

**The French Government and
the Policing of the
Extra-Territorial Print Trade,
1770-1789**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis argues that censorship in eighteenth-century France was highly focused and could be remarkably successful. It considers the way in which the French government attempted to impose its will on authors, journalists and publishers who operated outside France in the years 1770 to 1789. By examining the way French and foreign officials worked together to manage the print industry, this study sheds light on the practicalities of external censorship. The French government developed a relatively effective system for managing the spread of news information about French affairs of state. The Bourbon regime also experienced particular successes in its attempts to keep the book trade in check. It concentrated on curbing the dissemination of defamatory texts or *libelles* and was often able to stop these kinds of works from circulating in huge numbers. The year 1783 was critical in the French government's strategy of policing print beyond the borders of the kingdom. It was at this point that the French state shifted its approach by combining a stronger system of inspection for imported books with a more pragmatic outlook abroad. In doing so, it was able to intensify its hold over the print industry. This thesis makes the case for a more nuanced interpretation of censorship in old regime France and underscores the need to appreciate how control fluctuated according to chronology and geography. By pointing to the successes of censorship, it suggests that that forbidden book trade was perhaps weaker than once thought whilst the *ancien régime* government was considerably stronger.

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Note on Sources

The sources included in this thesis have been quoted in French. To avoid any confusion, the French in these quotations has been modernised. Job titles and the titles of books and journals appear in this thesis in their original French.

Preface

In February 1772 Emmanuel Marie Louis, marquis de Noailles, French *ambassadeur* in The Hague reported back to the foreign ministry on the subject of a book which was worrying the French government.

J'ai parlé à M. le Pensionnaire du Libelle intitulé Le Gazettier Cuirassé. Je lui ai dit que ce livre était le fruit de la licence la plus condamnable chez toutes les nations où la voie de poursuivre les délits était au reste. Je lui ai ajouté que l'écrivain n'épargnait pas même dans son audace la personne sacrée du Roi mon Maitre.¹

In the early 1770s, the Bourbon regime called upon its network of diplomatic agents to restrict both the circulation of this book and the actions of its author, Charles Théveneau de Morande. *Le Gazettier cuirassé; ou, anecdotes scandaleuses de la cour de France* was originally published late in July 1771 in London.² It reached the market at the height of the backlash against the French Chancellor Maupeou's controversial programme of reform for the French *parlements*. Morande fanned the flames of this affair by levelling accusations of ministerial despotism at the French government. *Le Gazettier cuirassé* was a series of scurrilous anecdotes which viciously attacked the pillars of *ancien régime* society, the King, his ministry, the clergy and the nobility.³ The text was

¹ Paris, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (hereafter AMAE), Correspondance politique (hereafter CP) Hollande 524, fol. 29, Noailles to d'Aiguillon, 4 February 1772.

² Charles-Claude Théveneau de Morande, *Le Gazettier cuirassé; ou, anecdotes scandaleuses de la cour de France* (London: [n. pub.], 1771).

³ For more on *Le Gazettier cuirassé*, see Simon Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution: London's French Libellistes, 1758-92* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 96-99; Simon Burrows, 'A Literary Low-Life Reassessed: Charles Théveneau de Morande in London, 1769-1791', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 22 (1998), 76-94 (pp. 79-81); Simon Burrows, *A King's Ransom: The Life of Charles Théveneau de Morande, Blackmailer, Scandalmonger and Master-Spy* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 36-50; Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water or, the Art of Slander in France from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 11-23; Robert

a particularly potent example of the *libelle* genre. *Libelles* were defamatory texts which slandered social and political elites and members of the royal family. Officials within the Bourbon ministry were appalled by this work and underlined the necessity of suppressing it in the summer of 1771. This text became a more pressing problem early in 1772 for two reasons. Firstly, the French government found out that Morande was planning to publish a scandalous biography of Louis XV's mistress, Madame du Barry. This was a work which seemed likely to compound the damage done by *Le Gazetier cuirassé*. Secondly, there were rumours that a new edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* was being published in Geneva.

The French state appealed to the British government to silence Morande (who was resident in London) but little help was forthcoming. The French government authorised agents it had working in London to negotiate with Morande and at the same time coordinated plans to kidnap the author. Morande was finally tamed in March 1774 when the playwright Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais was sent over to London on a special mission.⁴ Beaumarchais signed an agreement with him on behalf of the French government. Morande agreed to burn the entire edition of the du Barry text and promised never to attack the French government in print again. In return, his debts were cleared and he began to receive an annuity of 4,000 *livres* from the state. In the years following this pay-off, Morande switched sides and began to work as a spy for the French government.

French officials also worked hard to block the second edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* in January 1772. Hennin, the French diplomat in Geneva, found that a local bookseller called Jacques-Benjamin Téron was disseminating the work.⁵ Nothing was found to indicate that Genevan traders had published *Le Gazetier cuirassé* but papers

Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France', *Past and Present*, 51 (1971), 81-115 (pp. 105-10).

⁴ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 99.

⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

discovered in Téron's shop showed that he had received one hundred copies of the text from Marc Michel Rey, the Genevan publisher who traded from Amsterdam.⁶ Téron was temporarily imprisoned by the authorities in Geneva and the investigation moved northwards. Noailles, the French diplomat in The Hague, was able to convince officials there to search Rey's print-shop. Once copies of *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* were found with Rey, the Dutch States-General determined that this publisher should also be punished.⁷

The scale of the campaign against *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* clearly suggests that the French authorities saw this text as a serious threat to the stability of the Bourbon regime. This is the view taken by Robert Darnton in one of his most influential articles where he introduced Morande and *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* to the wider scholarly community.⁸ Darnton has stressed the importance of *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* and used this text as a springboard to explore the subversive nature of forbidden literature in eighteenth-century France. This thesis corroborates Darnton's view that French officials were disgusted by *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* but it also seeks to underscore the singularity of this work. International crusades to suppress texts like this were relatively rare in the final years of the *ancien régime*. There were only a limited number of works which impelled the authorities to become involved in censorship beyond French borders.

This thesis centres on the French government's attempts to control the kind of texts which were sent into France in the 1770s and 1780s. On the basis of examples like the pursuit of *Le Gazetteur cuirassé*, it will argue that the Bourbon ministry was able to impose its will beyond French borders. It will showcase the huge challenges of extra-territorial control but ultimately stress the successes of this system of policing. This thesis also contends that texts like *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* were somewhat atypical. When

⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 524, fols. 29-32, Noailles to d'Aiguillon, 4 February 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 524, fols. 34-35, Noailles to d'Aiguillon, 14 February 1772.

⁸ Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment', pp. 105-10.

they did appear, the French authorities orchestrated extraordinary crusades to block their circulation within France. The French government recognised that it would never be able to have total power over the entirety of the foreign print trade. As such, French officials sought to manage it as best they could: by throwing the spotlight on what they considered to be the most illicit titles. French attempts to police print abroad in the later eighteenth century were highly focused. It was this purposeful policing which helped the government to successfully regulate the kind of literature which came into France in the final years of the old regime.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis examines how the French government sought to extend its influence across Europe in the hope of influencing the kind of literature which was being sent into France between the years 1770 and 1789. Controlling the dissemination of printed matter both within and beyond French borders was certainly an arduous task but the failure of the French authorities was not a foregone conclusion. This thesis argues that the Bourbon administration could be remarkably successful in its attempts to police print towards the close of the eighteenth century. French officials were well aware of the difficulties of regulating the production and distribution of the printed word and did their best to keep it within acceptable boundaries. Tolerance was the byword and the regime only sprang into action when titles which seemed particularly threatening appeared on the scene. When the worst titles appeared, the Bourbon administration used diplomats stationed abroad to direct efforts to prevent them from reaching French readers in large numbers. This thesis will engage with historiography relating to the efficacy of censorship under the old regime. Throughout it, the term censorship will be employed in a general sense to describe the French government's attempts to control the printed word. There is much evidence of the failings of the censorship system but the findings of this thesis underline that controlling the printed word was still possible in eighteenth-century France. An appreciation of how far censorship could work will pave the way for a more precise view of the force of the printed word under the old regime.

The Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century France

For a long time, scholarship concerning censorship in *ancien régime* France was focused on Paris, the city which was the epicentre of both Enlightenment and Revolution. Since many aspects of the official management of the republic of letters were centralised in the capital, it is easy to see why studies of the administration of the book trade have often been Paris-centric. In the middle ages, it was the Church which took charge of censorship. As printing became more widespread across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, firmer structures of control were put into place. By the early eighteenth century, the Church (along with the *parlements* and the Universities) retained the right to condemn works but in practice, the crown was the primary institution capable of enforcing its will on the print network.

The basic regulations which governed the French book trade across most of the eighteenth century were collected together in 1723 in the *Code de la librairie*.¹ This assortment of laws originally applied only in Paris but was extended to cover the entire kingdom in 1744. Pre-publication censorship and the administration of privileges and permissions were managed through the *direction de la librairie*.² This office was headed by the *directeur* and his activities were overseen by the *garde des sceaux*, one of the King's principal ministers who was responsible for the administration of justice. The *directeur de la librairie* took charge of the censors who assessed books prior to publication, as well as the provincial inspectors of the book trade who were responsible for making sure printers and booksellers were abiding by the rules of the trade. He also worked closely with the *lieutenant général de police de Paris* and his police inspector subordinates who

¹ Giles Barber, *Studies in the Booktrade of the European Enlightenment* (London: Pindar Press, 1994), pp. 159-62.

² Henri-Jean Martin, 'La Direction des lettres', in *Histoire de l'édition française. Tome 2, le livre triomphant, 1660-1830*, ed. by Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier (Paris: Promodis, 1984), pp. 76-83.

raided print-shops, arrested book dealers and confiscated offensive works.³ Studies of these centralised mechanisms of control have long dominated the historiography.⁴ But historians have also begun to show that the Parisian system constituted only a fraction of a much larger picture. Jane McLeod's consideration of provincial book trade inspectors has highlighted that censorship had a life of its own outside the confines of the capital.⁵ Detailed empirical work by Thierry Rigogne has also emphasised the extent to which the regulation of the print trade varied across the huge expanse of the French kingdom.⁶

Attempts to manage the French book trade also extended beyond France's borders. It was in the late seventeenth century that French began to overtake Latin as the language of the European elite. By the middle of the eighteenth century French was established as the international language on the continent and Francophone literature was disseminated almost everywhere. Many French booksellers looked outwards to traders in nearby states since these individuals were (in theory at least) free from the regulations which governed the circulation of printed matter within France. The publishing industry flourished in the regions neighbouring France which included the

³ From 1763 to 1774 Antoine Raymond Jean Gualbert Gabriel de Sartine occupied the office of both *directeur de la librairie* and *lieutenant-général de Police de Paris* which demonstrates how many of the activities of these officials went on in parallel.

⁴ J. P. Belin, *Le Commerce des livres prohibés à Paris de 1750 à 1789* (New York: B. Franklin, 1967); Raymond F. Birn, *Royal Censorship of Books in Eighteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); Anne Goldgar, 'The Absolutism of Taste: Journalists as Censors in Eighteenth-Century Paris', in *Censorship and the Control of Print in England and France, 1600-1910*, ed. by Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1992), pp. 87-110; Lisa Jane Graham, 'Crimes of Opinion: Policing the Public in Eighteenth-Century Paris', in *Visions and Revisions of Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. by Christine Adams, Jack R. Censer and Lisa Jane Graham (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pp. 79-104; Thomas M. Lockett, 'Book Seizures and the Politics of Repression in Paris, 1787-1789', in *Into Print: Limits and Legacies of the Enlightenment; Essays in Honor of Robert Darnton*, ed. by Charles Walton (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), pp. 113-27; Nicole Hermann-Mascard, *La Censure des livres à Paris à la fin de l'ancien régime: 1750-1789* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968); Barbara Negroni, *Lectures interdites: le travail des censeurs au XVIIIe siècle, 1723-1774* (Paris: Michel, 1995).

⁵ Jane McLeod, 'Provincial Book Trade Inspectors in Eighteenth-Century France', *French History*, 12 (1998), 127-48.

⁶ Thierry Rigogne, *Between State and Market: Printing and Bookselling in Eighteenth-Century France, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2007:05 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2007).

papal enclave of Avignon, Britain, the Netherlands, the Swiss regions and the German states. Although local instruments of censorship existed in these territories, they were generally more lenient than those which operated inside France.

Scholars working in the 1960s were amongst the first to shed light on the participation of foreign traders in the French book trade. In his 1964 work *Pierre Rousseau and the philosophes of Bouillon*, Raymond Birn explored how his protagonist's publishing house catered to the French market from the duchy of Bouillon.⁷ It was at a similar time that Robert Darnton first showcased the records of the *Société typographique de Neuchâtel* (hereafter abbreviated to STN). The STN was a Swiss publishing house which sent both licit and illicit texts into France. Across his career, Darnton has continued to draw upon the STN archive as a means of exploring the role of extra-territorial book dealers in the French print trade.⁸ Later, Elizabeth Eisenstein's work broadened focus by stressing the ultimate significance of foreign involvement in French print.⁹ She contended that the relative autonomy of extra-territorial firms afforded these businesses the opportunity to make a considerable contribution to the development of French literary culture. For instance, the major tracts of the most celebrated *philosophes* were first published by Francophone printers positioned outside France.¹⁰ Darnton has even suggested the possibility that the majority of French books in the later eighteenth century were produced outside France.¹¹ The total size of the

⁷ Raymond F. Birn, *Pierre Rousseau and the Philosophes of Bouillon, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 212 (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1964).

⁸ Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the 'Encyclopédie', 1775-1800* (London: Belknap Press, 1979); Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (London: Harvard University Press, 1982); Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985); Robert Darnton, *The Corpus of Clandestine Literature in France, 1769-1789* (New York: Norton, 1995); Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).

⁹ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad: Aspects of the French Cosmopolitan Press from the Age of Louis XIV to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

¹⁰ Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad*, p. 1.

¹¹ Robert Darnton, 'Le Livre prohibé aux frontières: Neuchâtel', in *Histoire de l'édition française. Tome 2*, ed. by Martin and Chartier, pp. 342-59 (p. 343).

extra-territorial network can only be estimated but it is nevertheless clear that books, pamphlets and periodicals published beyond France were integral elements of the French print trade.

Censorship under the Old Regime

Since these extra-territorial book dealers operated outside the formal system of French censorship, they were especially involved in the production and distribution of illicit literature. This thesis considers how the old regime authorities reacted to the publication of material outside the borders of the French realm. By shining a light on illicit print, this thesis interacts with the rich historiography on censorship in *ancien régime* France. Whilst existing overviews of the French censorship structure do acknowledge that the Bourbon government made attempts to regulate the literature coming into France from abroad, they tend to conclude that such efforts were futile.¹² This conclusion partly stems from an assumption that censorship was simply too difficult in the eighteenth century. It has been argued that with literacy rates and demand for reading material rising steadily across the century, controlling the printed word was simply an impossible task.¹³ The increasing prevalence of print, coupled with the determination of book traders to evade the law made censorship a real challenge.

The notion that French censorship was somehow doomed to failure is also heavily influenced by the liberal conception of freedom of speech as a fundamental human right. This is an idea grounded in modernity which would have seemed extreme

¹² Belin, pp. 14-15, 41; William Hanley, 'The Policing of Thought: Censorship in Eighteenth-Century France', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 183 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1980), 265-95 (p. 295); Hermann-Mascard, p. 102; David T. Pottinger, *The French Book Trade in the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 72; Daniel Roche 'Censorship and the Publishing Industry', in *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775-1800*, ed. by Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche (London: University of California Press in Collaboration with the New York Public Library, 1989), pp. 3-25 (p. 25).

¹³ Hanley, 'The Policing of Thought', p. 295.

to the inhabitants of eighteenth-century France. The research of Charles Walton has emphasised a widespread belief in the necessity of policing print under the old regime. The *cabiers de doléances* collected prior to the meeting of the Estates-General do indicate a desire to abolish pre-publication censorship but the same lists of grievances also maintain that the state needed to regulate and restrict printed matter.¹⁴ Keeping the book trade under control was a difficult task in the later eighteenth century but this does not mean that it was an undesirable or unattainable goal.

Yet the French government's failure to adequately police the literature coming into France is also seen as a corollary of a censorship structure which was inefficient and ineffective. Between 1700 and 1789 some 3000 decrees on the French print trade were issued by the Bourbon regime.¹⁵ Regulations often overlapped, cancelled each other out or were ambiguous and thus open to interpretation. Aside from a general guideline that they were to condemn all works which seemed to challenge the Crown, the Church or the tenets of conventional morality, censors operated in the dark without formal directives.¹⁶ The instance where a royal censor sanctioned the Koran because it did not pose a threat to Christian principles has since become notorious.¹⁷ For a text to be printed legally it had to receive a royal *privilege* and the administration of these permissions became ever more complicated as the century progressed. Privileges were originally designated for a specific time period but it became common practice for these authorisations to be continually renewed as a means of confirming the dominance of

¹⁴ Charles Walton, *Policing Public Opinion in the French Revolution: The Culture of Calumny and the Problem of Free Speech* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 96.

¹⁵ Robert L. Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs: Banned Books and the French Booktrade during the Last Years of the Ancien Régime*, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2006:07 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2006), p. 21.

¹⁶ Raymond F. Birn, 'Book Censorship and Rousseau's Response', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2005:01 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2005), 223-45 (pp. 223-24).

¹⁷ Raymond F. Birn, 'Malesherbes and the Call for a Free Press' in *Revolution in Print*, ed. by Darnton and Roche, pp. 50-66 (p. 51).

the Parisian guild of printer-booksellers whom the crown could closely supervise.¹⁸ Furthermore, during his time as *directeur de la librairie* Chrétien-Guillaume de Lamoignon de Malesherbes popularised the granting of *permission tacites* as a means of permitting a broader range of texts.¹⁹ The circulation of works which were deemed unsuitable for a royal stamp of approval but not outrageous enough to be formally condemned could be legitimised with a *permission tacite*. Roger Chartier has suggested that in the later eighteenth century, almost as many books were printed with these kinds of informal permissions as were awarded the royal privilege.²⁰

Recent research by Robert Dawson and Thierry Rigogne has served to confirm this impression of the arbitrary nature of the royal administration of print. Rigogne has contended that the French authorities were often unable to enforce their will on the provinces as book trade regulations were ambiguous and local officials enjoyed a high level of autonomy.²¹ Although Dawson rates the overall effectiveness of the management of the book trade more highly than Rigogne, he does echo the same point: that increasingly intricate regulations overwhelmed officials and inclined them towards leniency.²² Officials were frequently confused about which works needed to be suppressed. There were also specific problems related to the inspection of imported books. In 1723, it was decreed that books printed outside of France were only permitted to enter the kingdom via designated *villes d'entrée* which included Marseilles, Lyon and Strasbourg. Incoming crates were inspected twice and any offensive material was to be immediately confiscated. Yet this system was far from foolproof. The

¹⁸ Jean-Dominique Mellot, 'Counterfeit Printing as an Agent of Diffusion and Change: The French Book-Privilege System and its Contradictions (1487-1790)', in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 42-66 (p. 54).

¹⁹ Roche, 'Censorship', p. 7.

²⁰ Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 51.

²¹ Rigogne, *Between State and Market*, pp. 57-58.

²² Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs*, pp. 137-43, 150.

network of *villes d'entrée* was not comprehensive and books poured into France via other cities like Besançon, Grenoble or Sedan.²³ The chaotic administration of the French print trade often meant that rules did not translate into reality.

This view of censorship as arbitrary and ultimately ineffectual has, however, been revised by some recent scholarship. McLeod's research indicates that by the later eighteenth-century, the provincial network of book trade inspectors constituted a relatively effective structure of control.²⁴ Gregory Brown has made it clear that many writers were more than willing to submit to censorship as a means of legitimising their literary output.²⁵ Vivian Gruder has uncovered evidence that the authorities were able to prevent the dissemination of salacious pamphlets which vilified Marie-Antoinette until the very eve of the French Revolution.²⁶ These examples of functioning censorship provide an empirical impetus to question the truism of its failure.

With regards to the extra-territorial print trade, there are also strong indications that censorship could work. A number of scholars have examined the techniques that the French government employed in its efforts to manage the content of the considerable number of French-language newspaper gazettes which were produced in the Netherlands.²⁷ Their findings indicate that the French state was able to exert considerable pressure on Francophone journalists which ultimately meant that they

²³ Rigogne, *Between State and Market*, p. 60.

²⁴ McLeod, 'Provincial Book Trade Inspectors', p. 148.

²⁵ Gregory S. Brown, 'Reconsidering the Censorship of Writers in Eighteenth-Century France: Civility, State Power and the Public Theatre in the Enlightenment', *Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 235-68.

²⁶ Vivian R. Gruder, 'The Question of Marie-Antoinette: The Queen and Public Opinion before the Revolution', *French History*, 16 (2002), 269-98.

²⁷ Eugène Hatin, *Les Gazettes de Hollande et la presse clandestine aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Pincebourde, 1865); Jeremy D. Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics under Louis XVI', in *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, ed. by Jack R. Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 75-132; Pierre Rétat, 'Les Gazetiers de Hollande et les puissances politiques: une difficile collaboration', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 25 (1993), 319-35; Jeroom Vercruyse, 'La Réception politique des journaux de Hollande, une lecture diplomatique', in *La Diffusion et la lecture des journaux de langue française sous l'ancien régime: actes du colloque international, Nimègue, 3-5 Juin 1987*, ed. by Hans Bots (Amsterdam: APA-Holland University Press, 1988), pp. 39-47.

were reluctant to publish any articles which might have offended the French authorities. Simon Burrows and Robert Darnton have both investigated how the French authorities tried to monitor and restrain the literary outpourings of an expatriate community of *libellistes* resident in London.²⁸ Although these historians disagree on several issues, the evidence they present confirms that the Bourbon regime was able to regulate the flow of literature which passed into France. This thesis synthesises these existing studies with fresh research. It uses a broad source base to go beyond what has been presented by these scholars and contextualise the evidence that they have brought forward. The wider European picture examined in this study confirms the findings of this existing work on the extra-territorial print trade: external policing was very focused and could be successful.

There are three main ways in which this study will advance understanding of this issue. First, it will move beyond a specific location to reflect upon how the Bourbon regime dealt with the authors, journalists and publishers who worked along France's northern and eastern borders in the final two decades of the *ancien régime*. Secondly, this study will systematically investigate the rich variety of texts which troubled the French authorities. Rather than concentrating on a single genre, this study will consider how and why newspapers, books and pamphlets provoked the consternation of French officials at certain times. Finally, this thesis will dwell upon the role of the French foreign ministry. The ultimate responsibility for monitoring, managing and manipulating the foreign book trade fell to the French foreign minister. The *secrétaire d'état des affaires étrangères* called upon his network of diplomat agents stationed in foreign centres of power to watch over local book dealers and do what they could to prevent objectionable works from reaching French readers. They were also

²⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 88-138; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 139-93.

responsible for scrutinising the extra-territorial periodical press. This study will highlight the importance of foreign ministers and diplomats in extending the French sphere of influence abroad. Censorship on an international scale was an enormous and daunting task. This thesis will outline how the French ministry used its network of ambassadorial officials to bring the foreign print trade under effective surveillance.

This study aims to give a more rounded picture of the French government's attempts to make its mark on the foreign print trade. Foreign merchants did not deal exclusively in illicit literature but they did pose a particular problem for the French government. Not only did non-French traders operate outside of the confines of French censorship but they were often situated in states where the acts of publishing and bookselling were less rigorously controlled. Historiography on the relationship between the French government and the Francophone periodical press has concentrated on Dutch newspapers whilst the in-depth studies of extra-territorial control undertaken by Burrows and Darnton focus on the print trade in London. This thesis broadens the methodology of this research to reveal how the regime responded to the production of forbidden literature beyond France's northern and eastern peripheries. It encompasses the areas which were most closely connected with the French book market: Britain, the Netherlands, the Swiss states and the principalities which were part of the Holy Roman Empire or under Prussian rule. This thesis is particularly distinctive for addressing French efforts to police print in the Swiss context, an area which has not yet been properly addressed in the historiography. The illicit print trade was especially lively in Britain since publishers there enjoyed something resembling freedom of the press. The printing industry had a long history in the German principalities and in the United Provinces. Publishing was also on the rise in the Swiss states. The geographical spread of this study, across a time period of twenty years, is important in understanding how censorship worked through space and time.

The efficacy of censorship was far from constant which means individual incidents can only reveal so much. This thesis will explore the extent of French influence on different regions and illuminate the ways in which the government's approach was adapted to local circumstances. The broad geographical scope of this thesis can also provide information about the nature of the extra-territorial print network. The research that Burrows and Darnton have undertaken demonstrates that London was clearly a centre of illicit production. This thesis will suggest that London was in fact the main locale of authorship and publishing which the French government found to be distasteful. The French government became involved in policing similar activities in mainland Europe but the continental network existed on a lesser scale.

The second distinguishing point of this thesis rests on genre. This study follows those texts which most concerned the French authorities. As the work of Burrows and Darnton has made clear, the Bourbon regime was determined to prevent the dissemination of *libelles*, texts which slandered social and political elites or members of the royal family.²⁹ This thesis encompasses *libelles* but also considers the extent to which other subject matter aroused official hostility. This includes the three main formats of the printed word in eighteenth-century Europe: periodicals, books and pamphlets. This thesis will consider how French officials assessed the threat posed by literature in the later eighteenth century. Thanks to the research of Burrows and Darnton, we already have an idea of many of the titles which were pursued by the French government in the extra-territorial arena. Although other instances of external policing went on across the continent, there was not an endless supply of illicit titles. It was only a limited corpus of literature which disturbed the French authorities. This study will seek to explain why the government objected vehemently to the publication of certain titles but was prepared to turn a blind eye to most of the works which were published abroad.

²⁹ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 88; Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, p. 200.

Recognition of the focused nature of extra-territorial policing will facilitate a closer appreciation its effectiveness.

The final strand which will serve to unite this broad approach is the role of individual actors in controlling the flow of literature into France. Research conducted by John Hardman, Munro Price and Julian Swann amongst others has underscored how the changing composition of the French government impacted upon *ancien régime* politics.³⁰ This nuanced perspective needs to be applied more readily to the structures of the administration of the book trade. Malesherbes' period as *directeur de la librairie* has received particular attention but the parts played by other figures has not yet been fully examined.³¹ Individual decision makers were critical since the complex web of regulations and rulings could not take effect unless they were upheld by those in power. In order to comprehend the extent to which censorship could be effective, it is vital to appreciate how, when and where decisions were made. The French foreign minister called upon his ambassadorial network to watch over local journalists and book traders. This study will consider how personnel shaped the tactics of extra-territorial policing. It will illustrate that diplomats and foreign ministers forged an efficient working relationship in matters of censorship.

³⁰ John Hardman, *French Politics, 1774-1789: From the Accession of Louis XVI to the Bastille* (London: Longman, 1995); Thomas E. Kaiser, 'Who's Afraid of Marie-Antoinette? Diplomacy, Austrophobia and the Queen', *French History*, 14 (2000), 241-71; Munro Price, *The Fall of the French Monarchy: Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette and the Baron de Breteuil* (London: Pan, 2002); Julian Swann, *Politics and the Parlement of Paris under Louis XV, 1754-1774* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³¹ Elisabeth Badinter, *Les "Remontrances" de Malesherbes, 1771-1775* (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1978); Birn, 'Malesherbes', pp. 50-66; Pierre Grosclaude, *Malesherbes: témoin et interprète de son temps* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1961); Edward P. Shaw, *Problems and Policies of Malesherbes as Directeur de la Librairie in France, 1750-1763* (Albany: State University of New York, 1966).

The Illicit Element in the Book Trade

Foreign publishers and booksellers operated outside French law in two ways: in economic and in ideological terms. From the time of the *Ordonnance de Moulins* in 1566, no person was allowed to print a book without first being awarded a royal *privilege*, a permission which constituted the right to print a particular text.³² Manuscripts were submitted to specialist royal censors for judgement prior to publication. Royal privileges were overwhelmingly bestowed to the 36 officially legitimated printer-booksellers in Paris who were close to the French centre of power.³³ It was the monopoly of the Parisian guild which compelled many provincial traders to become involved in the sale of forbidden books and they frequently turned to foreign publishers for this illicit stock. Most of the works which were printed abroad and sent into France were thus counterfeit editions of texts which had already been awarded a privilege within the kingdom. However, with the establishment of international copyright law still far in the future, privileges were difficult to enforce across national boundaries. What is more, piracy was considered a less serious matter than the publication of books with a subject matter which presented an explicit challenge to the French status quo.³⁴ Indeed, the very existence of a pirate edition meant that its content had already won the approval of the French censors.

A portion of the major reforms of the book trade which were passed on 30 August 1777 were designed to invigorate the provincial trade and went some way to legitimising their piracy. These reforms instigated a period of reprieve during which

³² Robert Shackleton, *Censure and Censorship: Impediments to Free Publication in the Age of Enlightenment* (Austin: Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas, 1975), p. 11.

³³ Carla Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 69-70.

³⁴ Chartier, *Cultural Origins*, p. 73-74; Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs*, pp. 17-18; Adrian Johns, *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 41-56; Mellot, pp. 55-58.

French booksellers could sell off their counterfeit copies without fear of punishment.³⁵ Rigogne has even argued that French officials deliberately turned a blind eye to counterfeiting in the provinces in the hope that it would keep printers too busy to produce more subversive material.³⁶ There has been some suggestion that French officials were more likely to object to pirate editions produced abroad.³⁷ It is true that foreign counterfeiting was more problematic as it constituted an economic challenge. French officials had a responsibility to stimulate trade and competition from foreign businesses could undercut the profits of their French counterparts. The government's attitude to foreign publishing has yet to be systematically examined through an economic lens. This study will make it clear that foreign piracy was not taken particularly seriously in the closing years of the *ancien régime*. There were times when concerns were raised about counterfeit editions but these were pursued half-heartedly. Tolerance of piracy was the norm and officials in the French foreign ministry focused their energies elsewhere.

Strictly speaking, an illegal book was one which had been examined and subsequently denounced by French censors. Any work which was not submitted to the channels of the French censorship system was automatically unauthorised. This was the case for many of the texts which were printed abroad in this period. Texts could also be designated as illegal after being condemned by royal or parliamentary edicts. Condemnations issued by the Church carried weight too but these were comparatively rare by the end of the eighteenth century. In practice, the concept of forbidden literature was much broader than these formal structures indicate. When it came to the works upon which French censors were able to pass judgement, outright

³⁵ Anne Boës and Robert L. Dawson, 'The Legitimation of Contrefaçons and the Police Stamp of 1777', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 230 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1985), 461-84.

³⁶ Rigogne, *Between State and Market*, p. 222.

³⁷ Roche, 'Censorship', pp. 7-8.

condemnations were unusual. Censors instead preferred to suggest possible revisions.³⁸ Similarly, the French government also seems to have been disinclined to formally denounce printed works in this period. Across the 1770s and 1780s, the Bourbon regime only issued an average of 4.5 condemnations each year.³⁹ This reticence is probably explained by the fear that underlining the illegality of a book or pamphlet would only serve to increase its popularity with French readers.

The existence of an international trade in Francophone literature brought further complications. The most provocative books and pamphlets were usually published without first being submitted to the judgement of French censors. Yet books could be printed abroad entirely legally by winning the approval of foreign censorship bodies. Publication was even easier in places like Britain or the United Provinces where there was no system of pre-publication censorship. Such texts were legitimate entities in their place of publication but could nevertheless be viewed with suspicion by the French authorities. Acknowledging these complexities, this thesis will make use of the term 'illicit' to describe printed material which the French government objected to. This term conveys the sense of something which was unauthorised or disapproved of, if not formally condemned.

There was no single list which detailed all the texts that the French government found unacceptable. Illicit literature under the old regime was thus a construct rather than something which had a definite existence. It was those within the French foreign ministry who decided which works were too offensive to be tolerated and the necessity of their suppression. Official documents frequently underlined that books which circulated in France should present no challenge to the state, the Roman Catholic faith

³⁸ Birn, *Royal Censorship*, p. 116.

³⁹ Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, p. 3.

or the tenets of conventional morality.⁴⁰ Yet the reprehensibility of a particular text was open to a degree of interpretation.⁴¹ The definition of acceptability evolved over time in the context of wider developments in the politico-cultural landscape. Thanks to a spiralling series of complicated rulings, the administration of the book trade lacked much sense of a top-down direction. This meant that individual decision-makers could have a significant impact on the circulation of literature.

This thesis dwells on the interplay between print and power by seeking to comprehend how and why French officials were prepared to tolerate some works but were determined to halt the production and dissemination of others. Scholars now tend to agree that although French censorship was repressive in theory, it was in practice characterised by nuance and flexibility. Political elites tend to be well-educated and well-informed well-educated and well-informed of the intellectual currents of the day. The work of Birn, Brown and Anne Goldgar makes it clear that censors were learned and often literary individuals who were generally sympathetic to the evolving intellectual climate of Enlightenment Europe.⁴² Censors sought to recommend works which propagated the respectable face of Enlightenment, namely a questioning attitude of mind which retained ultimate loyalty to the French crown. It has been argued by Jonathan Israel that the increasing acceptance of Enlightenment innovation coupled

⁴⁰ Such references can be found throughout the Collection Anisson du Perron in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, which contains government documents relating to the print trade. For some examples see Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BNF), Manuscrits Français (hereafter MF) 22063, fols. 278-89, June 1783; Paris, BNF, MF 22070, fols. 99-100, 13 June 1777; Paris, BNF, MF 22180, fols. 112-19, 26 August 1777.

⁴¹ This passage has been taken from my own article and reworked. See Louise Seaward, 'The Société typographique de Neuchâtel (STN) and the Politics of the Book Trade in Late Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1769-1789', *European History Quarterly*, forthcoming.

⁴² Birn, *Royal Censorship*, pp. 115-17; Brown, pp. 263-68; Goldgar, pp. 87-91.

with an escalating demand for the printed word encouraged French officials to be tolerant and pragmatic in their attempts to control the dissemination of literature.⁴³ Yet it is important to keep in mind that the influence of Enlightenment did not permeate everywhere. There were individuals within the French government who were staunchly opposed to it. What is more, there were other more pragmatic reasons which inclined the French government towards tolerance. As the localised studies of McLeod and Rigogne indicate, the sheer complexity of the censorship structure could overwhelm even the most conscientious of officials. The Francophone print trade was transnational and therefore very difficult to manage. As such, French officials concentrated on halting the spread of only what they felt to be the most dangerous texts in the extra-territorial arena. The French government was prepared to tolerate much but remained vigilant against those texts which seemed to threaten the three pillars of the *ancien régime*: the state, the Church and the tenets of conventional morality. These broad categories were obviously open to a degree of interpretation but the relatively homogenous nature of the governmental elite meant that officials tended to agree on which works posed the greatest threat. Diplomats came to recognise which texts were beyond the pale and were prevented from pursuing others by the disapproval of the French foreign ministers.

This appreciation of what was considered to be illicit literature can shed light on the French government's goals in the realm of external censorship. The specific objectives of French censorship were never collated in one place but they can be perceived by studying the actions of the foreign ministry. Censorship existed in terms of what was possible and the practice of external policing was reactive. It was only after French officials heard about a potentially offensive title or article that they were able to

⁴³ Jonathan Israel, 'French Royal Censorship and the Battle to Suppress the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert, 1751-1759', in *The Use of Censorship in the Enlightenment*, ed. by Mogens Lærke (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 61-76 (p. 69).

do anything about it. However, the French foreign ministry did take a strategic approach to the problem of policing print abroad.

The foreign minister worked closely with the *lieutenant général* of the Paris police and received information from the police chief about works which were rumoured or confirmed to be circulating in the French capital. In some cases, diplomats were able to acquire and study a copy of a controversial text in order to assess whether it seemed to present a serious threat. This was what happened when the second edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* was published on the continent. Sometimes, the immense popularity of certain works such as the *Encyclopédie* made their contents notorious. Some authors tried to blackmail the French state by threatening that they would publish a provocative text unless they were paid off by the government. In these instances, French officials were given a good idea of what the text in question would contain, although there was no guarantee that the threats which had been made would ever be realised.

Journals, books and pamphlets were all produced outside French borders and the French government attempted to impose its will upon each of these mediums. Books and journals were commercial products, with the latter designed for repeat sale. Pamphlets were shorter, cheaper and quicker to produce and were often printed and distributed clandestinely from an unknown source. It follows that it was easier for the state to police material which came from a fixed place of publication that they could put under surveillance. By contrast, judgements about books and pamphlets were often made on the basis of a text's author or title. Any title which mentioned Marie-Antoinette for example, was unlikely to be tolerated by the French state. The difficulty of policing an international print trade and the necessity of suppressing offensive texts as quickly as possible helps to explain the resort to this kind of pragmatic decision-making. But it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that French officials were largely making judgements about books and pamphlets without having read them in

their entirety or reflected particularly deeply about their subversive potential. It follows that they may have reacted excessively to some texts whilst accepting the publication of others which might have contained criticism of the French state buried deep within their pages. Extra-territorial policing was all about keeping the print trade within certain boundaries as far as was possible but there were obvious limitations to the government's strategy.

The policing of books and newspapers overlapped but there were also clear differences which can be perceived. Attempts to control journalism and literature were driven by similar basic concerns but the objectives and techniques used to manage these forms of print were slightly different. When it came to the book trade, the defamatory texts known as *libelles* were deemed the most outrageous because they attacked political elites and members of the royal family and thus the very foundations of the old regime. Tactics varied according to the scale of the threat posed by an illicit text but diplomats usually pressured foreign powers to confiscate copies and punish the publishers involved. In the most serious cases, the French government also pursued those responsible for authoring controversial books. It did not spend time chasing booksellers and instead it concentrated on those who had been involved in the production of a text. By contrast, the foreign ministry commonly appealed to writers involved with the foreign newspaper press. Foreign ministers made attempts to manage the flow of information and diplomats put pressure on editors to retract offensive articles. When controversial books and pamphlets appeared on the scene, the French state coerced outside authorities and publishers to bend to its will. The official approach to the extra-territorial periodical press was more a question of negotiating with editors and journalists.

There were some commonalities across the regulation of books, pamphlets and journals. The state was on high alert against texts which went into detail about French

politics or political elites. These kinds of works, whether they were covered in the press or in other literature, were not considered fit for public consumption. The idea of exemplary punishment was also critical across all genres. The French state utilised the threat and reality of prohibition from the French market as a tool to encourage extra-territorial gazetteers to fall into line with French wishes. The French authorities also spent a lot of time pursuing and trying to discipline errant publishers since it was hoped that imprisonment would act as a deterrent, a way of warning other extra-territorial printers of the consequences of producing contentious material.

Policing Extra-Territorial Print

This research is primarily based upon the diplomatic correspondence contained in the archives of the French foreign ministry. These sources largely consist of letters back and forth between foreign ministers and the diplomatic team, along with correspondence with other figures involved. Archival work was concentrated on papers concerning regions with strong ties to the French book market: the Netherlands, the Swiss states and the principalities belonging to Prussia and the Holy Roman Empire. When it came to material relating to Britain, Professor Simon Burrows kindly allowed me access to his transcriptions of sources from the French diplomatic archives.⁴⁴ There may thus be more material to uncover when it comes to the policing of the Francophone print trade in Britain but this thesis gives details of a wealth of major affairs which occurred, both across the channel and within other states which traded from beyond French borders. Further details of the material which has been consulted for this project can be found in the bibliography. Research in the foreign ministry archives has been complemented with time spent consulting internal government

⁴⁴ I would like to thank Simon Burrows for allowing me to consult these transcriptions.

records in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and documents relating to the arrest of writers, publishers and booksellers in the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal.

This study commences in January 1770 and terminates at the end of July 1789 when the change of regime had become evident. There are several ways in which a study of censorship centred on the years between 1770 and 1789 can broaden understanding of the old regime. A twenty-year time frame illuminates how far the nature and effectiveness of censorship fluctuated over time. This period also encompasses the full tenure of two foreign ministers who occupied the position for a considerable period of time. The role of the comte de Vergennes as foreign minister is of particular significance since he held the post for an extended period of more than 13 years. In addition, a study of the two decades immediately prior to the French Revolution is critical for exploring the connections between old regime and revolution; a key concern for historians working on this period.

This study is based on official records preserved by the French government in these years. This concentration on government sources has allowed light to be shed on the actions taken by the French authorities, as well as the perspectives of individual officials who were involved in policing print beyond French borders. Yet it is also important to recognise how far official documentation might conceal certain information from view. It was the French state which collated the records upon which this study relies. Official correspondence illustrates how the decision-making process unfolded but there is no certainty that all pertinent information has survived. Contemporary and subsequent officials might easily have pruned, destroyed or lost documents that were sensitive in nature. It can be assumed that the necessity of keeping accurate records prevented officials from frequently engaging in any deliberate tampering but the extent to which government sources are shaped by the perspective of the officials who collate them needs to be recognised nevertheless.

