

The Pamphlets of Revolution

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In both the American and French Revolutions, pamphlets became one of the most often utilized means of what Joanne Freeman called the “verbal ammunition” of “*political combat*.”¹ This “battle” drove writers of varying viewpoints to issue countless publications in an effort to “win the favor of public opinion.”² Pamphleteers and their motivations for writing were as diverse and complex as the documents themselves. The paper wars of the Atlantic Revolutions created an impressive body of work ripe with emotional pleas, political diatribes, and unconventional ideas.

Historians have relied on these pamphlets to gain insight into the events of the past and for support in recreating their accounts of the Revolutions. However, few have focused on a single pamphlet and its impacts on the societies in which they appeared, and none have examined these pamphlets comparatively across multiple Revolutions. By comparing similar pamphlets from the American and French Revolutions and exploring how they influenced public opinion, the significance of this literature’s impact on history will begin to emerge.

John Ferling’s comprehensive account of the American Revolution, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic*, offers an excellent overview of the events surrounding the War of Independence. His in-depth research, utilizing both credible secondary sources and numerous primary documents, presents a narrative chronology filled with key details and character sketches. Ferling’s book provides a wonderful resource by which pamphlets can be placed into the correct historical context. He references various pamphlets throughout his account, even acknowledging the shifts in language and theme as revolutionary ideas turned into all-out revolt: “[I]n 1775, some scribes for the first time addressed the concern that the radical

¹ Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), xxi-xxii.

² Kenneth Margerison, *Pamphlets & Public Opinion: The Campaign for a Union of Orders in the Early French Revolution* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1998), 1-2.

protest was eroding the bonds of society.”³ Like many general history narratives, Ferling recognizes the role of pamphlets but fails to explore their true impacts on the Revolution.

In a similar manner, William Doyle delivers a concise history of major events and the lasting impacts of France’s crisis in *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*. Drawing from years of research and expertise on the French Revolution, Doyle presents a brief, yet informative, chronology. Like Ferling’s account of the American conflict, Doyle’s book offers an effective resource for the historical contexts of pamphlets emerging from the French Revolution. Given its condensed nature, the narrative avoids intensive details, limiting its usefulness. However, Doyle does reference several important pamphlet writings throughout his book, including “What is the Third Estate?”, “the title of the most celebrated pamphlet of that winter, by the renegade clergyman Sieyès.”⁴ Though his account is informative and provides a necessary timeline, his research in this particular source is largely negligent of pamphlet literature.

By contrast, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* by Joanne Freeman thoroughly explores the role that political gossip and the resulting paper war played in the creation of the new American nation. Relying on an extensive bibliography of both primary and secondary sources, Freeman provides a compelling account of the years following the American Revolution, as the Republic struggled to find its footing. The book includes multiple references to pamphlets, their writers, and their purposes, with one entire chapter dedicated solely to examining “The Art of Paper War.” As Freeman asserts, pamphlets were typically “dignified in

³ John Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 148, <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=120918&site=ehost-live>.

⁴ William Doyle, *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 38, <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=100296&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

tone and lengthy” and served as “ideal platforms for presenting a detailed argument.”⁵ This most useful information not only provides general insight into how, why, and when pamphlets were used; it also facilitates a better understanding of their role in both American society and national politics. It also offers a look into how America coped post-Revolution, providing for an interesting comparison to pamphlets and ideas from post-Revolutionary France.

Several scholarly articles explore the paper war of the French conflict. Among these is Dale Van Kley’s, “New Wine in Old Wineskins: Continuity and Rupture in the Pamphlet Debate of the French Prerevolution, 1787-1789,” which examines how ministerial and magisterial pamphleteers drew from history to argue for their respective sides in the early days of revolutionary France. Van Kley further explores the elements which led to the convergence of these two factions. By utilizing the wealth of literature available from this period, he is able to produce a chronological account of how pre-revolutionary events influenced the writers to employ “a rich variety of rhetorical forms” “ranging from the erudite historical treatise to the dramatical farce.”⁶ This research produces a solid foundation for a cross-Revolution comparison with competing pamphlets emerging from the early days of the American rebellion prior to the intersection of common goals.

