with the Republic of France and so with anarchy and atheism, Barruel gave the intellectual fuel to the counter-revolutionary thought that prevailed over these republican ideals. His central claims were reinforced by a transatlantic cast of influential pamphleteers and journalists who identified a threat to the imperial, colonial and slave order they defended against the Atlantic Republic and its promises of emancipation.

- 83 Published in New York in 1799, Barruel's *Memoirs* claimed that 'Revolutionary Masons' pursued abolition 'to conceal the grand object of their Conspiracy under the specious pretext of humanity'. For Baruell, abolitionists took aim at chattel slavery merely to subvert the entire system of hierarchy and order—leaving anarchy and destruction in their wake. 'While occupying all Europe with the question they had proposed, on the slavery of the Negroes in America', he continued, 'they never lost sight of that Revolution which they had so long meditated, and which was to liberate all Europe from the pretended slavery of the laws and of supposed tyrants.'¹²⁹ Purposefully conflating political and economic discourses, writings such as these turned potent revolutionary language back on its proponents. Not only were revolutionaries likely to be abolitionists, conservatives argued, but abolitionists were also likely to be revolutionaries.
- 84 Associating radical abolitionists with religious infidelity was an effective means of dividing the antislavery movement. Opponents of abolition could tap into a potent anti-democratic narrative, which had widespread appeal in a nation experiencing a popular religious revival. French philosophy was now equated not only with radical schemes of emancipation, but also atheistic plots to subvert Christianity. This rhetoric was frequently repeated amongst conservatives throughout the United States, as when a member of a Federalist club called France, that 'nation of atheists' and warned that it had plans to subvert religion in the United States.¹³⁰ Whereas antislavery writings of earlier in the decade had frequently employed both the language of the radical Enlightenment and protestant Christianity (sometimes interchangeably), increasingly, in the late 1790s, religious antislavery voices avoided association with abolitionists thought too extreme. Claims to the 'rights of man' on behalf of the enslaved were replaced by a discourse emphasising Christian supplication, scriptural arguments, and national sin.

Conclusion

- 85 On the eve of the American Revolution in 1776, Thomas Paine exclaimed that 'Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia, and Africa, have long expelled her. — Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart.' For Paine, American independence was to 'prepare in time an asylum for mankind'. He hoped that monarchy in Britain would be swept away as well and looked forward to seeing 'the New World regenerate the Old'. The founding of the republic in France and its transformations from a cosmopolitan to an international, anti-imperial, anti-slavery project were therefore seen as momentous events by the English heirs of the radical and anti-slavery Atlantic republican tradition. France, in 1792-1794, embodied their ideals, their horizon of expectation, and they identified themselves with its 'cause', as exemplified by John Hurford Stone's correspondence: from French military victories to a wager, all these aspects were part of a larger struggle between two clashing models, a cosmopolitan one in which there would be no foreigners, as no human should be a stranger to his natural rights, and a 'nationalist' one where rights were localised, the product of history and of tradition. If the anglophone world was perhaps better equipped to receive the events of the French Revolution as the revivification of the more radical aspects of the Atlantic republican tradition, it was also quite aware of the threat it represented to the British

Empire and to the slave-based American republic, which was becoming an empire at home. From the mid-1790s, both models found defenders who lashed out against the 'French disease' and slavery was the key issue that prompted this backlash. Coincidentally, the United States and Britain formed an alliance with the Jay Treaty at this very moment. The strength of this conservative backlash was such that proponents of cosmopolitan republicanism were soon reduced to a minority, perceived as traitors, aliens to their own country.

- 86 Just over a decade and two revolutions later, Paine's dream appeared in jeopardy on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1797, at the same time Barruel began publication of his work, in France, the Bonapartist project was coined under the expression the 'Great Nation', words that would come to signify the last confused experience of 'sister republics' unifying Europe and that would embody a republican empire, that was authoritarian, antidemocratic and pro-slavery—a mirror of its hated rival for world dominance, the British Empire.¹³¹ As the 'Republican Moment' ended in France, in the United States the Alien Acts of 1798 symbolically put an end to any hope of a cosmopolitan republic. The 'cause' of liberty as a cosmopolity, a universal emancipation, gave way to a nationalist definition of the republic—the nation became nationalist, and we are today the poorer for it, heirs to this counter-revolutionary definition of the nation and of the republic.