There is one further significant limitation which is imposed by this source base. In many cases, we are relying upon the French government's version of the events that took place and officials within the foreign ministry were inclined to stress the efficacy of external censorship. French diplomats wanted to impress their foreign minister and tried to do by underscoring their vigilance and hard work. The foreign ministers themselves were also reluctant to admit to any weakness. They tended to assert that they were satisfied with the manner in which the extra-territorial print trade was being policed, even in the face of challenging circumstances. Yet the geographical distance between diplomats and foreign ministers also meant that officials on both sides were compelled to be candid about the issues they were confronting in order to work together to surmount them.

As long as these limitations are appreciated, governmental sources can still be useful. Official documentation does not tell the whole story and to an extent has biases towards presenting the government as an effective force. Yet acknowledging, understanding and tackling the problem of the extra-territorial print trade was a crucial aspect of relations between French foreign ministers and the diplomatic team. This thesis centres on the attitude and actions of the French government and official records represent one of the best ways of understanding these elements.

My doctoral research also makes use of data from *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe Database, 1769-1794*.⁴⁵ This project used the records of the Swiss publishing house, the STN to create a vast database charting the dissemination of literature in late eighteenth-century Europe. The example of the STN can offer an insight into how the French government related to a sizeable extra-territorial publisher.

⁴⁵ Simon Burrows and Mark Curran, *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe Database, 1769-1794* (hereafter *FBTEE Database*) (2012) <http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface> [accessed 11 January 2013].

This thesis covers a total of 193 instances when the French government made attempts to control, or seriously contemplated attempting to regulate, the extra-territorial print trade across the period from 1770 to 1789. For the most part, these instances largely constitute objections which were made to the appearance of seemingly offensive material. The French government reacted to books, pamphlets and journals which were written and published outside France, as well to the threat of such publications. The French state's engagement with the foreign print trade also encompassed negotiations surrounding the right to circulate printed matter within France. Particular titles are grouped together as one instance of regulation when the French government targeted them at the same time and for the same reasons. This was the case when foreign journals all published a similar article or when a publisher was thought to be printing a selection of objectionable titles.

Details of the 193 times when the French authorities engaged with the extra-territorial print trade have been collated in the table presented in Appendix A. This table covers all instances where the French government discussed objections to foreign print, even if no action was taken subsequently. The table contains information relating to the dates, titles of texts, individuals responsible for their production and a summary of the French government's involvement in their suppression or regulation. It is preceded by explanatory notes relating to this data.

The findings of this thesis are based on the results presented in this table. This thesis will also consider some measures of internal censorship in order to give context to the French government's attempts to bring the foreign print trade under control. These internal measures are not represented in this table. Whilst the literature which the French government targeted was overwhelming Francophone, this was not always the

case and there were six instances during this period when attention was centred on German or English-language newspapers (for evidence see Appendix A).

The total of 193 cannot tell us everything. The findings presented in Appendix A make it clear that the actions and reactions of the French government could be varied. The fact that the Bourbon state discussed the possibility of taking measures in the extra-territorial arena on 193 occasions makes it clear that such protestations were taken seriously at an official level. Yet this evidence also indicates that the French government recognised gradations of illegality in the print trade. Foreign ministers and diplomats made judgements about texts which came to their attention and discussion in the diplomatic correspondence was the starting point for a range of possible responses. In some cases, complaints were acknowledged but then not investigated further on the grounds that the text in question was not deemed sufficiently subversive. At other points, concerns were raised about a number of decidedly controversial titles and the foreign minister authorised rigorous measures in the hope of ensuring their suppression.

This thesis uses the full spread of this extra-territorial policing to inform its conclusions about the successes of external censorship in the later eighteenth century. The marked differences in the intensity of governmental reaction suggest that French officials were actually prepared to tolerate the majority of the extra-territorial print trade. Indeed, scholarly research has already uncovered many of the most protracted policing campaigns in this period. We should thus be careful of assuming that the big stories uncovered by Burrows and Darnton were typical of the time. Large-scale campaigns involving police agents and the suppression of several shocking titles were comparatively rare. Such affairs were considered to be gravely problematic but there was a finite number of these severely distasteful works that the French government decided to target across the closing years of the old regime. A breadth of purview

allows this thesis to demonstrate that attempts to police print abroad were focused on a limited sector of the print trade. French officials did not implement harsh measures every time a possible transgression was noted in the foreign print trade. Officials instead assessed potential threats and made decisions about the appropriate level of response.

Fluctuations according to chronology are an important part of the story of external censorship. Figure 1 outlines the chronological spread of the French government's engagement with the extra-territorial print trade. It marks all occasions when the French government objected to or made attempts to control the extra-territorial print trade across the period from 1770 to 1789. This number has been designated as a 'response' in the figures in this thesis as a way of underlining the number of occasions that the French government engaged with the foreign print trade. If a particular affair lasted for more than one year, its position on the graph is designated at the moment that it started to concern the French state. This graph indicates that were peaks of problems in 1771, in the mid to late 1770s and a sizeable spike in the early 1780s. Thereafter, the number of times that the French government became involved with regulating the extra-territorial print trade declines sharply, rises again from 1785 to 1787 and then tails off in the last years of the *ancien régime*.

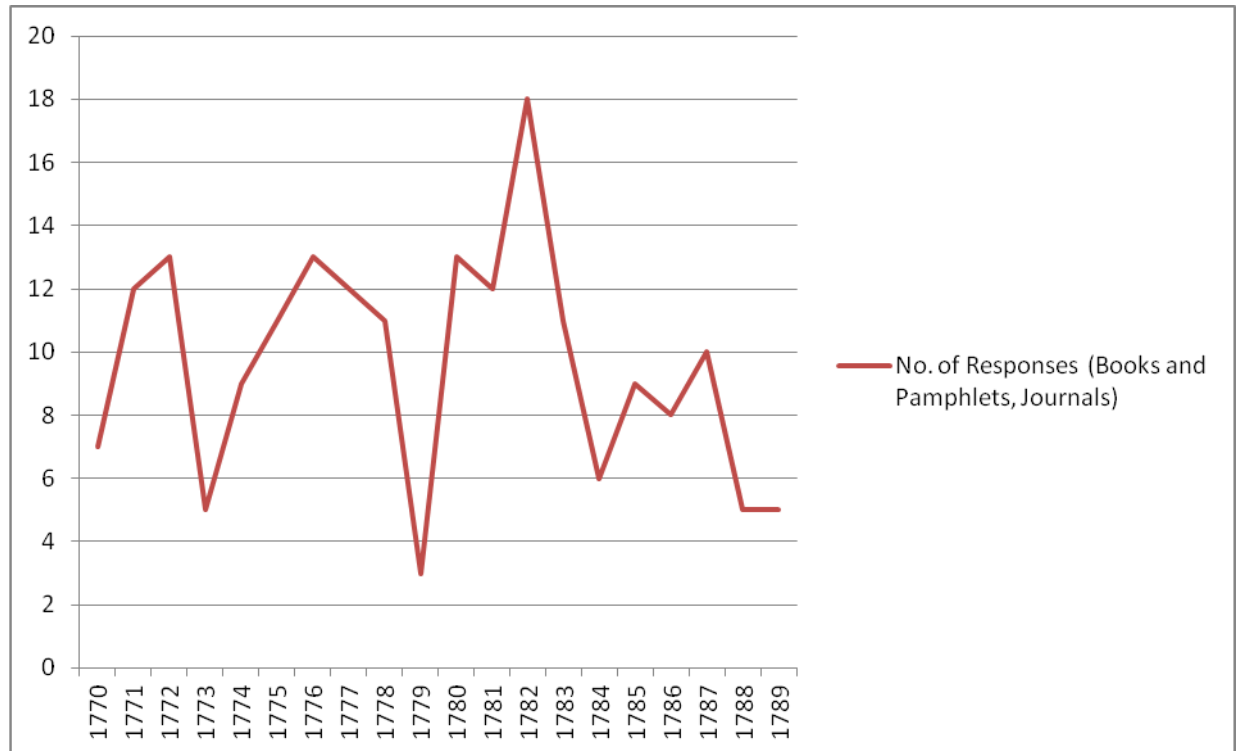


Figure 1: Frequency of Official Responses to the Extra-Territorial Print Trade (Books, Pamphlets and Journals) by Year, 1770-1789

The picture becomes a little clearer once the policing of books and journals are separated. Figure 2 shows how often the French government engaged with the extra-territorial print trade in reference to these two mediums and suggests that the two had somewhat different trajectories. Firstly, it is clear that the French government became involved with regulating the periodical press on a much more frequent basis. Issues relating to the management of books and pamphlets were raised 68 times across this period. The number of instances of the French state regulating journals was nearly double this number and reached 125. Managing the news was a continual process whereas the policing of books tended to be characterised by one-off events of major significance. Secondly, the high points of policing books and newspapers were not exactly the same. Official interest in journals was at its height in the early 1770s and the

later 1770s going into the early 1780s. By contrast, the book trade seems to have become increasingly problematic in the early 1780s, after which point government involvement with the foreign print trade went into decline. The year 1779 appears as a trough in both of these trajectories which can probably be explained by gaps in data in the foreign ministry archive for this year. The number of times that the French government took action in 1779 was presumably higher than these figures thus suggest. Recognising these contrasts, this thesis will explore the policing of journals and books in separate chapters. It will consider the rationale of managing the printed word in these formats and the reasons for the chronologies seen in Figure 2.

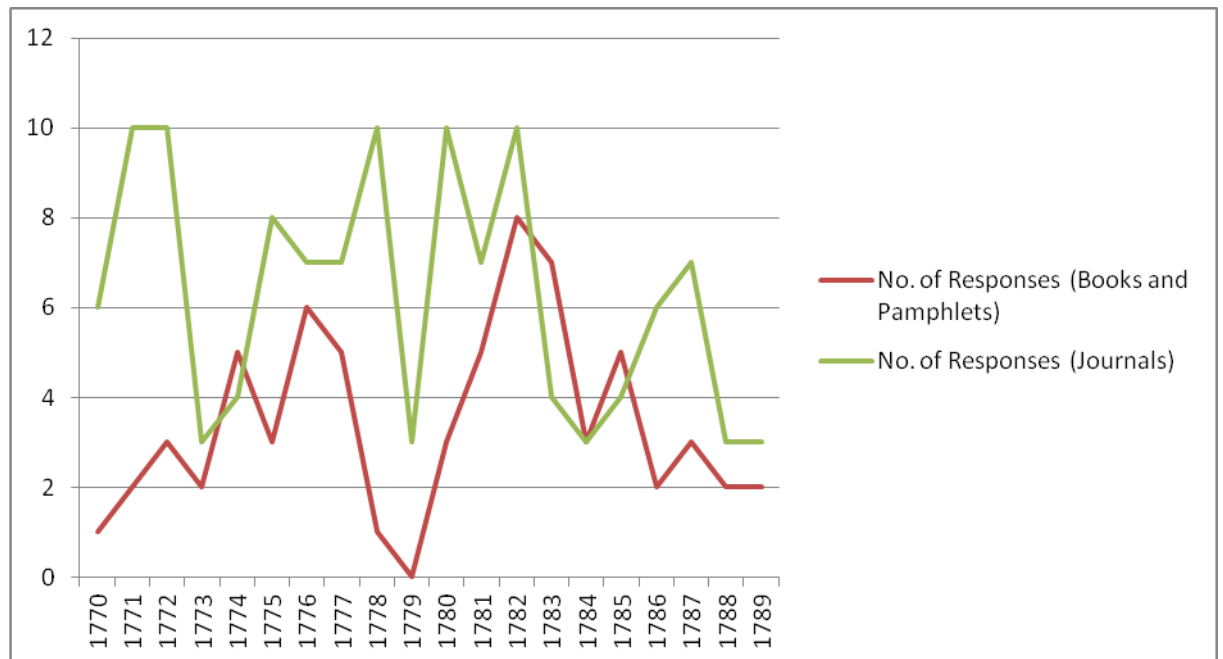


Figure 2: Frequency of Official Responses to the Extra-Territorial Print Trade (Books and Pamphlets, Journals) by Year, 1770-1789

There was one key moment when the government's approach to these two media coincided. In 1783, the French government renewed and strengthened its treatment of the extra-territorial print trade. In June of this year the state put measures in place to bring the importation of foreign books under tighter control. This move was accompanied by a strategic shift in attitude. The French foreign ministry actively attempted to take the threat of seemingly offensive books less seriously, scorning works that they might once have chased. This change of policy had a clear impact on the book market. The French government was troubled by a smaller number of texts in the later 1780s. The shift of 1783 made less of an impression on the newspaper press. The number of press-related complaints fell in 1783 to 1784 but began to creep up again in the mid to late 1780s. Chapters 4 and 5 will go into more detail about the impact of 1783 on the policing of books and journals. Suffice to say at this juncture that 1783 was a critical turning point when the efficacy of external policing was intensified. This is one of the major outcomes of this thesis.

There are also clear patterns to discern what it comes to the subject matter of the material which the French government became involved with in the extra-territorial arena. This information is summarised in Figure 3.

	No. of Responses (Books and Pamphlets)	No. of Responses (Journals)	Total No. of Responses (Books and Pamphlets, Journals)
French Current affairs/Politics	55	90	145
Personal libel	48	41	89
Scandal	26	1	27
Foreign affairs	8	19	27
Military affairs	2	13	15
Economics	5	5	10
Religion	3	6	9
Legal reform	5	2	7
Literary studies	1	2	3
History	2	0	2
Pornography	1	0	1

Figure 3: Frequency of Official Responses to the Extra-Territorial Print Trade (Books and Pamphlets, Journals) by Subject Matter, 1770-1789

The subject matter of each title that the French government engaged with has been classified according to at least one keyword (further details of these classification for titles or collection of titles can be found in Appendix A). Many texts covered more than one subject which this means that the sum of this table comes to more than the overall total of 193. Some initial conclusions about how French officials judged the threat posed by foreign literature can be drawn from this data. Figure 3 indicates that

the French government was concerned to manage the discussion of French current affairs and politics, above all else. The Bourbon state attempted to tightly restrict access to this kind of information within France and complemented this with a similar strategy in the extra-territorial arena. The regulation of political news was particularly pressing in the case of the periodical press because this topic was the main selling-point of foreign Francophone gazettes. These papers could provide the kind of insights into French current affairs which were not necessarily easily accessible within France. The question of personal libel or slander could also cause consternation for French officials who sought to defend the reputations of political and social elites, whether they were attacked in the periodical press or in books or pamphlets. The genre of *libelle* literature typically combined personal slander with information on French politics and this potent mixture regularly alarmed the officials who were working on censorship across this period.

Wider Implications

This study explores the most dramatic examples of policing print but it is also important to remember that other mechanisms of control and influence operated in the background too. It is worth being reminded of Pierre Bourdieu's distinction between structural and regulatory censorship: when the former (punishment, exclusion, prohibition) breaks down, regulation and surveillance become more common.⁴⁶ It can be said that a similar process to this occurred in the extra-territorial arena in the eighteenth century. With censorship structures within France often inefficient and ineffectual, the state developed a system designed to manage and suppress what it considered to be the worst kinds of material. The foreign ministry was flexible in the

⁴⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), p. 138

face of forbidden literature and this made the task of external censorship more manageable. This idea supports other work on French censorship which has suggested that flexibility had clear benefits for the French state, whether it was promoting French trade or allowing the Church a voice.⁴⁷ As the work of Cyndia Susan Clegg and Jason Peacey has made clear in the British context, the picture is rather more complex than censorship being simply a success or a failure; the shortcomings in the censorship structure were also matters of design.⁴⁸ The French government had an international system for monitoring the publishing industry. This surveillance enabled French officials to assess the threat posed by particular works and ensure that censorship was directed towards the most dangerous titles. They devised ways of working around the fact that total control was impossible.

This thesis will have significant implications for historiographical perceptions of the illicit book trade in *ancien régime* France. Scholarly appreciation of this subject is largely based upon the work of Darnton. His ground-breaking research has consistently revealed the intricacies of the way in which illicit texts were produced, marketed and disseminated in this period. Darnton has consistently emphasised the subversive nature of illicit production, making frequent use of vocabulary such as ‘under the cloak’, ‘smugglers’ and even ‘literary buccaneers’.⁴⁹ He has also postulated that the illegal and licit book trades operated in essentially separate spheres.⁵⁰ This notion connects with Darnton’s well-known ideas about Grub Street. His clandestine publishers seem to be

⁴⁷ Sophia Rosenfeld, ‘Writing the History of Censorship in the Age of Enlightenment’ in *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment: New Perspectives in Eighteenth-Century Intellectual History*, ed. by Daniel Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 117-45 (p. 123.)

⁴⁸ Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

⁴⁹ Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, pp. 3, 18-20, 43, 54, 80; Darnton, *The Literary Underground*, pp. 183-84.

⁵⁰ Darnton, *The Literary Underground*, p. 183.

working parallel to the resentful would-be *philosophes* who toiled in the Parisian gutter.⁵¹ Darnton's work has been very influential and made its mark on the historiography.⁵² Darnton's ideas about underground illegal publishing and bookselling are referenced as a matter of course by scholars working on the *ancien régime*.⁵³ The implication of Darnton's view seems to be that this print network was beyond the reach of the French authorities. The evidence presented in this thesis challenges the idea that extra-territorial book dealers were able to trade freely 'under the cloak'. Journalists and publishers outside France paid close attention to the French government and were prepared to acquiesce to its demands. Darnton's more recent works show him to be thinking along these lines too. He has distanced himself from the idea that Grub Street writers were autonomous radicals.⁵⁴ Moreover, he has provided a wealth of evidence to show the extent to which government officials became engaged with extra-territorial print. They policed production but many also became complicit in elements of illegality.⁵⁵ Darnton's pioneering research has rightly had a huge impact but it is time to recognise that the distinction he once made between legal and clandestine traders no longer stands. There were indeed 'underground' traders operating beyond France who

⁵¹ Darnton, 'High Enlightenment', pp. 18-35.

⁵² David A. Bell, 'A Grub Street Hack Goes to War', in *Into Print*, ed. by Charles Walton, pp. 131-44; Jeremy L. Caradonna, 'Grub Street and Suicide: A View from the Literary Press in Late Eighteenth-Century France', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33 (2010), 23-36.

⁵³ See Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 94; Thomas E. Kaiser and Dale Van Kley, 'Introduction', in *From Deficit to Deluge: The Origins of the French Revolution*, ed. by Thomas E. Kaiser and Dale Van Kley (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 1-36 (pp. 18-19); Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (London: Viking, 1989), p. 176; James J. Sheehan, 'Introduction: Culture and Power during the long Eighteenth Century', in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-13 (p. 5); Dominique Varry, 'La Diffusion sous le manteau: la Société typographique de Neuchâtel et les lyonnais', in *L'Europe et le livre: réseaux et pratiques du négoce de librairie, XVIIe-XIX siècles*, ed. by Frédéric Barbier, Sabine Juratic and Dominique Varry (Paris: Klincksieck, 1996), pp. 304-32.

⁵⁴ Robert Darnton, 'Response to Reviews of *The Devil in the Holy Water* or, the Art of Slander in France from Louis XIV to Napoleon by Robert Darnton', *H-France Forum*, 5 (2010), 117-27 <http://www.h-france.net/forum/forumvol5/darnton5.pdf> [accessed 11 January 2013] (pp. 123-26); Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 1.

⁵⁵ This is a major theme of Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*.

became involved with material which French officials found objectionable. But the extent to which these traders remained at the mercy of the French government must also be appreciated.

It is also important to think about the size and influence of the extra-territorial print trade in order to put the French state's efforts in context. First of all, it must be made clear that the French government was never able to totally eradicate the threat of forbidden literature. Publishers and booksellers continued to send illicit books into France through clandestine channels throughout the final years of the old regime. However, the French foreign ministry did experience real successes in suppressing the most provocative texts. This meant that there was a limited amount of these kinds of works reaching the French market in the later eighteenth century. A first edition of a *libelle* published in London typically ran to around a thousand copies, many of which the French government was able to prevent from being disseminated within the kingdom.⁵⁶ The boldest elements of the illicit print trade were relatively small in number then and the French foreign ministry worked hard to make them even less significant. It is vital to recognise that the French government did not put much effort into chasing second or subsequent editions save for in extreme cases such as with *Le Gazetier cuirassé*.⁵⁷ The ambassadorial network kept the government up to date with where second editions were appearing but the highly focused strategy of external policing entailed concentrating attention on a text's initial splash. Although pursuing first editions was a conscious choice, the point remains that later versions of provocative texts still had the potential to challenge the old regime. This was probably the major failing of extra-territorial policing.

⁵⁶ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 73-74.

⁵⁷ A second edition of another highly illegal work, the memoirs of the Jeanne de Valois-Saint-Rémy, comtesse de La Motte was also pursued early in 1789.

Second editions did emerge but the French government was nevertheless able to impose some limits on the size of the book market. This ultimately suggests that the impact of such texts on readers was lessened. The audience for these works was already restricted to the literate populace of France, although we can assume that some details from illicit texts also spread via word of mouth. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that newspapers had a wide circulation of regular readers which is something that could not be said for most forbidden texts. Scholars are in disagreement over the question of whether the populace of eighteenth-century France took subversive messages from the texts they read. Darnton has contended that forbidden literature was potent enough to undermine the old regime whilst others like Burrows, Chartier, Censer and Popkin underline that such texts were not necessarily taken seriously by readers.⁵⁸ The question of what impression these books made on readers is a vital one but the answer can never really be known for sure. Close textual analysis can provide us with fascinating insights into the messages that may have been picked up by eighteenth-century readers. Yet perhaps what matters most, is whether books were able to actually reach readers in the first place.

Even the most explosive book could only have had a limited impact if its audience was restricted. The notion that the French government was relatively successful in policing the external book trade thus presents a challenge to one of the dominant strands of historiography on the connection between eighteenth-century France and the French Revolution. After a long period of research focused on social explanations of the onset of revolution, in the 1980s historians began to turn to politico-cultural factors to account for the unprecedented upheaval of 1789. Largely

⁵⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 77-78; Chartier, *Cultural Origins*, p. 83; Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, pp. 217-31; Jeremy D. Popkin, 'Robert Darnton's Alternative (to the) Enlightenment', in *The Darnton Debate: Books and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Haydn T. Mason, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 359 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999), 105-28 (pp. 121-28).

due to the influential work of Jürgen Habermas, it has become an accepted view that across the second half of the eighteenth century in particular, the legitimacy of the French monarchy was progressively eroded by an expanding arena of printed and public discussion. Habermas contended that as the economy expanded, education improved and literacy rose across the continent during the later eighteenth century, a public sphere of rational-critical discourse developed. With information and ideas being exchanged in burgeoning arenas of printed and public discussion, the notion of public opinion as a rational force and a sovereign tribunal emerged and became established.⁵⁹ Historians have been reluctant to accept Habermas' model unquestioningly but a version of his theory has nevertheless become central to our comprehension of the politico-cultural climate of *ancien régime* France.⁶⁰ Scholars have acknowledged the difficulty of proving a concrete link between public sphere and revolution. Despite these caveats, some have contended that the expansion of the public sphere was key in the formation of volatile public opinion in old regime France.⁶¹

This thesis challenges the consensus on the public sphere by illustrating how far the French government was able to control the publication and the circulation of literature. The public sphere can be understood in meaningful terms as a metaphorical and physical space for the critical discussion and exchange of information and ideas. The concept encompasses the intersection and potential amplification of information through a broad range of oral, written and visual avenues. Printed matter was only one element of the public sphere but it was a tangible aspect which the French government

⁵⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

⁶⁰ Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (London: MIT Press, 1992); Jon Cowans, 'Habermas and French History: The Public Sphere and the Problem of Political Legitimacy', *French History*, 13 (1999), 134-60; Massimo Rospocher, ed., *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2012).

⁶¹ Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Mona Ozouf, 'Public Opinion' at the End of the Old Regime', *Journal of Modern History*, 60, (1988), S1-S21.

were able to police. It needs to be stressed that the size of the illicit extra-territorial print trade was limited. The production of works which the French government found completely repugnant was comparatively rare and when such texts did appear, they overwhelmingly emanated from London. Moreover, the external print trade was continually monitored by the Bourbon regime. This meant that when officials discovered works which were considered truly reprehensible, they were able to do all they could to prevent their circulation within France. These efforts could in turn discourage traders from becoming heavily involved with the exportation of illicit literature. The French government's ability to regulate the extra-territorial print trade does not mean that the public sphere was firmly under state control. There were many other components of the public sphere aside from the foreign print trade. It is also important to remember that the public sphere was constituted of discourses in favour of the French government as well as those which were more critical. Yet this study does present evidence of how far the government sought and was able to place normative limits on the diffusion of print, limiting the material up for discussion in the French public sphere in the process.

Although French readers looked to publishers and booksellers beyond France's borders to provide them with 'uncensored' books, the activities of these bookmen were far from free. Public debate undoubtedly played its part in destabilising the *ancien régime* but scholars have perhaps gone too far in conceptualising the flow of literature as something resembling a relentless torrent. Books, pamphlets and journals which were sent into France circulated largely within confines set by the French government and as such, only a limited number of readers were able to get hold of subversive material. The public sphere was important but it was embedded in the realities of contemporary political culture. This thesis argues for the importance of distinguishing how the government's approach to and effectiveness in external censorship fluctuated over time.

The extra-territorial book trade remained a problem but should not be thought of as one which was getting steadily worse as 1789 drew near. The picture was rather more complex. It is also important to keep in mind that books, pamphlets and newspapers were not the only media that could impact upon the French populace. Oral and more ephemeral elements also interacted with books, pamphlets and periodicals and their influence is much more difficult to determine.⁶²

This thesis can also tell us something about the political landscape of eighteenth-century France. Historians were once accustomed to thinking of Louis XVI as a feeble and uninspiring leader who had little success working with a ministry which found itself unable to steer a clear way through a mounting political and economic crisis. It has also been stressed that France's record in foreign policy was decidedly unimpressive in the latter part of the eighteenth century.⁶³ Such a line of thought can give the impression that the 1770s and 1780s were a period of decline which led to an inevitable collapse. This view has been somewhat modified by the work of Hardman and Price who have cautioned against a fatalistic view of Louis XVI's years in power. Their emphasis on the minutiae of ministerial politics in these decades makes it clear that the stability and success of the regime rose and fell.⁶⁴ This idea about the high and low points of French power is important to this study.

The question of the strength of the French government in its final years also ties into the issue of despotism. Ministerial despotism was a major accusation which was

⁶² For more on the influence of these factors, see Robert Darnton, 'An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris', *The American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), 1–35 (pp. 12-14); Paula McDowell, 'Mediating Media Past and Present: Toward a Genealogy of Print Culture and Oral Tradition', in *This is Enlightenment*, ed. by Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 229-46 (pp. 231-36); François Moureau, 'Les Nouvelles à la main dans le système d'information de l'ancien régime', in *De Bonne main: la communication manuscrite au 18^e siècle*, ed. by François Moureau (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1993), pp. 117-34 (pp. 117-20).

⁶³ Orville T. Murphy, *The Diplomatic Retreat of France and Public Opinion on the Eve of the French Revolution, 1783-1789* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), pp. 2-3.

⁶⁴ Hardman, *French Politics*, pp. 243-45; John Hardman, *Louis XVI: The Silent King* (London: Arnold, 2000), pp. 29-30; Price, *The Fall of the French Monarchy*, pp. 24-34.

levelled at the French government in contemporary literature.⁶⁵ A wave of pamphlets published in the early 1770s accused the French *chancelier* René Nicolas Charles Augustin de Maupeou of riding roughshod over the *parlements* whilst other works like *Essai sur le despotisme* by Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, lambasted the government more generally.⁶⁶ Historians differ in their assessment of whether these pamphleteers had a point. It has been argued that, when it came to the print trade at least, this discourse of despotism was out of step with reality. For example, the number of people put in the Bastille for offences concerning writing, bookselling and publishing was falling in the 1780s.⁶⁷ Burrows and Price have disputed this view by pointing to extreme repression in the extra-territorial arena. The French government routinely planned to kidnap and perhaps even to assassinate unruly authors.⁶⁸ These sorts of actions imbued the literary theme of despotism with an authenticity which arguably rendered it more convincing.

This thesis goes some way to confirming the former line of reasoning by contending that the French government held back from being dictatorial. This was largely because it recognised that it could not aspire to have complete control over the entirety of the print trade. It is also feasible that officials were anxious not to provide too much ammunition to those offering up the narrative of ministerial despotism. The French foreign ministry demanded that foreign powers submit to their wishes but it was rare for them to take this to extremes. Similarly, kidnapping was a last resort for the

⁶⁵ For work on the theme of despotism in eighteenth-century France, see John M. Burney, 'History, Despotism, Public Opinion and the Continuity of the Radical Attack on Monarchy in the French Revolution, 1787-1792', *History of European Ideas*, 17, (1993), 245-63; Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 7; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 36-37; Thomas E. Kaiser, 'The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture', *The Journal of Modern History*, 72 (2000), 6-34.

⁶⁶ Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, *Essai sur le despotisme* (London [Paris(?): [n. pub.], 1776).

⁶⁷ Rebecca Rogers, 'Le Livre embastillé', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 21 (1989), 189-202 (pp. 191-93).

⁶⁸ Simon Burrows, 'Despotism without Bounds: The French Secret Police and the Silencing of Dissent in London, 1760-1790', *History*, 89 (2004), 525-48; Munro Price, *Preserving the Monarchy: The Comte de Vergennes, 1774-1787* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3, 42.

French government. Punishments were usually measured and issued with at least some semblance of having gone through the proper legal channels.

This study will demonstrate that the Bourbon monarchy remained quite successful at imposing its will in the arena of print through most of the 1770s and 1780s. The foreign ministry had a clear idea of the works it wanted to halt and was able to exert enough pressure within and outside of France to prevent or stem their dissemination. Evidence that the French government could be forceful, if perhaps not despotic, in its final years indicates the need to rethink the connection between old regime politics and the French Revolution. The regime was not necessarily crumbling throughout the 1770s and 1780s and it still retained considerable power. Indeed, it may make more sense to place emphasis instead on the way in which social and economic problems precipitated the crisis of the old regime as has been suggested by one of the most recent studies on the origins of the revolutionary upheaval.⁶⁹

Chapter Overview

The chapters in this thesis illustrate how the policing of extra-territorial print was organised from 1770 to 1789. Chapter 2 considers how personnel within the French foreign ministry affected external censorship. It will argue that French diplomats worked well to monitor extra-territorial printing and were efficient in executing the orders of central government. It will also stress the importance of the comte de Vergennes, French foreign minister from 1774 to 1787 and contend that he played a key role in orchestrating an effective system of control. Chapter 3 focuses on one of the main obstacles facing the French government in its efforts to impose its will abroad. Foreign powers were often prepared to resist French demands in order to protect the

⁶⁹ Kaiser and Van Kley, 'Introduction', pp. 1-36.

traders in their locality. This obstructed and delayed programmes of policing but the determination of the French foreign ministry ultimately meant that such resistance could be overcome. Chapter 4 is centred on the extra-territorial newspaper press. It will contend that the French foreign ministry had a range of techniques which it employed to keep articles within acceptable limits. A combination of these methods allowed the state to prevent widespread discussion of news information about the French state. Chapter 5 will explore the French government's approach to potentially subversive texts. The variety of evidence in relation to this topic means that this chapter is the longest portion of the thesis. The policing of books also had a very strong chronological narrative revolving around the year 1783, which will be emphasised here. An expansion of foreign book dealing in the 1780s put the French foreign ministry under pressure. Struggling to cope, it revolutionised its approach in 1783 and was able to bring the print network back under control. This chapter is key to the overarching argument of this thesis: that the French government experienced particular success in policing print beyond France's borders. These five chapters illustrate the normal system of extra-territorial policing under the old regime and take into consideration how French officials responded to challenges to this structure.

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This research will follow the lead of Eisenstein in emphasising the critical significance of presses which operated from beyond France but in doing so will contest the post-revisionist consensus relating to the inexorable rise of print and the related expansion of the public sphere. Literature published outside of France made up a substantial proportion of that which circulated within the kingdom but the government's perspective on this aspect of the book trade has yet to receive much consideration in

the historiography. Burrows and Darnton have explored official attitudes to *libelles* produced in London and others have focused on Dutch gazettes but the geographical and ideological confines of these studies present an opportunity for further research. The inefficacy of the administrators of the book trade has become something of a truism but there is a need for an increased appreciation of the motivations driving royal officials and a subsequent re-evaluation of the extent to which they were able to enforce their will. Current conceptualisations of the French public sphere can be limited by their simplicity and there needs to be more consideration of issues which affected the manner of the administration of the book trade. These include the role of individual actors, the impact of ideological, political and economic pressures and the differences between various genres and media. The French government found it difficult to regulate the print trade but it never gave up trying to set the limits of this aspect of the public sphere. Success may not have always been immediately obvious but in many cases the French authorities were able to deter authors, journalists and publishers from becoming engaged in the most illicit areas of the print trade.

Chapter 2 - Diplomats and Foreign Ministers

The diplomatic correspondence of the French government reveals how attempts to extend control abroad were conceived of and materialised in practice. Officials working at the French embassies were the key agents in the government's strategy of external censorship. They received instructions from and liaised with the French foreign minister and some of his ministerial colleagues. Diplomats watched over the activities of local book traders and acted quickly in efforts to stem the flow of any seemingly subversive literature. Historical discussion of the role of the French censors has emphasised the significance of individual agents in the process of censorship. Studying relations between the diplomats and those working at the heart of the French state can present a new perspective on the workings of the system of literary control. Censorship was a broader phenomenon which touched areas of government outside of the *direction de la librairie* and which was dependent upon the cooperation of agents within and outside France. Diplomats were responsible for maintaining and promoting French influence abroad; external censorship was a key component of this role. The reactive nature of external policing meant that diplomats helped to perceive and suppress literature which might be dangerous. It was the French foreign ministers, however, who ultimately guided extra-territorial censorship and made the final decision about which texts could simply not be tolerated. With additional assistance from the Paris police, the foreign ministry was able to make its mark on the industry of extra-territorial print.

Who were the Diplomats?

It makes sense to begin with a consideration of who exactly was serving the French state abroad at the end of the eighteenth century. Diplomatic personnel were stationed in each European capital and a consular team was also positioned in merchant towns.¹ It was largely ennobled men who occupied the primary positions in the French embassies, either as *ambassadeurs* or *ministres plénipotentiaires*.² These officials were supported by less powerful agents who were usually drawn from the bourgeoisie to act as *résidents*, *chargés d'affaires* and *secrétaires*.³ A *chargé d'affaires* would take over temporarily if an ambassador went on leave or was recalled.⁴

Many of these officials were diplomatic professionals who spent their lifetime representing the French state abroad but there were others who were propelled into the role thanks to family links, political manoeuvring or their own specialist experience.⁵ Diplomats tended to hold between four and six postings in the course of their career and usually represented France in a single state for a period of one to three years.⁶ However, those diplomats who displayed a particular expertise in and understanding of a particular region could expect to enjoy a longer residency. This was the case for Pierre de Buisson, chevalier de Beauteville, who represented France in Swiss Solothurn for

¹ Charles-Édouard Levillain, 'La Correspondance diplomatique dans l'Europe moderne (c.1500-c.1750): problèmes de méthode et tentative de définition', in *Cultural Transfers: France and Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Simon Burrows, Edmond Dziembowski and Ann Thomson, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2010:04 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010), 43-55 (p. 46).

² Linda S. Frey and Marsha Frey, 'Courtesans of the King': Diplomats and the French Revolution', *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, 32 (2004), 107-22 (p. 109) <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/w/ws/fh/0642292.0032.007/--courtesans-of-the-king-diplomats-and-the-french-revolution?rgn=main;view=fulltext;q1=frey> [accessed 11 January 2013].

³ Frey and Frey, p. 109.

⁴ Jean Baillou, *Les Affaires étrangères et le corps diplomatique français*, vol 1 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1984), p. 204.

⁵ Hamish Scott, 'Diplomatic Culture in Old Regime Europe', in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 58-85 (pp. 60-61).

⁶ Baillou, pp. 192-93.

more than 10 years. Thus, the most powerful members of the diplomatic corps came from the same elite milieu as the French ministry and so there was a certain unity in culture and outlook.

As this chapter will highlight, French diplomats working abroad had a clear idea of the kind of texts which were not to be tolerated. However, it is important to recognise that the practice of rotating the diplomatic team meant that some officials were less familiar with the characteristics of a particular region. Although it is difficult to judge whether newly-arrived diplomats failed to notice or halt illicit printing and bookselling, it is evident that those with a longer residency were especially attuned to local activities. Two examples of diplomats who were remarkably effective at policing the print trade were Pierre Michel Hennin who was French *résident* in Geneva from 1765 to 1777 and Etienne Gastebois, the abbé Desnoyers, who occupied the position of *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague from 1772 to 1776. Hennin was praised in communication from the foreign ministry for his simple tastes, good management skills and intelligence.⁷ The men who occupied the lower position of *résident* were not usually so highly thought of. Desnoyers became *chargé d'affaires* after tutoring Noailles, who was French *ambassadeur* in The Hague from 1770 to 1776. The abbé was proactive in his role, compiling a kind of gazette of local news which he forwarded to the foreign ministry.⁸ These duties arguably gave Desnoyers confidence in the task of policing the print trade. He was very vocal in alerting the foreign ministry to potential threats and then zealous in pursuing the culprits.

Hennin and Desnoyers approached the extra-territorial print trade with assurance but there were others who were less confident working on their own

⁷ Georges Livet, ed., *Recueil des instructions aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France des traités de Westphalie jusqu'à la révolution française XXX Suisse, tome second, Genève, les Grisons, Neuchâtel et Valangin, l'évêché de Bale, le Valais* (Paris: Alcan, 1983), pp. 599-602.

⁸ For copies of these reports, see Paris, AMAE, Série mémoires et documents (hereafter SMD) France 1878-83.

initiative. Problems could also arise when the French government called upon *résidents* or *chargés d'affaires* to become involved in external censorship since they were not authorised to act in the same way as the *ambassadeurs*. Even though Hennin was adept at uncovering details of the book trade in Geneva, he still worried that his position as *résident* prevented him from putting sufficient pressure on the local authorities to punish wayward book dealers.⁹ Thus, the French government had access to a large team of ambassadors who were stationed in the major cities across the continent. The foreign ministry could also call upon other secretarial and support staff to chase books if an ambassador had taken leave or was overloaded with other duties. However, it is important to remember that the extent of expertise, local knowledge and power varied across the diplomatic team. This chapter will demonstrate how the actions and influence of individual diplomats impacted upon the efficacy of French external censorship.

Diplomats and their Role in Censorship

French diplomats were charged with a number of responsibilities as part of their role of representing the interests of France abroad. These included building commercial links, negotiating with foreign governments and conducting ceremonial duties.¹⁰ Monitoring the activities of local publishers and booksellers was a relatively minor portion of the job but it was a responsibility which was taken seriously by both the foreign minister and the ambassadors themselves. Indeed, at certain points of crisis entire dispatches were taken up with discussing the circulation of literature. This occurred in January 1772 when the French government became alarmed that a second edition of *Le Gazetier*

⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fols. 83-85, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 5 August 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fols. 183-86, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

¹⁰ On the range of activities taken on by diplomats, see Alfred Cobban, *Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague* (London: Gape, 1954).

cuirassé might be being published in Geneva. Prior to his initial arrival in a European capital, a diplomat would receive a memorandum of instructions from the foreign ministry entitled *Mémoire pour servir d'instruction*. This document was intended to offer guidance in representing France abroad and provide some details on the peculiarities of the region that the diplomat had been sent to. Some of these memoranda contained a passage which underlined duties in relation to external censorship:

Il ne sera pas moins intéressant pour la Religion et pour le Gouvernement d'apporter tous les obstacles praticables à l'impression des ouvrages licencieux ou hardis dans leur morale et dans leurs principes.¹¹

This document could also offer more specific advice tailored to local circumstances. Identical instructions were issued to Hennin and Jean-Baptiste Gedeon de Malescombes de Curières, baron de Castelnaud, French *résident* in Geneva when they started work in Geneva in 1765 and 1781 respectively which made it clear that they would find it difficult to work with the Genevan authorities in matters relating to the book trade;

On sent très bien à la vérité que les magistrats de cette République ne sauraient imposer sur ce sujet des lois aussi rigoureuses que celles d'un Etat monarchique, et que cette liberté même est un objet de commerce que l'on prétendrait difficilement ôter aux Genevois. Mais il est des ouvrages de telle nature que les magistrats, ne pouvant pas douter du mécontentement que leur débit dans le royaume donnerait à Sa Majesté, doivent naturellement se porter à des actes de déférence en les arrêtant.¹²

¹¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 70, fols. 431-58, 9 December 1765.

¹² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 88, fols. 24-33, 10 May 1781.

The foreign ministry asked its representatives in Geneva to secretly procure their own information on the local literary scene. The idea was that the diplomats could use the intelligence they personally had gathered to put pressure on local officials who might be reluctant to punish publishers who had been producing illicit texts. The reasons why foreign powers might have resisted French efforts to police print will be explored further in Chapter 3. At the start of a diplomat's posting it was outlined that they were expected to keep watch over the local book trade. The inclusion of this responsibility in the memorandum of instructions illustrates that the foreign ministry saw external censorship as a vital part of the diplomatic mission to cement the stability and strength of the French state.