Another such article, “Pamphlets and Journalism in the Early French Revolution: The Offices of the *Ami du Roi* of the Abbé Royou as a Center of Royalist Propaganda” by Harvey Chisick, sets out to show how and why pamphlet literature was utilized to promote and defend royalist tradition. He additionally provides numerous statistics to demonstrate the national and international spread of these pamphlets from 1790 to 1791. Though much of his research is based

⁵ Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 116.

⁶ Dale K. Van Kley, “New Wine in Old Wineskins: Continuity and Rupture in the Pamphlet Debate of the French Prerevolution, 1787-1789,” *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 2 (Autumn 1991): 453, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/286465>.

on either secondary sources or various editions of the *Ami du Roi*, “one of the best known and most widely read right-wing journals of its time,” Chisick nevertheless presents a detailed history of the paper’s role in promoting royalist ideology through the publication of pamphlets, arguing that they were “probably the most effective means of influencing opinion” during that time.⁷ The article lays out excellent information regarding the more conservative side of the early French Revolution’s pamphlet debate. This is comparable to the literature being produced by loyalist sources during the American situation.

Other sources examine the effect of pamphlets on public opinion in the individual Atlantic Revolutions. In “Pamphlets and Public Opinion during the American Revolution,” Homer Calkin explores the effectiveness and influence of pamphlets issued throughout the conflict. Relying heavily on these documents and quoting frequently from the literature, Calkin shows how pamphlets either gained popularity or became ineffective based upon the course of the Revolution. His extensive use of primary sources, in the form of letters and pamphlets, creates a compelling narrative of events from the perspective of those directly involved. Though he never engages in a comparison, he does acknowledge that “[t]he peak of pamphlet writing was probably reached in the last half of the eighteenth century during the American and French Revolutions.”⁸ Similar to Chisick’s examination into the significance of the *Ami du Roi*, Calkin also briefly addresses the role that alternate sources of information, such as newspapers, played in spreading the messages of the pamphlets. His account offers a wonderful resource for understanding why pamphlets were written, how they were utilized, and what their impact was

⁷ Harvey Chisick, “Pamphlets and Journalism in the Early French Revolution: The Offices of the *Ami du Roi* of the Abbé Royou as a Center of Royalist Propaganda,” *French Historical Studies* 15, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 624, 644, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/286549>.

⁸ Homer Calkin, “Pamphlets and Public Opinion during the American Revolution,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 64, no. 1 (January 1940): 22, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20087256>.

on public opinion, providing a basis for comparison when similar questions are asked concerning the French Revolution.

Some of those answers can be found in Kenneth Margerison's book, *Pamphlets & Public Opinion: The Campaign for a Union of Orders in the Early French Revolution*, which expands on the topic covered in Van Kley's article. Margerison, however, focuses his research specifically on the theme of unity, which he describes as the "dominant, yet little-studied, concern of the political writers in the months before the convening of the Estates General."⁹ His abundant use of primary sources and secondary literature leads to an exhaustive overview of the year prior to the meeting of the Estates General. Throughout his account of events, Margerison examines pamphlets emerging from the debate over how to organize the Estates General and explores how these documents influenced public opinion, leading to the creation of the National Assembly. This research supports a rich comparison between pre-revolutionary pamphlets from the French and American conflicts, including explorations into how the literature directed the course of initial movements.

Religion often factored into the rhetoric employed by writers throughout both Revolutions. "‘I fear God and honour the King’: John Wesley and the American Revolution" by Allan Raymond presents an examination into the role that religious language in pamphlets played in influencing the British public during the American rebellion. Raymond's research is focused predominately on the work of John Wesley, "leader of the Methodist movement in England."¹⁰ Through research into Wesley's letters and pamphlets, Raymond demonstrates how his views and language shifted throughout the course of the Revolution and even explores

⁹ Margerison, *Pamphlets & Public Opinion*, 8.

¹⁰ Allan Raymond, "‘I fear God and honour the King’: John Wesley and the American Revolution," *Church History* 45, no. 3 (September 1976): 316, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3164266>.

Wesley's attempts to sway American opinion. As Raymond asserts, Wesley, although believing that politics was not in his authority, "saw nothing wrong in lecturing the Methodists on their political duties."¹¹ The article's concentration on the religious ideology employed by Wesley and applied to the American Revolution creates the foundation for a comparison with pamphlets containing similar language from the crisis in France.

