

Those two documents are both against the French revolution. Most Englishmen and women and their government were against our revolution.

The French revolution: a view from England

The 1st document contains a declaration made in 1793 : F and Britain were now at war.

The declaration criticises the FR very sharply.

What they hated most was the execution of the king and queen.

The former had been beheaded in January, the latter in October.

① [The former institutions of France have been entirely destroyed]. In their place has succeeded a system destructive of all public order, maintained by proscriptions, exiles, and confiscations, without number: by arbitrary imprisonment; by massacres which cannot be remembered without horror; and at length by the execrable murder of a just and beneficent Sovereign, and of the illustrious Princess, who, with an unshaken firmness, has shared all the misfortunes of her Royal Consort, his protracted sufferings, his cruel captivity and his ignominious death.”— “They (the allies) have had to encounter acts of aggression without pretext, open violations of all treaties, unprovoked declarations of war; in a word, whatever corruption, intrigue or violence could effect for the purpose so openly avowed, of subverting all the institutions of society, and of extending over all the nations of Europe that confusion, which has produced the misery of France. Last but not least, they see the FR as a threat to Europe.

“Declaration sent by his Majesty’s command to the Commanders of his Majesty’s fleets and armies employed against France, and to his Majesty’s Ministers employed at foreign Courts.”— Whitehall, Oct. 29, 1793. In Edmund BURKE, *Two Letters Addressed to A Member of the Present Parliament, on the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France*, London, Rivington, 1796.]

Burke, a British MP, was famous for his sharp criticism of the FR.

② “Petit souper à la Parisienne” or A family of sans-culottes refreshing, after the fatigues of the day (20 September 1792). The title is ironical. It plays on gallows humour.

It is about the September massacres, just after the fall of the monarchy (10 August 1792). The revolutionary mobs slaughtered noble people and clergymen in the prisons of Paris.

The Sans-culottes are half naked. The expression is taken at face value (it meant that they wore trousers).



Those people are man-eaters : we are witnessing a scene of cannibalism, which is much exaggerated. Whatever the crimes of the revolutionaries, they did not eat human beings.

Those people are also plunderers : they have stolen the crown (a symbol of the revolution) and the jewels of the crown?.

> Criticism of the FR was widespread in England and it was very popular too. Such criticism was permitted, because it reflected the views of the British government.

Cartoon by GILLRAY, The British Museum. In September 1792, in the weeks following the fall of the monarchy, the French revolutionaries slaughtered aristocrats and members of the clergy, men and women, in the prisons of Paris. The new government did nothing to stop them.

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, describe the English standpoint on the French revolution and explain it.