Once the diplomats left France, their relationship with the foreign ministry became an epistolary one. Diplomats regularly sent back dispatches which were filled with information on the latest political, social and economic developments in their region. Once these dispatches had been considered by the foreign ministry, they were presented for discussion in the *Conseil d'état du Roi* where the King met with his most powerful ministers. Ambassadorial dispatches were thus discussed at the highest level of the French government. However, this did not mean that diplomats could always expect an immediate or full reply to be forthcoming. Given the high volume of correspondence that he received from diplomats across Europe, it was not unusual for the foreign minister to send rather pithy replies back to the diplomats. Sometimes diplomats would complain repeatedly across several dispatches before they received a response from the foreign minister which confirmed whether they were indeed right to be chasing a particular text or be demanding the retraction of an article in a foreign

gazette.¹³ Communication between the foreign minister and his diplomatic team was also complicated by the relatively slow pace of the posts in the eighteenth century.¹⁴ This meant that dispatches were often outdated or even irrelevant by the time they reached the other party, putting the two sides at cross purposes in their attempts to police the external production and dissemination of literature. Diplomats worked at a distance from the French foreign ministry and the imperfections in their means of communication empowered and even forced them to act upon their own initiative in policing the trade. Evidence of diplomats acting independently will be examined later in the chapter.

This research has found that the initial information about potentially threatening texts could come from several avenues. The foreign minister particularly relied upon details provided by the *lieutenant général de police de Paris* when deciding which texts to pursue. The *lieutenant général* had responsibility for policing the print trade in Paris, the largest centre of illicit bookselling in France.¹⁵ One of his main duties in this regard was the seizure of offensive books, whether they had been stopped at customs, at the *chambre syndicale* or book trade guild in Paris or uncovered through raids on book shops. The foreign minister also received information from the *garde des sceaux* and the *directeur de la librairie*, other officials with responsibility for overseeing the book trade within

¹³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 153-54, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 August 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 191-92, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 13 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 197-98, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 212-214, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 30 September 1774.

¹⁴ Blanning, pp. 127-35.

¹⁵ For more on the *lieutenant général* and the print trade, see Simon Burrows, 'Police and Political Pamphleteering in Pre-Revolutionary France: The Testimony of J.-P. Lenoir, Lieutenant-Général of Police of Paris', in *Print and Power in France and England, 1500-1800*, ed. by David Adams and Adrian Armstrong (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 99-112; Pierre Chevallier, 'Les Philosophes et le lieutenant de police Jean-Charles Pierre Le Noir (1775-1785)', *French Studies*, 17 (1963), 105-20; Daniel Roche, 'La Police du livre', in *Histoire de l'édition française. Tome 2*, ed. by Martin and Chartier, pp. 84-91.

France.¹⁶ Occasionally there is evidence that other ministers alerted the foreign minister to questionable literature.¹⁷ It is important to note that we have most information about the foreign minister's communication with the *lieutenant général* because this official only came to Versailles once a week. Other ministers were able to communicate in person with the foreign minister and so information about their deliberations may not have left traces in the archives. However, it was also the case that the *lieutenant général* was the official best placed to know what was going on in the illicit print trade. Thanks to his network of spies and police inspectors, the *lieutenant général* was able to inform his ministerial colleague of the latest potentially controversial books which making their way onto the market.

The *lieutenant général* also got involved in the policing of foreign print. He sent his police inspectors on missions beyond French borders to chase those implicated in the production of literature which French officials found to be deplorable. These missions were especially important in the early 1780s when there was a concerted effort to curb the illicit activities of writers and publishers working abroad. However, there were sometimes tensions in relations between the police and the foreign ministry. Police inspectors from Paris were only sent abroad in what was considered to be the gravest situations. They were sent on missions with express instructions to prevent the appearance or dissemination of texts which were thought to be potentially subversive. The singular nature of their assignment meant that they were expected to take charge of proceedings once they reached their destination. Indeed, Vergennes advised his diplomats that they would be receiving orders directly from the police officers

¹⁶ For some instances of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 111, fol. 21, Lamoignon de Bâville to Montmorin, 24 May 1787; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 73, Sartine to d'Aiguillon, 23 July 1771.

¹⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 17, Turgot to Vergennes, 27 September 1775.

themselves.¹⁸ Once police officials arrived on location, French diplomats were compelled to withdraw into a secondary role. They were sometimes instructed to make themselves useful by putting police inspectors in touch with local officials; they became facilitators rather than leaders. Diplomats were the individuals who were in possession of local power and connections. They were also accustomed to leading negotiations when it came to the suppression of illicit literature. As such, some officials bristled when the Parisian police arrived and took control.¹⁹

In this period it was usually Jean-François Des Brugnières or François-Hubert Receveur who were sent on foreign missions to suppress texts and this meant that these two police officers gained a lot of experience when it came to the matter of working with the diplomats. As such, there were many instances when the police inspectors were able to coordinate their actions meaningfully with the diplomatic team and this became especially important in the early 1780s when the French foreign ministry was threatened by a barrage of literature from abroad. The police inspectors themselves seemed to have worked quite effectively, regardless of whether they could count upon the backing of the diplomatic corps. They chased culprits across borders but it often took time for them to find the accused and drag them back to the Bastille.

Private individuals outside the French government also passed on warnings about literature that they themselves objected to.²⁰ This was usually in relation to supposedly defamatory articles which had been published in the extra-territorial periodical press. This aspect of external policing will be considered in Chapter 4. Writers themselves contacted the French government to complain about counterfeit

¹⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fol. 239, Vergennes to La Greze, 28 September 1780.

¹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 116, fols. 136-37, Causan to Vergennes, 14 March 1782.

²⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 79, Beaumont to d'Aiguillon, 30 July 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 179, Duronselle to d'Aiguillon, 6 January 1772.

editions of their texts, although this was rare.²¹ More often, authors got in touch with French officials with the idea of blackmailing the state to suppress a provocative work that they were on the verge of publishing.²²

Finally and crucially, it was part of the diplomats' job to keep a close eye on local journalists, publishers and booksellers and pinpoint any untoward activity. The diplomats alerted the foreign ministry to potentially subversive material in around a third of cases (see Appendix A for details of these instances). The *Mémoire pour servir d'instruction* issued to diplomats at the start of their posting did not outline exactly what constituted an illicit book. These instructions only indicated that the diplomats should pursue texts which were 'licencieux ou hardis dans leur morale et dans leurs principes'.²³ However, there was evidently a general understanding about which kinds of literature could not be tolerated. Internally, French censors concentrated their attention on texts which might threaten the Crown, the Church or standards of morality. These categories were also referenced in the diplomatic correspondence. Although these terms could be construed differently by individual officials, their consistent use meant that the diplomats were able to appreciate which texts were likely to present a problem. These were pamphlets and books which mentioned French politics or foreign policy, which slandered French notables (the royal family especially), which attacked the Roman Catholic faith or which were considered scandalous or sexually licentious. Similar themes were policed in the Francophone news media but the emphasis was different. The foreign ministry spent most time regulating coverage of matters relating to the French state since this information was not freely available within France.

²¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 526, fols. 36-39, Noailles to Vergennes, 25 November 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 522, fol. 283, Choiseul to Du Prat, 10 May 1770; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 383, fols. 310-11, Ripert de Monclar to d'Aiguillon, 3 August 1772. For further details of one of these complaints, see Chapter 5, pp. 201-02.

²² Such cases will be examined further in Chapter 5.

²³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 70, fol. 450, 9 December 1765.

Appreciation of these subjects meant that the diplomats were able to spot potentially threatening works in their own locality. The diplomats were heavily involved in managing the extra-territorial newspaper press. French envoys were very well attuned to Francophone periodicals since they were easily accessible. Well-respected French-language newspapers produced in Holland such as the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* and the *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits* (known everywhere as the *Gazette de Leyde*) were also considered to be required reading for government agents in eighteenth-century France.²⁴ It was more difficult for ambassadors to keep track of the publication and dissemination of illicit books and pamphlets which traders would usually try to keep under wraps. Ultimately, it was the foreign minister who made the decision about which texts threatened the French state. However, the diplomats remained vital to the process of external censorship. They took primary responsibility for keeping gazettes in line and also carried out instructions to target specific books for repressive measures.

Once the foreign ministry was alerted to a dangerous book or article, the course of action generally followed a consistent pattern. The diplomats who represented the French state in the eighteenth century were much more than just the passive recipients of commands; their perspectives and activities influenced the process of policing the extra-territorial book network. They were given a good deal of freedom to make their own decisions. There is also evidence that many of these diplomats had their own vision of the forbidden book trade which affected the way in which they tried to abide by or interpret the will of the foreign minister. Previously scholars have recognised the diplomats' role in external censorship but the extent to which the French government used its ambassadorial network to pursue divergent approaches in the management of books and newspaper gazettes has not yet been fully acknowledged. In the case of an

²⁴ Jeremy D. Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution: Jean Luzac's 'Gazette de Leyde'* (London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 8; Pierre Rétat, ed., *La Gazette d'Amsterdam: miroir de l'Europe au XVIIIe siècle, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2001:06 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001), pp. 2-3.

objectionable book or pamphlet, diplomats involved foreign authorities in 41 out of 68 instances of regulation, a figure which amounts to around 60% of cases (see Appendix A for details of these instances). Diplomats tried to enlist their help to find the source of the work in question and sought punishment for either its author or the publisher who had printed it.

When it came to an impertinent article which had been printed in a foreign gazette, diplomats tended to negotiate directly with the editor of the journal in question in order to persuade him to print a retraction.²⁵ The local authorities were called upon in only 36 out of 125 (or 29% of) instances relating to the regulation of the foreign newspaper press (see Appendix A for details). Foreign ministers would sometimes offer exact instructions to the diplomats, whether it be demanding that an article be retracted or requesting that the local authorities formally admonish a certain publisher. However, diplomats were trusted to use their own initiative to ensure that coverage in the extra-territorial press was favourable to France. Moreover, since illicit books and pamphlets needed to be suppressed as quickly as possible, there was not always time to wait for a response from the foreign ministry. In many cases, foreign ministers simply instructed the diplomats to monitor the situation and do everything in their power to curb the spread of the title in question.²⁶

The regularity of these generalised instructions indicates that the foreign minister was confident that his diplomats knew exactly what was expected of them. If a newspaper was found at fault, the diplomats were supposed to complain to the editor and compel him to print a retraction. It was hoped that this kind of admonishment

²⁵ For examples of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 522, fols. 322-23, Du Prat to Choiseul, 20 July 1770; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 524, fol. 350, Noailles to d'Aiguillon, 26 January 1773; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 578, fol. 354, Caillard to Montmorin, 26 June 1789.

²⁶ For some examples of these generalised instructions see Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 77, d'Aiguillon to Sartine, 28 July 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 51, Vergennes to Castelnau, 11 January 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fol. 102, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 18 May 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fol. 336, comte de Vergennes to marquis de Vergennes, 5 November 1786.

would dissuade editors from including articles of a similar nature in the future. If the French government suspected that an illicit book had been published locally, diplomats were to uncover the identity of its author or publisher. It was the foreign minister who made the decision about whether writers or printers were to be pursued in a particular case. Agents of the French police were sometimes sent abroad to arrest authors but it was generally the diplomats' responsibility to ensure that publishers were punished by the local authorities. This punishment was designed to curb the activities of this one publisher but was also envisaged as a way of warning other traders to stay away from illicit texts.

The position of trust enjoyed by French diplomats was hinted at in the course of 1772 when the foreign minister, the duc d'Aiguillon was unhappy with articles on French politics which were appearing in the *Gazette intéressante*, a journal published in Düsseldorf from 1772 to 1773.²⁷ D'Aiguillon appealed to Jacques-Bernard, comte O'Dunne, an Irish refugee who was French *ambassadeur* in the Palatinate-Zweibrücken but the foreign minister's letters on this subject went unanswered from the beginning of March until the start of August 1772.²⁸ On 31 August 1772, d'Aiguillon protested against the *Gazette intéressante* once more but at the same time underlined his faith in O'Dunne; 'Quoique je sois, depuis deux mois, dans l'attente de cette réponse, je n'en suis pas moins persuadé que vous aurez donné à cette affaire l'attention qu'elle exige'.²⁹ As it turned out an illness had prevented O'Dunne from carrying out his duties on this occasion and in September his secretary took charge of reprimanding the gazette's

²⁷ An overview of the *Gazette Intéressante* can be found in Anne-Marie Faivre and Denis Reynaud eds., *Dictionnaire des journaux: édition électronique revue, corrigée et augmentée du dictionnaire des journaux (1600-1789)* (2005) <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0570-gazette-intéressante> [accessed 11 January 2013].

²⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fol. 34, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 3 March 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fol. 102, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 18 May 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fols. 139-40, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 28 June 1772.

²⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fols. 185-86, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 31 August 1772.

editor.³⁰ This incident provides clear evidence of how far the diplomats were trusted to carry out the job of policing print. On this occasion d'Aiguillon was exasperated by O'Dunne's silence but this did not change the fact that he depended upon his ambassadorial team to carry out his instructions.

Some diplomats were more confident than others when it came to acting on their own initiative. Indeed, several men displayed an aptitude for the kind of detective work which was necessary in order to police print abroad. For example, in January 1780 Castelnau, French *résident* in Geneva warned the comte de Vergennes, the French foreign minister, that much of the distasteful literature coming into France from Geneva was actually being printed in the Swiss town of Moudon.³¹ It was perhaps during the pursuit of the second edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* that diplomatic fact-finding was at its most determined. Hennin, the French *résident* in Geneva, shrewdly attempted to analyse the condition of the paper and the kind of typesetting which had been used in the edition. After further investigation, however, he received information which convinced him that the text had in fact come from Marc-Michel Rey in Amsterdam.³² D'Aiguillon appreciated Hennin's resourcefulness and declared that this affair had satisfied him that Genevan publishers would never dare to print books as bold as *Le Gazetier cuirassé*.³³

The information provided by the diplomats was vital, then, but it was not always completely accurate. As we have seen, Hennin changed his mind about where exactly *Le Gazetier cuirassé* had been printed, initially laying blame with the Genevan publisher Téron and then settling upon Rey as the culprit. In October 1781 the STN was reprimanded by the French government after it published a *libelle* entitled, *Extrait du*

³⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fols. 193-94, O'Dunne's secretary to d'Aiguillon, 16 September 1772.

³¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 90-92, Castelnau to Vergennes, 22 January 1782.

³² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

³³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 224, d'Aiguillon to Hennin, 26 January 1772.

*journal d'un officier de la marine de l'escadre de M. le comte d'Estaing.*³⁴ This pamphlet assailed Jean-Baptiste Charles Henri Hector, comte d'Estaing, a French admiral who led French naval forces in the American War of Independence. Following this, the foreign minister requested that Théobald Bâcher, *chargé d'affaires* in Solothurn, keep the STN under surveillance. A year later, when Mirabeau came to Neuchâtel to have three controversial pamphlets printed, the STN was immediately suspected of involvement. In reality, it was another publishing company in Neuchâtel who had brought the books to market.³⁵

Discovering who was involved in the production of illicit material was one of the most vital components of the diplomats' role in external censorship. However, the extent to which these men were able to uncover the most pertinent details varied. Some, like Hennin, made a special effort to pursue wayward printers, but even the most determined still struggled with the task. Such publishing was clandestine by its very nature and book dealers who were engaging in illicit activities usually endeavoured to conceal their conduct. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, it was also common for foreign authorities to make attempts to protect traders working in their own locality and this entailed obstructing the diplomats' project of external policing. The French foreign ministers in this period were conscious of the difficulty of the diplomatic mission in the realm of literature and so did not expect too much. They were inclined to trust the information they received from the diplomats as they were in the best position to offer localised news. Moreover, the information from the diplomats was sometimes all that the foreign ministers had to go on. The diplomats themselves sought to justify their actions by stressing the complications that they faced. They confessed when they were taking an educated guess and did not claim to have complete knowledge of the print

³⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 216-17, Vergennes to Bâcher, 8 September 1782.

³⁵ This affair will be explored further in Chapter 5, pp. 193-94.

trade. It seems fair to say that the French diplomats generally coped well with these problems in this period. In all of the most serious cases, they were able to pinpoint the guilty authors or printers. The French foreign ministry relied upon the information they provided to keep journalists in check, punish publishers and suppression the circulation of any unwelcome material.

Diplomats who were especially engaged with the task of external censorship also expressed their own ideas on the best methods of controlling extra-territorial literature. These views were influenced by their professional experience of chasing texts or harassing foreign journalists. One of the most common frustrations, and one which is discussed frequently in the diplomatic dispatches, was the laxity of any regional censorship structure.³⁶ Chapter 3 will shed further light on how successfully the diplomats were able cooperate with foreign authorities who were generally less concerned with the policing of print. Diplomats occasionally recommended that the French foreign minister utilise particular manoeuvres. For example, in June 1784, Marie Louise Henry, marquis d'Escorches de Sainte-Croix, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Liège, offered up a quiet critique of the more forceful approach that the foreign ministry had initiated in 1783.³⁷ Sainte-Croix claimed that he merely desired to inform Vergennes of how difficult booksellers in Liège were finding it to send their texts into France. The marquis stressed that the French government was right to police the kind of books which were coming into the kingdom but at the same time he suggested that the state should be promoting any transactions which might benefit the French economy.

³⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 191-92, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 13 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 209-10, Bon to d'Aiguillon, 5 June 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 383, fol. 329, Beauteville to d'Aiguillon, 27 August 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 261-62, Bâcher to Vergennes, 6 October 1782; Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

³⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 70, fol. 231, Sainte-Croix to Vergennes, 11 June 1784; For another example, see Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 205-06, Bâcher to Vergennes, 26 August 1782.

The abbé Desnoyers was one diplomat who relished employing his own initiative in this arena. For example, Desnoyers voiced his doubts about the efficacy of scolding editors who published offensive articles in the extra-territorial press. Instead, he advocated banning the Dutch gazettes from France as a means of bringing them into line.³⁸ Jean Balthazar, comte d'Adhémar, the French ambassador in London, was another official who had his own perspective on external censorship. He represented France in Brussels from 1778 to 1783 and then in London from 1783 to 1787 which meant that he was placed twice in cities notorious for offensive texts. His experience in London was especially important in forming his views because he was stationed in the British capital at a time when a string of *libellistes* were trying to compel the crown to pay to suppress the scandalous tales that they had produced. D'Adhémar was disturbed and irritated by these authors and became convinced that spurning their demands and threats was the best course of action. He even contemplated bypassing Vergennes to inform Louis XVI of his proposal.³⁹ After receiving a warning from Vergennes, d'Adhémar was persuaded to confine the matter to the foreign ministry.⁴⁰ One of the *libelles* in question proclaimed that Marie-Antoinette had been unfaithful to the King; Vergennes stressed to d'Adhémar that it would be both inappropriate and unpleasant to raise this subject with Louis XVI.

Although Vergennes was not prepared to ignore works which slandered the French King and Queen, the influence of d'Adhémar's perspective can nevertheless be perceived in government policy from 1783 onwards. From this year until at least 1786 the French state was resolved to pay as little attention to illicit books as possible. In June 1783, a new system of centralised inspection for imported foreign books was also put into place by Vergennes in the hope of cementing French control. This change in

³⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 191-92, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 13 September 1774.

³⁹ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 132-33; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 167.

⁴⁰ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 179-80.

stance will be explored in further detail in Chapter 5. Clearly d'Adhémar's understanding of the forbidden book trade was appreciated by Vergennes. Diplomats who put forward strong views were generally taken seriously by the foreign ministers who valued their experience and knowledge. Even if the foreign minister ended up following a different course, he relied upon advice from the diplomats to make his decision. We see this in the case of d'Adhémar and Vergennes; the latter initially disagreed with the idea that all *libelles* should be scorned but ended up taking d'Adhémar's views on board.

The important job of assessing which texts needed to be stopped was again dependent on the conviction of the individual diplomats. Some men had the confidence to commence proceedings themselves if they felt that a title merited immediate action. They would take action to discover more about the title in question, admonish those involved in its publication and then seek the approval of the foreign minister in the aftermath. In April 1777, Nicolas-Germain Léonard, the *chargé d'affaires* in Liège, pressured the regional authorities to scold the French publisher Jean Louis de Boubers who was doing business from the region.⁴¹ Boubers was suspected of printing *Mémoires de M. le comte de Saint-Germain*, a text which purported to contain genuine observations from behind the scenes at Versailles collected by Claude Louis, comte de Saint-Germain, who was the French minister of war from October 1775 to September 1777.⁴² Vergennes expressed his satisfaction after Léonard relayed to him that Boubers had been summoned before the Privy Council in Liège and formally rebuked.⁴³ This edition of the *Mémoires de M. le comte de Saint-Germain* was halted. It seems that the work

⁴¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fols. 214-15, Léonard to Vergennes, 5 April 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fols. 224-25, Léonard to Vergennes, 23 April 1777.

⁴² Claude-Louis, comte de Saint-Germain (attrib.), *Mémoires de M. le comte de Saint-Germain, ministre et secrétaire d'état de la guerre, lieutenant-général des armées de France* (Suisse [Berne(?)] : [Société typographique de Berne(?)], 1779).

⁴³ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fol. 227, Vergennes to Léonard, 4 May 1777.

did not reach the market until late in 1779 when its connection to contemporary politics was less immediate.⁴⁴

In the case of *Le Gazetier cuirassé*, Hennin, the *résident* in Geneva, knew that the first edition had caused a huge stir when it was published in London. The French government had issued very firm orders to suppress the text when it first emerged in the summer of 1771. As a result, he did not wait for orders to begin trying to uncover the source of a new version which was being sold in Geneva.⁴⁵ However, it is important to recognise that even the most proactive diplomats still needed the foreign minister to legitimise their actions. Hennin found that *Le Gazetier cuirassé* was being sold by the bookseller Téron but chose to wait for further instruction before asking the Genevan authorities to arrest him. Hennin was not certain if the French government would want to chase *Le Gazetier cuirassé* in Geneva when such a move might publicise the work still further.⁴⁶ The diplomat soon received authorisation from d'Aiguillon and was able to conduct a full investigation into the work. The diplomats were responsible for watching over the print trade in their locality and alerting the foreign minister to the publication of any potentially subversive books. These officials were confident enough to indicate possible threats but were generally reluctant to do much more without official approval.

When it came to the newspaper press, the diplomatic corps displayed much more self-assurance in identifying and attempting to block inappropriate articles. The baron de Bon, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Brussels, took it upon himself to enter into negotiations with the authorities there in the hope of curbing the licence of the *Gazette*

⁴⁴ The *Mémoires secrets* mentioned the work in 1780 whilst the Swiss publisher, the STN began trading in the text in November 1779. For evidence, see Louis Petit de Bachaumont (attrib.), *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république des lettres en France, depuis 1762 jusqu'à nos jours*, vol 14 (London: Adamson, 1780), pp. 299-300; Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Book, Mémoires de M. le comte de Saint-Germain http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0001672&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

⁴⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

⁴⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

des Pays-Bas.⁴⁷ He referred to the newspaper as a *libelle* and was able to convince officials in Brussels to reprimand its editor.⁴⁸ When he continued to find inappropriate articles printed in the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* he even made the decision to threaten the editor with exclusion from the French market. All this Bon did without explicitly seeking prior or subsequent approval from d'Aiguillon. Diplomats were more confident acting on their own initiative in the case of the extra-territorial press but they also did their best to alert the government to the publication of reprehensible literature.

It is important to note here that French diplomats were also sensitive to personal smears which found their way into print outside France. Louis Cachet, comte de Montezan, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Cologne, and Falciola, *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin, both protested to the foreign minister when they felt they had been misquoted in the Prussian gazette, the *Courier du Bas-Rhin* in 1778 and 1787 respectively.⁴⁹ They both underlined that their commitment to their ambassadorial role precluded them from making any indiscreet statements, despite what the paper might have printed. During his time as ambassador in London, Noailles was very anxious over the possibility that the notorious publicist Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet would attack him in a *libelle* which he was threatening to bring to market for much of 1777.⁵⁰ When the comte de Mirabeau published his *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin* early in 1789, the French *ministre plénipotentiaire* Antoine-Joseph-Philippe, comte d'Esterno, was troubled that the author

⁴⁷ This paper seems to have been a continuation of the *Mercure historique et politique des Pays-Bas* which was printed in Brussels between 1759 and 1761. French officials referred to this journal as the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* and the *Gazette de Bruxelles*. For the *Mercure historique*, see Favre and Reynaud, eds., *Dictionnaire des journaux*: <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0942-mercure-historique-et-politique-des-pays-bas> [accessed 11 January 2013]; Jeroom Vercryusse, 'Journalistes et Journaux à Bruxelles au XVIIIe siècle', *Études sur le XVIIIe siècle*, 4 (1977), 117-27.

⁴⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 209-10, Bon to d'Aiguillon, 5 June 1771.

⁴⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 108, fols. 348-49, Montezan to Vergennes, 29 December 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 207, fols. 197-206, Falciola to Montmorin, 9 October 1787.

⁵⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 522, fols. 292-93, Noailles to Vergennes, 1 April 1777.

had made false claims about him.⁵¹ Yet it must be remembered that these apprehensions constituted something more than self-interest. Diplomats were the official representatives of France abroad and this meant that calumny targeted towards them was also considered a slight on the French state.⁵² Just as they were on guard to protect French elites and members of the royal family from defamation, the French diplomats were also watching out for any slurs against their own person. However, there were only a handful of cases where such concerns were raised. Moreover, when diplomats did complain about personal attacks, it was usually merely to assure the foreign minister that they had been misrepresented. Diplomats concentrated on the job at hand rather than attempt to use the structures of extra-territorial control to defend themselves.

Several scholars have highlighted the role of ambassadors in the process of cultural transfer, albeit in earlier time periods.⁵³ Joanna Craigwood describes how envoys moved books across Europe as their diplomatic postings changed whilst Martin Lowry has pointed out the diplomats actively encouraged local printers. French diplomats working abroad in the final years of the old regime also played an important role beyond mere suppression. In 1761 the *Gazette de France* became an official mouthpiece of the French government and was formally attached to the French foreign ministry. The diplomatic corps were called upon to fill the pages of the journal by

⁵¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 210, fols. 79-87, d'Esterno to Montmorin, 4 April 1789.

⁵² Burrows, *A King's Ransom*, p. 43.

⁵³ Joanna Craigwood, 'Diplomats and International Book Exchange', in *Cultural Transfers*, ed. by Burrows, Dziembowski and Thomson, pp. 57-69 (p. 57); Martin Lowry, 'Diplomacy and the Spread of Printing', in *Bibliography and the Study of 15th-century Civilisation: Papers Presented at a Colloquium at the British Library, 26-28 September 1984*, ed. by John Goldfinch and Lotte Hellinga (London: British Library, 1987), pp. 124-46 (pp. 133-34), Maria Keblusek, 'Book Agents, Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books', in *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Noldus (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006), pp. 97-107 (p. 97).

sending back bulletins of regional news.⁵⁴ The idea was that by keeping the *Gazette de France* fresh, the appeal of foreign Francophone gazettes (which were more difficult to control) would be lessened. Diplomats were also instructed to request that their secretaries compile a digest of newspapers printed regionally and indicate which news should be suppressed.⁵⁵ This report was designed to help with the compilation of the *Gazette de France* but it shows that even the secretarial team in the French embassies became involved in monitoring and making judgements on the printed word. The diplomatic corps were thus employed in both subtle and repressive capacities to manage the extra-territorial print trade.

Clashes between Diplomats and Foreign Ministers

As we have seen, the French diplomats had a good idea of what was expected of them when it came to the extra-territorial print trade. Yet in spite of their best efforts, they could not always anticipate the will of the foreign minister with complete precision. Diplomats relayed their fears back to central government but were commanded to cease their protestations if the foreign minister disagreed about the offensiveness of a book or article.⁵⁶ In the course of 1777, Paul-François de Quelen, duc de La Vauguyon, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in The Hague, became uncomfortable about articles in the *Gazette de La Haye*.⁵⁷ Vergennes rejected his concerns, dismissing one of the articles in question as ‘un bavardage qui ne mérite aucune attention de notre part’.⁵⁸ When the *Gazette de*

⁵⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Allemagne 637, fols. 281-82, d’Aiguillon to Clausonette, 10 August 1777; Paris, SMD France 1370, fols. 43-44, 10 August 1771.

⁵⁵ Paris, AMAE, SMD France 1370, fols. 43-44, 10 August 1771.

⁵⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne supplément 4, fol. 443, Vergennes to Montezan, 4 April 1779.

⁵⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 530, fols. 166-67, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 1 June 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 530, fols. 174-77, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 10 June; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 530, fols. 180-85, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 17 June 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 530, fols. 188-89, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 26 June 1777.

⁵⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 532, fol. 22, Vergennes to Béranger, 15 January 1778.

Schaffhouse printed an article describing France's unsuccessful attempt to capture Gibraltar from the British during the American War of Independence, Bâcher, the *chargé d'affaires* in Solothurn, was determined to punish the journal's editor.⁵⁹ The diplomat appealed to officials in Schaffhausen but told Vergennes that he was disappointed with their response. Vergennes attempted to pacify Bâcher by suggesting that tolerance on this occasion would put the French state in a better position to demand a severe punishment if the gazetteer reoffended;

Quoique la réprimande faite au Gazetier de Schaffhouse ne soit pas une satisfaction aussi éclatante que nous aurions pu le désirer il ne paraît pas qu'il y ait d'inconvénient à laisser tomber cette affaire. Notre indulgence dans cette circonstance deviendrait même un titre pour exiger une punition plus sévère à la première occasion que nous aurions de nous plaindre.⁶⁰

Yet there were other times when diplomats were able to bring the French foreign minister round to their way of thinking. Across much of 1774, the abbé Desnoyers grumbled continually about reports on French affairs of state which were published in Dutch French-language gazettes.⁶¹ Upon taking office as foreign minister, Vergennes initially saw little reason for complaint. He pointed out that whilst the offending articles may have been false, they did not contain anything critical of the

⁵⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 261-62, Bâcher to Vergennes, 6 October 1782.

⁶⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 273-74, Vergennes to Bâcher, 27 October 1782.

⁶¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 7-8, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 10 May 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 31-34, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 31 May 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 153-54, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 13 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 173-78, Desnoyers to d'Aiguillon, 26 April 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 191-92, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 13 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 197-98, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 212-14, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 30 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 236-38, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 25 October 1774.

French court or government.⁶² As such, Vergennes felt, there was no need to scold the editors who had included them in their papers. This reaction did not satisfy Desnoyers and he continued to complain about the Dutch gazettes, pointing out that it was in fact his duty to make Vergennes aware of what was being printed in the extra-territorial press.⁶³ Persistent pressure from Desnoyers wore Vergennes down and he was persuaded to threaten the gazetteers in question with prohibition from the French market.⁶⁴

Desnoyers was able to change Vergennes' mind once again in 1775. In October of this year Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, baron de l'Aulne, *contrôleur général des finances*, confessed to Vergennes that he was worried that a book which criticised his financial policies had been published in Holland. This text was entitled *L'Anti-Monopoleur*. Vergennes called upon Desnoyers to uncover who had printed this work. Desnoyers pointed out the book was not making great waves in Holland and stressed that it actually contained many tributes to the French state.⁶⁵ In spite of his own reservations, Desnoyers agreed to try to discover the source of this work. However, it seems that Vergennes was convinced by the abbé's assessment of the situation since he declined to issue any further orders relating to the punishment of the printers involved. It is also important to remember that action against this text had been triggered by the personal complaints of Turgot. As Desnoyers pointed out, it was not considered to be a particularly distasteful work which was not fit to be tolerated.

Desnoyers was clearly one of the most influential diplomats who represented the French state abroad in this period. However, there were instances when other officials were able to persuade the foreign minister to follow a particular course of action. This happened most frequently in relation to the extra-territorial newspaper

⁶² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 196, Vergennes to Desnoyers, 15 September 1774.

⁶³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 197-98, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 September 1774.

⁶⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 200, Vergennes to Desnoyers, 22 September 1774.

⁶⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fols. 62-68, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 21 October 1775.

press. Many diplomats came to sympathise with foreign journalists and sought to prevent harsh measures being executed against them by the French state. The close relationship between diplomats and newspaper editors will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4. Jean Luzac, the Dutch lawyer and journalist who edited the *Gazette de Leyde* from 1772 to 1798, was especially adept at forging bonds with the French diplomatic corps.⁶⁶ During the 1770s and 1780s Luzac was able to persuade a number of officials to make representations to the French foreign minister on his behalf.⁶⁷ French diplomats showed their support to other gazetteers too such as the editor of the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* or the *Gazette des Deux-Ponts*.⁶⁸ In September 1783 Laurent Bérenger tried to refute suggestions that Pierre-Frédéric Gosse, a printer-bookseller in The Hague, had published Linguet's controversial *Mémoires sur la Bastille*.⁶⁹ However, this was one of the few occasions where a French diplomat tried to defend a foreign printer in this period. Empathy between newspaper editors and French officials was much more common. Gosse was also the publisher of the *Gazette de La Haye* which perhaps may explain why Bérenger offered support to him. Desnoyers raised many objections to the Dutch

⁶⁶ Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', p. 103.

⁶⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 525, fol. 63, Des Escotais to d'Aiguillon, 6 July 1773; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fols. 308-09, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 2 April 1776; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 532, fol. 72, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 3 February 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 543, fol. 222, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 2 February 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 67-72, Vérac to Vergennes, 11 March 1785.

⁶⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 120, fols. 229-30, O'Kelly to Vergennes, 23 September 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 171, fol. 165, Garnier to Vergennes, 30 June 1778. Note: the *Gazette des Deux-Ponts* was both a literary and a political paper. Both titles were brought to market in tandem by Jean Dubois-Fontanelle and Jean-François Le Tellier in the Palatinate-Zweibrücken. These papers were run in parallel, by the same team and were both referred to as the *Gazette des Deux-Ponts* by the French authorities. As such, this thesis uses the title of *Gazette des Deux-Ponts* to reference both of these papers. For more on these journals, see Faivre and Reynaud eds., *Dictionnaire des journaux* <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0507-gazette-des-deux-ponts> [accessed 11 January 2013]; Jochen Schlobach, 'Conditions politiques et matérielles de l'imprimerie et des gazettes à Deux-Ponts', in *Les Gazettes européennes de langue française (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles: table ronde internationale)*, ed. by Henri Durantou, Claude Labrosse and Pierre Rétat (Saint-Étienne: Université de Saint-Étienne, 1992), pp. 269-80.

⁶⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783; Simon-Nicolas-Henri, *Mémoires sur la Bastille et la détention de l'auteur dans ce château royal, depuis le 27 septembre 1780, jusqu'au au 19 mai 1782* (London: Spilsbury, 1783).

gazettes in the course of 1774 but, like Béranger, also claimed that Gosse was less deserving of punishment.⁷⁰

This mutual respect could be advantageous for the French state since such an understanding facilitated its attempts to coerce the gazetteers to comply with French wishes. However, these bonds could also be said to undermine external censorship because they inclined the diplomats to try to protect journalists even if they had printed articles which the state might consider to be dangerous. Either way, close relations between diplomats and editors confirm that French officials working abroad could play a major role in interpreting and executing orders from the foreign minister.

As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the French state re-evaluated and adjusted its approach to the extra-territorial book trade in 1783 after becoming exasperated with the pursuit of foreign books in the early 1780s. In June 1783 it was decreed that all books coming into France were to be inspected centrally in Paris and French officials also decided to try to scorn the threat of illicit literature as much as possible. Vergennes, who was foreign minister at the time, also narrowed his censorship strategy. He was now only prepared to issue orders against works which he considered to be truly beyond the pale. This new approach shook the stability of the diplomats' understanding of their role in policing illicit texts. These officials became unsure of exactly which works still constituted a significant enough threat to the French state, its religion and its moral code. Diplomats continued to be on alert against and report the same kinds of printing but now they found that their accounts were generally met with indifference from Vergennes. They had lost some of their power to influence the foreign minister. In September 1783, Béranger the *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, reported his suspicions that two printers named Benet and Hack were publishing an edition of *La Gazette noire par un homme qui n'est pas blanc; ou œuvres posthumes du gazetier*

⁷⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 153-54, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 August 1774.

cuirassé in Rotterdam.⁷¹ The author was probably Anne-Gédéon Lafitte, marquis de Pelleport, a rival of Morande who had tried to link his work with the latter's notorious work, *Le Gazetier cuirassé*.⁷² In early 1772 the government had hunted down those who had published and sold *Le Gazetier cuirassé* in Geneva and Amsterdam but the same treatment was not extended to those involved with *La Gazette noire*. Béranger denounced Benet and Hack to officials in Holland but he did not receive any instructions from Vergennes to continue with the matter.⁷³ Diplomats continued to play an important role in external censorship until the fall of the *ancien régime* despite the change in perspective which occurred in 1783. There was now less scope for the diplomats to act on their own initiative or bring the foreign minister around to their point of view. However, the French government continued to rely upon the surveillance skills of the diplomatic corps and value the information they were able to provide. This information meant that the government could still implement measures against what it considered to be the most dangerous worst works from 1783 onwards.

Having considered how far French diplomats were able to exercise independent judgement as they attempted to control the extra-territorial print trade, it is time to assess their effectiveness. Since they were situated far away from the French centre of power, the diplomats did their best to emphasise their loyalty and usefulness. They used the dispatches to recount their actions in great detail and frequently underscored just how speedily they had reacted to the foreign minister's commands. During 1776 Desnoyers went to great lengths to demonstrate his responsiveness.⁷⁴ He sent Vergennes copies of the warning letter he had written to the editors of the main

⁷¹ Charles-Claude Théveneau de Morande (attrib.), *La Gazette noire, par un homme qui n'est pas blanc; ou, œuvres posthumes du gazetier cuirassé* ([London (?)]; [n. pub.], 1784).

⁷² Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 170

⁷³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Béranger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783.

⁷⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 302, Desnoyers to Dutch journalists, 30 March 1776.

Francophone gazettes in Holland. To emphasise that the editors had been sufficiently cowed, Desnoyers also included an apologetic reply from Pierre-Frédéric Gosse, the publisher of the *Gazette de La Haye*.⁷⁵ Yet this deliberate projection of efficacy masked a number of issues. Firstly, the matter of external censorship was discussed in the diplomatic correspondence only occasionally. Although there is an entire volume of the *Correspondance politique Angleterre* relating to the London *libellistes*, concerns about the print trade were raised much less frequently in other locations. This raises the question of whether undesirable literature seldom appeared or whether French diplomats were sometimes unaware of all that was going on. It seems fair to say that French envoys knew a lot about the Francophone periodical press since this was easily available to them. It was more difficult for ambassadors to keep track of the publication and dissemination of illicit books and pamphlets which traders often tried to keep quiet. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that publishers had to advertise the works in their catalogues somehow. The nature of the print trade meant that it could never be completely clandestine.

It was always the foreign minister who made the final call as to whether a certain title should be pursued. However, the diplomats did have local knowledge which gave them an advantage in pursuing extra-territorial traders. What is more, both the diplomats and the French foreign minister recognised the magnitude of the task of external censorship and so only targeted the gravest offences for repressive measures. This explains why the issue of external censorship was only discussed rarely in the diplomatic documents. There was an understanding that the French government would only chase the very worst kinds of books. Secondly, in around a third of cases, it was the diplomats themselves who were the first to perceive a potential threat to the French state. This shows that they had a realistic vision of what was expected of them and that

⁷⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 310, Gosse to Desnoyers, April 1776.

they were indeed able to interpret and anticipate the demands of the foreign minister. The French foreign ministers frequently expressed their satisfaction with the course of action that the diplomats had pursued as in June 1775 when Vergennes told the chevalier de Gaussen, *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin; 'La voie que vous avez prise était la plus courte et la plus efficace'.⁷⁶ French envoys never disputed the instructions they received from the foreign minister overtly. When they disagreed, diplomats continued to highlight transgressions in the hope that the foreign minister would be convinced that such disobedience merited punishment. They stressed that their repeated complaints in the face of official indifference actually offered evidence of their commitment to their duty of defending the French state.⁷⁷

Some members of the diplomatic corps were concerned to protect their own reputations but they were mainly sensitive to works which maligned other notable individuals or texts which attacked French government and society more generally. Pierre Rétat has suggested that the constant recurrence of diplomatic complaints about the extra-territorial newspaper press indicates that the French government was less than effective in its strategy of censorship.⁷⁸ Yet external censorship was a reactive process by its very nature. The French foreign ministry relied on its network of diplomats to take action after contentious material had been published abroad. These responsibilities remained crucial even after the foreign ministry began to take a more detached approach in 1783. It was the diplomats' role in continual surveillance and monitoring which provided much information about the extra-territorial trade. They continued to help the French government decide whether works should be chased or ignored.

⁷⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 193, fols. 177-78, Vergennes to Gaussen, 22 June 1775.

⁷⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne supplément 4, fol. 510, Chalgrin to Vergennes, 20 October 1779; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 197-98, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 September 1774.

⁷⁸ Rétat, 'Les Gazetiers de Hollande', p. 321.