Christopher Hodson examines this use of religious symbolism in the pamphlets and art of Revolutionary France in his article, "'In Praise of the Third Estate': Religious and Social Imagery in the Early French Revolution." Through extensive research into the pamphlets published during this period, he presents compelling insight into how and why religious language was so often utilized during the first echoes of rebellion and why it basically disappeared from the texts after the establishment of the National Assembly. As Hodson points out, "pamphlets published in 1788, 1789, and 1790 appropriated the idea of religion as justification, describing the Third Estate as a holy order and comparing it, through allegory, to Christ."¹² The employment of Christianity-inspired language was common throughout both the American and French Revolutions. This makes for a unique comparison of those pamphlets containing such ideals from both Atlantic crises.

Though the recognition of pamphlets written by women is rare due to their typically anonymous nature, there are a few exceptions. Sophie Bourgault, in her article, "A Forgotten Revolutionary Pamphlet: Madame de Genlis on Hospitality," exclusively examines the 1791 pamphlet, *Discours sur le luxe et sur l'hospitalité considérés sous leurs rapports avec les moeurs et l'éducation nationale*, in order to give more attention to the role that female pamphleteers

¹¹ Ibid., 316.

¹² Christopher Hodson, "'In Praise of the Third Estate': Religion and Social Imagery in the Early French Revolution," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 3 (Spring 2001): 348, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30053983>.

played in influencing the French Revolution. Bourgault presents a comprehensive biography of Madame de Genlis and argues that her often-overlooked pamphlet contained “surprisingly radical dimensions” and “timely political implications.”¹³ Drawing from numerous secondary sources focusing on Genlis and from Genlis’s own work, Bourgault offers a compelling exploration into this singular document. By researching how one woman was able to utilize pamphlets to promote her message in France, Bourgault has created a basis upon which women pamphleteers of the American Revolution, though seldom identified, may be compared.

Another article researching France’s pamphlet literature is Paul Hanson’s “Monarchist Clubs and the Pamphlet Debate over Political Legitimacy in the Early Years of the French Revolution.” Hanson presents an intriguing exploration into the little-known Monarchist Clubs, which arose in 1790-1791 in opposition to the Jacobins, by examining the pamphlets which emerged to discredit these groups during their short existence. According to Hanson, both the clubs and the pamphlet’s writers “were grappling with the same sets of issues,” including “the definition of public opinion and its legitimate expression.”¹⁴ Borrowing from both primary and secondary sources, Hanson’s article provides for a particularly intriguing comparison, given the similarities between the Club’s constitutional message and their antagonists’ responses and the post-American Revolution Federalists’ constitutional essays and their adversaries’ pamphlets.

Though there exist many rich resources concerning the pamphlets of the American and French Revolutions, few historians have placed upon them the emphasis they deserve. Research into the pamphlets from the latter years of the French Revolution is also noticeably absent. These are unfortunate shortcomings. The literature emerging from the revolutionary period reveals the

¹³ Sophie Bourgault, “A Forgotten Revolutionary Pamphlet: Madame de Genlis on Hospitality,” *Women’s Studies* 44, no. 8 (December 2015): 1134, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/10.1080/00497878.2015.1078214>.

¹⁴ Paul R. Hanson, “Monarchist Clubs and the Pamphlet Debate over Political Legitimacy in the Early Years of the French Revolution,” *French Historical Studies* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1998):300, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/286631>.

character of their writers, the importance of unity, and the language of revolution. It is in these documents, which Calkin calls “the chief instrument to carry one’s ideas to the public,” that the true intentions and missions of revolution are found.¹⁵ Only through a cross-Revolution comparison, which has yet to be explored in existing historiography, can pamphlets be truly appreciated for their significant role in instigating, molding, and directing the paths of the Atlantic Revolutions.

Throughout the American Revolution, “the pamphlet was considered of prime importance in forming and shaping the minds of the people.”¹⁶ Margerison presents a similar argument when considering France: “The language of the pamphlets provides the single most important key to understanding the initial direction of the revolution.”¹⁷ Despite the importance placed on these documents, they continue to be undervalued for their impact on the Atlantic Revolutions. A comparison of pamphlets across the American and French Revolutions reveals the commonalities present in the struggle for representation and freedom. It highlights the similarities of “rebels” divided by an ocean. It unveils the influence of these writings on the course of history.