NOTES

1. Jérôme MAVIDAL and Émile LAURENT (eds), *Archives parlementaires...*, 104 vols, Paris, p. Dupont / CNRS, 1862-continued (hereafter *AP*), vol. 49, p. 10 (all translations are the authors'). The recipients were Joseph Priestley, Thomas Paine, Jeremy Bentham, William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, James Mackintosh, David Williams, Giuseppe Gorani, Anacharsis Cloots, Cornelius de Pauw, Joachim Heinrich Campe, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Thadeus Kosciusko, and Friedrich von Schiller.
2. Suzanne DESAN, 'Foreigners, Cosmopolitanism, and French Revolutionary Universalism', in Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson (eds), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2013, p. 86-100 (100).
3. Marc BELISSA, *Fraternité universelle et intérêt national, 1713-1795. Les cosmopolitiques du droit des gens*, Paris, Kimé, 1998.
4. Richard BOURKE, *Empire & Revolution. The Political Life of Edmund Burke*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2015, p. 609 and 677-739.
5. Conor Cruise O'BRIEN, 'Edmund Burke: Prophet Against the Tyranny of the Politics of Theory', in Frank M. Turner *et al* (eds), *Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003, p. 213-232.
6. Micah ALPAUGH, 'The British Origins of the French Jacobins: Radical Sociability and the Development of Political Club Networks, 1787-1793', *European History Quarterly* [online], vol. 44, no. 593, 2014, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265691414546456>; *id.*, 'French Jacobins and American Democrats in the 1790s: A Transatlantic History', paper presented at the 48th Annual Conference

of the Consortium of the Revolutionary Era, 1750-1850, February 2018 (the authors thank Micah Alpaugh for having communicated this paper); Rachel HAMMERSLEY, *The English Republican Tradition and Eighteenth-Century France: Between the Ancients and the Moderns*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010; Pierre LURBE, 'Lost in [French] Translation: Sidney's Elusive Republicanism', in Gaby Mahlberg and Dirk Wiemann (eds), *European Contexts for English Republicanism*, Farnham, Surrey, Ashgate, 2013, p. 211-224; Johnson K. WRIGHT, *A Classical Republican in Eighteenth-Century France: The Political Thought of Mably*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997; Annie JOURDAN, 'The "Alien Origins" of the French Revolution: American, Scottish, Genevan, and Dutch Influences', *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History* [online], vol. 35, 2007: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0642292.0035.012>

7. John G. A. POCOCK, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975; Keith Michael BAKER, 'Transformations of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 73, no. 1 (March 2001), p. 32-53. Baker's thesis in the latter article was criticised by Christopher HAMEL, 'L'esprit républicain anglais adapté à la France du XVIII^e siècle : un républicanisme classique ?', *La Révolution française - Cahiers de l'Institut d'histoire de la Révolution française* (hereafter LRF), no. 5, 2013, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/lrf.997>. For the 'travelling' nature of the Republic, see Gilles BERTRAND and Pierre SERNA (eds), *La République en voyage, 1770-1830*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013. For the other traditions behind the civic humanism identified by Pocock, see Marc BELISSA, Yannick BOSCH and Florence GAUTHIER (eds), *Républicanismes et droits naturels à l'époque moderne. Des humanistes aux révolutions de droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, Paris, Kimé, 2009; Margaret JACOB, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*, Lafayette, LA, Cornerstone, 2006 [1981], p. 94 and 249-260.

8. Clément THIBAUD, 'Pour une histoire polycentrique des républicanismes atlantiques (années 1770 - années 1880)', *Revue d'histoire du XIX^e siècle* [online], 56, 2018, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rh19.5593>

9. David ERDMAN, *Commerce des Lumières. John Oswald and the British in Paris, 1790-1793*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1986, p. 187-189.