Foreign Ministers: D'Aiguillon and Vergennes

Any assessment of the workings of external censorship must also take the position of French foreign minister into account. In the final two decades of the *ancien régime*, the post of *secrétaire des affaires étrangères* was occupied by six different men. These were the duc de Choiseul (April 1766-December 1770), the duc de La Vrillière (December 1770 to June 1771), the duc d'Aiguillon (June 1771 to June 1774), Bertin (June to July 1774), the comte de Vergennes (July 1774 to February 1787) and the comte de Montmorin (February 1787 to November 1791). These individuals had ultimate responsibility for policing the extra-territorial print trade and it was they who issued commands to the diplomats working in Europe. The foreign minister had a lot of influence in the French government in a broader sense because his position afforded him constant access to the King, who viewed diplomacy as his most vital function.⁷⁹ John Hardman's work on high politics has made it clear that the French government was torn in many different directions by shifting ministerial rivalries.⁸⁰ As a result, it makes sense to dwell upon the stance of the different foreign ministers and their interaction with their colleagues. There has been some suggestion that ministers were out of touch and overwhelmed by the final years of the old regime. Price has studied court and ministerial politics in detail and concludes that the training and worldview of the governing class left them ill-equipped to cope with the tumultuous landscape of late eighteenth-century France.⁸¹ The foreign ministers of the 1770s and 1780s certainly found the extra-territorial book trade exasperating but they used their diplomatic network to understand and manipulate it.

⁷⁹ Hardman, *French Politics*, pp. 21-22.

⁸⁰ Hardman, *French Politics*, p. 113.

⁸¹ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 235.

The work of Burrows and Darnton on the London *libellistes* has incorporated some discussion of the attitudes of the ministers in power in this period.⁸² It was d'Aiguillon and Vergennes who occupied the post of foreign minister for the longest time across the period covered by this study. An exploration of their attitudes and action will illuminate the impact that they were able to have on the French government's strategy of external censorship.

Emmanuel-Armand de Vignerot du Plessis de Richelieu, duc d'Aiguillon began his career as a soldier. In 1753 he was made *commandant en chef* in Brittany where he quickly became unpopular for perceived attempts to ride roughshod over the privileges of the province. In November 1765, Louis-René de Caradeuc de la Chalotais, the *procureur général* of the *parlement* in Brittany, was arrested on suspicion of writing threatening letters to Louis III Phélypeaux, comte de Saint-Florentin, duc de La Vrillière, who at that time was *secrétaire d'état de la maison du roi*. Divisions between d'Aiguillon and the Bretons intensified as the former seemed to be attempting to manipulate the trial process.⁸³ In March 1770 the *parlement* of Rennes opened criminal proceedings against d'Aiguillon. The trial was moved to Paris on d'Aiguillon's request but eventually collapsed in June 1770 without a verdict being reached. The public nature of the trial did much to dent d'Aiguillon's reputation but he survived. D'Aiguillon became *secrétaire des affaires étrangères* in June 1771 as part of a ministerial reshuffle designed to suppress resistance to governmental reforms. In January 1771, the French chancellor Maupeou forcefully and radically remodelled the French *parlements*, exiling any magistrates who stood in his way.⁸⁴ This attempt at subjugation came after the *parlements* had consistently obstructed governmental reform plans. D'Aiguillon

⁸² Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 89-90; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 106-12.

⁸³ Marcel Marion, *La Bretagne et le duc d'Aiguillon, 1753-1770* (Paris: Fontémoing, 1898); Swann, *Politics and the Parlement of Paris*, pp. 323-29.

⁸⁴ William Doyle, 'The Parlements of France and the Breakdown of the Old Regime 1771-1788', *French Historical Studies*, 6 (1970), 415-58; Swan, *Politics and the Parlement of Paris*, pp. 314-68.

became part of an unlikable triumvirate along with Maupeou and Joseph Marie, abbé Terray as *contrôleur-général des finances*. Their time in power lasted until just after the death of Louis XV in May 1774. Although they were referred to by contemporaries as the triumvirate, these three ministers did not coordinate policy as a matter of course and often pulled in different directions.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the three remained associated with the fall-out from Maupeou's unpopular decision to restructure the *parlements*.

One of d'Aiguillon's most pressing concerns was preventing reports which might fan the flames of the Maupeou controversy from appearing in the Francophone periodical press. Under d'Aiguillon's aegis French diplomats admonished the editors of gazettes in Mannheim, Schaffhausen and Düsseldorf but it was the French-language gazettes in the Netherlands which presented the biggest problem. These journals had a large readership within France and they were also repeatedly printing details of the continuing opposition to the Maupeou coup. During this period d'Aiguillon enlisted his diplomats to reprimand journalists and issued orders for certain gazettes to be temporarily excluded from the French market.⁸⁶ Censer and Popkin have shown how coverage of the after-effects of the Maupeou coup was rescinded in the wake of these moves.⁸⁷ However, the Bourbon state was never able to exercise total control over the periodical press and this tension will be examined in detail in Chapter 4. When it came to the international gazettes, management skills were employed more often than bullying tactics. Diplomats were required to keep watch for any inappropriate coverage and they would then negotiate to ensure that the articles in question were retracted.

⁸⁵ Hardman, *French Politics*, p. 23.

⁸⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 521, fols. 257-58, Du Prat to Luzac, 5 February 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 523, fols. 161-63, Noailles to d'Aiguillon, 7 May 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 523, fol. 262, d'Aiguillon to Noailles, 8 September 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 523, fol. 277, d'Aiguillon to Noailles, 26 September 1771.

⁸⁷ Jack R. Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 169-71; Popkin, *News and Politics*, pp. 139-45.

The reactive nature of policing the periodical press meant that d'Aiguillon was never able to bring these journals completely under his control.

As well as being concerned to stop coverage of the Maupeou coup, d'Aiguillon was also engaged in efforts to halt the spread of works which slandered French elites. D'Aiguillon himself outlined his policy that no material which was offensive to notable individuals was to be tolerated.⁸⁸ It has been argued by Burrows that d'Aiguillon's political background served to make him especially sensitive to personal insults.⁸⁹ In the mid 1760s the duc had endured the painful experience of being vilified in the pamphlet press for his role in the Brittany affair. D'Aiguillon was also vulnerable to calumny because he had ascended to his post as foreign secretary thanks to the influence of Louis XV's mistress, Madame du Barry, who was a divisive force at court. D'Aiguillon was probably du Barry's sole ministerial ally and remained a friend for life. We can see evidence of d'Aiguillon's concern with protecting reputations in his approach to policing the printed word beyond France's borders. He authorised his diplomats to seek the retraction of newspaper articles which seemed to disparage elite figures and when it came to books, d'Aiguillon concentrated his attention on *libelles*. He was incensed to be personally targeted in *Le Gazetier cuirassé* and also sanctioned serious measures against other texts which slandered his ally Madame du Barry such as Morande's *Mémoires secrets d'une femme publique depuis son berceau jusqu'au lit d'honneur*.⁹⁰

D'Aiguillon even tried to restrict discussion of his person after he left office. In July 1774 he forwarded a supplement of the *Gazette d'Utrecht* to Vergennes, the new foreign minister. This supplement discussed d'Aiguillon's role in the Guînes affair. Adrien-Louis de Bonnières, comte de Guînes was the French ambassador in London and in 1771 he accused his secretary, Barthélemy Tort de la Sonde, of trying to use the

⁸⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 118, d'Aiguillon to Vergennes, 28 July 1774.

⁸⁹ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 6, 89.

⁹⁰ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 96-99.

Guînes name to speculate with public money.⁹¹ D'Aiguillon had sided with Tort but did so against the powerful alliance of Marie-Antoinette and the duc de Choiseul who decided to back Guînes. This was a contentious affair which dragged on for years and which eventually resulted in Guînes being narrowly acquitted by a commission of *conseillers d'état* in June 1775. This controversy left d'Aiguillon without much support and it was his exclusion from favour which was partly to blame for his fall from power in June 1774. Marie-Antoinette already disliked the duc due to his friendship with Madame du Barry and the Guînes affair only made her more ill-disposed towards him. In his letter to Vergennes in July 1774 d'Aiguillon claimed that whilst he would usually pour scorn on any articles which referenced him in unfavourable terms, he felt compelled to protect his reputation under the present circumstances.

The real problem here was that Tort and Guînes both needed to cite correspondence from d'Aiguillon to establish their causes in the case. D'Aiguillon was to be exposed publicly in the course of this affair. He asked Vergennes to instruct Noailles, the *ambassadeur* in The Hague, to negotiate with the Dutch States-General in the hope of compelling Claude-Isaac Peuch, the editor of the *Gazette d'Utrecht*, to retract his article on the Guînes affair.⁹² D'Aiguillon also advised that measures should be taken both against the gazette itself and its correspondents in Paris.⁹³ The duc tried to persuade Vergennes to act by underlining that he had the approval of the naval minister Antoine Raymond Jean Gualbert Gabriel de Sartine. Not only had Sartine recently departed the office of the *directeur de la librairie* but he was also an ally of Vergennes. Vergennes assented to d'Aiguillon's request and instructed Desnoyers to seek a

⁹¹ For Guînes' perspective on this affair, see Adrien-Louis de Bonnières, comte de Guînes, *Mémoire pour le comte de Guînes, ambassadeur du roi, contre les sieurs Tort et Roger, ci-devant ses secrétaires; et le sieur Delpech* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1774).

⁹² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 117, d'Aiguillon to Vergennes, 27 July 1774.

⁹³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 118, d'Aiguillon to Vergennes, 28 July 1774.

retraction from the *Gazette d'Utrecht*, as well as from the *Gazette de Leyde* and the *Gazette de La Haye* which had also printed versions of the same article.⁹⁴

D'Aiguillon was involved in managing international coverage of the Maupeou coup and also sought to shield those at the top of French society from criticism. However, he did not expend too much energy on trying to police the extra-territorial print trade in a wider sense. Indeed, there were times when the diplomats seemed more proactive than the duc. In May 1774 Desnoyers tried to rouse d'Aiguillon, informing him; 'je viens de renouveler les démarches qui m'ont paru nécessaires auprès des Gazetiers et des autres, tant écrivains qu'imprimeurs de ce Pays-ci'.⁹⁵ However, it was not until Vergennes took over the post of foreign secretary that Desnoyers was really listened to. Shortly after he took office Vergennes asked Desnoyers for more information about the booksellers working in The Hague and the offensive literature they were stocking.⁹⁶

In the task of external censorship d'Aiguillon focused his attention on personal slurs. In some cases, the works he condemned also appeared to constitute a wider attack on the French state. This was certainly the case for *Le Gazetier cuirassé*. However, when we compare d'Aiguillon's actions with those his successor Vergennes we see that the duc's involvement in policing the print trade was actually minimal. This was not because d'Aiguillon was a tolerant individual. Indeed, his desperation to control the way in which he was discussed in extra-territorial print demonstrates a belief that authors and publishers operating outside France should be policed. However, he did not have the power or the competence to involve himself in the processes of external censorship to the same extent as Vergennes.

⁹⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 153-54, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 August 1774.

⁹⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 7-8, Desnoyers to d'Aiguillon, 10 May 1774.

⁹⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 161, Vergennes to Desnoyers, 18 August 1774.

There have been several studies of Vergennes' foreign policy decisions and more recently Price, Hardman and Jean-François Labourdette have shed light on Vergennes' role in shaping domestic politics.⁹⁷ Although we already know that Vergennes was engaged in efforts to control the extra-territorial print trade, this will be the first time that his activities have been examined in a systematic manner. Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes ascended to the post of *secrétaire des affaires étrangères* after a diplomatic career which began in Constantinople in 1755. He was recalled to France in 1768 after a disagreement with the duc de Choiseul.⁹⁸ Thanks to the backing of Maupeou, Vergennes was appointed French ambassador in Stockholm in 1771. Vergennes became foreign minister in July 1774 and was able to hang onto power until his death in February 1787. As foreign minister, Vergennes was something of an outsider in social terms compared to his ministerial and diplomatic colleagues. His family had been ennobled relatively recently and were part of the robe nobility.⁹⁹ Vergennes had originally intended upon a career in law. However, he did bring his own ambassadorial experience to the role which gave him a keen understanding of the diplomats' position. Vergennes was thus in charge of external censorship for most of the period covered by this study. Vergennes understood the importance of monitoring and manipulating the printed word and did not shy away from imposing draconian measures in an attempt to do so.¹⁰⁰

Vergennes also had much greater reserves of political support than d'Aiguillon and was able to consolidate his authority over a longer period. Vergennes was one of

⁹⁷ Hardman, *French Politics*; Jean-François Labourdette, *Vergennes: ministre principal de Louis XVI* (Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 1990); Orville T. Murphy, *Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes: French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution, 1719-1787* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982); Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*.

⁹⁸ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 5.

⁹⁹ For more on Vergennes' background, see Bernard Cheignard, 'Les Racines bourguignonnes de Charles Gravier de Vergennes', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 3-4 (1987), 191-213; Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁰ Burrows, 'Despotism without Bounds', p. 526.

the only ministers who had a genuine connection with Louis XVI. The two men were both committed *dévo*t Catholics.¹⁰¹ They were also devoted to their wives and never took mistresses. Such uxoriousness was rare amongst eighteenth-century French leaders. When Vergennes died on 13 February 1787, Louis XVI is reported to have broken down in tears and said, ‘je perds le seul ami sur lequel je pouvais compter, le seul ministre qui ne me trompa jamais’.¹⁰² The pamphleteer Linguet witheringly described Vergennes as ‘un des plus vertueux, et par conséquent des plus inutiles Ministres, qui ait existé.’¹⁰³ Vergennes benefited from the friendship and trust of Louis XVI and he was also allied with other influential ministers including Jean Frédéric Phélypeaux, comte de Maurepas, who was the King’s first minister.¹⁰⁴ Vergennes’ political clout rose sharply after Maurepas died in November 1781. The foreign minister’s power reached its zenith in February 1783 when Louis XVI conferred the title of *chef du conseil royal des finances* upon him.¹⁰⁵ This title had previously belonged to Maurepas and in bestowing it on Vergennes, Louis signalled that he had taken over as his most powerful and trusted minister. It also allowed Vergennes to extend his authority into the domestic sphere and in the course of 1783 he was occupied with plans to arrange a cross-departmental ministerial budget via a committee.

Vergennes’ power took a knock in November 1783. His *comité* fell apart and he was discredited in the eyes of Louis XVI after the *contrôleur-général* Henri François de Paule Lefèvre d’Ormesson accused him of trying to sell rights on lands in Alsace and Lorraine to the crown at an inflated price. However, Vergennes’ biographer Price has

¹⁰¹ For more on the relationship between Louis XVI and Vergennes, see *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes: Correspondence 1774-1787*, ed. by John Hardman and Munro Price (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998), pp. 3-27.

¹⁰² Quoted in *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, p. xv.

¹⁰³ Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet, *Lettre de M. Linguet, à M. le comte de Vergennes, ministre des affaires étrangères en France* (London: [n. pub.], 1777), p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Munro Price, ‘The Dutch Affair and the Fall of the Ancien Régime, 1784-1787’, *The Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), 875-905 (pp. 876-77).

¹⁰⁵ Hardman, *French Politics*, pp. 64-71.

suggested that the foreign minister's authority was on the rise again from 1785 until his death in 1787.¹⁰⁶ This position of influence helps to explain why Vergennes' strategy of external censorship was more dynamic and effective than that of d'Aiguillon. However, as the following discussion will highlight, it was also the case that Vergennes was simply more engaged with and adept at policing the print trade.

Vergennes took his censorship responsibilities seriously and thought deeply about the best manner to bring the extra-territorial print trade under control. The comte placed greater emphasis on his role in overseeing foreign print and so arrived at a better understanding of the complexities of censorship. Vergennes was a conservative and a devout catholic who appreciated that literature which attacked elements of the old regime could endanger the status quo within France. However, he also recognised that he would not be able to completely dominate the international book trade. In 1774 Vergennes told Louis XVI that public opinion was queen of the world, signalling his belief that the French government should aim to influence and regulate the material available to the public rather than simply dictate terms.¹⁰⁷

At the same time, there were clear limits to Vergennes' acceptance of the circulation of literature. For example, in October 1777 Jean Luzac, the editor of the *Gazette de Leyde*, contacted the French government after two French men imprisoned in Aix-en-Provence wrote to him asking him to publish a plea for their release in his newspaper.¹⁰⁸ Vergennes decided that Luzac should not print the plea, contending that such a piece would set a dangerous precedent. The foreign minister considered French readers to be 'crédule et superstitieux' and was wary of allowing a wider audience to form an opinion on the guilt of these prisoners.¹⁰⁹ Vergennes' experience of working as a diplomat also meant that he appreciated the options which were open to his team

¹⁰⁶ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰⁷ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 532, fol. 15, 12 January 1778.

¹⁰⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 532, fol. 16, Vergennes to Miromesnil, 13 January 1778.

when it came to policing literature abroad. Vergennes thus approached the task of external censorship with a considered strategy, in contrast to d'Aiguillon's more reactive tactics. In general terms, Vergennes' approach was tolerant and flexible. The comte was prepared to stomach most examples of illicit writing and printing which went on in the extra-territorial sphere and only authorised measures against material which he saw as especially controversial or subversive.

Vergennes' dedication to his duties is most evident in the decree he enacted on 12 June 1783. It was on this date that Vergennes attempted to restrict the passage of books coming into France from abroad by declaring that all foreign books were to be inspected in Paris. This was an unprecedented act of centralisation which also had a huge impact upon the book trade within France. The level of Vergennes' engagement with the policing of print must be emphasised. This is especially worthy of note because the efficacy of censorship was shaken in the aftermath of Vergennes' death in February 1787. Vergennes' death was only one factor in the crumbling of censorship at the end of the *ancien régime* but it seems fair to say that the government might have retained control for longer had he lived. In contrast to d'Aiguillon, Vergennes did not restrict himself to condemning and chasing certain titles. His approach to the extra-territorial book trade was thought through and strategic rather than merely reactive.

Yet like d'Aiguillon, Vergennes was worried about literature which might attack him personally. Although Vergennes was one of Louis XVI's most influential ministers, he never allowed himself to accept that his position was completely secure and fretted continually about losing power to a minister patronised by Marie-Antoinette and the duc de Choiseul.¹¹⁰ Marie-Antoinette simply disliked Vergennes and during the early 1780s she was occupied with manoeuvres to enhance her influence by bringing more of

¹¹⁰ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, pp. 6-7.

her protégés into the ministry.¹¹¹ Vergennes' private correspondence with Louis XVI demonstrates that the foreign minister was also apprehensive about the production and circulation of literature which discussed his personal life. Vergennes did express concerns about texts relating to his person in private correspondence but only in a few cases did he demand that his subordinates prevent their dissemination. For example, Vergennes grumbled to Louis XVI about a pamphlet entitled *Nouvelles considérations sur l'ouverture de l'Escant* in which Linguet discussed the comte's foreign policy in disparaging terms.¹¹² Although Vergennes told Laurent de Villedeuil, the *directeur de la librairie*, that the text should not be permitted, the foreign minister never instructed his diplomats to suppress this work. Vergennes also showed disdain when Linguet published his calumnious *Lettre de M. Linguet à M. le comte de Vergennes, ministre des affaires étrangères en France* in January 1777 and he refused to be blackmailed into paying a large sum to prevent the publication of *Les Amours et aventures du vizir Vergennes, a libelle* which threatened to expose his supposed love affairs.¹¹³

It is possible that Vergennes' comparatively humble origins may have served to make him less sensitive to personal criticism. Vergennes focused his energies on managing the extra-territorial print trade as he saw fit rather than leaping to defend himself at all times. However, it is important to recognise that Vergennes was not completely disinterested when it came to managing the print trade. For example, in September 1786 Vergennes heard talk of the possible publication of correspondence between Frederick the Great of Prussia and the French *philosophe* d'Alembert.¹¹⁴ The foreign minister worried that this work might criticise his foreign policy and so he decided to destroy existing copies of the letters.

¹¹¹ Hardman, *Louis XVI: The Silent King*, pp. 72-73.

¹¹² *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, pp. 368-70.

¹¹³ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 106, Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 160-61.

¹¹⁴ Labourdette, p. 202.

Although he tried to situate himself above personal attacks, Vergennes was often willing to protect the reputation of other members of the French elite and sanctioned measures abroad to do so. Vergennes stressed the necessity of defending reputations, even if the person attacked in the work was not taking it particularly seriously.¹¹⁵ There were times when Vergennes sought to prevent written criticism of elite figures and like d'Aiguillon he was concerned about protecting his own reputation. But he also showed remarkable readiness to tolerate slander. The idea that it was better to scorn contentious literature comes up time and time again in Vergennes' correspondence. In November 1782, Vergennes reminded d'Esterno, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Berlin, that the state was in the habit of showing contempt for gazetteers, but added that on this occasion, the journalist in question had gone too far and needed to be reprimanded.¹¹⁶ When the writer Morande was planning to bring a libel case against Pelleport, his fellow *libelliste*, Vergennes warned d'Adhémar not to get involved since the crown had not been attacked.¹¹⁷ By contrast, some of the most successful examples of external censorship were set in motion in the hope of curbing the spread of material which slandered members of the royal family. These works were primarily published in London where the foreign ministry enacted prolonged and remarkably successful campaigns to prevent the appearance of works which discussed Marie-Antoinette.¹¹⁸ Stopping these kinds of texts was one of Vergennes' primary concerns because they were seen to constitute a challenge to the absolute authority of the French King. Vergennes was prepared to tolerate much in the way of distasteful material but drew the line when it came to works which assaulted the royals.

Vergennes' role in the policing of *libelles* will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5.

¹¹⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 147, Vergennes to Bâcher, 30 July 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 216-17, Bâcher to Vergennes, 8 September 1782.

¹¹⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 373, Vergennes to d'Esterno, 14 November 1782.

¹¹⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 545, fol. 167, Vergennes to d'Adhémar, 14 October 1783.

¹¹⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 147-65.

Vergennes spent a long period in office which allows us to consider how power shifts and political pressures influenced the way in which he approached the challenges of external censorship. This link between politics and censorship is most apparent in the early 1780s when Vergennes' political authority was at its apogee. It was during this period that he made a concerted attempt to bring the extra-territorial print network under his control. Evidence from the diplomatic correspondence indicates that Vergennes' conception of his own role in censorship was enlarged at this time. In November 1783, Vergennes wrote to Laurent Basset de Châteaubourg, the *lieutenant général de police de Lyon*, after the latter individual had given his approval to a tragedy entitled *Barneveldt* by the playwright Antoine-Marin Lemierre.¹¹⁹ Since this play discussed the relationship between France and the United Provinces, Vergennes requested that the manuscript be sent to him for review. The foreign minister also suggested that; 'il conviendrait de la soumettre à l'examen d'un censeur de Paris plus au fait des convenances en pareilles que ne le peuvent être les censeurs des villes de Provinces'.¹²⁰ After receiving a letter of objection from an ally of Lemierre which pointed out that the tragedy was based on a story which was centuries old, Vergennes eventually consented for the play to be put on in Lyon.¹²¹ It was not particularly unusual for Vergennes to be consulted by the *directeur de la librairie* when censors were judging works which touched upon matters of foreign policy. But Vergennes' decision in November 1783 to intervene in the minutiae of local censorship was somewhat unprecedented.

Vergennes' engagement with the extra-territorial book trade is also indicated by the extent to which he coordinated his actions with other ministers. The foreign minister cooperated well with his close ally Armand Thomas Hue, marquis de

¹¹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 556, fol. 111, Vergennes to Basset, 4 September 1783.

¹²⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 556, fol. 111, Vergennes to Basset, 4 September 1783.

¹²¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 556, fol. 298, Basset to Vergennes, 22 December 1783.

Miromesnil, who occupied the post of *garde des sceaux* from 1774 to 1787.¹²² Vergennes was also allied with and relied upon Jean-Charles-Pierre Lenoir, the *lieutenant général de police de Paris* from August 1774 to May 1775 and then again from June 1776 until August 1785. Vergennes asked Lenoir to send him regular police bulletins to inform him of cultural shifts in Paris. Lenoir was instrumental in helping Vergennes to understand the book trade and fed him information about the key players and titles. Vergennes also worked with the *directeur de la librairie* to offer guidance when the censors were judging works on foreign affairs.¹²³ For example, in February 1780 Vergennes advised François-Claude Le Camus de Néville, the current *directeur de la librairie*, that certain pamphlets which attacked Britain should not be tolerated. Vergennes maintained that the French state should conduct itself with honest and decency, despite hostilities between the two countries.¹²⁴ Néville and Lenoir both consulted Vergennes regularly in the early 1780s when texts relating to the political troubles in Geneva poured onto the market.¹²⁵ In addition, Vergennes sought advice from Maurepas, Louis XVI's first minister and principal advisor. Maurepas had actually been disgraced in 1749 for his role in the creation of verses which slandered Madame du Pompadour and he continued to collect songs and epigrams after his return to his power.¹²⁶ As such, Maurepas arguably took *libelles* less seriously than Vergennes, even if slurs were targeted towards him. However, Maurepas' influence should not be overstated.

As we have seen, Vergennes was largely able to direct external censorship according to his own views and his position of authority was boosted following Maurepas' death in November 1781. What is more, the memoirs of Lenoir, the

¹²² Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 420, fol. 6, Vergennes to Miromesnil, 11 January 1787.

¹²³ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 533, fol. 45, Néville to Vergennes, 28 February 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 290, Vergennes to Villedeuil, 8 July 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 563, fol. 80, Villedeuil to Vergennes, 17 June 1785.

¹²⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 290, Vergennes to Villedeuil, 8 July 1785.

¹²⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 86, fol. 302, Vergennes to Lenoir, 24 December 1780.

¹²⁶ Robert Darnton, 'Poetry and the Police in Eighteenth-Century Paris', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 371 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999), 1-22 (pp. 10-11).

lieutenant général, indicate that Maurepas concurred with Vergennes on the seriousness of works which maligned members of the royal family.¹²⁷ There is less evidence, in terms of volume of correspondence, that d'Aiguillon collaborated closely with other officials within France. This lends more weight to the argument that Vergennes took his censorship duties very seriously, effectively calling upon colleagues whom he could rely upon for information and support. Compared to d'Aiguillon, Vergennes showed a keener appreciation for the manner in which he could manipulate the print trade in France's interests.

Vergennes' political influence was diminished late in 1783 and only began to revive in 1785. Price has contended that as the 1780s progressed, Vergennes became increasingly concerned with political rivalries rather than administrative duties.¹²⁸ However, evidence relating to external censorship suggests that Vergennes' vulnerability in this period has perhaps been overstated. Vergennes continued to be able to impose his will on the extra-territorial print trade until his death in 1787. There is considerable evidence that the edict which Vergennes issued on 12 June 1783 relating to the inspection of imported books was upheld until at least 1786. The effects of this decree will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5. It is certainly fair to say that Vergennes was less involved in the policing of literature from mid-1783 onwards. But this was the result of a conscious policy decision on his part to scorn the threat posed by *libellistes* and other controversial writers as far as possible. When the diplomats brought contentious texts to his attention, Vergennes largely clung to the belief that ignoring illicit literature was the best course of action. Vergennes' political position was shaken late in 1783 but the foreign minister was able to retain enough authority to ensure that the extra-territorial print network remained under his control.

¹²⁷ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 89; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 111.

¹²⁸ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 164.

Yet there are signs that Vergennes' once perceptive appreciation of the book trade was beginning to wane in the months before his death in February 1787. In September 1786, Vergennes complained to Miromesnil, the *garde des sceaux*, about inaccuracies in the article on Geneva in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, an enlarged and revised edition of the *Encyclopédie* which was printed in Paris by the publisher and entrepreneur Charles-Joseph Panckoucke.¹²⁹ Vergennes had received protests from the *Petit Conseil* in Geneva about this article and he agreed that the piece needed to be revised. The foreign minister expressed surprise that details of the King's power in Geneva had not been properly outlined and he also wished it to be made clear that 'Genève n'a jamais été plus heureuse ni plus prospère que depuis la pacification'.¹³⁰ Since this edition of the *Encyclopédie méthodique* had already been published and disseminated Miromesnil could only suggest that the French government formally condemn the article whilst he arranged for a new version to be inserted into a forthcoming edition.¹³¹ On this occasion the article on Geneva in Panckoucke's *Encyclopédie Méthodique* had already been sent out to subscribers at least two years previously.¹³² It was too late to prevent the text from having any impact on French readers.

In November 1786 Vergennes' assurance seems to have faltered slightly once more. He declared that measures were to be taken against a pamphlet entitled, *Essai sur quelques changements qu'on pourrait faire dès à présent dans les loix criminelles de France, par un honnête homme qui, depuis qu'il connoît ces loix, n'est pas bien sûr de n'être pas pendu un jour*.¹³³

This work has been attributed to Trophimé-Gérard, marquis de Lally-Tollendal but

¹²⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 466, Vergennes to Miromesnil, 8 September 1786; Suzanne Tucoo-Chala, *Charles-Joseph Panckoucke et la librairie française, 1736–1798* (Pau: Éditions Marrimpouey jeune, 1977), pp. 323-44.

¹³⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 466, Vergennes to Miromesnil, 8 September 1786.

¹³¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 467, Miromesnil to Vergennes, 14 September 1786.

¹³² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 96, fol. 13, Vergennes to Meunier, 19 February 1787.

¹³³ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fol. 336, comte de Vergennes to marquis de Vergennes, 5 November 1786.

government documents suggest that it was written by Louis-Pierre Manuel.¹³⁴ Manuel himself seems to corroborate this in his treatise on the Paris police.¹³⁵

A search in Berne uncovered 200 copies of the work at the shop of a bookseller in Lausanne. The authorities in Berne asked the bookseller in question (whom they did not name) to justify his decision to market the work;

Ce libraire surpris de l'imputation qu'on lui a faite d'avoir vendu un libelle, croit non seulement n'avoir commis aucune faute à ce sujet, mais encore il espère être à l'abri de tous dommages puisque cette brochure, selon lui, n'est en aucune façon un libelle, ne contenant que des observations sur la législation criminelle de France, qui ne sont pas plus fortes que ce que l'on trouve dans d'autres écrits imprimés et publiquement vendus en France.¹³⁶

Miromesnil concurred with the assessment made by the authorities in Berne:

Ces 200 exemplaires ne peuvent pas former un objet de grande conséquence. Vous aurez remarqué de plus que la Brochure dont il s'agit, n'est point du nombre de celles qui présentent des injures concertées dans le dessein de nuire à la France ou à des particuliers, et qui forment par cette raison la première classe des véritables libelles.¹³⁷

Although he disagreed with Vergennes, Miromesnil was prepared to defer to the foreign minister's ultimate authority in the extra-territorial sphere. However,

¹³⁴ Paris, BNF, Collection Joly de Fleury 1682, fol. 312, 12 October 1786; Paris, BNF, Collection Joly de Fleury, fol. 313, 14 October 1786; Antoine-Alexandre Barbier and others, eds., *Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes*, 3rd edn, vol 4 (Paris: Daffis, 1879), p. 36.

¹³⁵ Pierre Manuel, *La Police de Paris dévoilée*, vol 1 (Paris: Garnery, 1793), pp. 52-54.

¹³⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fol. 379, Conseil de la ville de Berne à marquis de Vergennes, 14 December 1786.

¹³⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fol. 9, Miromesnil to Vergennes, 23 January 1787.

Miromesnil's doubts were enough to persuade Vergennes that the pamphlet was not worth chasing. In March 1787, he advised Dominique Gabard de Vaux, the *chargé d'affaires* in Solothurn, that the matter should now be dropped.¹³⁸ Vergennes' initial worries were understandable. Manuel's writings had landed him in the Bastille twice already in 1783 and earlier in 1786.¹³⁹ In December 1786, Vergennes feared that Manuel had brought another intolerable text to market. This affair shows that even the most confident officials could have difficulties deciding which texts merited suppressive measures.

Vergennes was most in control of the extra-territorial print trade during the early 1780s. He showed concern to defend elite figures against slanderous commentary but he also understood how other kinds of books and articles might harm the *ancien régime*. Even though his political position was weakened from late 1783 onwards, he retained enough authority to continue to hold sway over foreign print. Although there are some signals that his judgement was sometimes clouded, the fact remains that he was able to operate the structures of external censorship in line with his own will.

..

This chapter has made it clear that individual decision-makers played a key role in external censorship. Surveillance was probably the diplomats' most important duty. Certainly there were some diplomats who were more confident in this role than others. Desnoyers, *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, was one notable example of a diplomat who zealously patrolled the print industry. As a corps, the diplomats were trusted and given scope to interpret whether or not literature was sufficiently offensive to warrant

¹³⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 420, fols. 88-91, Vergennes to Gabard, 25 March 1787.

¹³⁹ Gudrun Gersmann, 'Le Monde des colporteurs parisiens de livres prohibés 1750-1789', in *Colportage et lecture populaire: imprimés de large circulation en Europe, XVIe-XIXe siècles: actes du colloque des 21-24 avril 1991, Wolfenbüttel*, ed. by Roger Chartier and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1996), pp. 37-47 (pp. 40-41).

repressive measures. The ambassadorial team were most engaged with the Francophone periodical press but they also had access to important information about illicit bookselling and publishing. By passing word back to France, they helped the foreign minister to assess the severity of the threat posed by certain titles. The stance of the foreign ministers was undoubtedly central to extra-territorial control. Vergennes arguably took his responsibilities in the extra-territorial arena more seriously than d'Aiguillon. Vergennes used his considerable power effectively in order to shape the kind of literature which was able to make its way into France. His assertiveness helps to explain a lot of the successes of external censorship in this period. Yet the foreign ministers could not operate alone. The structures of extra-territorial policing rested on cooperation between diplomats and foreign ministers because it was a process which was continual and reactive. This process allowed individual agents to have a discernible effect on the extent of French influence abroad.

Chapter 3 - Working with Foreign Powers

It was the French diplomatic corps who played the key role in watching over and regulating the extra-territorial print trade. Yet the realisation of their efforts was often dependent upon the compliance and cooperation of foreign powers. This chapter will explore how the French state coerced, negotiated and clashed with foreign authorities in the hope of exercising some control over the kind of works which were being imported into France. The French state was a great power but its dominance abroad was not guaranteed. French diplomats had to spend a lot of time appealing to and trying to compel foreign officials to enact measures against writers and publishers who were involved in the production and dissemination of controversial material. The French government's relationship with foreign authorities was most significant when it came to the policing of books and pamphlets. As explained in Chapter 2, diplomats tended to appeal directly to editors and journalists when articles which were deemed inappropriate were published in the foreign newspaper press. This chapter will explore and emphasise the tensions in relations between the French diplomatic corps and foreign authorities when it came to the question of policing print. It will contend that foreign powers were a major hindrance to external censorship. The Bourbon regime tried to encourage foreign governments to watch over the print trade carefully but they could not depend on them to prevent the appearance of contentious texts. What is more, foreign officials were generally reluctant to punish local men who had incurred the wrath of the French government and they had a number of techniques which they employed to avoid following French demands. However, through continued pressure the foreign ministry was able to convince and coerce foreign powers to discipline those implicated in the illicit print trade. Authorities beyond France obstructed French attempts to manage the

extra-territorial print trade but the diplomats did their best to impose the government's will abroad.

France and the Extra-Territorial Print Trade

In many ways, the states which surrounded France were ideally positioned to cater to a French literary market which was censored and constricted. French was the international language of Europe and Francophone texts were traded all over the continent. Geographically, book dealers in the areas bordering France were close enough to send texts across the frontier with a minimum of cost and effort. Regions like Geneva, Britain, Holland and the German state states all had long traditions of publishing and bookselling.¹ By the later eighteenth-century the Francophone print industry was also flourishing in other areas. Between 1700 and 1800, the number of print-shops in the Swiss states nearly doubled.² Although structures of censorship existed in most of the states adjacent to France, the policing of the printed word tended to be lax. Moreover, many of the smaller states which surrounded France, such as the Swiss cantons or the territories of the Holy Roman Empire, enjoyed a good deal of political independence. This could work to the benefit of indigenous authors, booksellers and publishers who were sheltered by sympathetic agents of local government. The extra-territorial print trade was strong and vibrant by the later eighteenth century which meant that it was a challenge for the French government to keep it under surveillance and control.

¹ On the rise of the printing press, see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 3-121.

² Jean-Daniel Candaux, 'Imprimeurs et libraires dans la Suisse des Lumières', in *Le Rayonnement d'une maison d'édition dans l'Europe des Lumières: la Société typographique de Neuchâtel 1769-1789: actes du colloque organisé par la Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Neuchâtel et la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Neuchâtel 31 Octobre – 2 Novembre 2002*, ed. by Robert Darnton, Jacques Rychner and Michel Schlup (Neuchâtel: Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Neuchâtel, 2005), pp. 51-68 (p. 52).

In the 1770s and 1780s, France was one of only a number of great powers on the continent and its authority was challenged primarily by Austria, Britain and Prussia. France's vulnerability was painfully underlined by the severe defeats it suffered in the course of the Seven Years War between 1756 and 1763. Nevertheless, the French nation still had huge reserves of political and economic might in comparison with many of the smaller states which surrounded it. France also had commercial influence since many of the states along its borders were dependent upon foreign trade with their powerful neighbour. French diplomats were thus at an advantage in their relations with foreign authorities since they were in the prestigious position of representing the great power of France.³

An appreciation of regional difference is critical to understanding the impact that the French government could have in foreign territories. Figure 4 shows the geographical spread of extra-territorial policing for books and pamphlets, and for journals. It also provides details of which cities have been included in each regional area. This table covers all the occasions when the French government attempted to engage with the print trade in a particular location and categorises these instances according to region. If a campaign of suppression was spread across two locations, both locations have been counted on this chart. The total number of official responses by location is thus greater than the number of times that the French government made efforts to respond to the extra-territorial print trade.

³ For more on international diplomacy in this period, see Jeremy Black, *European International Relations, 1648-1815* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); T. C. W. Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2007); Murphy, *The Diplomatic Retreat*; Hamish Scott, *The Birth of a Great Power System, 1740-1815* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2006).

Region	Cities included	No. of Responses (Books and Pamphlets)	No. of Responses (Journals)	Total No. of Responses (Books and Pamphlets, Journals)
Dutch	Amsterdam, The Hague, Leiden, Maastricht, Utrecht	12	46	58
Holy Roman Empire	Brussels, Erlangen, Liège, Mannheim, Mainz, Palatinate-Zweibrücken, Regensburg	15	38	53
British	London	23	15	38
Swiss	Berne, Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Schaffhausen	15	13	28
Prussian	Berlin, Cleves	5	14	19

Figure 4: Frequency of Official Responses to the Extra-Territorial Print Trade (Books and Pamphlets, Journals) by Region, 1770-1789

As Figure 4 indicates, instances of external censorship relating to books and pamphlets were concentrated in Britain and then spread relatively evenly across the Swiss states, the regions of the Holy Roman Empire and also, the United Provinces. Britain was undoubtedly the area which was most difficult to manage. There, the Francophone print trade was centred in London and publishers routinely engaged in the production of provocative texts. By contrast, illicit publishing in the rest of Europe ranged over Amsterdam, Maastricht and The Hague in the United Provinces, Brussels

and Liège in the Holy Roman Empire and the Helvetic towns of Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel.⁴

When it came to the management of the newspaper press, Figure 4 illustrates that the French government was overwhelmingly involved with the regulation of Dutch journals. This chart also indicates that papers which were published in the states of the Holy Roman Empire were surprisingly troublesome.⁵ British newspapers did come under fire but the industry of Francophone journalism was not as strong there as it was on the continent. The *Courier de l'Europe* was the most successful Francophone journal published in Britain and the French government had considerable influence over this title.⁶

These geographical differences in external policing were related to French spheres of influence abroad. French authority was probably at its lowest level in Britain, a state which had long been a diplomatic enemy. Relations between the two governments were especially strained from 1778 to 1783 when the countries were in direct combat in the American War of Independence. The influence of the French diplomatic corps was lessened still further during the war as France stationed only a

⁴ On Francophone publishing in these regions, see C. Berkvens-Stevelinck and others, eds., *Le Magasin de l'univers: The Dutch Republic as the Centre of the European Book Trade: Papers Presented at the International Colloquium held at Wassenaar, 5-7 July 1990*, ed. by C. Berkvens-Stevelinck and others (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Georges Bonnant, *Le Livre genevois sous l'ancien régime* (Geneva: Droz, 1999); Silvio Corsini, *Le Livre à Lausanne: cinq siècles d'édition et d'imprimerie, 1493-1993* (Lausanne: Payot, 1993); Darnton, Rychner and Schlup, eds., *Le Rayonnement d'une maison d'édition*; Yves Zacharie Dubosq, *Le Livre français et son commerce en Hollande de 1750 à 1780: (d'après des documents inédits)* (Amsterdam: Paris, 1925); John R. Kleinschmidt, *Les Imprimeurs et libraires de la république de Genève, 1700-1798* (Geneva: Lullien, 1948).

⁵ For an overview of the Francophone press in the German states, see François Moureau 'La Presse allemande de langue française (1686-1790): étude statistique et thématique', *Aufklärungen: Frankreich und Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, 1 (1985), 243-50.