On the eve of their respective Revolutions, approximately ten years apart, American colonists and France’s Third Estate wrestled with the issue of representation. In America, a series of taxes imposed by Britain were challenging the people’s rights. In France, the monarchy, clergy, and nobility sat in absolute control over the majority of the population. Questions concerning authority became a prominent theme in the Revolutions’ early years.

¹⁵ Calkin, “Pamphlets and Public Opinion,” 22.

¹⁶ Calkin, “Pamphlets and Public Opinion,” 41.

¹⁷ Margerison, *Pamphlets & Public Opinion*, 8.

American lawyer and assemblyman John Dickinson, enraged by what he considered unfair taxation stemming from the Townshend Acts, penned *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, “a pamphlet that outsold every other political tract published in America before 1776.”¹⁸ Dickinson’s response was guided by his belief that the action by Parliament “appears to me to be unconstitutional” and “destructive to the liberty of these colonies.”¹⁹ However, he did make concessions for Parliament’s control over commerce: “there is no privilege these colonies claim, which they ought in *duty* and *prudence* more earnestly to maintain and defend, than the authority of the *British* parliament to regulate the trade of all her dominions.”²⁰ For Dickinson, the question was not whether Parliament should have authority, but rather how much.

A similar conflict over authority was brewing at the start of the French Revolution. Prior to the convening of the Estates General in 1789, a wealth of pamphlets issued forth from the Third Estate. On one side of the debate, pamphleteers fought for the necessity of Parlement. On the other side were those supporting the authority of the King. “[I]n the summer of 1787,” “the anonymous but blatantly ‘ministerial’ *Observations d’un avocat* perversely raised the question of the Estates’ traditional forms.” The pamphlet called for Parlement to remember that if the old forms from 1614 were adhered to, many of the monarch’s most intelligent minds would be excluded. On the opposing side, magisterial pamphleteers warned of despotic ministers.²¹ Who held true authority, Parlement or the King, and how much power should they have? These were the questions at the heart of the early pamphlet debate.

¹⁸ Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 70.

¹⁹ John Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, in *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate, 1764-1772*, ed. Gordon S. Wood (New York: Library of American, 2015), Letter II, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁰ Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer*, Letter VI.

²¹ Van Kley, “New Wine in Old Wineskins,” 452.

The Loyalists of the American Revolution and the Royalists of the French Revolution were by no means silent throughout the conflicts. In 1774, an American pamphlet, commonly attributed to Anglican clergyman Jonathan Boucher, emerged defending “[t]he Harmony which subsisted, with little or no Interruption, between Great Britain and her Colonies,” which was now believed to be “in Danger of being destroyed forever.” The push toward Revolution was thought to be nothing more than “Calamities which have frequently arisen from an ardent mistaken Zeal.” The question was posed, “Shall we abuse the Generosity, and the Beneficence of Laws, made for our Protection?” The Loyalist author warned the Philadelphia Congress that they could “teize the Mother Country,” but never destroy her forces.²²

In France, Royalist pamphleteers were also active. Jacques-Antoine-Marie de Cazalès and Jean-Sifrein Maury were “regarded as among the most able defenders of royalist and traditionalist opinion.”²³ One such pamphlet, written by Cazalès in 1791, defended the right of inheritance, by which offices were occupied in the *ancien régime*. In the same year, Maury published a condemnation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which “provided for lay election of priests and bishops, nationalization of ecclesiastical boundaries, and a purely honorific role for the pope.”²⁴ In each of these pamphlets, the call for a return to the orthodox ways of France was loud and clear.

Despite their collective adoption of many Enlightenment ideals, the Revolutions were filled with pamphlets employing ultra-religious language in their missions to sway public opinion. In England, Methodist leader John Wesley filled his writings with appeals to religion.

²² Jonathan Boucher, *A Letter from a Virginian, to the Members of the Congress to Be Held at Philadelphia, on the First of September, 1774*, in *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate, 1773-1776*, ed. Gordon S. Wood (New York: Library of America, 2015), ProQuest Ebook Central.