10. On these aspects, see the very rich contributions of the special issue of LRF, 'Le républicanisme anglais dans la France des Lumières et de la Révolution', no. 5, 2013, edited by François QUASTANA and Pierre SERNA: <https://doi.org/10.4000/lrf.947>

11. Carine LOUNISSI, *Thomas Paine and the French Revolution*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

12. Anthony DI LORENZO and John DONOGHUE, 'Abolition and Republicanism over the Transatlantic Long Term, 1640-1800', LRF, no. 11, 2016, DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/lrf.1690> ; Pierre SERNA, 'L'insurrection, l'abolition de l'esclavage et le pouvoir exécutif ou les trois fondements originaux de la République des droits naturels selon Théophile Mandar', in Marc Belissa *et al* (eds), *Républicanismes et droit naturel*, *op. cit.*, p. 135-160 and 120-134.

13. Sophie WAHNICH, *L'Impossible citoyen : l'étranger dans le discours de la révolution française*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1997, p. 175-185; Michael RAPPORT, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: The Treatment of Foreigners, 1789-1799*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 138-139; Peter SAHLINS, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 276-278.

14. Alan WHARAM, *The Treason Trials, 1794*, Leicester and London, Leicester University Press, 1992, p. 85-90. The letters are kept at the National Archives, Kew (hereafter NA), Privy Council (hereafter PC) 1/19/A.27, as they were examined by the Privy Council and some of them (though by far not all) were produced as evidence in the trial of William Stone in January 1796. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from this carton. Most historians have used the letters as they are quoted in the printed report of the trial: *The Trial of William Stone: For High Treason...*, London,

Martha Gurney, 1796. However, taking the pain to read the manuscript letters is worthwhile as they are full of insightful details omitted from the printed version.

15. This title is of course a tribute to Lionel D. WOODWARD, *Une Anglaise amie de la Révolution française : Hélène-Maria Williams et ses amis*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1930.

16. The following biographical information, unless otherwise noted, are drawn from Michael RAPPORT, 'Stone, John Hurford, (1763–1818)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter ODNB), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/26576>

17. Ministre de la Police [Merlin de Douai], rapport au Directoire exécutif de l'interrogatoire de John Hurford Stone, 21 Ventôse Year IV [11 March 1796], Archives nationales, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (hereafter AN), F⁷ 7114, doss. 7614.

18. Rachel ROGERS, *Vectors of Revolution: The British Radical Community in Early Republican Paris, 1792-1794*, PhD dissertation, Université Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2012, p. 50-53.

19. J. H. Stone à Pétion, London, 12 février 1792, AN, AF⁷ 4774 70, doss. 459.

20. In this regard, Stone was not an exception: Joel Barlow, Thomas Christie, James Gamble, Robert Rayment, Stephen Sayre, and Christopher White, all future members of the SADH, combined entrepreneurship and revolutionary activism: Rachel ROGERS, *Vectors of Revolution...*, *op. cit.*, p. 144-153.

21. Deborah F. KENNEDY, 'Williams, Helen Maria (1759-1827)', ODNB. The exact nature of Stone's and Williams's relationship is uncertain. John Goldworth Alger, in *Englishmen in the French Revolution* (London, S. Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1889, p. 66 and 69), claims that Stone and Williams were secretly married by Grégoire when they travelled together in Switzerland in 1796. Alger relied on none other than Henry Redhead Yorke, a member of the SADH who later recanted his revolutionary enthusiasm and became an ultra-loyalist: Henry Redhead YORKE, *Letters from France in 1802*, 2 vol., London, H. D. Symonds, 1804, vol. II, p. 383.

22. On the SADH and the dinner, see John Goldworth ALGER, *Englishmen in the French Revolution*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1889, p. 81-103; *id.*, 'The British Colony in Paris, 1792-1793', *The English Historical Review*, 1898, p. 672-694 ; *id.*, *Paris in 1789-1794: Farewell Letters of Victims of the Guillotine*, London, George Allen, 1902, chap. 8, p. 324-363. In the latter, Alger coined the expression 'British Club' to encompass these 'outlaws and conspirators' (the title of chapter 5), showing how he perceived them. Rachel ROGERS, in *Vectors of Revolution (op. cit.)*, recently offered a more insightful analysis of the British community in Paris. Jonathan ISRAEL, in *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from the Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2014), opens with a prologue devoted to the dinner, an emblematic event of what he dubbed the 'radical Enlightenment' but which he mistakenly links solely with the Girondins. On the Irish dimension of the dinner, see Mathieu FERRADOU, 'Histoire d'un « festin patriotique » à l'hôtel White (18 novembre 1792) : les Irlandais patriotes à Paris, 1789-1795', *AHRE*, no. 382, 2015, p. 123-143. On the trans-Channel dialogue, see David ERDMAN, *Commerce des Lumières...*, *op. cit.*, p. 137-165 and 187 sq.