⁶ For more on the *Courier de l'Europe*, see Simon Burrows, 'The Courier de l'Europe as an Agent of Cultural Transfer (1776-1791)', in *Cultural Transfers*, ed. by Burrows, Dziembowski and Thomson, pp. 189-201; Hélène Maspéro-Clerc, 'Une "Gazette anglo-française" pendant la guerre d'Amérique: "Le Courier de l'Europe" (1776-1788)', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 277 (1976), 572-94; Gunnar von Proschwitz and Mavis von Proschwitz, eds., *Beaumarchais et le "Courier de l'Europe": documents inédits ou peu connus*, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 273-74 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1990).

chargé d'affaires in London at this time.⁷ Chapter 5 will shed more light on the difficulty the French government had in imposing its will on the print trade within Britain.

By contrast, most of the states allied to or part of the Old Swiss Confederacy had long been clients of France and saw close relations with their most powerful neighbour as the natural state of affairs. Bâcher, the *chargé d'affaires* in Solothurn, certainly thought this, stating that the people of Schaffhausen 'sont trop intéressés à se maintenir dans les bonnes grâces de Sa Majesté, avec laquelle ils ont l'honneur d'être allié'.⁸ The strong relationship between France and the Old Swiss Confederacy was cemented in July 1777 when the pair renewed their political alliance.⁹ Switzerland was important to France in strategic terms. The idea was that by keeping the Swiss states close, the French government could stop them allying with the rival power of Austria.

But the extent of France's influence varied across the Helvetic region. The volatile nature of Genevan politics enabled the French government to play a direct role there but it also meant that working with the local authorities could be difficult. Across the course of the eighteenth century, the independent republic of Geneva was repeatedly rocked by conflicts over the question of who should be able to exercise political rights. In 1738 France agreed to act as a guarantor of Geneva's political stability and repeatedly sent troops into the region to calm any agitation. In April 1782 a reformist movement of *représentants* rebelled against the oligarchic nature of the Genevan government. France invaded Geneva to re-establish stability after this political revolt and managed to force the expulsion of the rebels.¹⁰ From this point onwards Geneva essentially became a French protectorate.

⁷ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 146.

⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 233, Bâcher to Vergennes, 25 September 1782.

⁹ Philippe Gern, *Aspects des relations franco-suissees au temps de Louis XVI: diplomatie, économie, finances* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1970), p. 11. Note: Geneva and Neuchâtel were not part of this alliance.

¹⁰ For more on France and Geneva in the eighteenth century see Frances Acomb, *Mallet du Pan (1749-1800): A Career in Political Journalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1973), pp. 87-94;

This situation meant that officials in Geneva laboured with the threat of French military intervention and political interference looming over them. Yet, the small republic of Geneva also had a very strong sense of independence. For the Genevans, their ability to remain autonomous despite being surrounded by the major powers of Europe was providence and a proof of God's faith in their state.¹¹ Fears about Geneva becoming dominated by France were partly responsible for the 1782 revolution. Staying close to France was a priority for the small executive councils which governed Geneva but this aim was not supported by the *représentants*, nor by the wider populace who saw a conflict between French Catholicism and Genevan Protestantism. This tension shines through in French policing of the extra-territorial print trade. The Genevan authorities were careful to repeatedly stress their loyalty to France but, as we shall see, they also resisted French demands when it came to the matter of controlling the book trade.

French influence in Holland and in the Holy Roman Empire was strong since France was allied with both the United Provinces and Austria. Officials in these regions were generally more accommodating than their counterparts in Britain or the Swiss states. The great power status of France also meant it had enough might to intimidate smaller states within the Holy Roman Empire. One small territory which was firmly within the French sphere of influence was the principality of Palatinate-Zweibrücken whose duc Christian IV had close connections with Paris and Versailles.¹² French influence was less certain in Neuchâtel and Cleves because these territories were under the protection of Prussia, a powerful rival power. In 1756 the Bourbon state reversed

Louis Binz, *Brève histoire de Genève* (Geneva: Chancellerie d'Etat, 1985), pp. 42-45; Richard Whatmore, *Against War and Empire: Geneva, Britain, and France in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Yale University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Whatmore, pp. 3-20.

¹² Schlobach, pp. 270-74.

its traditional allegiances; a strategic alliance was formed with Austria which posted Prussia as a new enemy.

The French foreign minister and the diplomats working abroad appreciated how far French influence fluctuated across Europe. It was explained in the diplomatic correspondence that particular pressure would need to be applied when working with the local authorities in places like Britain and Geneva. The instructions supplied to Hennin when he became *résident* in Geneva in 1765 outlined some of the difficulties in ensuring officials there followed French orders;

Nous avons sur ce sujet plus d'un exemple d'occasions où nous avons eu à nous louer du Gouvernement de Genève. Mais le Sr Hennin fera très bien de tacher de se procurer des intelligences secrètes dans la librairie, qui le mettent à portée de réclamer à temps le secours de l'autorité des Magistrats, et de leur ôter le prétexte d'ignorance dont ils useraient peut-être pour masquer leur connivence.¹³

Although officials in Geneva could be hard to manage, the extent to which they constituted a serious problem for France should not be overstated. In this period, French police officers were never sent on mission to the Swiss states to arrest authors or publishers. They were sent to the Netherlands and to Britain on several occasions. One implication of this is that the French government felt it had sufficient clout in the Swiss states. Even if officials protested, the foreign ministry ultimately felt it could depend on them to adhere to French demands. Another reason for this discrepancy is the nature of the print trades in the different regions of Europe. London was a major centre of international news and had close links with other significant book centres in

¹³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 70, fols. 431-58, 9 December 1765.

Paris and Amsterdam. The Swiss print trade was more parochial in comparison and did not have the same international reputation.

Shortcomings of Foreign Censorship

The states which neighboured France did have their own mechanisms in place for controlling the printed word, whether this was a formal structure of censorship or other methods of regulating which kind of works were in circulation. However, these foreign authorities were generally more tolerant than their French counterparts when it came to the print trade. The following discussion will explore the reasons for this tendency towards clemency. It makes sense to begin with a brief outline of censorship in some of the regions surrounding France where the Francophone print industry was strong.

Following the lapse of the Licensing Act at the end of the seventeenth century, Britain had something resembling a free press. Other states had firmer structures designed to manage publication and circulation. In the Swiss state of Neuchâtel there was a system of pre-publication censorship in place. Printers had to send their works to censors at state and city level for approval and local pastors also played a role in censorship by condemning texts that they disagreed with.¹⁴ In Geneva, booksellers and printers needed government approbation to operate but pre-publication censorship did not exist. It was a similar story in the United Provinces. Publishers did not have to submit works to censors and control was exercised instead through official condemnations of provocative material.¹⁵ Censorship was fragmented across much of

¹⁴ Michel Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité: l'édition neuchâteloise de Lumières' in *Le Rayonnement d'une maison d'édition*, ed. by Darnton, Rychner and Schlup, pp. 69-86 (pp. 76-79).

¹⁵ C. Berkens-Stevelinck, 'L'Édition française en Hollande', in *Histoire de l'édition française, Tome 2*, ed. by Martin and Chartier, pp. 316-25 (p. 325); A. H. Huussen Jr, 'Freedom of the Press and Censorship in the Netherlands, 1780-1810', in *Too Mighty to be Free: Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. by A.C. Duke and C. A. Tamse (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1987), pp. 107-26 (pp. 109-10).

the Holy Roman Empire, even after Joseph II established a centralised censorship commission in Vienna in July 1781.¹⁶ The exception to this pattern was probably Prussia, where attempts were made to intensify censorship during this period. Frederick the Great tried to impose his will on the print trade by passing forty-three laws on censorship which his successor Frederick William II then sought to strengthen.¹⁷

Comprehensive examinations of censorship in these regions have yet to be undertaken but the extant studies create the impression that regulations were often ineffective. The main problem was the lack of a centralised power strong enough to control the book trade across the various principalities to the east of France. Different rules applied in different jurisdictions and this allowed individuals to move copies of a condemned book from one location to another in order to avoid incurring any form of punishment. The shortcomings of foreign censorship put the onus for controlling extra-territorial print firmly onto the French government. Censorship was obviously not completely absent from the states around France and more detailed scholarship will be able to uncover the extent to which these powers succeeded and failed in their endeavours to manage printed matter. Yet, even if foreign censorship could work, it remains the case that the French government was always going to be somewhat dissatisfied with it. The foreign ministry spent most time chasing and trying to suppress those texts which seemed to undermine the French state or attack members of its political and social elite or the royal family. Foreign censorship was not targeted towards these sorts of texts.

Aside from this difference in emphasis, there were a number of other reasons why the states surrounding France had difficulty imposing their will on the print trade.

¹⁶ Birn, *Royal Censorship*, p. 2; Claire Madl and Michael Wögerbauer, 'Censorship and Book Supply', in *The Enlightenment in Bohemia: Religion, Morality and Multiculturalism*, ed. by Ivo Cerman, Rita Krueger and Susan Reynolds, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2011:07 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011), 69-87 (pp. 74-75).

¹⁷ Jeffery Freedman, *Books Without Borders in Enlightenment Europe: French Cosmopolitanism and German Literary Markets* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 72.

The most important explanation relates to the nature of government in these regions. There was no one centralised authority with responsibility for censorship. For instance, neither the Dutch States-General nor its leader the *Grand pensionnaire* had much power over newspapers since gazettes came under the jurisdiction of local officials.¹⁸ Local laws on the book trade often contradicted each other which meant that traders could often escape punishment simply by moving to another town. The personnel tasked with censorship could also be inadequate. In Neuchâtel, there was one censor for the entire principality but it was impossible for this individual to examine all manuscripts which were ready for publication.¹⁹ Printers could also simply decide not to submit potentially provocative works to local censors. This thesis aims to make it clear that censorship presented a real challenge for the French government. It was even more difficult for the smaller states surrounding France where authority was much less centralised.

The feeble nature of foreign censorship was problematic and this weakness was compounded by the extent to which local officials were generally inclined to protect the booksellers and publishers working in their region.²⁰ This was one of the French government's biggest frustrations in its attempts to police the extra-territorial trade. A number of factors interacted to ensure that book dealers could retain the support of local officials even whilst being condemned by the French state. Of these, pragmatic considerations were probably the most significant. A booming publishing company made use of local resources, employed local traders and created profits which could be fed back into the region. The economic worth of the book trade inclined local officials to turn a blind eye to the publication of potentially controversial texts, especially if they were destined for export. Indeed, Eisenstein has argued that the Dutch authorities were

¹⁸ Rétat, ed., *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, p. 46.

¹⁹ Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité', p. 82.

²⁰ The next three paragraphs have been taken from my own article and reworked. See Seaward, 'The Société typographique de Neuchâtel'.

tolerant because officials simply assumed that all Francophone texts were going to be sent abroad.²¹ Relations could also be reciprocal. In the United Provinces, the owners of gazettes had to pay an annual tax for the right to publish which gave local officials a financial incentive to protect these newspapers.²² Manzoni published his *Courier du Bas-Rhin* from the Prussian duchy of Cleves. He was able to secure the protection of the Prussian authorities by promising to promote their interests in his paper.²³

There were other dynamics which inclined officials towards tolerance. In Neuchâtel and Geneva, the political elite were generally in accord with the moderate Swiss version of the Enlightenment.²⁴ It thus seems fair to say they valued the cultural currency that publishers brought to their locality. The printing ventures of the STN, one of the primary publishers in Neuchâtel, enabled the local elite to rub shoulders with a number of notable literary figures including Jacques Mallet Du Pan, the comte de Mirabeau and Jacques-Pierre Brissot. The Palatinate-Zweibrücken was ruled over by Christian IV, an Enlightenment enthusiast. He supported the *Gazette des Deux-Ponts* which was a journal which existed in both a literary and political incarnation.²⁵ Christian IV liked the idea of patronising periodicals which would promote his own interests and ideas. Publishers also provided politicians with the means to fulfil their own literary ambitions. Neuchâtel's censor Jérôme-Emmanuel Boyve enlisted the STN to print copies of his own work on Swiss politics, *Recherches sur l'indigénat helvétique de la principauté de Neuchâtel et Vallangin*.²⁶

²¹ Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad*, p. 19.

²² Rézat, ed., *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, p. 48.

²³ Moureau, 'La Presse allemande', pp. 247-50.

²⁴ Acomb, p. 27; Philippe Henry, 'Le Pays de Neuchâtel à l'époque de la naissance de la Société typographique (1769)', in *Le Rayonnement d'une maison d'édition*, ed. by Darnton, Rychner and Schlup, pp. 33-49 (p. 46); Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité', p. 82.

²⁵ Schlobach, pp. 270-74.

²⁶ Neuchâtel, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Neuchâtel (hereafter BPUN), Fonds de la Société typographique de Neuchâtel (hereafter STN), MS 1127, fols. 103-04, Jérôme-Emmanuel Boyve to the STN, 18 May 1778.

What is more, social and political similarities seem to have been important in fostering links between publishers and government agents. Many extra-territorial firms were situated in small principalities where it was relatively easy to cultivate links with influential officials. This was especially the case for the STN since its directors were an integral part of the local fabric. Frédéric-Samuel Ostervald had a long political career before becoming the town's *banneret* in 1762 whilst his son-in-law, Jean-Elie Bertrand, was a pastor and professor at the *Collège de Neuchâtel*.²⁷ Such connections brought the STN's directors into regular contact with local figures of political authority. For instance, Ostervald was close friends with Samuel de Petitpierre, the town mayor and censor of the principality.²⁸ Comparable ties also existed in Geneva. The Cramer brothers established a business there and became Voltaire's publishers of choice. In 1767 Philibert Cramer became a member of the *Petit Conseil* in Geneva.²⁹ As Hennin, the French *résident* in Geneva, pointed out, Cramer was, 'dans le Conseil et passe pour y avoir la plus grande influence, plusieurs autres Conseillers sont intéressés dans la librairie soit par eux-mêmes soit par leurs Parents'.³⁰ Hennin also reported that the authorities in Lausanne were unlikely to police the book trade with much vigour since many of those in power also had a vested interest in the printing industry.³¹ Publishers could be respectable members of the community. More than that, many actually held local positions of power which allowed them to secure some form of protection for their business.

²⁷ Michel Schlup, 'La Société typographique de Neuchâtel (1769-1789): points de repère', in *L'Édition neuchâtelois au siècle des Lumières: la Société Typographique de Neuchâtel (1769-1789)*, ed. by Michel Schlup (Neuchâtel: Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Neuchâtel, 2002), pp. 61-105 (pp. 67-69).

²⁸ Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité', pp. 78-79.

²⁹ Bernard Lescave, 'Commerce d'assortiment et livres interdits: Genève', in *Histoire de l'édition française. Tome 2*, ed. by Martin and Chartier, pp. 326-33 (p. 328).

³⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 83, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 5 August 1771. Note: 'Parent' could also mean relative in contemporary parlance.

³¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

The French government appealed directly to foreign powers when titles which it objected to appeared on the scene. Diplomats were instructed to meet with foreign officials and push for the suppression of texts and the punishment of offenders. The French government's investigations into the Cramers' publication of an edition of the *Encyclopédie* in Geneva shed light on the way in which these economic, cultural, social and political influences worked together to undermine French efforts to regulate the extra-territorial trade. In August 1771, d'Aiguillon asked Hennin to make moves to suppress this new edition. Hennin, however, doubted that he would be able to persuade 'les Genevois à renoncer à une entreprise qu'ils regardent comme infiniment avantageuse'.³² Firstly, the Cramers were well respected in Geneva. One of the brothers sat in the *Petit Conseil* and several other officials had ties to the book trade, either themselves or through members of their family. Secondly, the publishing of the *Encyclopédie* was good for the local economy, with more than twenty presses working on the edition every day. Lastly, Hennin suggested that the people had been emboldened by their recent political troubles: they were unlikely to stop the publication of a work simply because it was a counterfeit edition of a French text. Hennin was ready to put pressure on the *Petit Conseil* to act, but his reservations were enough to convince d'Aiguillon that it was futile to try to get further involved.³³

In this case, the French government capitulated in the face of Genevan resistance, which highlights the extent to which the French authorities were willing to pick their battles carefully. It was twenty years since the first volumes of the *Encyclopédie* appeared on the scene and by 1771, a foreign edition of the work constituted an economic rather than an ideological problem. As Hennin put it, 'J'étais fâché de voir des Libraires étrangers faire une entreprise de plusieurs millions dont la France aurait pu

³² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 83, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 5 August 1771.

³³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 86, d'Aiguillon to Hennin, 11 August 1771.

profiter'.³⁴ By printing the *Encyclopédie*, Genevan publishers were undercutting French traders but this was considered a less serious matter than works which seemed to explicitly challenge the French status quo. So, commercial, intellectual, social and political affinities inclined foreign authorities to defend the trade of local book dealers. This climate of tolerance gave publishers and booksellers an acute sense of just how far they could bend the rules and still retain local support. The alliance between local traders and government officials thus made it difficult for France to realise its objectives of external censorship. The French ministry put a lot more effort into overcoming this resistance when it came to other titles which were considered to be much more dangerous.

Foreign Powers: Defiance and Compliance

When working with French diplomats, foreign authorities adopted a posture of total compliance. Firstly, officials underlined their disappointment and anger at the offences that had been committed in their territory. According to a diplomatic dispatch, Charles Léopold von Heydes de Belderbusch, a minister in Cologne, appeared to be 'courroucé contre des anonymes qui commettent des délits de cette nature que l'on doit regarder comme une peste publique dont le châtement exemplaire peut seul arrêter les progrès contagieux'.³⁵ Secondly, officials stressed that they had acted quickly, conducted thorough investigations and issued severe punishments.³⁶ Foreign officials would often write detailed accounts of the exact measures that they had undertaken and then

³⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 83, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 5 August 1771.

³⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 110, fols. 134-37, Causan to Vergennes, 14 March 1782.

³⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 190, Lullin to d'Aiguillon, 15 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fols. 159-62, Léonard to Vergennes, 28 April 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fols. 368-70, d'Esterno to Vergennes, 9 November 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 382, fol. 121, Conseil de la Ville de Schaffhouse to Beauteville, 24 September 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 250, Conseil de la Ville de Schaffhouse, 30 September 1782.

forward these to French diplomats or foreign ministers.³⁷ Officials also asked the diplomats to provide further details about the affair at hand.³⁸ This was a way to demonstrate a willingness to do the bidding of the French state. It was also a means of compensating for any delays in acting upon French orders. Foreign powers claimed that they needed more information before they would be able to uncover any culprits. Thirdly, governments outside France made it clear that they would endeavour to be more vigilant in the future when it came to the print trade.³⁹ This attempt to reassure the French state was made repeatedly by the same officials, demonstrating the limited effectiveness of such a declaration. If we are to believe the testimony of officials outside France, they did everything in their power to assist the French government. The following discussion will make it clear that this was far from the case.

The dispatches of the diplomats illustrate the extent to which foreign officials endeavoured to resist French demands. One of the main ways they obstructed extra-territorial policing was by stressing the need to follow local legal procedures closely at all times. The foreign minister and his diplomats recognised that it would be best to present proofs of provocative printing in order to compel foreign authorities to respond accordingly.⁴⁰ There were many occasions when the French government had cause to arrange a raid on the residence or business of an individual involved in the illicit print trade. Foreign officials frequently refused to conduct such searches until they had

³⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 190, Lullin to d'Aiguillon, 15 January 1772.

³⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fols. 226-30, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 31 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 141-42, 15 February 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fol. 341, comte de Vergennes to marquis de Vergennes, 14 November 1786.

³⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fols. 226-30, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 31 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 382, fol. 121, Conseil de la ville de Schaffhouse to Beauteville, 24 September 1771.

⁴⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 85-86, Lenoir to Vergennes, 20 January 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 400, Vergennes to Thiroux de Crosne, 18 March 1786; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 117, fol. 350, Vergennes to O'Dunne, 26 April 1776; Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal (hereafter BA), Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

received proper authorisation from their own government.⁴¹ This led to delays in searching and sealing properties and the possibility that important evidence might be lost or even deliberately concealed or destroyed.

Such delays even occurred when the French state was chasing French authors abroad. Publishers and journalists did not have to be local men to make a contribution to the regional economy. In the course of the War of American Independence, the French writer Linguet moved from London to Brussels. In the context of opposition between France and Britain Linguet hoped that his journal, *Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix-huitième siècle*, would find its way into France with greater ease from Brussels.⁴² The *Annales* was arguably the most successful French-language journal of the century, which helps to explain why officials in Brussels leapt to the defence of their guest. In September 1780 Linguet was arrested in Paris and sent to the Bastille where he spent the following two years behind bars. He was supposedly arrested for a printed assault on the *académicien* Emmanuel-Félicité de Durfort, duc de Duras, but the French government also had other reasons for wanting to restrict his freedom. In the immediate aftermath of this arrest, the French foreign ministry concentrated its efforts on Brussels in the hope of getting hold of Linguet's personal papers. By 1780 Linguet had already carved out a reputation as a notorious pamphleteer. In January 1777 he published an acerbic attack on Vergennes and for the rest of the year bargained fiercely for better treatment for his *Annales* journal by threatening to publish similarly spiteful texts targeted towards other members of the Bourbon ministry.⁴³ When Linguet was

⁴¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 77, Castelnau to Vergennes, 18 January 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 413, 20 April 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fol. 240, La Greze to Vergennes, 3 October 1780; Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

⁴² On the *Annales*, see Darline Gay Levy, *The Ideas and Careers of Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet: A Study in Eighteenth-Century French Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 172-224.

⁴³ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 521, fols. 364-65, Noailles to Vergennes, 28 February 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 522, fol. 37, Vergennes to Noailles, 7 March 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 522, fols. 296-97, *Mémoire* from Linguet, April 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre

arrested in 1780, Vergennes and Lenoir feared that papers stored at his former residence in Brussels might contain incriminating information about powerful figures in the French government.⁴⁴ Vergennes arranged for the police inspector Brugnières to travel to Brussels at the end of September 1780. Once in Brussels, Brugnières clashed with officials who were reluctant to give him access to Linguet's residence or his belongings. An official in Brussels stressed that Linguet had always been a responsible resident. As such, it was imperative that laws were followed to the letter when it came to the matter of searching and seizing his property.⁴⁵

Foreign powers did deliberately prevaricate when faced with the wrath of the French government but the legitimacy of their protestations also needs to be acknowledged. They had their own laws that they hoped to be able to uphold. The frustration expressed by the diplomats when they encountered any resistance from foreign officials tells us something about what the French state expected from these individuals. The French government was determined to extend its authority abroad, overriding local structures and systems. It also sent its own police agents to arrest offenders. The foreign ministry encouraged governments outside France to act arbitrarily. This line of thinking was demonstrated when French diplomats explicitly requested that foreign officials take clandestine measures against particular books, publishers or authors.⁴⁶

Historians working on this period have emphasised that allegations of ministerial despotism were raised repeatedly in French pamphlet literature in the latter

522, fols. 294-95, Linguet to Noailles, 1 April 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 522, fols. 352-53, Vergennes to Noailles, 5 April 1777; Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 105-07; Levy, pp. 186-91.

⁴⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fol. 232, Lenoir to Vergennes, September 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fol. 239, Vergennes to La Greze, 28 September 1780.

⁴⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fols. 243-44, to La Greze, 7 October 1780.

⁴⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 417, fol. 203, Polignac to Vergennes, 18 May 1784; Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

half of the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ These complaints were especially forceful in the early 1770s after Maupeou advanced his aggressive programme of reform for the French *parlements* and exiled any magistrates who stood their ground against him. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Rolf Reichardt have suggested in their work on the Bastille that such accusations were exaggerated. For these scholars, the horrors of the Bastille were a symbolic image rather than something which existed in reality at the end of the *ancien régime*.⁴⁸ However, it is important to stress that worries about the extraordinary authority of French ministers were not without foundation. The French government was determined to get foreign officials to bend to its will and had little patience with any attempts to obstruct this objective. Yet at the same time, the French government was never overtly aggressive in the extra-territorial sphere. Its demands were always couched in a conciliatory tone. Desnoyers, French diplomat in The Hague, felt that perhaps the French state could take a stronger line in Holland but contended that this would upset the Dutch authorities unnecessarily and make officials think twice about the extent to which France was interfering in their affairs.⁴⁹ Price has even suggested that the foreign minister Vergennes' actions in the extra-territorial arena were limited by fears that contemporary pamphleteers would depict him as guilty of ministerial despotism.⁵⁰ Within certain boundaries, then, French officials expected foreign powers to comply as quickly as possible, even if this meant arbitrary action outside the boundaries of the law. It did not resort to violent coercion and instead relied upon pressure and negotiation to convince foreign governments to disregard local regulations. Even if the French state was not going to complete extremes, the extent to

⁴⁷ Burney, p. 248-51; Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 7; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 36-37; Kaiser, 'The Evil Empire', pp. 14-15.

⁴⁸ Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Rolf Reichardt, *The Bastille: A History of a Symbol of Despotism and Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 27-37.

⁴⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fols. 308-09, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 2 April 1776.

⁵⁰ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 3.

which it was able to compel foreign powers to submit to its wishes goes some way to suggesting its strength in this period.

By showing willing and insisting on the necessity of following local laws, foreign officials were able to resist the French government without becoming drawn into an outright confrontation. They also tried to achieve this balance by claiming to be ignorant of any transgressions which might have been committed locally. Shifting blame was another tactic. In 1772, Lullin, the *secrétaire d'état* of the *Petit Conseil* in Geneva, tried to accuse the Genevan police force of negligence: 'les officiers de Police ont lu ce livre, et oublié que leur devoir les obligeait à en empêcher la distribution'.⁵¹ There were also instances when officials outside France were brave enough to defend local traders more explicitly. Even if it could not be denied that a book dealer was connected with a particular text, the local authorities attempted to convince France that his involvement had been minimal.⁵² In January 1772, the *Petit Conseil* in Geneva clung to the somewhat dubious claim that the bookseller Téron had received copies of *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* from Rey in Amsterdam without requesting them.⁵³ The *Conseil* admitted that Téron had sent a few copies of the text to other Swiss booksellers but refused to accept that he had transported any volumes to France. This way of standing up for local traders was mirrored in the extra-territorial newspaper press. When a gazette printed an article which angered the French authorities, there was no way of denying it. In these cases, foreign officials defended newspaper editors by arguing that they had merely copied the offensive article from another gazette.⁵⁴ This was, of course, standard reporting practice at this time.

⁵¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 187, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

⁵² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80 fol. 187, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 137, Petit Conseil to Vergennes, 14 February 1782.

⁵³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 187, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

⁵⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 171, fol. 166, Crumpipen to Garnier, 7 July 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 382, fol. 121, Conseil de la ville de Schaffhouse to Beauteville, 24 September 1771.

It was rare for foreign governments to overtly challenge French attempts to control extra-territorial print but it was not unknown. As an example, in December 1786, officials in Berne protested that they were not willing to punish the bookseller who marketed copies of the *Essai sur quelques changements* since they did not accept that this text deserved condemnation.⁵⁵ However, this kind of defiance should not be overstated. Even though the government in Berne was not convinced by the French state's interpretation of this text, they nevertheless agreed to ban the sale of the work and confiscate any copies which they found.⁵⁶ Officials from beyond the borders of France generally tried to couch any resistance in the language of compliance. They wanted to show loyalty to one of the great powers of Europe but were still intent on defending and protecting traders in their locality.

The way in which foreign officials blocked French attempts to police print understandably irritated the diplomatic corps. Local authorities were a major stumbling-block to the successful completion of their mission. Diplomats often grumbled to the French foreign minister when officials abroad demonstrated reluctance to follow their orders.⁵⁷ There was also a lack of faith in the effectiveness of local police forces with diplomats doubting that they could find controversial books or even feeling that they routinely hid evidence.⁵⁸ In January 1772 Hennin, the *résident* in Geneva, complained that the *Petit Conseil* had known all along about the sale of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* and that the police too were negligent and reluctant to punish literary offences for fear of upsetting the local populace.⁵⁹ Desnoyers, the diplomat working in The Hague, also experienced acute frustration. He believed that officials from The Hague disturbed

⁵⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fol. 379, Conseil de la ville de Berne to marquis de Vergennes, 14 December 1786.

⁵⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fols. 384-85, marquis de Vergennes to comte de Vergennes, 23 December 1786.

⁵⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 383, fol. 329, Beauteville to d'Aiguillon, 27 August 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 261-62, Bâcher to Vergennes, 6 October 1782.

⁵⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 565, fol. 266-67, Vêrac to Vergennes, 17 December 1786.

⁵⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

investigations by warning local booksellers which texts the French government was looking for. He told d'Aiguillon that the authorities in Holland had claimed that their constitution and laws prevented them from fulfilling his wishes exactly. Desnoyers thought this was a disingenuous tactic to divert him from his task, an 'objection frivole dont on amuse quelquefois l'inexpérience des Ministres étrangers'.⁶⁰ This kind of mistrust was common. The foreign ministry often suspected that local officials had deliberately concealed or destroyed incriminating evidence. In 1780, Vergennes alleged that the negligence of local officials had probably allowed Linguet's money to be squirreled away and his papers to be burnt.⁶¹

These specific complaints were part of a wider pessimism about the possibility of foreign authorities being able to police the print trade in line with the standards of the French state. Diplomats repeatedly emphasised that foreign cultures of press freedom made it extremely difficult to bring the book trade under control.⁶² For Bérenger, the *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, 'La liberté de la presse est si essentiellement liée à celle de la constitution de ce Pays'.⁶³ Members of the diplomatic team also endeavoured to make it clear that any blame for delays or difficulties lay firmly with the foreign authorities. French diplomats stressed that they had done their best to uncover and punish offending traders in spite of the local resistance which they faced. The French diplomatic corps saw through the smokescreen of loyalty which was utilised by officials outside France. They expressed their frustration with foreign powers but also

⁶⁰ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

⁶¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fol. 252, Vergennes to La Greze, 12 October 1780.

⁶² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 191-92, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 13 September 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 209-10, Bon to d'Aiguillon, 5 June 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 204, fols. 435-38, d'Esterno to Vergennes, 15 November 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 383, fol. 322, Beauteville to d'Aiguillon, 18 August 1772.

⁶³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783.

portrayed themselves as resolute in their efforts to overcome the obstacles which they felt had been deliberately placed in their way.

One important way in which the French government attempted to prevail over obstreperous officials was to appeal directly to the highest authority possible.⁶⁴ Winning such support put the French state in a better position to put pressure on regional officials who had been less than supportive. In February 1780 Vergennes became concerned about a pamphlet advocating rights for Jews, entitled *Un Juif seul contre tout le parlement de Paris*.⁶⁵ Léonard, the *chargé d'affaires* in Liège, made his enquiries and found that the work had indeed been printed there the previous year.⁶⁶ Armed with this knowledge, Léonard asked François Charles de Velbrück, the Prince-Bishop of Liège, to stop the spread of this work. With the Prince-Bishop now involved, the mayor of Liège acted much more energetically and ended up confiscating more than one hundred copies of the text.

The foreign ministry also involved diplomats from other countries in its methods of external policing in particular cases. Late in 1782 the French government was applying pressure in Neuchâtel in order to discover who exactly had printed three controversial pamphlets by the comte de Mirabeau. These were *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état*, *Le Libertin de qualité; ou, ma conversion* and *L'Espion dévalisé*. The French government took issue with these texts in relation to their politically scandalous and erotic content. Regional officials were not as helpful as the French state would have liked but the idea of troubling Frederick the Great with matters relating to the print

⁶⁴ For examples of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 117, fols. 360-61, O'Dunne to Vergennes, 17 May 1776; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 417, fol. 194, Vergennes to Polignac, 13 May 1784; Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

⁶⁵ This was part of a larger work entitled, *Recueil de pièces intéressantes sur les deux questions célèbres, savoir, si un Juif converti au Christianisme peut épouser une fille chrétienne, lorsque son épouse juive refuse de le suivre, et si un juif endurci devenu baron, peut nommer aux canonicats d'une collégiale de sa baronie* (Palatinate-Zweibrücken: [n. pub.], 1779).

⁶⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 68, fol. 234, Léonard to Vergennes, 7 March 1780.

trade was out of the question. Instead, Vergennes involved the baron von der Goltz, Prussian ambassador to France, in this campaign since Neuchâtel was a Prussian principality at this juncture. Goltz was selected for this task partly because he was a prominent figure from within the corridors of power at Versailles who could be easily instructed. However, the French ministry did not trust Goltz entirely. He was considered to be a gossipmonger and a gambler and French officials worried about what kind of information he was passing back to Frederick the Great.⁶⁷ Yet, when it came to the Mirabeau affair Vergennes hoped that Goltz would at least be able to persuade his subordinates in Neuchâtel to act efficiently. Vergennes' expectations were realised in this case. Goltz wrote directly to Frederick and even travelled to Neuchâtel himself to apply pressure in person.⁶⁸ The baron was able to report back to Vergennes that the *Conseil d'état* in Neuchâtel had uncovered and punished the printers responsible for at least one of the pamphlets. This example shows how the French government strove to impose its will abroad and the effectiveness of its tactic of appealing higher up the chain of command when faced with regional opposition.⁶⁹

It is also important to recognise that foreign officials did not always obstruct the French government in its efforts to regulate the kind of literature which made its way into France. When it came to the extra-territorial newspaper press, the French foreign ministry only appealed to foreign powers in a minority of serious cases. As such, officials abroad appreciated when the French state was seriously disturbed by a

⁶⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse supplément 8, fols. 136-38, 4 June 1773; Jules Gustave Flammermont, *Rapport à M le ministre de l'instruction publique sur les correspondances des agents diplomatiques étrangers en France avant la révolution: conservées dans les archives de Berlin, Dresde, Genève, Turin, Gênes, Florence, Naples, Simancas, Lisbonne, Londres, La Haye et Vienne* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1896), p. xix; *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, p. 293.

⁶⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 339, Goltz to Vergennes, 19 October 1782. This affair will be explored in full in Chapter 5, pp. 221-22, 240-42.

⁶⁹ For another instance of this, Paris, AMAE, SMD France 582, fol. 399, Montmorin to Poitevin de Maissemy, 9 July 1789.

particular article and were usually ready to reprimand journalists.⁷⁰ One notable example of local responsiveness took place in November 1778. Mathieu de Basquiat, baron de la Houze, the French *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Hamburg, took issue with an article about Philippe d'Orléans, duc de Chartres which was printed in the *Le Journaliste de Hambourg*, a literary and political periodical.⁷¹ La Houze petitioned the Senate in Hamburg to rescind the privilege of this gazette. His appeal was successful and by the end of 1778 publication of *Le Journaliste de Hambourg* had ceased.⁷² In most cases, officials acknowledged that the newspaper editor had made a mistake in writing the article in question and compelled him to print a retraction.

Foreign powers were more likely to be compliant when policing was focused on gazettes. This was because complaints relating to journals were relatively easy to resolve. Editors were usually dependent on the right to publish in a particular state and so were receptive to official requests to print retractions. Reprimanding a journalist was an easy way for powers outside France to demonstrate that they supported the concerns of the French government. Policing the publication and dissemination of books was much more complicated as authors and publishers were much harder to control. Transgressions in the book trade also had more serious implications. The foreign ministry targeted only the most provocative works which it suspected were being published abroad. Foreign authorities probably feared that they would only be in more trouble with France if they admitted that they had allowed such printing to go on in their locality. There were also gradations of severity when it came to the book trade. The French government was more likely to be satisfied by the actions of foreign powers if they had been asked to chase a text other than a defamatory *libelle*. The French

⁷⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 118, fol. 60, duc de Deux-Ponts to Vergennes, 5 March 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 471, Vergennes to d'Esterno, 29 December 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 224, Vergennes to Bâcher, 19 September 1782.

⁷¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hambourg 103, fols. 209-10, La Houze to Vergennes, 13 November 1778.

⁷² Faivre and Reynaud, eds., *Dictionnaire des journaux* <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0791-le-journaliste-de-hambourg> [accessed 11 January 2013].

ministry took *libelles* very seriously and had high hopes for their immediate suppression. Foreign powers routinely hindered the realisation of this objective.

There were also occasions when authorities outside France would take the initiative when it came to the policing of print.⁷³ In February 1785 the French writer, Théophile-Imarigeon, the abbé Duvernet was arrested in Brussels, accused of authoring manuscripts which slandered members of the Dutch government.⁷⁴ These manuscripts were so offensive that the Dutch authorities considered putting Duvernet to death. Knowing that Duvernet had previously spent time in the Bastille for illicit writings, Dutch officials appealed to France for further information which might help to convict him.⁷⁵ In November of the same year, the French government was concerned that the *Courier du Bas-Rhin* was covering French politics in too much detail.⁷⁶ In this instance, Prussian officials agreed with such an assessment and revealed that they had already admonished the gazetteer several times for the disrespectful tone of his paper. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that officials outside France were prompt and proactive primarily when it came to texts which they personally found disturbing. This goes to show the extent to which foreign obstructionism was deliberate. Authorities beyond French borders were willing and able to take measures which might curtail the publication and circulation of certain titles but they were not prepared simply to cave in to French demands.

It is also interesting to note that French government did sometimes work with foreign authorities with regards to literature which did not directly concern the French state. The diplomats kept the foreign ministry up to date on works published locally

⁷³ For some instances of this, see AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 39-40, Castelnau to Vergennes, 10 January 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 568, fol. 142, Vergennes to Vêrac, 28 July 1786.

⁷⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 174, fol. 317, Hirsinger to Vergennes, 28 February 1785.

⁷⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 174, fol. 338, Hirsinger to Vergennes, 31 May 1785.

⁷⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 204, fol. 429, Finckenstein and Hertzberg to d'Esterno, 12 November 1785.

which attacked foreign powers, whether it was the Dutch stadtholder, the King of Prussia or the Elector Palatine.⁷⁷ On occasion, the French government was prepared to get directly involved. In November 1782, Vergennes received a plea on behalf of a young Frenchman who had been thrown into prison in Liège for writing verses in praise of the French man of letters Guillaume Thomas, the abbé Raynal. This tribute went by the title of *La Nymphé de Spa à l'abbé Raynal*.⁷⁸ Vergennes was concerned that this French subject might be put to death in Liège and asked the diplomat there, Honoré Auguste Sabatier de Cabre, to find out more about the case.⁷⁹ Sabatier reported that a crime had been committed and that it might not be wise to overrule the decision made by the authorities in Liège. This was enough to convince Vergennes to end any thoughts of getting involved in this affair.⁸⁰ In January 1788, Jean Gravier, the marquis de Vergennes, who was the French diplomat in Solothurn (and also the brother of the former foreign minister, the comte de Vergennes) sent Montmorin, then the foreign minister, a letter from the canton of Berne which asked the government to make moves to prevent a pamphlet which insulted the judiciary in Berne from circulating within France.⁸¹ In consultation with the *garde des sceaux*, Montmorin issued orders for inspectors in Lyon to confiscate any copies. He considered this to be a small favour which could be granted without too much trouble.⁸² The French system of diplomatic surveillance meant that the foreign ministry was aware of much of the literature which

⁷⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Allemagne 657, fols. 396-97, Bérenger to Montmorin, 22 September 1787; Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 111, fol. 3, to Vergennes, 2 February 1787; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 552, fols. 255-64, Bérenger to Vergennes, 24 December 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Mayence 67, fols. 304-09, O'Kelly to Vergennes, 11 March 1786; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse supplément 8, fols. 162-64, Gausson to Vergennes, 26 January 1775.

⁷⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fol. 115, de Gallianare to Vergennes, 29 November 1781; J.-M. Quérard, *La France littéraire; ou, dictionnaire bibliographique des savants, historiens et gens de lettres de la France; ainsi que des littérateurs étrangers qui ont écrit en français, plus particulièrement pendant les XVIIIe et XIXe siècles*, vol 7 (Paris: Didot, 1835), p. 475.

⁷⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fol. 118, Vergennes to Sabatier de Cabre, 4 December 1781.

⁸⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fols. 119-21, Sabatier de Cabre to Vergennes, 10 December 1781.

⁸¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 420, fols. 239-40, marquis de Vergennes to Montmorin, 1 January 1788.

⁸² Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 420, fol. 242, Montmorin to Miromesnil, 11 January 1788.

was published abroad. However, the French foreign minister held back from becoming too involved in affairs where the French interests were not immediately at stake. The government's strategy of external policing was highly focused and broadening this would have risked wasting the diplomats' time and energy.

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It might be assumed that many of the small states which surrounded France were cowed before one of the great powers of Europe but this was not exactly the case. Some states were more responsive than others. In the Swiss region for example, the authorities in Berne were quick to respond whilst those in Geneva routinely expressed objections to French attempts to keep the print trade in check. Such defiance was never overt but it nevertheless worked to hamper the French system of extra-territorial policing. Foreign officials hid behind procedure and protected local traders whilst all the time stressing their loyalty to the French state. This was a very effective and non-threatening means of resisting French demands. The diplomatic corps became familiar with these techniques and they expected bureaucrats outside France to be slow, obstructive and misleading.⁸³ Indeed, it can be argued that this was simply the way things worked under the old regime. With political centralisation incomplete or completely lacking, getting anything done required a careful blend of conciliation and coercion. It was the diplomats' responsibility to overcome a façade of flattery and force foreign authorities to comply with French wishes. Despite such efforts, the resistance of the local authorities meant it took longer than strictly necessary to arrest offenders.