²³ Chisick, “Pamphlets and Journalism,” 629.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 630; Doyle, *The French Revolution*, 46.

As rumors of the American Revolution spread, Wesley, fearing a similar revolt in England, published *Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power* in which he argued “that power did not originate in the people,” but “came instead from God.”²⁵ His 1775 pamphlet, *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*, borrowing heavily from Samuel Johnson’s *Taxation No Tyranny*, urged the colonists to “realize that they already possessed all the religious and civil liberty they desired.”²⁶ By 1776, Wesley’s anxiety over the American Revolution led him to urge the people of England to return to God. A year later, another of his pamphlets stated his belief that the American war would fail since “the hand of God is upon them.”²⁷ Wesley’s faith was at the center of every publication.

Religious language was also an often-utilized trope of the French Revolution pamphleteers’ esteem of the Third Estate. Though most of the authors are unknown, their mission is clear. *Le Magnificat du Tiers-État* compared the Third Estate to “the Savior of nations,” contrasted by the clergy’s and the nobility’s “insurmountable difficulties being saved...their haughtiness will almost never get on well with Christian humility.”²⁸ As Hodson points out, one “important tenet of the pamphlet argument of 1789” was the belief that “the nobility was irreligious, even demonic, and completely unfit to rule.”²⁹ *La Passion, la mort, et la resurrection du peuple* placed the Third Estate in the setting of the trial and crucifixion of Christ. The “Plebeian” declared that he would “defend his rights and prove his innocence” through a sort of resurrection via an allusion to the forthcoming Estates General.³⁰ However, after the formation of the National Assembly, the use of such language began to wane.³¹

²⁵ Raymond, “John Wesley,” 318.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 321.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 325-326.

²⁸ Hodson, “Religious and Social Imagery,” 337-338.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 348.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 355.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 357.

One group of pamphleteers from both Revolutions is all too often overlooked: women. One of the most prominent female writers to emerge from the American Revolution was Mercy Otis Warren. She is most well-known for her exhaustive *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*, but her pamphlet, *Observations on the New Constitution, and on the Federal and State Conventions*, is worth noting. Originally attributed to Elbridge Gerry due to its anonymity, the pamphlet, published in 1788 during the struggle to establish the new nation, strongly opposed the new Constitution. It warned that “[m]an is not immediately corrupted, but power without limitation, or amenability, may endanger the brightest virtue” and advocated for “defined limits of the Judiciary Powers,” “provision by a bill of rights to guard against the dangerous encroachments of power,” and “provision for a rotation” of offices.³² Her work was clearly influential on both public opinion and on Congress.

In France, Stéphanie-Caroline-Félicité du Crest, comte de Genlis, Marquise de Sillery published a little-acknowledged pamphlet entitled, *Discours sur le luxe et sur l’hospitalité considérés sous leurs rapports avec les moeurs et l’éducation nationale* in 1791 to defend revolutionary hospitality. Like Warren, Genlis was an influential writer questioning the actions of the new government. When the National Assembly took action to suppress convents and monasteries, Genlis alerted “her readers to the fact that their suppression entails the loss of precious hospitality work.” In her account, she “criticizes the revolutionaries for having failed to discriminate sufficiently between good and corrupt religious institutions before adopting their radical measure.”³³ Instead, she proposed initiatives that would “drastically reform the administration of hospitals and increase their funding,” thus having “an immense influence on

³² Elbridge Gerry, *Observations on the New Constitutions, and on the Federal and State Conventions*, in *Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States, published during its Discussion by the People, 1787-1788*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (Brooklyn, 1888), <<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1670>>.

³³ Bourgault, “Forgotten Revolutionary Pamphlet,” 1137-1138.

the mores.”³⁴ Amongst those she argued would benefit from “the hospitality of religious institutions” were “foreigners and migrants of ‘all status’” as well as “the underprivileged.”³⁵ Both Genlis and Mercy Otis Warren challenged their respective governments and became women of impact in male-dominated domains.