23. *The Trial of William Stone...*, *op. cit.*, p. 27. On the attorney general's use as evidence of Stone's use of the pronoun 'we' see *ibid.*, p. 28 and also his letter of 26 December 1793 for a similar use.

24. Excluding cases in which the use of 'we' is unclear as to whom Stone encompasses within its range (perhaps the Stones couple or his circle of friends).

25. George Monro's report, London, 6 December 1792, NA, Treasury Solicitor's Papers (hereafter TS) 11/959, Part 1; John Goldworth ALGER, 'The British Colony in Paris', *op. cit.*, p. 673, note 3, correctly identifies Stone's handwriting.

26. *Adresse de la société des Anglois, Ecossois et Irlandois Résidans et domiciliés à Paris*, AN, C 241 (the translation is from John Goldworth ALGER, 'The British Colony in Paris', *art. cit.*, p. 673-674).

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Star (6 December), *Dublin Evening Post* (6 Dec.), *Kentish Gazette* (7 December), *Northampton Mercury* (8 December), *Manchester Mercury* (11 December).

43. *Morning Chronicle*, 26 November 1792.

44. According to John Goldworth ALGER, *Paris in 1789-1794...*, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

45. *Patriote français*, 21 November 1792.

46. *Patriote français*, 26 November 1792.

47. On 12 February 1793, in the wake of the declaration of war, Burke eagerly seized the list of toasts as an opportunity to denounce the collusion of British radicals and French revolutionaries in parliament. Sheridan retorted by reminding Burke that the *Patriote français* had published a rebuttal of the toast. See William COBBETT, *The Parliamentary History of England from the earliest period to the year 1803*, 36 vol., T. C. Hansard, London, 1806-20, vol. 30, p. 386-392.

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54. AP, vol. 52, p. 577

55. Sophie WAHNICH, *L'Impossible citoyen*, *op. cit.*, p. 72-73; AP, vol. 53, p. 292.

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ABSTRACTS

With the advent of the Republic during the summer of 1792, France took part in and transformed the republican experience, which had been developing on both sides of the revolutionary

Atlantic since the seventeenth century. In this sequence, the decree of 26 August 1792 was conceived as a message addressed to the entire world, and perhaps more particularly to the heirs of the English republican tradition who articulated the defence of liberty with abolitionism. The point of view of these expatriated republicans in France shows that the advent of the 'Republic of France' was indeed perceived as an Atlantic republican cosmopolitics, especially its anti-slavery component. This in turn rapidly provoked a conservative backlash on both sides of the Atlantic, strengthened by the French Wars and particularly after the abolition decree of 1794, ending this universalist 'republican moment', replacing it with a narrow "nationalist" and authoritarian conception of the republic.

Avec l'avènement de la République à l'été 1792, la France adopte et transforme l'idée républicaine qui s'est développée de part et d'autre de l'Atlantique révolutionnaire depuis le dix-septième siècle. Dans cette séquence, le décret du 26 août 1792 est un message adressé à l'ensemble du monde, mais plus particulièrement aux héritiers de la tradition républicaine anglaise qui nouaient ensemble la défense de la liberté avec l'antiesclavagisme. Le regard décentré de ces républicains anglophones expatriés en France permet de voir que l'avènement de la « République de France » a bien été perçue comme une cosmopolitique républicaine atlantique, notamment dans son volet antiesclavagiste. Cette dernière provoque une réaction conservatrice dans le monde anglophone, accélérée dans le contexte des *French Wars* et surtout après le décret d'abolition de l'esclavage de 1794, terminant ce « moment républicain » universaliste et imposant une conception plus restreinte, « nationaliste » et autoritaire, de la république.

INDEX

Mots-clés: République de France, cosmopolitisme, anti-esclavagisme, républicanisme anglais, réaction conservatrice

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