How successful the French government's attempts to coordinate external censorship with local authorities were is difficult to ascertain. After especially serious

⁸³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 117, Lamoignon de Bâville to Vergennes, 5 February 1782.

affairs like the pursuit of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* in Geneva and Amsterdam, the diplomats tried to make it clear that local officials needed be more vigilant to the threat of similar works in the future.⁸⁴ This request for increased vigilance was repeated time and again. French diplomats and foreign ministers also declared the belief that officials outside would indeed be more alert in the future.⁸⁵ Despite this, illicit publishing and bookselling continued and agents of local government carried on obstructing French efforts to track down and punish those involved.

Yet, the French foreign ministers often expressed satisfaction with the way that that foreign powers had acted in the course of these affairs.⁸⁶ Obviously, the ministry did not want to admit to any weakness in the extra-territorial arena or draw attention to its failings. But it is also vital to remember that the French state had limited and highly focused objectives when it came to the external policing of literature. When working with foreign powers, the French ministry aimed to apprehend and or punish at least one individual who had been involved in the production of illicit material. It was hoped that this punishment would act as an example and a warning to other authors and traders of the consequences of publishing this kind of literature. The French state was able to achieve its objectives in the majority of the cases which it deemed the most serious. Outside London in particular, the regime was able to convince foreign powers to do its bidding by either reproaching or punishing those who produced provocative texts. Perhaps it is most important to emphasise that French diplomats worked hard to overcome the obstacles placed in their way by regional powers and that the foreign

⁸⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 223, Hennin to Conseil de Genève, 26 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fol. 214-15, Léonard to Vergennes, 5 April 1777.

⁸⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 224, 26 January 1772; Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

⁸⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 224, d'Aiguillon to Hennin, 26 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 170-73, Vergennes to Castelnau, 24 February 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fol. 223, Vergennes to Léonard, 18 April 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 471, Vergennes to d'Esterno, 29 December 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 383, fol. 330, d'Aiguillon to Beauteville, 3 September 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 273-74, Vergennes to Bâcher, 27 October 1782.

ministers were usually pleased with the course of action taken, even if it had taken longer than they might have hoped. External censorship was a responsive process by its very nature; the French government could only react to an offensive text after it had appeared in print and struggling with foreign authorities was simply part of the process.

Chapter 4 - Making the News: The French Government and the Extra- Territorial Press

The French government was determined to control the kind of printed matter which made its way into France. This chapter will consider how the ambassadorial corps negotiated with editors and local authorities to make sure newspaper coverage was acceptable to France. In reflection of the French government's focus, attention will be centred on the Francophone periodical press. The Bourbon regime only attempted to engage with or control non-Francophone journals on six occasions across the period covered by this study and these attempts were related to British and German-language periodicals (This occurred twice in 1775 and in 1780, 1782, 1784 and 1787. For further details see Appendix A). This chapter will consider how and why the discussion of certain topics worried the French authorities. Minimising discussion of French politics was the most pressing concern; the diplomatic team took issue most often with articles relating to the French state. After all, providing political commentary on France was the *raison d'être* of the extra-territorial press since the French government made sure that this topic was largely excluded from newspapers which were printed within the French kingdom. Indeed, part of the reason that so much attention was given to the extra-territorial press was that it was easier to control than the book trade. The policing of books and newspapers operated in two overlapping spheres with different rationales. The reason for controlling coverage in gazettes was primarily related to news information management whilst issues of reputation were of greater importance in the book trade. For the most part, the Bourbon regime had enough influence over extra-territorial journalists to avoid involving local governments in this area of external censorship. Offensive articles were a continual problem but the French state was able

to put pressure on editors to retract or change their coverage in the vast majority of cases. The French government had quite a strong hold over the extra-territorial periodical press and it was very successful in keeping these journalists within certain restrictions. Editors recognised what sort of coverage was acceptable to France and self-censored their gazettes to prevent angering the French authorities on too many occasions.

News Within and Outside France

There was a range of periodical publications available in eighteenth-century France. Readers pored over journals which publicised the latest literary releases, showcased philosophical thinking or advertised regional wares and trades. This chapter will focus however, on journals which reported news information, especially in relation to international politics. These were mainly newspaper gazettes. Foreign newspapers published outside the French kingdom had an appeal for French readers because coverage of internal politics was restricted inside France. Under the absolutist system of the *ancien régime*, the details of French politics were considered to be the business of the King and his ministers rather than a subject which was fit for public consumption. As such only four French newspapers were expressly permitted to print political news.⁸⁷ The *Gazette de France* held the primary privilege for political news and three other journals, the *Mercure de France*, the *Journal général de France* and the *Journal de Paris* were allowed to reprint its political content at a fee.⁸⁸ The French authorities kept close tabs

⁸⁷ Christopher Todd, *Political Bias, Censorship and the Dissolution of the 'Official' Press in Eighteenth-Century France* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1991), p. 13.

⁸⁸ Hannah Barker and Simon Burrows, 'Introduction', in *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America, 1760-1820*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Simon Burrows (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-22 (p. 7).

on these publications to ensure that discussion of French politics was kept to a minimum and that it was not accompanied by any critical commentary.

These structural restrictions did not apply to gazettes written and printed outside France.⁸⁹ Readers who wanted to keep up to date with developments in French politics thus had an external source of information available to them. The two major titles for French readers were the Dutch *Gazette de Leyde* and the *Courier du Bas-Rhin* which was printed in the Prussian enclave of Cleves.⁹⁰ Sales figures for foreign newspaper gazettes are uncertain but Gilles Feyel has made an estimate for the year 1781. Feyel postulates that around 14,000 copies of foreign gazettes circulated within France during this year.⁹¹ This is in comparison with an annual circulation of around 30,000 for domestic French newspapers. The number of readers was even greater than this since several people probably read each copy of a periodical in the eighteenth century. The Dutch gazettes were the most well-informed and hence the most popular within France but French readers also subscribed to periodical publications emanating from other areas of Europe.

These gazettes did not circulate freely within France, however. Editors who wished to market their newspapers were obliged to coordinate an agreement with the chief of the *Gazette de France* who owned the privilege for the printing of political news

⁸⁹ On Francophone periodicals in the eighteenth century, see Simon Burrows, 'The Cosmopolitan Press, 1759-1815', in *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Barker and Burrows, pp. 23-47; Hatin; Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 'Horizons médiatiques et ouvertures interculturelles dans la presse au dix-huitième siècle', in *Enlightenment, Revolution and the Periodical Press*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Jeremy D. Popkin, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2004:06 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), 22-32; Jeremy D. Popkin, 'New Perspectives on the History of the Press in Early Modern Europe', in *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by J. W. Koopmans (Paris: Peters, 2005), pp. 1-27; Jeremy D. Popkin and Jack R. Censer, 'Some Paradoxes of the Eighteenth-Century Periodical', in *Enlightenment, Revolution and the Periodical Press*, ed. by Lüsebrink and Popkin, pp. 3-21.

⁹⁰ On these two newspapers, see Popkin, *News and Politics*; Moureau, 'La Presse allemande'; Jan de Vet, 'Le Courier du Bas-Rhin de Jean Manzon et les Provinces-Unies (1787-1795)', in *Les Gazettes européennes de langue française*, ed. by Duranton, Labrosse and Rétat, pp. 107-20.

⁹¹ Gilles Feyel, 'La Diffusion des gazettes étrangères en France et la révolution postale des années 1750', in *Les Gazettes européennes de langue française*, ed. by Duranton, Labrosse et Rétat, pp. 81-98 (p. 96).

about France. Once a compromise had been found, the foreign journalist paid a fee to both the editor of the *Gazette de France* and the French foreign ministry.⁹² In return, his gazette was officially permitted to circulate through the French postal system. It was the *bureau général des gazettes étrangères* which authorised the entry of these gazettes and organised their distribution through the posts. This body was established as part of the foreign ministry in 1767.⁹³ By 1785, a total of 16 foreign gazettes were officially permitted to circulate in this way.⁹⁴ As with most aspects of the administration of the print trade, the situation was more complex in practice. During the later part of the eighteenth century the French government tacitly tolerated the diffusion of most titles but utilised condemnations and sanctions to punish editors for any perceived transgressions. This chapter will consider the nature and efficacy of this system of control.

A good deal of scholarship has centred on the role of the French government in regulating the Francophone newspaper press. Those historians such as Censer, Popkin, Rétat and Jerom Vercruysse who have surveyed the techniques employed in managing the news have managed to illustrate some of the successes of external censorship.⁹⁵ These scholars have centred their attention on the Francophone papers based in the United Provinces. This is understandable since the French government was also focused on these gazettes. The French ministry was keen to manage coverage in the Dutch newspapers because they attracted the broadest readership, both within France

⁹² René Moulinas, 'Du Rôle de la poste royale comme moyen de contrôle financier sur la diffusion des gazettes en France au XVIIIe siècle', in *Modèles et moyens de la réflexion politique au XVIIIe siècle: actes du colloque organisé par l'Université lilloise des lettres, sciences humaines et arts, du 16 au 19 octobre 1973*, vol 1, ed. by Roger Mercier (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Université de Lille III, 1977-79), pp. 383-96 (pp. 389-90).

⁹³ François Moureau, *La Plume et le plomb: espaces de l'imprimé et du manuscrit au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2006), p. 416.

⁹⁴ Censer, *French Press*, p. 8.

⁹⁵ Censer, *French Press*, pp. 15-53; Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', pp. 75-132; Rétat, 'Les Gazetiers de Hollande', pp. 319-35; Vercruysse, 'La Réception politique des journaux de Hollande', pp. 39-47.

and internationally. This thesis aims to build upon and supplement this concentration on the Dutch press. By considering extra-territorial periodicals both within and outside Holland, this study will shed more light on the motives and effectiveness of the French government's methods of external policing.

It is important to recognise how one important element restricted the French government's ability to control news which was printed abroad. As the demand for news swelled across the eighteenth century, so did the influence enjoyed by the press. The French government was forced to engage increasingly with the media as the century wore on. Public opinion was becoming important in international politics and for gaining financial credit. It was no longer realistic to expect French subjects to live without news about affairs of state.⁹⁶ Although this situation was never explicitly acknowledged by the French foreign ministry, it seems fair to argue that individual agents appreciated the importance of the press in this period. The French government was keen to grasp the opportunity to utilise the press as a means of promoting its own agenda abroad. For this kind of propaganda to have any real impact, foreign newspapers needed to retain at least a semblance of independence.⁹⁷ This relationship worked both ways. Foreign editors knew that French readers craved their impartial coverage of French politics and so were sometimes reluctant to completely acquiesce to the demands of the Bourbon state.

This thesis will build upon these theories about the restrictions of press management. It will stress that there was also an important practical issue which was just as important as this idea about the desirability of some element of press freedom. Controlling the extra-territorial press in its entirety was a huge task which was simply beyond the reaches of the eighteenth-century French state. Realising that total control

⁹⁶ Censer, *French Press*, pp. 47-51.

⁹⁷ Barker and Burrows, p. 8; Popkin, *News and Politics*, pp. 42, 215-17; Rétat, 'Les Gazetiers de Hollande', p. 319.

over the media was both undesirable and impossible to achieve, the Bourbon ministry approached the extra-territorial press with measured pragmatism, seeking to manipulate rather than completely prescribe all news. As was the case with books, tolerance was the norm largely because it was the easiest option. French diplomats were then responsible for fine-tuning coverage in the extra-territorial newspapers.

Part of the reason why this detached strategy worked so well was that the French government recognised that it had a great deal of influence over foreign editors. French was the *lingua franca* of eighteenth-century Europe. Francophone gazettes thus had an international readership which meant that they were not totally reliant upon the French market. Yet, the sheer size of France meant that newspapers were less likely to enjoy financial stability and success if they were not able to reach French readers. The Bourbon ministry recognised the extent to which foreign editors were dependent upon gaining access to French readers. As such, officials judged correctly that journalists would be ready to negotiate for fear of losing their foothold in France. When the foreign ministry noticed inappropriate articles in the extra-territorial press, editors were very responsive to the request for a retraction to be printed. Dealing directly with editors also had the advantage of circumventing foreign authorities who could be frustrating and time-consuming to work with.

On balance, the French government decided that it was better to skilfully manage non-French periodicals rather than provoke uproar with authoritative measures that it could not necessarily enforce. As was the case with the book trade, the French state would only react to the newspaper press in certain circumstances. Decisions to completely exclude a particular gazette from the French market were rare but officials did believe that the sparing use of such punishments would act as an example to other editors and warn them against printing similar articles. French attempts to control press

coverage gave gazetteers a good idea of the limits of acceptability and they self-censored to ensure their periodical would not run into trouble with the French authorities.

The French government's attempts to manage the extra-territorial press were largely directed towards Francophone periodicals because these were the titles which were most likely to reach readers within France. However, there were six instances in this period when the French government became engaged with German or English-language newspapers. This was partly an acknowledgement of the practice of editors copying news from one another. If a distasteful article appeared in a foreign-language periodical, it could easily be translated into France and reprinted in a Francophone journal. It also suggests that the perspective of French officials extended somewhat beyond material which was destined for French readers, if only to a small extent. But again it is important to stress that the official censorship strategy was focused and as a result, it was comparatively rare for French officials to take measures against material which was targeted towards a more localised market. The whole rationale behind the system of extra-territorial policing was to attempt to control the material that was making its way into France.

It must be appreciated that some gazettes were more troublesome than others. The amount of complaints brought against particular journals can be seen in Figure 5. This chart includes data for all titles which attracted more than one objection from the French foreign ministry in this period. It clearly illustrates that Dutch gazettes were the French government's largest problem. It must be added here that the foreign ministry also protested generally about the Dutch gazettes without pinpointing specific titles.⁹⁸ This happened on at least seven occasions in this period.

⁹⁸ For an example, see Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 31-34, Desnoyers to d'Aiguillon, 31 May 1774.

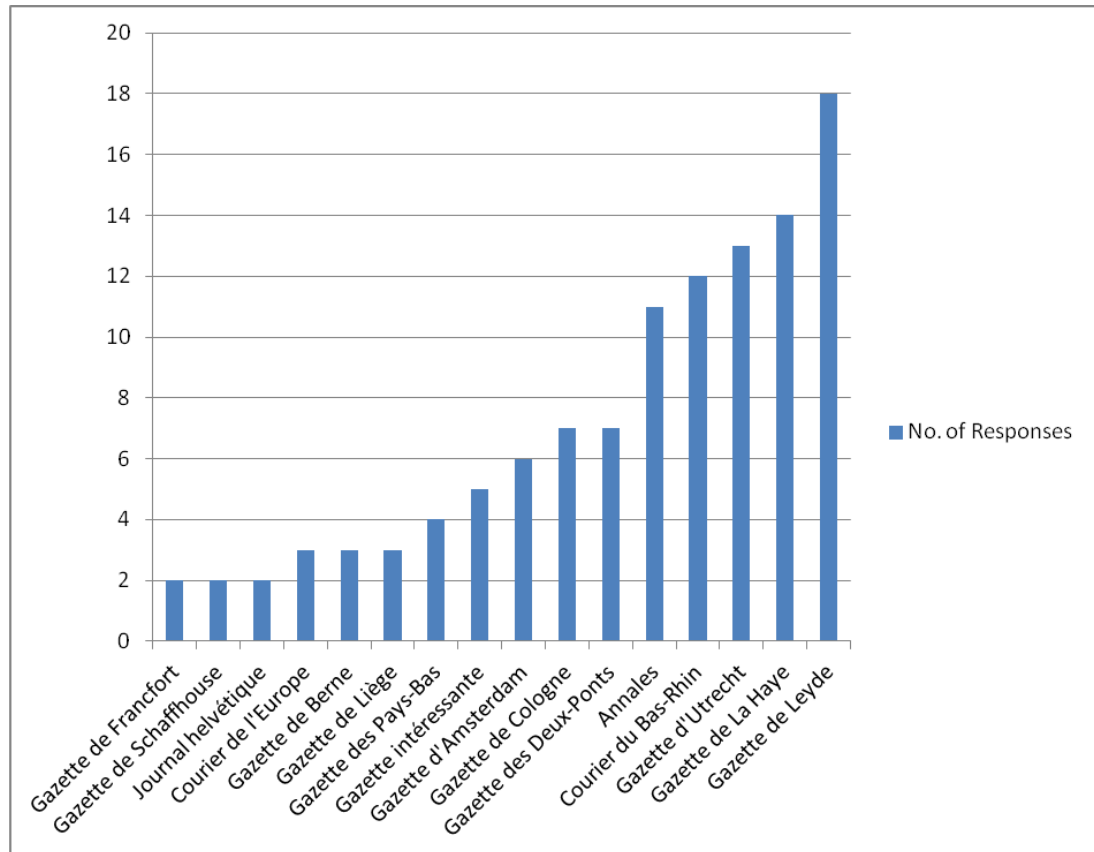


Figure 5: Frequency of Official Responses to the Extra-Territorial Print Trade (Journals) by Journal Title, 1770-1789

The *Gazette de Leyde* clearly stands out as the paper which was most difficult to manage whilst the Dutch *Gazette d'Amsterdam* attracted fewer complaints. There were several reasons why the French government took particular issue with the *Gazette de Leyde*. As Popkin has outlined, this newspaper was the most well-informed of the Francophone press and, as a result, was especially popular with readers.⁹⁹ The implications of this were threefold. Firstly, a broad international audience meant that the editors of the *Gazette de Leyde* were not completely dependent upon French subscribers. They were thus less susceptible to the threat that their newspaper could be

⁹⁹ Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', pp. 128-31.

cut off from the French market.¹⁰⁰ Secondly, the popularity of the *Gazette de Leyde* amongst French readers made the Bourbon ministry particularly sensitive about its possible influence. French officials were also suspicious of the *Gazette de Leyde* because they knew that Jean Luzac, the periodical's editor from 1772 onwards, took a broadly anti-absolutist stance.¹⁰¹ Finally, the *Gazette de Leyde* was considered the eighteenth-century newspaper of record and was read by most French officials. Government agents were thus most likely to find cause for complaint in the periodical they read most closely and frequently.

By contrast, journals in Swiss states rarely incurred the wrath of the French government.¹⁰² These papers could not compete with Dutch gazettes like the *Gazette de Leyde* which presented the freshest news and as such, were not especially popular within France. Keen to keep hold of the French readers that they did have and without a broad international audience to fall back on, the editors of these gazettes were also more concerned to keep on the right side of the French authorities. The government's strategy of external control was thus centred on managing the Dutch gazettes since these papers constituted a dangerous mixture of popularity and forthrightness. It regulated other gazettes too and generally found these quite easy to control.

Chronology of Control

French efforts to manage the periodical press were subject to certain limitations but such efforts were far from futile. It is important to appreciate that the effectiveness of external censorship fluctuated over time and according to circumstance. This has been observed by Jack Censer who has proposed a chronology detailing the high and low

¹⁰⁰ Censer, *French Press*, p. 43.

¹⁰¹ Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad*, p. 111.

¹⁰² Jean-Daniel Candaux, 'Les Gazettes helvétiques', in *L'Étude des périodiques anciens: colloque d'Utrecht*, ed. by Marianne Constance Couperus (Paris: Nizet, 1973), pp. 126-71.

points of French management of extra-territorial newspapers. Censer claims that control of the external press was successful from 1771 to 1774, more relaxed from 1774 to 1776, tightened again from 1776 to 1784 and lessened in the final years of the *ancien régime*.¹⁰³ This research confirms the first part of Censer's chronology but can add some nuances to his assessment of press control in the rest of this time period. Across these twenty years there were at least 125 occasions when the French government became engaged with the extra-territorial periodical press. This chronology of policing has been charted in Figure 6.

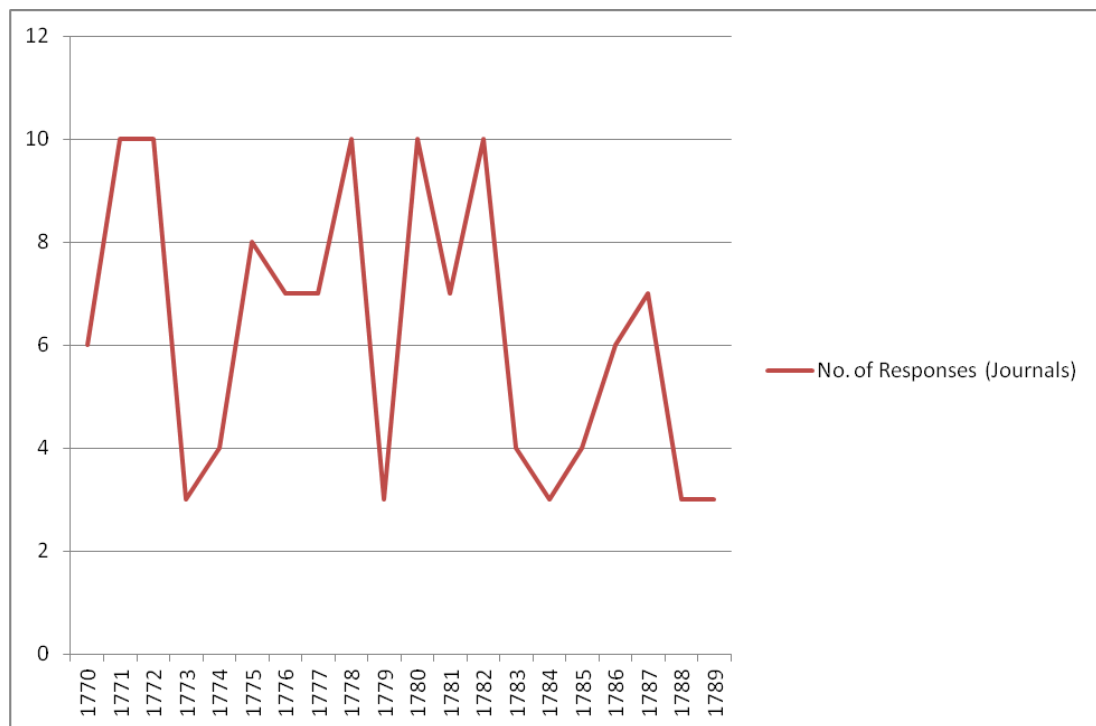


Figure 6: Frequency of Official Responses to the Extra-Territorial Print Trade (Journals) by Year, 1770-1789

¹⁰³ Censer, *French Press*, pp. 47, 52, 146.

The French government does seem to have been successful in bringing gazettes into line in the early 1770s. A spike of complaints in 1771 and 1772 was followed by a sharp decline in the following year. This data indicates that policing continued steadily from the moment when power passed from Louis XV to XVI in 1774 and then reached a peak in the later 1770s and early 1780s. Censer is right to highlight that control was relaxed in 1784 but the data suggests that policing intensified once again (although not to its original height) and then only began to tail off in the last two years of the *ancien régime*. This chronology is explicitly related to the current events that these journals were trying to cover. The government's attempts to control the periodical press were largely concerned with news information management. Peaks in the early 1770s and the late 1770s to the early 1780s relate to Maupeou's coup and the American War of Independence, two events which stimulated French interest in the news. The French foreign ministry thus became more determined to manage the information which was being presented to the French public in the context of these wider events. It is important to remember that after reaching a low point in 1784, policing did increase once again from 1785 to 1787. The French foreign ministry recognised that it could use its diplomatic team to target the periodical press with relative ease and continued to do so across the mid-to-late 1780s.

The work of Censer and Popkin has made it clear that diplomatic control of the Dutch Francophone press escalated in the early 1770s in the context of the Maupeou coup.¹⁰⁴ Maupeou's reforms sparked opposition from the magistrates in *parlement* and were fiercely criticised in contemporary pamphlet literature as being signs of ministerial despotism. Maupeou sought to crush resistance to his reforms on all fronts. He exiled the opposing magistrates and replaced them with more compliant men. He sponsored

¹⁰⁴ Jack R. Censer, 'Maupeou et la presse politique', in *Les Gazettes européennes de langue française*, ed. by Durantón, Labrosse and Rétat, pp. 291-98; Popkin, *News and Politics*, pp. 139-40.

propagandists to defend his reforms and pushed the police to arrest those who sold oppositional pamphlets to the public.¹⁰⁵ These internal measures were coordinated with a campaign to prevent foreign gazettes from reporting on and so further advancing, opposition to these contentious reforms. The extra-territorial press was able to cover Maupeou's coup itself but journalists were then put under pressure to limit additional discussion of the affair. These complaints were concentrated on the Dutch gazettes but the French foreign ministry did target other newspapers too. Singling out certain gazetteers for admonishment as a warning to other gazettes worked to lessen international coverage of French politics.

It was the Dutch newspaper press which was most popular with French readers. As a result, French officials put a lot of energy into controlling this sector of the print trade. The *Gazette de Leyde* was singled out as a particularly outspoken newspaper. At the end of January 1771, the French foreign minister, the duc de Vrillière, told the abbé Du Prat, *chargé d'affaires* working in The Hague, that articles on French politics included in the *Gazette de Leyde* had become too bold. Vrillière asked Du Prat to warn the editor of this gazette that he was discussing the Maupeou reforms in too much detail.¹⁰⁶ At this point it was Etienne Luzac, the uncle of the successive editor Jean Luzac, who directed the *Gazette de Leyde*. Etienne Luzac underlined his deference to France but at the same time was brave enough to point out that his newspaper could not simply ignore events of universal and historical import.¹⁰⁷ The editor vaguely promised to try

¹⁰⁵ For more on the press during the Maupeou *coup* see Censer, 'Maupeou et la presse politique'; Durand Echeverria, *The Maupeou Revolution: A Study in the History of Libertarianism, France 1770-1774* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985); David Hudson, 'In Defense of Reform: French Government Propaganda during the Maupeou Crisis', *French Historical Studies*, 8 (1973), 51-76; Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', pp. 169-70; Shanti Marie Singham, 'Imbued with Patriotism: The Politicisation of the *Mémoires secrets* during the Maupeou years', in *The Mémoires secrets and the Culture of Publicity in Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. by Bernadette Fort and Jeremy D. Popkin (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998), pp. 37-60.

¹⁰⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 521, fol. 257, La Vrillière to Du Prat, 31 January 1771.

¹⁰⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 521, fols. 258-59, Luzac to Du Prat, 8 February 1771.

his best to adhere to French wishes but added that he would still be including editorial commentary on events in France.

In spite of Luzac's resistant attitude, the pressure applied in January 1771 seems to have had some effect. This was because it was coupled with other efforts to keep the gazettes in Holland under control. In May 1771 Noailles, French *ambassadeur* in The Hague, decided that it would be a good idea to talk to the *Grand pensionnaire* in the United Provinces about the matter of political reporting in the Dutch newspapers.¹⁰⁸ A more extreme course of action was followed in September 1771. The duc d'Aiguillon, who had taken over from Vrillière as foreign minister, issued orders for the *Gazette d'Utrecht* and the *Gazette de La Haye* to be prohibited from circulating through the French postal system.¹⁰⁹ These prohibitions were brief but it was made plain that the decision to ban the titles was designed to warn other journalists against commenting too freely on French politics.¹¹⁰

The French government thus took a three-pronged approach to the task of limiting discussion of the Maupeou affair. Luzac was admonished, the authorities in Holland were involved and a couple of gazettes were excluded from the French market in the hope of encouraging other gazetteers to be more cautious. Although the French government continued to find fault with the *Gazette de Leyde*, Popkin's study of the journal does indicate that the content of this newspaper was modified in line with French demands. For most of the early 1770s, the gazette confined itself to reprinting edicts issued by the government and the new *parlements*.¹¹¹ The *Gazette de Leyde* largely followed the French government's official line. This idea of compliance is corroborated

¹⁰⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 523, fols. 161-63, Noailles to d'Aiguillon, 7 May 1771.

¹⁰⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 523, fol. 262, d'Aiguillon to Noailles, 8 September 1771. On the *Gazette de La Haye*, see Otto Lankhorst, 'La Gazette de La Haye (1744-1790), cadette des premières gazettes néerlandaises', in *Les Gazettes européennes de langue française*, ed. by Durantou, Labrosse and Rétat, pp. 51-64.

¹¹⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 523, fol. 277, d'Aiguillon to Noailles, 26 September 1771.

¹¹¹ Popkin, *News and Politics*, p. 145.

by this thesis. In 1773, there were only three instances when the French government felt the need to engage with the foreign press, compared to ten times in 1771 and a further ten times in 1772 (see Appendix A for details). The clear implication of this fall in complaints is that the government had succeeded in bringing the gazettes into line across 1771 and 1772. It provides evidence of the government's strategy of encouraging self-censorship abroad. Pressure placed upon certain titles clearly scared other editors into submission too.

The French government did more than simply try to keep the *Gazette de Leyde* in line and hope that other newspapers would follow suit. It negotiated with the authorities in Holland and even went as far as excluding gazettes to show journalists that indiscreet discussion of French politics would not be tolerated. French officials also worked hard to impose their will on journals outside the United Provinces in the early 1770s. In 1771, the *Gazette de Mannheim*, the *Gazette de Francfort* and the *Gazette de Schaffhouse* were reprimanded by French diplomats for their commentary on the Maupeou coup. The editor of the latter journal was also formally scolded by the authorities in Schaffhausen.¹¹² The French government was able to arrange for articles relating to France which were to be printed in the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* to undergo censorship prior to publication.¹¹³ In 1772 the *Gazette intéressante* of Düsseldorf was also challenged on a number of occasions for its coverage of French politics. Charles Theodore, the Elector Palatine, was asked to compel the editor to be more respectful of France and refrain from discussing matters which only concerned the King. Largely due to the illness of the relevant French ambassador, the disobedience of this editor was not dealt with effectively. D'Aiguillon continued to find fault with the journal

¹¹² Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 114, fol. 293, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 14 July 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 382, fol. 121, Conseil de la ville de Schaffhouse to Beauteville, 24 September 1771.

¹¹³ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 285-86, Bon to d'Aiguillon, 21 October 1771.

throughout 1772 until the Elector Palatine agreed to try harder to bring the journal under control.¹¹⁴ The context of the Maupeou coup meant it was imperative for the French government to manage the coverage of French politics in the extra-territorial press in the early 1770s. The coup and the resultant backlash was a major challenge for the French state but the government was able to take measures which restricted the flow of information about the crisis in the extra-territorial sphere.

This raises questions about the long-term significance of the Maupeou coup. David Hudson's study of contemporary pamphlets suggests that although opposition to the chancellor's reforms was forceful at first, its intensity lessened over time.¹¹⁵ By the time Louis XV died in May 1774 the output of pamphleteers at least indicates that the effects of these reforms were starting to stabilise. Looking to pamphlets and the press cannot give us a full appreciation of public opinion in the later eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the information about Maupeou's reforms which circulated within France influenced the wider response. It is vital to appreciate the extent to which the French government was determined to manage the availability of this information.

When Louis XV died, his grandson ascended to the throne as Louis XVI. After a period of deliberation Louis XVI decided to end Maupeou's reforms and bring back the old *parlements*. Popkin and Censer contend that the more moderate stance of the new regime was also extended to the extra-territorial arena. According to these historians, from mid 1774 to 1776, the Bourbon state took a more tolerant approach to the extra-territorial newspaper press.¹¹⁶ Yet it must be stressed that this change was not immediate or complete. The change of regime emboldened the Dutch gazettes but the French state still showed a determination to manage their content.

¹¹⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fols. 193-94, O'Dunne's secretary to d'Aiguillon, 16 September 1772.

¹¹⁵ Hudson, pp. 74-76

¹¹⁶ Censer, *French Press*, p. 174; Popkin, *News and Politics*, p. 145

Desnoyers, French diplomat in The Hague, complained repeatedly to Vergennes, the new foreign minister, about articles printed in the Dutch press. In September 1774, Vergennes authorised Desnoyers to threaten the newspapers with exclusion from the French market.¹¹⁷ Desnoyers was satisfied that this menace had worked to pacify the Dutch gazetteers.¹¹⁸ In January 1775 Noailles, *ambassadeur* in The Hague, was ordered to reprimand the editors of several Dutch newspapers for their coverage of religious issues within France. These papers had reported ‘contre toute vérité’ Louis XVI’s response to the decision of the Archbishop of Paris to refuse the last rites to Jansenist parishioners.¹¹⁹ They had also printed coverage which claimed that the *curé* of the Church of Saint-Severin in Paris had been forcibly exiled from his post. Noailles stressed that these reports had angered the King himself ‘Sa Majesté dont l’attention ne laisse rien échapper, a vu avec étonnement de pareils mensonges répandues dans des feuilles Etrangères dont elle veut bien permettre l’entrée dans son Royaume.’¹²⁰ The ambassador threatened the *Gazette d’Utrecht*, the *Gazette de Leyde* and the *Gazette d’Amsterdam* with prohibition from France if they did not retract the articles in question.

In the two years following the accession of Louis XVI, the issue of the extra-territorial press continued to be mentioned frequently in the diplomatic correspondence. Despite the end of the Maupeou crisis, the French government remained determined to manage the news information which made its way into France. Yet, with the foreign press continuing to be disruptive, French officials sometimes struggled to impose their will abroad. Desnoyers threatened to stop the Dutch gazettes from circulating within France in September 1774 but Noailles was forced to repeat the threat again in January 1775 when more inappropriate articles were published. Indeed,

¹¹⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 200, Vergennes to Desnoyers, 22 September 1774.

¹¹⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 212-14, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 30 September 1774.

¹¹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 527, fols. 13-14, Noailles to Dutch journalists, 11 January 1775.

¹²⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 527, fols. 13-14, Noailles to Dutch journalists, 11 January 1775.

in May 1776 Vergennes decried the unruliness of the Dutch gazettes, declaring that they were impossible to silence on certain subjects.¹²¹ This underlines the extent to which any success in keeping editors subjugated was only ever short term. The French government had to exercise continued and concerted effort if it wanted to keep the foreign press within acceptable limits.

The French government became very concerned with regulating the periodical press during the American War of Independence. France entered the conflict in February 1778 and during the length of this war, the foreign ministry was engaged in efforts to rein in any potential criticism of French military undertakings. This was an especially pressing concern because the circulation of newspapers increased in wartime reflecting the customers' desire to keep up to date with international news. Censer has rightly pinpointed that press control was relaxed in 1784.¹²² The French government twice attempted to control British newspapers in this year.¹²³ French officials also objected to an issue of the *Courier du Bas-Rhin* but subsequently took no action (see Appendix A for further details of this).¹²⁴ There seems to have been no further policing of journals taking place on the continent. When it came to the matter of explaining this change, Censer was less confident. This thesis suggests that this partly was symptomatic of a wider shift in approach. From 1783 onwards the French government adopted a different attitude when it came to the extra-territorial book trade, trying to ignore possible threats rather than repress them. The dearth of policing in 1784 certainly indicates that this attitude translated into the arena of the press. Monitoring and managing the press did become more regular again in 1785 and then was at a low point once more towards the end of the old regime in 1788 and 1789. The French foreign ministry was less involved with the extra-territorial press at the end of the 1780s

¹²¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 340, 8 May 1776.

¹²² Censer, *French Press*, p. 146.

¹²³ For details, see Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 127-29.

¹²⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 560, fols. 201-02, Bérenger to Vergennes, 2 December 1784.

for several reasons. This seems to partially have been a result of the more detached approach which the French government had started to take in 1783. With the end of the American War of Independence, energy no longer had to be expended on the process of controlling information about France's naval might. Political events within France had also calmed down by this point. In the later 1770s and early 1780s there were no major clashes with the *parlements*, episodes which had been a huge source of news during the Maupeou coup.

Outside France, there was political turmoil in the United Provinces. In the context of the Anglo-Dutch War (1780 to 1784), economic problems and social discontent, critics of stadtholder William V, Prince of Orange, formed a party of opposition called the Patriots.¹²⁵ The influence of the Patriots swelled across the early 1780s which undermined the stability of the Orangist regime (which incidentally was allied with Britain against France). The revolting Patriots were ultimately repressed in 1787 with the help of Prussian and British intervention. All this meant that French influence was lessened in the state where it had most difficulty with its surveillance of gazettes. The main reason for the policing of the gazettes slowing down in 1788 and 1789 is the pre-revolutionary crisis and onset of the French Revolution. These huge events distracted the French state and also undermined the extra-territorial newspaper press. Foreign newspapers could no longer keep pace with the speed of political change and their popularity within France was damaged. As Figure 6 makes clear, there was a discernible chronology to the French government's attempts to manage the newspaper press in the two final decades of the *ancien régime*. The foreign ministry was determined

¹²⁵ Maarten Prak, 'Burghers, Citizens and Popular Politics in the Dutch Republic', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 30 (1997), 443-48 (pp. 446-48); Munro Price, 'The Dutch Affair and the Fall of the Ancien Régime, 1784-1787', *The Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), 875-905, (pp. 878-80); Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (London: Collins, 1977), Chapter 3.

to manage the presentation of news information and this meant its chronology of policing was primarily related to wider events taking place within and outside France.

Why Complain?

The systematic nature of this study can shed light on the full range of material which French officials objected to during the 1770s and 1780s. Rétat's study of the complaints brought against the Dutch gazettes from 1755 to 1760 indicates that discussion of three topics in particular alarmed the French authorities. These three topics were France's internal politics, political figures or other elites and military setbacks in war.¹²⁶ Vercruyse has also proposed that general calls for calm were common.¹²⁷ This thesis extends the geographical and chronological scope of these two studies and is able to build upon their conclusions. This thesis supports Rétat's conclusion that French officials were more likely to take issue with specific articles; their manner of controlling the periodical press was reactive. More generalised requests for subdued coverage were only made on 22 out of the 125 occasions when the French government became engaged with the foreign press (see Appendix A for details). The Bourbon regime took most offence to articles which discussed matters relating to the French state. French officials did put forward generalised objections to the foreign newspaper press in a wider sense but these complaints were often related to coverage of French state affairs too. This was the topic which the French government was primarily concerned about as it was what differentiated foreign journals from the more reserved gazettes which were printed within France. In addition to this desire to manage news information, officials also showed a particular concern to regulate the way in which elite

¹²⁶ Rétat, 'Les Gazetiers de Hollande', p. 322.

¹²⁷ Vercruyse, 'La Réception politique des journaux', p. 40.

figures were portrayed in the extra-territorial press. Finally, discussion related to foreign affairs or the French armed could also be problematic as it could represent a potential challenge to France's status as one of the great powers of Europe.

As detailed in Chapter 2, French diplomats were required to keep a close eye on what was printed in local newspapers. These officials thus became attuned to the news coverage in gazettes and reacted quickly when journalists seemed to be behaving audaciously. There were several instances when one or a group of editors were urged to moderate the tone of their coverage. Diplomats sometimes described certain newspaper gazettes as a kind of *libelle*, littered with abusive statements.¹²⁸ However, it was more often the case that diplomats sprang into action in reaction to the publication of a contentious article. Foreign reporting which seemed to be going too far was viewed with seriousness. It was rare for the French foreign minister to declare that an article highlighted by a diplomat should simply be ignored; this only happened on nine occasions across the period covered by this study (in 1771, 1775, 1778, twice in 1779, 1780, 1781, 1784 and 1785. See Appendix A for details).¹²⁹ When the French ministry came across a report in a gazette that it was unhappy with, there were a number of potential ways to resolve the problem. The management of news usually involved the cooperation and assistance of the French diplomat resident in the town which had produced the offending piece. The external censorship process could be launched either from within France by persons within the ministry, by the diplomats beyond French borders or from the objections of a third party. French officials became

¹²⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 110, fol. 46-59, Causan to Vergennes, 18 April 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 181-85, Vêrac to Vergennes, 29 March 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 564, fol. 62, Vêrac to Vergennes, 9 September 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 204, fol. 439, d'Esterno to Vergennes, 22 September 1785.

¹²⁹ For instances like this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 532, fol. 22, Vergennes to Bérenger, 15 January 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 538, fols. 403-04, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 30 December 1779; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 373, Vergennes to d'Esterno, 14 November 1782.

particularly anxious if an article had been reprinted by other Francophone editors or translated and republished in non-French gazettes.¹³⁰ These reprints compounded the damage done by the original article. Once the diplomat was on alert, he usually negotiated with the editor of the newspaper under fire and only petitioned the local authorities to take action too in more serious cases. Diplomats could try to bully editors into compliance by threatening to exclude journals from the lucrative French market. These techniques constituted part of the French government's strategy of exemplary punishment which can also be seen in its approach to the book trade. Newspapers directly fed off one another which meant that measures taken against one editor would have wider repercussions.

Given the deliberate scarcity of political news within France, it is hardly surprising that French diplomats were particularly sensitive to anything which referenced the internal workings of the French state. We already know that the Francophone press came under fire for its reports on the aftermath of the Maupeou coup in the early 1770s. D'Aiguillon despaired at the coverage of French politics in the *Gazette intéressante* of Düsseldorf.

En général je vois que le gazetier est mal servi par ses correspondants en France, et il serait de son intérêt de les choisir mieux instruits ou plus fidèles. Il débite au hasard des anecdotes fausses et controuvées et ne peut pas résister à la démangeaison de parler des matières du Gouvernement qui ne sont et ne peuvent être du ressort d'un nouvelliste public.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 108, fols. 307-09, Chalgrin to Vergennes, 16 August 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 564, fol. 406, Vérac to Vergennes, 15 October 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 202-03, de Richemont to La Vrillière, 21 May 1771.