Throughout both Revolutions, America and France faced numerous instances of internal political opposition in the form of essays and pamphlets. Following the American Revolution, unrest between Federalists and Anti-Federalists grew into outright political battle. James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay teamed up to write a series of essays defending the United States Constitution. The Anti-Federalists responded with a series of pamphlets published between 1787 and 1788. Virginia’s delegate to the Constitutional Convention George Mason was one such opposer. In his *Objections to the Federal Constitution*, he asserted that “[t]here is no declaration of rights,” “no declaration of any kind for preserving the liberty of the press, the trial by jury in civil cases, nor against the danger of standing armies in time of peace.” It was his fear that “[t]his government” “will, in its operation, produce a monarchy, or a corrupt oppressive aristocracy.”³⁶

In France it was the battle between the Jacobins and the short-lived Monarchist Clubs that set off a pamphlet debate. The Club’s common goal “was the destruction of the Jacobin clubs” through “a denial of the legitimacy of political clubs” altogether.³⁷ The Club “professed their desire for open discussion, obedience to the law, and respect for the new constitution.”³⁸ After several skirmishes involving the Clubs broke out across France, pamphlets began to emerge from

³⁴ Ibid., 1142.

³⁵ Ibid., 1146.

³⁶ George Mason, *Objections to the Federal Constitution*, in *Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States, published during its Discussion by the People, 1787-1788*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (Brooklyn, 1888), <<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1670>>.

³⁷ Hanson, “Monarchist Clubs,” 303.

³⁸ Ibid., 310.

every side, with the constitution at the center of their arguments. In 1791, an anonymous pamphlet, responding to an anti-Monarchist article by newspaperman Gorsas, asked the question, “was the constitution not in fact a monarchist constitution?” To the pamphleteer, these two elements were conjoined.³⁹ Falling more in line with Gorsas was Jean René Loiseau who published a pamphlet “denouncing the Monarchist Club as an anticonstitutional association.”⁴⁰ One thing is certain: amongst these pamphleteers, there were issues of far greater concern than just the existence of the Club.

Of all the pamphlets published throughout these two Revolutions, two would stand out from among the rest. Both were published in the midst of their respective crises, and both could not be more different in message and tenor. In America, few documents have done more to alter the course of events than Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*. “Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil.”⁴¹ In Paine’s opinion, government is “rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world.”⁴² Of the struggle in which America was engaged at the time of his writing, Paine argued that “[t]he sun never shined on a cause of greater worth.”⁴³ Calkin states that effectiveness is, to some extent, measured by number of copies distributed. “One of the most widely diffused of the revolutionary tracts was *Common Sense* of which more than 100,000 were sold in the first three months.”⁴⁴

The French Revolution’s most recognized pamphlet would not issue from Paris, but rather from London in 1790, via the pen of an Irish statesman. In *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke admonished the revolutionaries: “You had all these advantages in your

³⁹ Ibid., 315-316.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 317.

⁴¹ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017), 1.

⁴² Ibid., 5.

⁴³ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁴ Calkin, “Pamphlets and Public Opinion,” 27.

ancient states; but you chose to act as if you had never been moulded into a civil society, and had everything to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising everything that belonged to you.”⁴⁵ Unlike Paine’s views on the American conflict, Burke believed the revolution in France was bound for failure. Seizing an opportunity to defend revolution, Paine responded to Burke’s attacks with his own series of articles in 1791 entitled *The Rights of Man*.

The comparison of pamphlets from the American and French Revolutions reveals the broader themes at work across the Atlantic conflicts. These commonalities bring greater insight to understanding the workings of revolution. As Freeman has stated, “[s]trategically written ‘private’ letters, pamphlets, broadsides, and newspapers each had a different power and reach,” and writers “chose the medium best adapted to their purposes.”⁴⁶ No matter the medium chosen, writers were “sending a written representation of themselves out into the world.”⁴⁷ Pamphlets “reveal not only the political goals of the writers [...] but also the ideological suppositions upon which their objectives rested.”⁴⁸ The machinations of revolution are not learned by studying the events, but rather by listening to the voices of the people; and through their surviving pamphlets, the people speak.

⁴⁵ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, Vol. III (London: John C. Nimmo, 1887), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15679/15679-h/15679-h.htm#REFLECTIONS>.

⁴⁶ Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 113.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁴⁸ Margerison, *Politics & Public Opinion*, 2.

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