¹³¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fol. 102, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 18 May 1772.

The French government purposely restricted the kind of political news which was to be found in French gazettes and pursued the same concerns in the extra-territorial sphere. This political management continued across the final years of the old regime. In March 1789 for instance, the foreign ministry threatened to exclude the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* from the French market after it published a letter to Jacques Necker, the *contrôleur général*, within its pages.¹³²

Related to this desire to rein in discussion of French politics was the concern to protect France's reputation on the international stage. The foreign ministry sought the retraction of articles which might undercut France's standing as one of the great powers of Europe.¹³³ This became an especially pressing concern during the period from 1778 to 1783 when France was engaged in the American War of Independence. In July 1778, La Vauguyon, the *ministre plénipotentiaire* in The Hague, remonstrated to Vergennes about the *Gazette de La Haye*. La Vauguyon believed that the British ambassador to the United Provinces had been calculatingly supplying the Dutch periodical press with anti-French articles.¹³⁴ Vergennes agreed upon the seriousness of this matter and advised La Vauguyon to warn the editor that his paper would be excluded from France if it continued to print such pieces. Chalgrin, the *chargé d'affaires* in Cologne, had similar concerns. In August 1778, he informed Vergennes of a report published in the *Gazette de Cologne* which detailed a naval battle between France and Britain. The article had portrayed Britain as the victorious force in this clash. The *Gazette de Cologne* was

¹³² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 578, fol. 166-88, Montmorin to Caillard, 22 March 1789.

¹³³ For examples of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Hambourg 104, fol. 346, de Vivers to Vergennes, 8 August 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 524, fols. 217-18, Desnoyers to d'Aiguillon, 11 August 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 170, fol. 339, Garnier to Vergennes, 20 March 1776; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 207, fols. 103-04, Groschlag to Montmorin, 6 September 1787.

¹³⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 533, fol. 63, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 2 July 1778.

subsidised by George Cressner, a British diplomat stationed in Cologne, which suggests why it might have supported Britain in the conflict.¹³⁵ Chalgrin persuaded the abbé de Jeurinvillier, the editor of the *Gazette de Cologne* to print a retraction of the offending article in this instance but the diplomats working in Cologne continued to find fault with this paper's coverage of the war.

Managing the way the French state was depicted, in both internal and external terms was the most important aspect of control. The French government also expressed particular anxiety about the portrayal of France's political and social elites. Protecting reputations was considered to be a very important duty. Self-interest was obviously at play here; the regime was determined to defend the honour of its elites. However, it must also be taken into consideration that the status quo of the *ancien régime* was very much dependent upon the political and financial leadership of this elite. Any attacks on elite figures, whether they were targeted towards individuals in government or not, had wider implications. However, the foreign ministry did concentrate on defending political elites rather than those who had no connection to the French government.

Understandably, the foreign ministry was sensitive to any slanders directed against its own officials. It was the diplomats' responsibility to monitor the Francophone newspaper press which made them the first to notice any articles which discussed them personally.¹³⁶ Manzon, the editor of the *Courier du Bas-Rhin* was accused of misquoting the French diplomats on a number of occasions.¹³⁷ However, articles

¹³⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 108, fols. 307-09, Chalgrin to Vergennes, 16 August 1778.

¹³⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 108, fols. 348-49, Montezan to Vergennes, 29 December 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Hambourg 103, fols. 209-10, La Houze to Vergennes, 13 November 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 170, fol. 339, Garnier to Vergennes, 20 March 1776; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 207, fols. 197-206, Falciola to Montmorin, 9 October 1787.

¹³⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 108, fol. 348, Montezan to Vergennes, 29 December 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 207, fols. 197-206, Falciola to Montmorin, 9 October 1787.

concerning the French foreign ministers were viewed with much more seriousness. In the spring of 1772, the *Gazette de Leyde* came under fire after it mentioned that the former foreign minister, the duc de Choiseul, was in retirement and selling his paintings.¹³⁸ This reference was problematic because it could be interpreted as an insinuation that the duc was experiencing financial problems and might therefore harm his credit. As discussed in Chapter 2, d'Aiguillon was upset by coverage of the Guînes affair in the *Gazette d'Utrecht* and asked Vergennes to compel the relevant editors to retract these articles.¹³⁹

Vergennes was adept and thoughtful in matters of censorship but there are still several examples of him using the structures of extra-territorial control to preserve his own reputation. In April 1777, Vergennes commanded that the editor of the *Gazette de Liège* be asked to retract an article which alleged that the foreign minister had bestowed a passport upon an adventurer who claimed to be the Prince Justiniani de Chio.¹⁴⁰ The foreign ministry also looked after its allies. Vergennes was intent on protecting one of his close friends, Louis René Édouard, cardinal de Rohan. In September 1782, Vergennes instructed Louis-Théodore Hérissant, the *chargé d'affaires* in Regensburg, to request that the editor of a gazette published in the German town of Erlangen retract an article about the cardinal.¹⁴¹ Vergennes wished Hérissant to stress to the editor that Rohan was indeed an honourable man. Shielding Rohan from criticism became a more pressing concern during the period from 1785 to 1786 in the context of the diamond necklace affair. Rohan became implicated in an intricate plot to defraud the royal jewellers out of this extravagant piece of jewellery. As we shall see in Chapter 5, Vergennes sent envoys abroad to chase down witnesses who could potentially exonerate

¹³⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 524, fols. 139-42, Desnoyers to Luzac, May 1772.

¹³⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fol. 117, d'Aiguillon to Vergennes, 27 July 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 153-54, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 16 August 1774.

¹⁴⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fols. 16-18, Léonard to Vergennes, 16 April 1776.

¹⁴¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Allemagne 654, fols. 249-50, Hérissant to Vergennes, 28 September 1782.

Rohan. He also endeavoured to control discussion of the cardinal in the extra-territorial press. In June 1786, Vergennes ordered that a warning be issued to Luzac for the manner in which Rohan had been presented in the *Gazette de Leyde*.¹⁴²

Yet the French foreign ministry was not completely self-interested and also showed concern when other social or political elites from outside the foreign office were discussed in the foreign press.¹⁴³ The extent to which inappropriate articles on notable personages could have wider implications can be illustrated with a few cases. In April 1770, Du Prat, *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, reported that the *Gazette d'Utrecht* had printed an alarming article about the financier M. de la Balue.

Votre Grandeur sait qu'il y est du que Sa Majesté, en voulant bien acquitter les dettes contractées par M de la Balue avec les Etrangers, n'entendait satisfaire qu'aux engagements pris par lui, comme Banquier de la Cour.¹⁴⁴

In presenting its readers with details of Balue's debts, the *Gazette d'Utrecht* challenged the financial surety of the French state. Accordingly, Du Prat put pressure on the *Gazette d'Utrecht* to retract this article.

Newspaper coverage of French elite figures could also have wider ramifications. Thomas Arthur, comte de Lally, baron de Tollendal was a French general who led troops in India during the Seven Years Wars. Overwhelmed by enemy forces, he was compelled to surrender. He survived but his failure ended up costing him his life and he was executed by the French state in 1766. His son, Trophime-Gérard, marquis de

¹⁴² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 567, fols. 292-99, Vêrac to Vergennes, 18 June 1786.

¹⁴³ For some of these complaints, see Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 522, fols. 258-68, Du Prat to Choiseul, 13 April 1770; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 522, fols. 322-23, Du Prat to Choiseul, 20 July 1770; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 550, fol. 230, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 2 August 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 574, fols. 170-71, Montmorin to Vêrac, 20 August 1787; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 171, fol. 165, Garnier to Vergennes, 30 June 1778.

¹⁴⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 522, fols. 258-68, Du Prat to Choiseul, 13 April 1770.

Lally-Tollendal was dedicated to clearing his father's name and in 1778 managed to persuade Louis XVI to annul the decree which had sentenced him to death. Garnier, the *chargé d'affaires* in Brussels, was disturbed by an article in the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* which discussed this change of heart, presumably because it intimated the fallibility of the King. In this instance, Garnier involved François Charles de Velbrück, the Prince-Bishop of Liège, who promised to do everything in his power to ensure that the paper printed a retraction.¹⁴⁵

Articles which mentioned members of the French royal family were taken particularly seriously by the foreign ministry. In April 1776 Vergennes told O'Dunne, the *ambassadeur* in the Palatinate-Zweibrücken, that he had received serious complaints about the licence of the author of a periodical printed in Düsseldorf.¹⁴⁶ These complaints had come from an army officer called Thomas Augustin de Gasparin who referred to the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* as a 'libelle'.¹⁴⁷ According to Gasparin, this 'monstreuse production' spoke impudently of Marie-Antoinette and put forward a harsh critique of the actions of the French ministry.

The *Correspondance littéraire secrète* was a weekly bulletin written in the form of a letter to a foreign reader which had been launched in January of the previous year. It is known that from 1780 to February 1784 the French journalist and bookseller Louis-François Mettra published this work in the village of Münz, close to the city walls of Cologne.¹⁴⁸ After the banks of the Rhine burst and flooded his shop in January 1784, Mettra transported his enterprise first to Deutz, close to Cologne and then in March 1785 further south to Neuwied.¹⁴⁹ However, scholars have not yet been able to

¹⁴⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 171, fol. 165, Garnier to Vergennes, 30 June 1778.

¹⁴⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 117, fol. 350, Vergennes to O'Dunne, 26 April 1776.

¹⁴⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fol. 11, Gasparin to Vergennes, 16 April 1776.

¹⁴⁸ Freedman, *Books Without Borders*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁹ Freedman, *Books Without Borders*, p. 72.

pinpoint where exactly the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* was based during the period 1775 to 1780.¹⁵⁰ Vergennes' letter indicates that this work started life in Düsseldorf.

It has also been proposed that the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* might have been in the hands of someone other than Mettra prior to 1780.¹⁵¹ This suggestion is also corroborated by the diplomatic correspondence. In April 1776, Vergennes asked O'Dunne to try to unearth the identity of the author of this news-sheet and collect together some passages from the text so that the French state could bring formal complaints to the authorities in the Palatinate-Zweibrücken.¹⁵² O'Dunne reported back that the author was an individual known as Norbert who was 'un aventurier qui a une trop mauvaise tête pour écrire sagement'.¹⁵³ This was Karl von Neorberg, although his name usually appears as Norbert in the diplomatic correspondence. O'Dunne was already well acquainted with Neorberg. The diplomat had been ordered to complain to the Elector Palatine about him earlier in the 1770s when Neorberg was the editor of the *Gazette intéressante*.¹⁵⁴ The Elector had threatened Neorberg with corporal punishment if he continued his audacious reporting. In 1776, O'Dunne promised to appeal to the Elector Palatine once again. With a reputation for daring journalism and his *Gazette intéressante* coming to an end in December 1773, it seems that it was indeed Neorberg who took up the reins of the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* in 1775.

¹⁵⁰ Faivre and Reynaud, eds., *Dictionnaire des journaux* <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0235-correspondance-litteraire-secrete> [accessed 11 January 2013].

¹⁵¹ Faivre and Reynaud, eds., *Dictionnaire des journaux* <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0235-correspondance-litteraire-secrete> [accessed 11 January 2013].

¹⁵² Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 117, fol. 350, Vergennes to O'Dunne, 26 April 1776.

¹⁵³ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 117, fols. 360-61, O'Dunne to Vergennes, 17 May 1776.

¹⁵⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fol. 34, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 3 March 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fol. 102, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 18 May 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 115, fols. 139-40, d'Aiguillon to O'Dunne, 28 June 1772.

It is important to note that the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* was something of a unique example. During the period under consideration in this study, other foreign journals did not get into trouble for their coverage of the French Queen. This says something about the efficacy of the French government's strategy. Foreign gazetteers appreciated the limits of acceptability and recognised that this kind of reporting would not be acceptable if they wished to continue to trade in France. It is also important to recognise that the *Correspondance littéraire secrète* did not have a particularly large circulation within France; more copies were sold in the German states.¹⁵⁵ However, it remains the case that the French government did not succeed in pacifying this title completely. The periodical continued to report on the latest happenings from Paris and Versailles (including the royal family) until 1793.

Although it was usually either the diplomats or the foreign minister who noticed an indiscreet article in the foreign press, complaints sometimes came directly from the individual who had been reported on. Before he was made Louis XVI's first minister at the end of the 1780s Etienne-Charles de Loménie de Brienne was Archbishop of Toulouse. In August 1775, Brienne told Vergennes that the *Gazette d'Utrecht* had described him as being tolerant of Protestants. There was probably a great deal of truth in this article. Brienne was an enlightened intellectual and might even have been an atheist. In spite of this, Brienne sought to protect his reputation and job by asking Vergennes to admonish the *Gazette d'Utrecht* for this perceived slight.¹⁵⁶ It is unclear whether Vergennes followed up on this request but other evidence indicates that he might not have done.

In July 1780, Dom Franc, a monk from the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, claimed that the prior of the abbey had been maligned by an article in the *Gazette*

¹⁵⁵ Moureau, *La Plume et la plomb*, p. 351.

¹⁵⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 527, fol. 376, Brienne to Vergennes, 19 August 1775.

d'Utrecht.¹⁵⁷ Vergennes was unmoved and told Dom Franc that he would be better off contacting the editor of the gazette directly.¹⁵⁸ Vergennes was not however, unsympathetic to all such complaints. In September 1780 John Holker, a manufacturing entrepreneur based in Rouen objected to an article which had been printed in the *Gazette d'Utrecht*.¹⁵⁹ Holker claimed that the article criticised his son, John Holker Jr, who was French consul in Philadelphia. In this instance, Vergennes agreed that the article was inappropriate and organised for the gazette's editor to be rebuked and a retraction to be printed.¹⁶⁰ The French foreign ministry was attentive when it came to newspaper articles which mentioned French elite figures. However, some of these articles were taken more seriously than others. The French government was most opposed to critical discussion of members of the royal family but rarely came across this in the periodical press. As a result, it was able to focus on those articles which referenced individuals with political power within France. Other individuals who objected to the French government when they appeared in the foreign periodical press had a chance of getting their voices heard but this was by no means guaranteed.

Another way in which the French state tried to manage the extra-territorial press was by attempting to prevent the discussion and promotion of texts which it disagreed with.¹⁶¹ Eighteenth-century periodicals commonly included book reviews and excerpts as a way of marketing new titles. On 23 February 1776 the *parlement* of Paris condemned *Inconvénients des droits féodaux*, a pamphlet thought to be inspired by Turgot which critiqued the privileges held by the French nobility.¹⁶² The author was Pierre-

¹⁵⁷ Paris, AMAE, SMD France 582, fol. 150, Franc to Vergennes, 23 July 1780.

¹⁵⁸ Paris, AMAE, SMD France 582, fol. 178, Vergennes to Franc, July 1780.

¹⁵⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 542, fol. 109, Holker to Vergennes, 29 September 1780.

¹⁶⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 542, fol. 176. Vergennes to Holker, 17 October 1780.

¹⁶¹ For some instances of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 544, fols. 175-80, 11 May 1781; Neuchâtel, BPUN, Fonds de la STN, MS 1213, fols. 286-87, David-Alphonse de Sandoz-Rollin to the STN, 18 November 1781.

¹⁶² Robert L. Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs: Banned Books and the French Booktrade during the Last Years of the Ancien Régime* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2006), Online Appendices, Appendix G,

François Boncerf, although some additional material had been lifted from writings by the baron de Montesquieu. Boncerf was fortunate enough to receive a letter from Voltaire which responded to and praised his work. Judging that such commendation might help his cause, Boncerf quickly had copies of the letter printed and forwarded them to the editors of the Dutch Francophone gazettes. The French government was able to stop copies of this letter from circulating in Paris and in March Turgot, the *contrôleur général* asked Vergennes to make sure that the missive did not appear abroad either.¹⁶³ Vergennes asked Desnoyers, French diplomat in The Hague, to send this request to the editors of the newspapers in Holland. The pressure weighing down on Boncerf also compelled him to write directly to Gosse, the publisher of the *Gazette de La Haye*, to plead for him not to include the letter in his journal: ‘Ce serait aller contre l’intention de l’auteur et la mienne, et je puis vous l’assurer contre celle du Gouvernement.’¹⁶⁴ Desnoyers was confident that the editors in question would adhere to French wishes and there is no evidence that these journalists needed any further convincing to obey.¹⁶⁵

Another incident goes to show that, although it was not their primary focus, French officials did sometimes complain about material relating to religious questions. In June 1780, Vergennes told La Vauguyon, the *ministre plénipotentiaire* in The Hague, to send a circular letter to the editors of the Dutch gazettes. This letter was to request that these editors refrain from reviewing or publishing extracts from Bernard Lambert’s *Requête des fideles à nos seigneurs les évêques de l’assemblée générale du clergé de France*.¹⁶⁶ This treatise on the state of the Roman Catholic faith in France claimed that the Church was

no. 16 http://www.utexas.edu/people/dawson/Confs_appendixes.htm [accessed 11 January 2013].

¹⁶³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 258, Turgot to Vergennes, 22 March 1776.

¹⁶⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 257, Boncerf to Gosse, 21 March 1776.

¹⁶⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 302, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 30 March 1776.

¹⁶⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 541, fols. 183-89, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 20 June 1780.

under attack and that the French state was partly to blame for its decline.¹⁶⁷ This was a religious work which had implications for the political authority of the French government which helps to explain why action was taken against it.

Again, the French foreign ministry was especially concerned to prevent material relating to members of the royal family from being discussed in the periodical press. In May 1775, Gausson, *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin, became anxious about the *Gazette littéraire de Berlin*. The journal's editor was a French writer by the name of Joseph Du Fresne de Francheville. Gausson had heard that Francheville had in his possession a pamphlet entitled, *Mémoire de Louis XV* and was planning to present an extract of the text in his gazette. Francheville had the approval of the Prussian foreign minister, Ewald Friedrich Graf von Hertzberg, who had already 'effacé quelques passages dans lesquels le vil auteur de cette vile production osait attaquer la mémoire du feu Roi'.¹⁶⁸ Gausson however, remained concerned about the text. Vergennes agreed that such works which discussed members of the royal family were dangerous, even if they appeared after their death.¹⁶⁹ Under pressure from Gausson, Francheville agreed to omit the extract from his paper. He also assured Gausson that his copy of this *Mémoire de Louis XV* was the only one available in Berlin. Gausson visited several booksellers and journalists in Berlin before writing to Vergennes to confirm that this did seem to be the case.¹⁷⁰ Vergennes did not authorise measures anywhere else in Europe against this text which indicates that the publisher probably wanted to advertise the work in Francheville's gazette to rouse interest before bringing the work to market. The French government put a halt to this plan and thus to the publication of this work. Regulating the periodical press was another avenue for controlling the circulation of literature. By preventing works being discussed and advertised, French officials hoped to lessen their

¹⁶⁷ Bachaumont (attrib.), *Mémoires secrets*, vol 15 (London: Adamson, 1781), pp. 241-42.

¹⁶⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 193, fols. 123-31, Gausson to Vergennes, 6 May 1775.

¹⁶⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 193, fols. 145-46, Vergennes to Gausson, 21 May 1775.

¹⁷⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 193, fol. 155, Gausson to Vergennes, 3 June 1775.

impact. When it came to texts relating to the royal family, the French foreign ministry was engaged in efforts to suppress the pamphlet itself as well any extracts that might be printed.

There were times when economic considerations influenced French attempts to regulate the foreign periodical press but such instances were rare. Upholding the rights of French publishers and journalists beyond French borders was never a priority for the foreign ministry. As was the case in the book market, the French state was not willing to chase every transgression when it came to the periodical press. On the rare occasions when issues relating to privileges were raised, they were very much a secondary consideration or used merely as a pretext to take measures against on a particular title.¹⁷¹ However, there was one point in this period where the contravention of a privilege did instigate measures in the extra-territorial sphere. In May 1770, Choiseul, the French foreign minister, received a complaint from Jacques Lacombe, a Parisian bookseller and publisher who owned the privilege to a number of French journals. Lacombe claimed that Marc-Michel Rey, the Genevan publisher based in Amsterdam, was printing a counterfeit edition of the *Mercure de France*.¹⁷² Far from trying to conceal his piracy, Rey had advertised his edition in an April issue of the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*. Choiseul did nothing, however, and it was not until February 1771 that La Vrillière, his successor, decided to consider Lacombe's complaint. La Vrillière instructed Du Prat, *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, to ask the Dutch authorities to admonish Rey. Rey appeared before magistrates in Amsterdam and by way of defence argued that Lacombe's *Mercure de France* took too long to arrive in Holland and was too difficult for Dutch readers to get hold of.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ For an example of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 93, fol. 240, Vergennes to Mallet Du Pan, 20 October 1782.

¹⁷² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 522, fol. 280, 7 May 1770.

¹⁷³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 521, fols. 262-63, 12 February 1771.

Du Prat doubted the authorities in Holland would monitor Rey's activities in future and so advised that Lacombe would be better off making a deal with the Genevan in order to receive monetary compensation for the infringement of this privilege. This represented the only time across the years from 1770 to 1789 that economic concerns were at the forefront of external policing (see Appendix A for details). The only similar occasion came in November 1777 when the journalist Linguet protested about the publication of a counterfeit edition of his *Annales* journal.¹⁷⁴ His complaints were not followed up by the French government. In 1771 the French government took a long time to take action against Rey and ended up being resigned to him continuing with his counterfeit operation. The question of economic competition was simply not the French foreign ministry's main concern and no other action was taken against foreign counterfeit editions of French journals in this period.

Management Techniques

Once an offensive article had been brought to the attention of the foreign ministry, the next step usually involved the diplomat negotiating with the foreign journalist. Negotiation was confined between the diplomat and journalist in 89 of the 125 official responses under discussion in this study (see Appendix A for details). Editors were pressured to print a retraction of the article in question or warned more generally to approach with caution any commentary which might relate to the French state. Like foreign officials, journalists apologised and stressed their ultimate deference to the French state. However, editors outside France did not usually try to avoid complying with French wishes as foreign authorities routinely did. Most often, the editors would acquiesce immediately to French demands and print a complete retraction as quickly as

¹⁷⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 526, fols. 36-39, Noailles to Vergennes, 25 November 1777.

possible.¹⁷⁵ When, for example, the French government took issue with an article in the *Gazette de Schaffhouse* in September 1771, Swiss officials underlined the total submission of the gazetteer;

Il nous a fait connaître d'une manière à n'en pouvoir douter qu'il avait tiré lui même ces nouvelles d'autres papiers publics, et qu'il les avait insérés dans sa Gazette sans aucun mauvais dessein; il a offert de les rétracter à la première occasion.¹⁷⁶

The editors of most Francophone journals depended upon being able to access readers within France. For fear of being excluded from this lucrative market, editors were quick to respond when French officials took issue with their journals.

Censer and Vercruysse have contended that Jean Luzac, the editor of the *Gazette de Leyde*, was one of the only Francophone journalists who defended his newspaper overtly before the French authorities.¹⁷⁷ This broad study confirms that Luzac does seem to have been braver than other journalists. He was not prepared to capitulate completely before the French authorities and we have already seen how he fought back during the Maupeou coup. In the early 1770s, he objected to French attempts to prevent newspapers from reporting on the aftermath of the Maupeou coup. Luzac's confidence in his journalistic convictions was buttressed by the *Gazette de Leyde's* increasing market share, both inside and outside France. This international market lessened the effect of a temporary ban from France. Luzac had other subscribers he could rely upon in the interim. By contrast, the *Gazette d'Utrecht* was financially weaker

¹⁷⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 530, fol. 165, Richelieu to Vergennes, 31 May 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 550, fol. 230, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 2 August 1782.

¹⁷⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 382, fol. 121, Conseil de la ville de Schaffhouse to Beauteville, 24 September 1771.

¹⁷⁷ Censer, *French Press*, p. 44; Vercruysse, 'La Réception politique des journaux', p. 46.

because it depended upon its sales in France.¹⁷⁸ As such, the editor of this paper was more likely to acquiesce to French demands.

Luzac might have been more confident than many other editors in the face of French protests but his defiance only went so far. For example, when the *Gazette de Leyde* was temporarily banned from France later in March 1785 Luzac responded in the same deferent manner as other gazetteers.¹⁷⁹ Vergennes seems to have issued this short-term proscription under pressure from Marie-Antoinette after the *Gazette de Leyde* took an anti-Austrian line over the dispute surrounding the closure of the Scheldt river.¹⁸⁰ Following the ban, Luzac stressed his ultimate loyalty to France, his respect for Louis XVI and claimed ignorance as to the nature of the unsuitable article which he had supposedly printed: 'Il se pourrait néanmoins, que nous fut échappé quelque trait, dont l'aiguillon nous aurait été inconnu à nous-mêmes.'¹⁸¹

Luzac was one of the only journalists courageous enough to stand up to the French government but his defiance was ultimately constrained. Although he was keen to defend the integrity of his newspaper, Luzac was equally aware that the French government had the power to damage his profits by preventing his journal from circulating within France. He was braver than other journalists but ultimately constrained by his ties to France in the same way that they were.

Luzac's stance was a delicate mix of defiance and submission. Other gazetteers were less confident in defending themselves explicitly but some did manage to find different ways to resist French demands. The main means of circumventing French hostility was to simply continue publishing the kind of articles that the French government objected to. For two and a half years, diplomats in Cologne found fault

¹⁷⁸ Faivre and Reynaud, eds., *Dictionnaire des journaux*: <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0531-gazette-dutrecht> [accessed 11 January 2013].

¹⁷⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 65-66, Luzac to Vergennes, 10 March 1785.

¹⁸⁰ *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, pp. 372-73.

¹⁸¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 65-66, Luzac to Vergennes, 10 March 1785.

with articles in the *Gazette de Cologne* which they claimed portrayed France as the weaker power in the American War of Independence.¹⁸² On each occasion, the gazette's editor apologised and claimed that he would not make the same mistake again.¹⁸³ Tiring of these excuses, Vergennes eventually decided to ban the gazette from France temporarily in January 1781.¹⁸⁴

Manzon, the editor of the *Courier du Bas-Rhin* was another journalist who did not submit totally to French demands. Despite repeated rebukes from French diplomats for his reports on the French state, Manzon did little to modify the content of his journal.¹⁸⁵ He was something of a unique case in so far as he had an arrangement with the Prussian authorities whereby he promoted their interests in his gazette in return for official protection.¹⁸⁶ This position of relative safety gave Manzon the assurance to be bolder in selecting material on French politics for publication in his journal. The *Courier du Bas-Rhin* was also a particular concern for the French foreign ministry since officials worried that the Dutch newspaper press routinely copied articles which appeared in Manzon's journal.¹⁸⁷ Manzon was admonished several times during the 1770s and 1780s but the French government did not succeed in totally imposing its will on this journalist since the protection of Prussia prevented further measures from being implemented effectively. The *Courier du Bas-Rhin* was the *Gazette de Leyde's* major rival but French worries were kept in check by the fact that the *Courier du Bas-Rhin* did not

¹⁸² Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 108, fols. 299-304, Chalgrin to Vergennes, 5 August 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 108, fols. 305-09, Chalgrin to Vergennes, 14 August 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne supplément 4, fols. 432-37, Montezan to Vergennes, 20 March 1779; Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne supplément 4, fols. 438-39, Montezan to Vergennes, 23 March 1779; Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne supplément 4, fol. 510, Chalgrin to Vergennes, 20 October 1779.

¹⁸³ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne supplément 4, fols. 449-52, Montezan to Vergennes, 22 April 1779.

¹⁸⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 109, fol. 324, 9 December 1780.

¹⁸⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 110, fols. 46-59, Causan to Vergennes, 18 April 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 181-85, Vérac to Vergennes, 29 March 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 564, fol. 406, Vérac to Vergennes, 15 October 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 204, fols. 435-38, d'Esterno to Vergennes, 15 November 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 204, fol. 439, Manzon to Vergennes, 22 November 1785.

¹⁸⁶ Moureau, 'La Presse allemande', p. 248.

¹⁸⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 564, fol. 406, 15 October 1785.

have a huge audience within France. It also adopted a more politically conservative tone than the *Gazette de Leyde*. As such, Manzon's defiance was irritating but not considered to be catastrophic.

There were editors, then, who seem not to have taken heed of French complaints fully or immediately. Yet objections were not normally made as regularly as was the case for the *Gazette de Cologne*. Having entered into war in 1778, the French state was keen to project an image of strength on the international stage and so kept up pressure on the *Gazette de Cologne*. French officials were more sensitive in 1778, which helps to explain why several complaints were made. However, it must be stressed that Francophone gazetteers were admonished repeatedly in the course of the 1770s and 1780s. Despite professing to be apologetic, these journalists continued to print material which French officials found intolerable. At the same time, it was rare for gazetteers to repeatedly offend the French government over a short period of time. This suggests that French efforts to regulate the press had a real impact in the short term. The Bourbon regime could not prevent extra-territorial gazettes from reporting on French news but it was able to impose a relatively effective system of regulation upon these titles.

Another way in which editors attempted to defend their journals was to appeal directly to French diplomats.¹⁸⁸ Luzac was able to persuade several officials to speak in favour of his *Gazette de Leyde*.¹⁸⁹ Even when Luzac chose to stand up to the French government in the early 1770s, he was still able to persuade diplomats to write to d'Aiguillon endorsing him. When the *Gazette de Leyde* was temporarily banned in 1785,

¹⁸⁸ See Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 87, fols. 80-81, Mallet Du Pan, 18 January 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Palatinat-Deux-Ponts 120, fols. 229-30, O'Kelly to Vergennes, 23 September 1778.

¹⁸⁹ For examples, see Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 521, fols. 259-60, Du Prat to Choiseul, 12 February 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 525, fol. 63, Des Escotais to d'Aiguillon, 6 July 1773; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fol. 308, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 2 April 1776; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 532, fol. 72, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 3 February 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 543, fol. 222, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 2 February 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 67-72, Vêrac to Vergennes, 11 March 1785.

Luzac was sure that Bérenger, the *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, would vouch for him. Luzac told Vergennes this, claiming that ‘Sr de Bérenger qui a bien voulu nous honorer toujours de son estime, et qui connait à fond notre façon de penser et d’agir’.¹⁹⁰ The gazetteer was right to have faith in the diplomats working in The Hague. Vêrac, French *ambassadeur* in The Hague, was quick to point out to Vergennes that Luzac had always shown a great deal of loyalty to the French state.¹⁹¹ Vergennes himself, who seems to have been pressured into laying down this prohibition, even wrote to Louis XVI endorsing Luzac and asking for the ban to be rescinded.¹⁹² Such close relationships were largely a result of the conscious efforts of the journalists who were situated outside the French state. They recognised that if they wanted their gazette to be tolerated within France, it made sense to ingratiate themselves with French diplomats. As Rétat has noted, gazetteers employed exaggeration, hyperbole, irony and flattery in efforts to charm diplomats and evade punishment.¹⁹³

Other editors went further to try to win over the French authorities. For example, Jean Tronchin Dubreuil, the editor of the *Gazette d’Amsterdam*, attempted to make links with French officials in the course of his business trips to Paris.¹⁹⁴ Journalists even tried to stress their relations with the French diplomatic corps when the relationship was not a particularly close one. When he was trying to win permission to circulate his newspaper via the French postal system, Jeurin villier, the editor of the *Gazette de Cologne*, underlined that he had always worked well with the ambassadorial team in Cologne even though French diplomats complained repeatedly about the gazette.¹⁹⁵ Empathy between editors and French officials could be useful as it arguably

¹⁹⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 65-66, Luzac to Vergennes, 10 March 1785.

¹⁹¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 67-72, Vêrac to Vergennes, 11 March 1785; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 73-74, Vêrac to Vergennes, 11 March 1785.

¹⁹² *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, pp. 372-73.

¹⁹³ Rétat, ‘Les Gazetiers de Hollande’, pp. 325-29.

¹⁹⁴ Rétat, ed., *La Gazette d’Amsterdam*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁵ Paris, AMAE Cologne 109, fols. 272-73, to Vergennes, 30 August 1780.

put diplomats in a stronger position to convince gazetteers to print material which the French state approved of. This was important because the majority of disputes were settled between editor and diplomat. Editors put a lot of effort into developing relations with French diplomats but it is clear that these close relationships also had benefits for the French state.

Popkin has suggested that the French government was disinclined to complain to foreign powers when it came to the periodical press.¹⁹⁶ This comprehensive study offers overwhelming evidence to confirm that this was the case. In 29% of cases relating to the periodical press, French diplomats supplemented their negotiations with journalists by making a formal complaint to foreign authorities. This is contrast to foreign powers being involved in 60% of instances relating to books and pamphlets (see Appendix A for details of these instances). The idea of coordinating press management with officials outside France was not the preferred option for two reasons. As outlined in this chapter so far, the French state had a lot of influence over extra-territorial journalists. These gazetteers wanted to be able to sell their papers in France and as such, tended to be responsive to French requests for compliance. The foreign ministry was also wary of involving foreign officials because they were well aware that they tended to be obstructionist and evasive. It was more trouble than it was worth to consult foreign powers when attempts to police the newspaper press occurred so frequently. Such a line of action would have wasted a lot of time.

There were instances when the French foreign minister deemed it necessary to involve foreign officials in their negotiations. This usually happened when unwelcome articles appeared which related to the two major topics which concerned the French

¹⁹⁶ Jeremy D. Popkin, 'International Gazettes and Politics of Europe in the Revolutionary Period', *Journalism Quarterly*, 62 (1985), 482-88 (p. 483).

government: articles relating to French state affairs or French political elites.¹⁹⁷ When challenged by the French government, officials outside France followed the example of most gazetteers by adopting a compliant stance. Officials feigned shock at the article in question and promised to do all they could to improve the content of the journal which had come under fire. In September 1782, Vergennes took issue with coverage of the American War of Independence in the *Gazette de Schaffhouse*. In two separate letters to Bâcher, the French *chargé d'affaires* in Solothurn, officials in Schaffhausen underscored that they had made their own moves to encourage moderation in this gazetteer even before they received notice of French displeasure. The editor of the *Gazette de Schaffhouse* was summoned to the *Conseil* where he was rebuked and ordered to be more cautious in selecting material for his newspaper. Still, Vergennes and Bâcher both doubted whether they could really trust officials in Schaffhausen to be vigilant in the future.¹⁹⁸

As has been made clear in Chapter 3, foreign authorities claimed to be willing to comply with French wishes whilst at the same time making moves to protect and defend those printing and trading in their immediate locality. But the French government did have success working with officials outside France when it came to the periodical press. Foreign powers were only consulted in a minimum of the more serious cases and so officials recognised that on these relatively rare occasions it might be in their best interests to fall in line with French wishes. What is more, admonishing

¹⁹⁷ For these kinds of complaints, see Paris, AMAE, CP Allemagne 654, fol. 245, Hérissant to Gemmingen, September 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Hambourg 103, fols. 209-10, La Houze to Vergennes, 13 November 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 521, fols. 259-60, 12 February 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 523, fols. 161-63, 7 May 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 532, fol. 57, Montbarey to Vergennes, 26 January 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 171, fol. 165, Garnier to Vergennes, 30 June 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 373, Vergennes to d'Esterno, 14 November 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 382, fol. 121, 24 September 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 224, Vergennes to Bâcher, 19 September 1782.

¹⁹⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 261-62, Bâcher to Vergennes, 6 October 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 273-74, Vergennes to Bâcher, 27 October 1782.

a local editor was an easy and effective way for foreign governments to demonstrate that they supported the French state. Officials working in the foreign ministry had concerns about whether authorities outside France could police the print trade effectively but this was worry was concentrated in the book market where foreign officials were most often involved.

Moving beyond merely putting pressure on editors to print retractions, the French government had another means of managing the newspaper press. This involved threatening the editor of the periodical with exclusion from the French market.¹⁹⁹ The Bourbon ministry recognised that the large size of the French market made it critical to the success of the Francophone journals. As such, threats to block access to French readers could have a real impact. The precedent for this method of control was set in 1759 with a major policy shift which Feyel has called the ‘Postal Revolution’.²⁰⁰ Prior to this date only five extra-territorial gazettes had been permitted to circulate through the French mail, but in 1759 the duc de Choiseul, foreign minister at the time, decided to allow foreign newspapers unfettered access to France. Taken at face value, this move seems to suggest that the government was taking a more relaxed approach to the extra-territorial press. Yet looking more closely, the Postal Revolution of 1759 mirrors the approach to external policing pursued by the foreign ministry during the 1770s and 1780s. The ministry recognised that it was impossible to control every aspect of the circulation of the printed word. Even with draconian controls in place, journals could still make their way into France. In 1759, as in the later period, the French government responded pragmatically by being tolerant and then clamping down only in the case of activity which it felt to be completely unacceptable. By allowing Francophone journals *de facto* access to French readers, the ministry put itself in a good

¹⁹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 219-23, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 11 October 1774; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 527, fol. 13, Noailles to Dutch journalists, 11 January 1775; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 533, fol. 63, Vergennes to La Vauguyon, 2 July 1778.

²⁰⁰ Feyel, ‘La Diffusion des gazettes étrangères’, pp. 91-97.

position to castigate foreign editors who were loathe to lose their connection to the French market.

The threat of prohibition was a major weapon for the foreign ministry. If a gazette could not be delivered via the French posts, the cost of its transportation shot up and these costs had to be passed onto customers. High subscription fees obviously discouraged potential and current subscribers from keeping up with a particular journal and so the overall damage to profits was compounded. Threats were issued immediately in serious cases or if a gazetteer was seen to be publishing a succession of inappropriate articles. It was envisaged that even the threat of such a punishment would be sufficient to persuade journalists to modify the content of their newspapers. The diplomats at least believed that this approach worked. In January 1775 Vergennes ordered that the journalists behind the four main Dutch Francophone newspapers should be threatened with exclusion from the French market. Noailles, French *ambassadeur* in The Hague, issued the threat and was able to report back to Vergennes that all four editors were printing a retraction. Noailles tried to emphasise that such measures could bear fruit: 'J'ai souvent réitéré, Monsieur le Comte, les mêmes menaces puissent-elles cette fois-ci faire un meilleur effet pour l'avenir.'²⁰¹

When it came to the task of regulating the periodical press, the French foreign ministry tried to employ its international power to the best possible effect. Implementing an outright ban was difficult so the French state focused its energies. Threatening prohibition did have an impact on gazettes and it also had the benefit of conserving the resources which might have been poured into upholding any bans. Yet there is a need to differentiate between the success of these warnings in the short and long term. Threatening Dutch editors with exclusion from the French market succeeded in convincing journalists to print retractions and scared other gazetteers but

²⁰¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 527, fols. 20-21, Noailles to Vergennes, 13 January 1775.

it did not stop them from ever printing offensive articles again. French diplomats thus played a critical role in micro-managing the gazettes, using repeated threats to ensure compliance.

Rétat has suggested that the French government did not have the authority to make these threats a reality by completely closing its borders to extra-territorial gazettes.²⁰² It is fair to say that inefficiencies in the administration of the French print trade made it difficult for the French authorities to uphold prohibitions. Some of these complications can be perceived by following the prohibition which was placed upon the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* in April 1771. A few weeks later, the French foreign minister, La Vrillière, received word that the journal was making its way into France in spite of this ban. The gazetteer was passing copies clandestinely through provincial post offices and smuggling journals into Paris from just outside the capital.²⁰³ This shows how editors could get their papers into France in spite of bans.

The baron de Bon, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Brussels, realised that prohibition had not worked. Instead, Bon orchestrated an arrangement with the editor of the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* whereby the editor agreed to submit all articles on France to prior censorship.²⁰⁴ The editor had found a way to circumvent the ban but his methods were hardly practical in the longer term. Newspapers had to be able to inform their subscribers of how to collect their gazettes and also needed to create confidence that they would arrive. The *Gazette des Pays-Bas* could not reach the French market in this manner indefinitely. What is more, there were other examples of proscriptions which worked fairly effectively in the short term, especially during the aftermath of the Maupeou coup. Across the period from 1770 to 1789 the French government banned

²⁰² Rétat, 'Les Gazetiers de Hollande', p. 323.

²⁰³ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 202-03, Richemont to La Vrillière, 21 May 1771.

²⁰⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 285-86, Bon to d'Aiguillon, 21 October 1771.

foreign gazettes from France on at least 11 occasions (this occurred three times in 1771, in 1776, 1780, 1782, 1785, twice in 1787, 1788 and 1789. See Appendix A for details). These prohibitions were usually short-term, generally lasting only a matter of weeks. Prohibition was a way to shock gazetteers into line by reminding them of the power that France could have over the success of their business. For the French ministry, the desired effect of issuing these bans was twofold. First, it was a way to punish and hopefully bring into line an unruly gazetteer. Secondly, it was seen as part of the government's strategy of exemplary punishment. This again was part of the policy of focused censorship. French officials hoped that with attention focused on banning one gazette for a short period of time, other journalists would self-censor their publications for fear that the same treatment would be meted out to them.

Prohibition - or at least the prospect of it - was an effective tool because gazettes were a poor vehicle for clandestine distribution. Technically periodicals could circulate without going through the French postal system but it was relatively easy for the French state to pinpoint and halt their dissemination. In order to achieve stable sales within France, newspapers needed a fixed office and an avenue of distribution to ensure regular deliveries. This kind of solidity meant that newspapers were vulnerable to the machinations of the French state. The foreign office managed subscriptions to foreign gazettes which put French officials in a powerful position to take action against newspaper coverage which they did not approve of. The French state had an effective system for managing the newspaper trade, keeping it within acceptable boundaries rather than trying to prohibit it entirely. Prohibitions then were an extension of the government's strategy of micro-management more than they were authoritarian measures. Even when a gazette was banned, French officials recognised that these prohibitions were only a short-term measure designed to caution other gazetteers.

Another way in which the French government was able to extend control over the extra-territorial press was through the negotiation of permissions to circulate through the French postal system. The Swiss publisher the STN was involved in a bargaining process when it came to a periodical publication which touched upon politics and literature, the *Journal helvétique*.²⁰⁵ The firm acquired the rights to this journal in August 1769 and set about trying to broaden its readership outside the Swiss states. In July 1770 one of the directors of the STN wrote to Choiseul, then the French foreign minister, in order to make arrangements for the *Journal helvétique* to be disseminated within France. Ostervald knew that the *Journal encyclopédique*, composed and printed by Pierre Rousseau in Bouillon, had established an office in Paris to receive subscriptions and distribute journals and he asked permission for the STN to do the same.²⁰⁶ Choiseul saw no reason to oppose the dissemination of this journal and arranged for the *Journal helvétique* to be distributed via the French postal system for a fee.²⁰⁷

Ten years later the STN became more aggressive in its attempts to market this periodical within France. The firm's directors reckoned that part of the reason that the *Journal helvétique* lacked appeal for French readers was that its political news was frequently out of date by the time it reached France. So in 1781 the STN decided to split the periodical into two separate titles. The *Journal helvétique* continued to contain political and literary news and the company also began to print a purely literary periodical aimed primarily at non-Swiss readers which was named the *Journal de Neuchâtel*.²⁰⁸ The STN's directors now needed to secure French support for the

²⁰⁵ On the *Journal helvétique*, see Michel Schlup, 'Le Rêve impossible de la Société typographique de Neuchâtel: un Journal helvétique et 'parisien'?', in *L'édition neuchâtelois*, ed. by Schlup, pp. 143-55.

²⁰⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 380, fol. 249, Ostervald to Choiseul, 11 July 1770.

²⁰⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 380, fol. 340, Ostervald to Choiseul 4 September 1770; Michel Schlup, 'Diffusion et lecture du Journal helvétique, au temps de la Société typographique de Neuchâtel, 1769-1782', *La Diffusion et la lecture des journaux de langue française*, ed. by Hans Bots, pp. 59-70 (p. 63).

²⁰⁸ Schlup, 'Le Rêve impossible de la Société typographique de Neuchâtel', pp. 151-52.

dissemination of this new title. The STN endeavoured to negotiate with Miromesnil, the *garde des sceaux*, and Néville, the *directeur de la librairie*, but to no avail.²⁰⁹ Members of the French administration refused to bestow a privilege upon this journal and this ultimately led to its demise. The STN ceased to publish the periodical at the end of 1782 after failing in its efforts to increase the number of people who subscribed to the work from outside the Swiss states.²¹⁰ The French ministry did not take decisions about bestowing privileges lightly and in other cases, the refusal of permission was more immediate and final.

The issue of privilege was particularly significant when it came to Linguet's *Annales*. This political journal was published between 1777 and 1792, first from London and later from Brussels and Paris. With a peak circulation of 30,000 copies, the *Annales* reached more readers than the entire French newspaper press combined.²¹¹ Although it had a lot of subscribers, other gazettes may have had more people reading each copy of a paper. It was also stridently critical in tone and discussions of domestic politics were frequently to be found amongst its pages. As was the case with the *Gazette de Leyde*, Linguet's journal could be bold and was very popular within France. As such, the French authorities had a double incentive to keep a close watch over it. Linguet was volatile but he also had powerful allies at court. He supposedly even enjoyed the esteem of Louis XVI who subscribed to the *Annales*.²¹²

When he launched his journal in April 1777, Linguet used aggressive tactics to demand favourable treatment. He threatened to publish a corpus of *libelles* which would slander current and former members of the French government: d'Aiguillon,

²⁰⁹ Neuchâtel, BPUN, Fonds de la STN, MS 1213, fols. 284-85, Sandoz-Rollin to the STN, 1 October 1781; Neuchâtel, BPUN, Fonds de la STN, MS 1213, fols. 286-87, Sandoz-Rollin to the STN, 18 November 1781; Neuchâtel, BPUN, Fonds de la STN, MS 1213, fols. 288-89, Sandoz-Rollin to the STN, 23 September 1782.

²¹⁰ Schlup, 'Diffusion et lecture du Journal helvétique', p. 63.

²¹¹ Burrows, *A King's Ransom*, p. 147.

²¹² Levy, p. 193.

Miromesnil and Maurepas. After lengthy discussions, Vergennes agreed in August 1777 to give the *Annales* a *tolérance tacite* which would permit the periodical to be disseminated through the French mail system.²¹³ Unfortunately by the time this had been settled, one of Linguet's *libelles* had already appeared. This was his *Aiguilloniana*, the text targeted towards the former foreign minister.²¹⁴ Linguet, did, however agree to suppress the rest of his collection of calumny. Linguet got what he wanted but it could also be said that his arrangement worked in the French ministry's favour too since it followed in the example of the 'Postal Revolution' of 1759. As Burrows has argued, by allowing Linguet to access the French market, the government retained some leverage over him which they hoped would encourage him to confine his articles within acceptable limits.²¹⁵ Vergennes also confirmed his approval of Linguet when the journalist asked for and received permission to move the *Annales* to Brussels in 1778.²¹⁶ Vergennes agreed that Linguet could continue the *Annales* from the continent in the belief that this favour would help keep Linguet loyal to the French state.

There were other factors which inclined French officials to offer their support to Linguet. First, his fundamental loyalty to the French monarchy coupled with his enormous popularity meant that his writings could potentially bolster the stability of the *ancien régime*. Indeed, it was reported that Vergennes had actually offered Linguet a pension to become a state propagandist that he had turned down.²¹⁷ More importantly, French officials feared that Linguet's would publish the explosive attacks on the French ministry which he had threatened. This was a risk which was particularly potent since Linguet had many allies at court who could provide him with a wealth of incriminating information. Linguet was an unusual case, an unpredictable journalist who thought

²¹³ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 105-07.

²¹⁴ Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet, *Aiguilloniana; ou, anecdotes utiles pour l'histoire de France, au dix-huitième siècle, depuis l'année 1770* (London: [n. pub.], 1777)

²¹⁵ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 106-07.

²¹⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 530, fol. 111, Vergennes to d'Adhémar, 20 July 1778.

²¹⁷ Bachaumont (attrib.), *Mémoires secrets*, vol 16 (London: Adamson, 1782), p. 24.

nothing of aggravating the French state. He was very different to other Francophone gazetteers who underlined their deference to and respect for the French government. Moreover, Linguet had powerful allies who were ready to protect him from harm. Linguet's unique character meant that he required careful management. The French government was prepared to tolerate him in the hope that this would incline him to think more carefully about the kind of articles he printed. This tolerance came to a dramatic end in September 1780 when, on account of his writings, Linguet was arrested in Paris and locked up in the Bastille.²¹⁸ He did not emerge until May 1782.

Linguet's singularity becomes clear when we consider how the French government treated Mallet Du Pan, the Genevan journalist who continued the *Annales* after Linguet was sent to prison in 1780. In the early 1780s Mallet Du Pan beseeched Vergennes several times to authorise his version of Linguet's *Annales* and then later his own journal with a *tolérance tacite*.²¹⁹ Mallet Du Pan stressed that the success of his periodical would be undermined if he could not secure permission to disseminate it through the French posts.²²⁰ These pleas fell on deaf ears. Vergennes declared that Mallet Du Pan was covering French politics in too much detail and that in covering this subject at all, he was encroaching upon the privilege of existing French journals.²²¹ Mallet Du Pan's periodical was able to reach some French readers through clandestine channels but Vergennes' hostility meant it could not enjoy the same success as Linguet's. Linguet's politics, personality and popularity meant that the government was torn between appeasing and aggressively repressing him. Less prominent journalists like Mallet Du Pan had little in the way of leverage and were forced to submit to conditions imposed on them by the Bourbon ministry. The French state made use of its structure

²¹⁸ Levy, pp. 1-2.

²¹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 87, fols. 80-81, Mallet Du Pan to Vergennes, 18 January 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 93, fol. 467, Mallet Du Pan to Vergennes, 4 November 1782.

²²⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 87, fols. 80-81, Mallet Du Pan to Vergennes, 18 January 1781.

²²¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 94, fol. 97, Vergennes to Mallet Du Pan, 23 March 1783.

of permissions to keep journals in check. French officials were able to deny the right to circulate through the posts to periodicals they disapproved of. The state also employed these privileges in the hope of subjugating editors who were keen to retain their access to the French market.

In addition to negotiation and suppression, the French government had another means of control at its disposal. In some cases, the French state was able to arrange for foreign officials or French censors to check over the content of newspapers prior to their dissemination within France. Journalists outside France would stress their own willingness to assent to such instruments of control in the hope of being permitted to market their work to French readers. Mallet Du Pan repeatedly underlined his willingness to submit to censorship and the moderation of his views; he had ‘rien de commun avec les autres journaux’.²²² Vergennes was unsympathetic to Mallet’s request, but there were other instances when the foreign ministry considered the possibility of putting firmer structures of pre-publication censorship for Francophone journals in place. When the Dutch gazettes seemed unruly in 1774, Desnoyers proposed that these newspapers might be persuaded to present articles relating to France on separate sheets which could be easily changed or replaced.²²³ Burrows and Darnton have acknowledged that the French government also approved the circulation of the London edition of the *Courier de l’Europe* on the condition that issues were submitted to a French censor before they were published.²²⁴

Censorship also worked relatively effectively when it came to the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* in 1771. Seeing that prohibition had not been entirely effective and finding the local authorities to be unresponsive, Bon, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Brussels, turned back to the gazetteer. Bon initially requested that all items be communicated to him prior to

²²² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 92, fol. 418, Mallet Du Pan to Vergennes, 26 August 1782.

²²³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 212-14, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 30 September 1774.

²²⁴ Burrows, ‘The Courier de L’Europe’, p. 191; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 325.

publication. When the editor balked at this request, the two parties settled on an agreement whereby all articles relating to the French state would be subject to censorship from a secretary of state in Brussels.²²⁵ Bon then advised d'Aiguillon to rescind the ban on the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* in favour of this new arrangement. He promised to continue to monitor the local mechanisms of censorship and regularly send copies of the newspaper to d'Aiguillon for verification.²²⁶ So the French government found a way to control the content of a gazette without having to keep in place a ban which had proved difficult to sustain.

This agreement was shaken only a few times during this period. In 1778, 1786 and 1787 French diplomats took issue with reports relating to the French state which the local official in charge of censorship had already given his assent to.²²⁷ In 1778 and 1786, the French diplomat complained to local officials who professed to be contrite and promised to reprimand the editor and the censor of the *Gazette des Pays-Bas*. By 1787, the French state was preoccupied with the pre-revolutionary crisis which meant that this censorship arrangement was not a priority. Montmorin, the French foreign minister, merely suggested that the editor should be scolded.²²⁸ Pre-publication censorship therefore worked well for the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* but began to break down towards the end of the *ancien régime*. This form of censorship was comparatively rare because it was complicated to organise and depended upon the obedience of foreign officials who were difficult to control. Nevertheless, its existence shows that the

²²⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 209-10, Bon to La Vrillière, 5 June 1771.

²²⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 285-86, Bon to d'Aiguillon, 21 October 1771.

²²⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 171, fol. 165, Garnier to Vergennes, 30 June 1778; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 175, fol. 59, Hirsinger to Vergennes, 13 June 1786; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 175, fol. 145, Hirsinger to Vergennes, 4 December 1786; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 175, fol. 370, Hirsinger to Montmorin, 25 June 1787; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 176, fol. 31, Hirsinger to Montmorin, 10 July 1787.

²²⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 176, fol. 13, Montmorin to Hirsinger, 6 July 1787.

French government had well-developed and effective techniques to manage the periodical press which did not involve overt aggression.

The realities of managing print made French officials aware that proactive methods of control only succeeded within certain limits. The French government also employed more subtle techniques designed to manage and manipulate the flow of information available to extra-territorial gazetteers. The French foreign ministry saw the potential benefits in using foreign journals to spread its own propaganda since these newspapers had a reputation for independence and credibility. The publisher Panckoucke had an agreement with the French government that allowed him to include some items of political interest in his journals.²²⁹ The titles of his *Journal de Genève* and *Journal politiques de Bruxelles* suggested a foreign provenance but they were actually printed inside France. The French state authorised Panckoucke to print some political news in the hope of attracting readers away from foreign periodicals which were more difficult to bring into line. Foreign editors sometimes got a one-off payment for reporting on certain topics and some journalists even enjoyed a regular pension from the French court in return for favourable coverage.²³⁰ More commonly, the foreign ministry exploited the French diplomats' rapport with foreign journalists by asking the diplomats to lobby to have certain articles inserted in the Francophone press.²³¹

In the early 1780s, the government devised a particularly effective method of managing the news. Early in 1781, Vergennes instigated a campaign against the *nouvellistes* working in Paris and, after raids and arrests, several newsmongers ended up in the Bastille.²³² Pascal Boyer was one of the writers imprisoned in January 1781 but his arrest ended up leading to an arrangement with the French authorities whereby he

²²⁹ Censer, *French Press*, p. 48.

²³⁰ Jerzy Lojek, 'Gazettes internationales de la langue française dans la seconde moitié au XVIIIème siècle', in *Modèles et moyens*, ed. by Mercier, pp. 369-82 (p. 374).

²³¹ For an example of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 66, fol. 329, Vergennes to Sabatier de Cabre, 12 February 1776.

²³² Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', pp. 95-96.

supplied news on French politics to foreign gazettes. This agreement came about partly thanks to the intervention of Louis-Melchior-Armand, vicomte de Polignac, French *ambassadeur* in Solothurn, who interceded with Vergennes on Boyer's behalf. Polignac pointed out that there was no evidence of Boyer's guilt to be found amongst his papers and also intimated the potential value of the latter's journalistic skills.²³³ Boyer had worked for several gazettes and also furnished Polignac himself with a bulletin of interesting tidbits on his last trip to Paris. Vergennes was in agreement on the subject of Boyer's innocence and told Polignac that he would do his best to help him out in some way.²³⁴ This promise was quickly realised as Vergennes found a way to reconcile Boyer's journalistic talent with government interests. Boyer was put at the head of a semi-official news bureau in Paris which was subsidised by the French government and personally supervised by Vergennes.²³⁵

This office supplied information on French politics to the *Gazette de Leyde* and several other Francophone periodicals. Popkin's analysis of the content of the *Gazette de Leyde* indicates that, largely thanks to Boyer, the paper took a more conservative stance on French politics for much of the 1780s.²³⁶ It is unclear whether Luzac knew about the intimacy of Boyer's connection with the French government. Regardless, Luzac accepted pre-approved news from Boyer's semi-official bureau across the final decade of the *ancien régime*. Popkin has uncovered evidence which suggests that Antoine Bernard Caillard, secretary at the French embassy in The Hague, was instructed to win over the editor of this gazette.²³⁷ Caillard entered into a regular correspondence with Luzac in the hope of influencing the content of his newspaper. These methods of manipulating information were designed to make the periodical press easier to manage.

²³³ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 412, fols. 40-42, Polignac to Vergennes, 29 January 1781.

²³⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 412, fols. 77-78, Vergennes to Polignac, 13 February 1781.

²³⁵ Hardman, *French Politics*, p. 242.

²³⁶ Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', pp. 81-82.

²³⁷ Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', p. 103.

If information was controlled, the diplomats would ideally be able to spend more time concentrating on suppressing the most offensive examples of foreign literature.

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Exploring the extent to which the French state was successful in managing the foreign periodical press can help us to better appreciate the wider implications of this system of control. Was the French government able to limit the impact journals might have had on the French populace? With the press largely censored within France, extra-territorial newspapers were of crucial importance in spreading information about political events that might not have otherwise been available. The newspaper press provided a regular forum for the discussion of political issues. This chapter has illustrated that the French government found ways to manage extra-territorial gazettes and ensure that the details of French politics were covered in a manner that it found acceptable. Indeed, it focused much of its attention on this task. The French foreign ministry seems to have had more success regulating the press than it did when it came to controlling the dissemination of books and pamphlets.

During the 1770s and 1780s French officials worked hard to prevent overt criticism of France from being published in the press. Foreign gazetteers were thus subjugated to the French state to an extent but this did not mean that their journals were all insipid and devoid of any influence. Extra-territorial gazettes remained important in providing political information to the French populace. What is more, the French government's focus could have been too narrow. French officials concentrated on the elements which it felt were subversive but other articles which examined democratic revolutions in Geneva or the United States of America for example might

have undermined the French state just as easily.²³⁸ Nevertheless, the foreign ministry was able to limit coverage of French affairs of state. This was the information which was arguably of most relevance to the French populace. The French government could not prevent the extra-territorial press from entering France, nor did it want to. It had a working system in place to ensure that coverage stayed within acceptable boundaries.

The French government was never completely successful in its efforts to control the Francophone media. Yet, French officials recognised that complete command over foreign periodicals was unlikely to be achieved and sought to work effectively within more limited parameters. The French state had enough influence over editors to ensure retractions were printed speedily in most cases. This meant that the potentially lengthy and contentious negotiations with local authorities could be avoided in all but the most serious cases. It was rare for a gazette to be excluded from the French market but French officials employed the threat of prohibition skilfully to keep editors in line. It makes sense to question whether printed retractions and sycophantic apologies really had any impact on readers once the offensive article had already been printed. Perhaps the damage had already been done. However, it is important to remember that in most cases a printed retraction was enough to satisfy the French government. Moreover, it was rare for gazettes to re-offend in the immediate aftermath of being reprimanded by the French state. Threats and prohibitions also made other editors anxious and inclined them to self-censor material that might provoke the consternation of France.

The diplomats monitored the extra-territorial press continually and tried to tweak coverage in order to protect the reputation of the French state and its elites. When more serious measures were needed, the French foreign ministry worked on the principle of making an example of any journalists who were becoming unruly rather

²³⁸ Censer, *French Press*, pp. 5, 51.

than fully flexing its muscles in the extra-territorial arena. The government's primary aim was to curtail critical discussion of affairs relating to the French state and this objective was broadly achieved.

Chapter 5 – Policing Print: The French Government and the Extra-Territorial Book Trade

The French government kept a close eye on the Francophone periodical press and complaints about this medium were frequent. Yet the state's most active policing was directed towards the extra-territorial book trade. This chapter will consider how the foreign ministry endeavoured to curb the dissemination of texts which it considered to be very dangerous. Between 1770 and 1789 the issue of regulation foreign books and pamphlet was considered by the French government on at least 68 occasions (see Appendix A for further details of these instances). This chapter is primarily based upon the major affairs of external censorship in this period. It will argue that the Bourbon state was relatively successful in censoring the production of literature which it found abhorrent in the 1770s. It will illustrate that the French state set its own limits when it came to the extra-territorial trade. There was a functioning idea of what could and could not be tolerated which guided external censorship. The illicit element in the extra-territorial book trade became more aggressive in the early 1780s but in the summer of 1783 a change of tactics allowed the French government to take control once again. French dominance over the foreign book trade lasted at least until the onset of the pre-revolutionary crisis.

Illicit Books and Pamphlets

As has been outlined, there were no firm guidelines detailing the kind of literature which was considered unacceptable. Chapter 2 explored how diplomats and foreign ministers played an important role in determining whether a particular book should be

stopped from circulating. French officials did not usually articulate why exactly an individual title should be pursued. Despite uncertainty over the specifics, there was a general understanding shared by French officials in relation to the sorts of texts which were intolerable. By following the discussion on external censorship through the foreign ministry correspondence, it is evident that the French government was primarily concerned about certain themes. What also stands out is a remarkable tolerance. French foreign ministers were prepared to withstand most books and only reacted to the publication of a limited range of titles. By the final decades of the *ancien régime*, the liberalising influence of the Enlightenment had started to penetrate the corridors of power. Openly 'Enlightened' ministers like Malesherbes or Turgot displayed clemency and advocated reform.¹ Although d'Aiguillon and Vergennes were far from being proponents of the Enlightenment, it seems fair to say that they could not help but be influenced by such shifts in the intellectual atmosphere. The questioning and critical strands of Enlightenment thought broadened the possibilities for contemporary debate in the context of rising literacy rates and an increased demand for the printed word.² In this climate, it was unrealistic for the French government to expect to be able to uphold the same rules of censorship which had applied at the beginning of the eighteenth century. This kind of pragmatism was particularly important when it came to the extra-territorial print trade. The difficulty of imposing control beyond French borders compelled the foreign ministry to concentrate attention on what seemed to be the most reprehensible literature.

¹ For more on the influence of Enlightenment within the French government, see Elizabeth Andrews, 'Between *Auteurs* and *Abonnés*: Reading the *Journal de Paris*, 1787-1789', *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, 37 (2009), 135-47 (p. 140-41) <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/w/wsfh/0642292.0037.009/--between-auteurs-and-abonnes-reading-the-journal-de-paris?rgn=main;view=fulltext;q1=andrews> [accessed 11 January 2013]; Birn, *Royal Censorship*, pp. 116-17; Robert Darnton, 'Censorship, a Comparative View: France 1789-East Germany, 1989', *Representations*, 49 (1995), 40-60 (pp. 52-53); Edelstein, pp. 90-91.

² James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 81-86.

Internal government documents from the period used a formula to understand subversive texts. Officials repeatedly asserted that works which seemed to threaten the state, the Church or the tenets of conventional morality needed to be stopped. This doctrine was interpreted in a very specific manner when it came to the extra-territorial print trade; the French authorities targeted a limited range of works abroad. Texts which discussed matters of state were certainly a concern. As explored in Chapter 4 in relation to the extra-territorial periodical press, the Bourbon ministry was determined to limit what information about French politics was publicly available. Affairs of state were considered to be the business of the King and his ministers rather than something which should be up for discussion in a public forum.

The need to buttress the stability of the state and uphold standards of morality overlapped when it came to the genre of texts which was pursued most often by the French foreign ministry. Officials were especially aggrieved by *libelle* literature and the most extraordinary examples of external policing were directed towards these texts. These works slandered those at the summit of French society and portrayed them as being embroiled in sexual scandals, financial plots and courtly intrigues. It is vital to appreciate that the foreign ministry rarely reacted to the publication of texts which undermined the Roman Catholic Church; protecting the faith was simply not a priority. Officials charged with the task of policing print abroad had a clear idea of the kind of material which needed to be suppressed.

As examined in Chapter 4, the French diplomatic team spent a lot of time trying to limit the discussion of France's internal affairs in Francophone journals. This concern was also the primary motivating factor when it came to the matter of policing the book trade. As an example, in January 1782 Castelnau, the *résident* in Geneva, alerted Vergennes to the publication of a small pamphlet which he suspected had been composed by the Swiss financier Etienne Clavière. Castelnau was worried because it

contained a few lines which were critical of the French state.³ Vergennes did not authorise Castelnau to try to uncover the author or publisher of this work but was happy to learn that local authorities were taking measures against it. The foreign minister was satisfied when Castelnau informed him that the *Petit Conseil* in Geneva had condemned the work and declared that all copies were to be burnt.

French officials also found texts relating to the French justice system to be disquieting when they targeted the inequitable circumstances of arrest and the conditions of imprisonment. The comte de Mirabeau's *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état* from 1782 condemned the deployment of *lettres de cachet* to arrest and imprison men indefinitely without due process. Vergennes issued orders against the Swiss publishers who had printed this work.⁴ French diplomats were also vigilant when two works on the Bastille came onto the market in the Netherlands in September 1783. These were Linguet's account of his incarceration in France's most notorious prison, his *Mémoires sur la Bastille* and a second, augmented edition of *Remarques historiques et anecdotes sur le château de la Bastille*.⁵ Bérenger, the *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, told Vergennes that he would do all he could to unearth the identity of the printers. The diplomat also informed the *Grand pensionnaire* in Holland of the publication of these texts and tried to stress 'la nécessité d'en prévenir la propagation, en infligeant des peines sévères tant aux auteurs, qu'aux imprimeurs et libraires qui se rendent leurs complices'.⁶ However, the impact of this kind of literature should not be over-emphasised. In their work on the Bastille, Lüsebrink and Reichardt have emphasised the importance of such pamphlets in perpetuating a view of the French monarchy as despotic.⁷ It is important to remember

³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 39-40, Castelnau to Vergennes, 10 January 1782.

⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse, 201, fol. 336, Vergennes to Goltz, 17 October 1782.

⁵ Note: Although the *Remarques historiques* were published anonymously and have subsequently been attributed to Joseph Marie Brossais du Perray, Burrows has argued the text was written by Morande. See Burrows, *A King's Ransom*, p. 45.

⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783.

⁷ Lüsebrink and Reichardt, pp. 6-37

that there were only a handful of such titles in the later eighteenth-century.

Nevertheless, the sensational nature of the exposés written by Linguet and Mirabeau, two men who had been incarcerated themselves, made these works international best-sellers. The French government made efforts to prevent their dissemination but readers within and beyond France were still able to access them.

Libelles

Information about politics was important but the government was also concerned about those texts which maligned the reputation of powerful elite figures or members of the royal family. These texts were considered to be all the more potent since they combined information about French politics with slanderous allegations. The prolonged campaigns of external policing which will be explored in this chapter were largely targeted towards this kind of literature. Those in the foreign ministry were also most likely to vocalise the motivations for extra-territorial censorship when elites had been attacked. Such texts were known as *libelles*.⁸ The fourth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* of 1762 and Jean-François Féraud's *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française* published from 1787 to 1788 both defined the word as 'écrit injurieux'.⁹ *Libelles* were described in the *Encyclopédie* by the chevalier de Jaucourt as follows, 'écrit satirique,

⁸ On the *libelle* genre in the long eighteenth century, see Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*; Olivier Ferret, Anne-Marie Mercier-Faivre and Chantal Thomas, eds., *Dictionnaire des vies privées, 1722-1842*, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 2011:02 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011).

⁹ *Dictionnaires d'autrefois*, University of Chicago: ARTFL Project (2013), Search for 'libelle' in *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* and *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française* <http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdico1look.pl?strippedhw=libelle> [accessed 11 January 2013].

injurieux contre la probité, l'honneur et la réputation de quelqu'un'.¹⁰ This element of slander was considered to be a key component of any *libelle*. Miromesnil, the *garde des sceaux*, expressed concerns about texts which contained 'injures concertées dans le dessein de nuire à la France ou à des particuliers, et qui forment par cette raison la première classe des véritables libelles'.¹¹ It must also be stressed that the term *libelle* was often employed in ambiguous ways by members of the French government. *Libelle* was used as a reference point for any kind of illicit or controversial material.¹² This more generalised use of the word *libelle* is acknowledged in Féraud's *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française*.¹³

This study argues that the French government regarded *libelles* as absolutely intolerable works which needed to be suppressed. The fear of *libelle* literature was deep-rooted in old regime France. In the early seventeenth century for instance, it was decreed that writers found guilty of composing slanderous texts were to be put to death.¹⁴ Whilst this extreme measure was seldom enforced, it suggests how far and for how long the publication of *libelles* worried French officials. *Libelles* were a cause for concern because they constituted an affront to the traditions of hierarchy, honour and deference upon which the *ancien régime* was grounded. The research of William Reddie and Charles Walton has underlined the continuing importance of the idea of a code of

¹⁰ *Encyclopédie; ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers: par une société de gens de lettres*, ed. by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, vol 9, p. 459. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project, ed. by Robert Morrissey (2013) <http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.8:1420.encycopedie0313.4663940> [accessed 11 January 2013].

¹¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 420, fol. 9, Miromesnil to Vergennes, 23 January 1787.

¹² Paris, AMAE, CP Allemagne 646, fols. 76-78, Bombelles to Vergennes, 2 February 1777; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 525, fol. 3, Sartine to Vergennes, 6 April 1773; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 528, fols. 12-16, Desnoyers to Vergennes, 8 September 1775; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 168, fols. 209-10, Bon to d'Aiguillon, 5 June 1771.

¹³ *Dictionnaires d'autrefois*, University of Chicago: ARTFL Project (2013), Search for 'libelle' in *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française* <http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdico1look.pl?strippedhw=libelle> [accessed 11 January 2013].

¹⁴ Emily Butterworth, *Poisoned Words: Slander and Satire in Early Modern France* (London: Legenda, in association with the Society for French Studies, 2006), pp. 2-3.

honour in eighteenth-century France and beyond.¹⁵ Darnton's study of the history of the *libelle* genre also stresses its resonance for contemporaries. Whilst the stories of political, financial and sexual corruption might seem exaggerated today, this style of literature was specifically designed to appeal to eighteenth-century readers and it gained potency by repeating anecdotes to create a powerful narrative of official degradation.¹⁶ Slander thus had the potential to seriously undermine individual reputations, with significant political ramifications when the figure in question was a member of the French royal family or government. The governmental obsession with the suppression of *libelle* literature is thus a product of the significance placed upon matters of honour and reputation in eighteenth-century France. Such texts were also problematic because the French government was committed to restricting the public's access to information about French state affairs. As Burrows and Darnton have acknowledged in their respective studies, the most contentious *libelles* had a political context.¹⁷ They represented an attack on the government, its personnel or its policies. Finally, self-interest was also key here. The powerful figures in the French ministry leapt to the defence of their friends, colleagues and superiors.

As explained in Chapter 4, French diplomats repeatedly reprimanded newspaper editors who printed articles which might be seen to malign powerful figures. The major international campaigns which were launched against *libelles* provide evidence that the Bourbon regime viewed these texts as a fundamental challenge to the stability and power of the French state. The foreign ministry was obsessed with controlling the image of the elite figures who led France and *libelles* which discussed members of the royal family were viewed with particular seriousness. Although these types of works

¹⁵ William M. Reddy, *The Invisible Code: Honor and Sentiment in Postrevolutionary France, 1814-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 1-17; Walton, pp. 113-115.

¹⁶ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 267-75.

¹⁷ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 171-73; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 258, 264.

sometimes had an erotic element, Burrows has argued that the sexual content of *libelles* has been overstated.¹⁸ Most of these texts did not mention sex explicitly. This suggestion is corroborated by this broader study. The government was most concerned about the personal element in *libelle* literature, regardless of whether or not there was any sexual content. Moreover, the French foreign ministry did not concentrate on works which were primarily pornographic or erotic in nature.¹⁹ Such works generally needed to be connected to contemporary politics in some way before the French government would consider pursuing them.

There are many examples of the foreign ministry acting in the extra-territorial arena when texts which attacked the reputation of elites appeared on the scene. The foreign ministry also endeavoured to pre-empt the publication of defamatory texts. The diplomatic corps were instructed to engage in efforts to curb the dissemination of these texts and try to punish those who had been involved in their production. The French authorities were even prepared to take measures against *libelles* when the individuals under attack in the works showed little concern for them. In July 1782, Vergennes tried to uncover the author of *Extrait du journal d'un officier de la marine de l'escadre de M. le comte d'Estaing*, the attack on the admiral comte d'Estaing which had been printed by the STN in Neuchâtel.²⁰ Vergennes was presumably alerted to the work after the STN sent 1,800 copies to Poinçot, one of the major booksellers in Versailles.²¹ Vergennes asserted that this work was a 'libelle punissable' and instructed Bâcher, the *chargé d'affaires* in

¹⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 172.

¹⁹ The political significance of erotic texts has been stressed by Lynn Hunt and others in Lynn Hunt, ed., *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

²⁰ Anon., *Extrait du journal d'un officier de la marine de l'escadre de M. le comte d'Estaing* ([Neuchâtel]: [Société typographique de Neuchâtel], 1782).

²¹ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Book, *Extrait du journal d'un officier de la marine*

http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0003696&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

Solothurn, to try to find out who had written the work.²² The foreign minister stressed that it was imperative to defend the reputations of military and naval leaders, even if the comte d'Estaing himself was not taking the work particularly seriously. Ostervald, one of the directors of the STN, claimed to have no knowledge of the source of this manuscript but Vergennes urged Bâcher to continue to seek out this information.²³

As the research of Burrows and Darnton has emphasised, it was texts (rumoured or real) which denigrated members of the royal family which were undoubtedly taken the most seriously by the French authorities.²⁴ Extraordinary efforts were made to prevent French readers from getting their hands on such texts. For instance, in June 1777, the French government learned that a pamphlet entitled *La Reine des velches et sa surintendante; ou, les deux amants femelles* was due to be published imminently in London.²⁵ This was the first known pamphlet to maintain that Marie-Antoinette was a lesbian. Noailles, the French *ambassadeur* in London, had trouble tracking down the work so Vergennes asked Nathaniel Parker Forth, a British envoy working in Paris, to help stop the work. Forth was able to locate the printed copies, buy up the entire edition and bring it to the French capital under lock and key in January 1778.²⁶ This example demonstrates that extra-territorial policing was most determined when it came to the matter of suppressing works which attacked members of the French royal family.

The *libelle* trade in eighteenth-century France cannot be fully understood without some appreciation of the complicity of the governmental elite in this literature. In his earlier work, Darnton postulated that scurrilous *libelles* were produced by resentful would-be *philosophes* who lived and worked in the Parisian gutter. It was the failure of

²² Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 147, Vergennes to Bâcher, 30 July 1782.

²³ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 216-17, Vergennes to Bâcher, 8 September 1782.

²⁴ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 89, 108-11; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 129.

²⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 523, fols. 217-18, Vergennes to Noailles, 7 June 1777.

²⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 528, fol. 202, Forth to Maurepas, 30 January 1778. For a full account of this affair, see Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 108-11.

these ‘hacks’ to achieve real literary success which imbued their writing with a torrent of anger powerful enough to sap the strength of the French monarchy.²⁷ Jeremy Popkin countered this line of reasoning with evidence that from at least the time of the Maupeou coup in 1771, pamphleteers were writing at the behest of political elites who used pamphlets to settle disagreements between themselves.²⁸ The idea that this provocative literature could not have reached publication without some support from French officials has been confirmed by Darnton’s latest study of the *libelle* genre.²⁹ In addition to highlighting more of the ministerial complicity uncovered by Popkin, Darnton also shows that several police officials grasped the chance to make money from the *libelle* trade.

An awareness of elite complicity was an important consideration when it came to the task of policing *libelles* in the extra-territorial sphere. The French foreign office could not openly attack the powerful ministers who sponsored such works and so concentrated instead on chasing the authors and publishers who had brought them to market. The diplomatic correspondence shows that the foreign ministry was particularly worried about authors like Linguet since it was feared that their elite connections would give them access to much potentially incriminating intelligence. The extent to which courtiers, ministers and police officials patronised the illicit book trade helps to explain why total control of the book trade was impossible to realise. The governmental elite were accustomed to contesting each other through the use of *libelles*. This was a fact of life and the foreign ministry had to find a way to circumvent elite patronage in order to deal with the worst aspects of the *libelle* genre.

²⁷ Darnton, ‘The High Enlightenment’, pp. 101-02.

²⁸ Jeremy D. Popkin, ‘Pamphlet Journalism at the End of the Old Regime’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 22 (1989), 351-67 (pp. 356-57).

²⁹ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 124-38.

Tolerance Extended Abroad

In considering the policing of the extra-territorial print trade, it is just as important to ascertain which kinds of texts French officials declined to chase. One sector of the book trade which does not seem to have necessitated repressive measures was philosophical thought. By the last decades of the old regime, the Enlightenment was becoming less and less controversial and had many adherents at Versailles. Across the 1770s and 1780s, there were still philosophical works which were rejected by censors or condemned and confiscated by the authorities within France.³⁰ However, the French foreign ministers were not prepared to mobilise the diplomatic network to suppress philosophical texts. This was because external censorship was focused, targeted only towards what were considered to be the most reprehensible books.

This mix of tolerance and resignation is evident in debate surrounding the publication of an edition of the *Encyclopédie* in Geneva. In July 1771, both Sartine, the *directeur de la librairie* and *lieutenant général* of the police of Paris, and d'Aiguillon, the foreign minister, became anxious when Christophe de Beaumont, the Archbishop of Paris, complained about a new edition of the *Encyclopédie* which was being published in Geneva by the Cramer brothers.³¹ Hennin, the *résident* in Geneva, had already informed the foreign ministry about the Cramers' involvement with this text but he had not been listened to. As a result, Hennin assumed that the brothers were preparing the edition in association with Paris booksellers with the tacit consent of the French government.³² The foreign ministry was ready to tolerate the publication of the *Encyclopédie* until the Archbishop of Paris became involved. Even then, the state declined to take serious measures against the edition, despite knowing the identity of the publishers. Hennin

³⁰ Birn, *Royal Censorship*, pp. 68-98.

³¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 79, Beaumont to d'Aiguillon, 30 July 1771; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 82, d'Aiguillon to Beaumont, 4 August 1771.

³² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 83, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 5 August 1771.

visited local booksellers and publishers and tried to warn them off by asserting that this version of the *Encyclopédie* would not be allowed to circulate in France. However, local traders were able to resist this pressure as they claimed the edition was also going to be sold in the rest of Europe. Hennin's pessimism about the possibility of stopping the Genevan *Encyclopédie* was enough to convince d'Aiguillon that any further action would be futile.³³ The foreign ministry did not take issue with the publication of the *Encyclopédie* until they were compelled to by the complaints of the Archbishop.

We see further evidence of indifference to this text in 1776. In December of this year Néville, the *directeur de la librairie*, condemned an augmented Swiss edition of the work, this time printed by Felice in Yverdon.³⁴ Vergennes did not authorise any action to curb the spread of this edition. Evidently philosophical works were not thought to constitute a big enough problem to necessitate international policing campaigns. Indeed, in his work on the STN edition of the *Encyclopédie* Darnton pointed out that, 'Far from arousing any opposition among the French authorities, the quarto [edition of the *Encyclopédie*] was advertised, shipped and sold everywhere in the country with their active support'.³⁵ Suppressing philosophical discourse was not a priority for the French government and was even less of a pressing concern in the extra-territorial arena. It was not the case that these kinds of works were purely theoretical without a tangible connection to contemporary politics or events. Philosophy itself could represent a forceful challenge to the status quo. Yet, any potentially subversive elements in such works were difficult to perceive and assess, especially when compared to the bold nature of the *libelles*.

The system of extra-territorial policing also showed little concern for texts which challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. This attitude was largely

³³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 86, d'Aiguillon to Beaumont, 11 August 1771.

³⁴ Paris, BNF, MF 22180, fol. 66, 16 December 1776.

³⁵ Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment*, p. 534.

extended to material which was anti-clerical, irreligious or which promoted other faiths. This was simply a corollary of the foreign ministry's strategy of highly focused censorship. The authorities were prepared to tolerate the circulation of the majority of books; they only directed measures against those which were considered to be the very worst titles. Birn's research into the work of the royal censors has demonstrated that they showed toleration to Protestant works, within certain limits.³⁶ This same tolerant attitude can be seen in the French foreign ministry. Yet there were also some practical factors which could explain why works which challenged the Catholic religion might have been tolerated. For much of the 1750s and 1760s, religion was one of the most controversial issues of the day and also had a political edge. The Jansenists were a Roman Catholic sect whose influence grew in the early eighteenth century.³⁷ In 1713 a papal bull enacted by Pope Clement XI condemned several tenets of Jansenism as heretical. This bull *Unigenitus* became French law in 1730. Despite coming under attack from the crown, the Jansenists did have the support of the *parlements*. Some magistrates were Jansenists themselves; others saw the battle over Jansenism in political terms; as a way to defend the state from papal intervention. Pressure from the Jansenists in the *parlements* compelled Louis XV to attack the Jesuits, a rival Catholic sect. In 1764 the Jesuit order was dissolved in France; Jesuits were forced to renounce their vows or be expelled from France.

By the final two decades of the *ancien régime*, much of the heat had dissipated from the issue of religion. There is also the question of the severity of the threat posed by such works. The only major and overt work of atheism published in these years was *Système de la nature; ou, des loix du monde physique et du monde moral* by Paul-Henri Thiry, baron d'Holbach. This is in contrast to the string of *libelles* which were printed or in the

³⁶ Birn, *Royal Censorship*, pp 45-47.

³⁷ On the Jansenists, see Dale Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 75-134.

offing during the 1770s and 1780s. But this is not the full story. By following instructions issued by the French foreign ministers, it is clear to see that in this period these men took the deliberate decision not to pursue works which disputed the Roman Catholic faith. Published for the first time in 1770, *Système de la nature* was a radical work of materialism which denied the existence of God. However, there is no evidence that the French foreign ministry acted to prevent this work from being sent into France from abroad or punish those who had been involved in its production. Mark Curran has suggested that in the context of the Maupeou coup, the French state was too distracted to chase copies of *Système de la nature*.³⁸ This is probably true but it was also the case that pursuing these kinds of works was not part of the government's strategy. Protestant works were also able to circulate unchallenged. For example, the STN was free to market its editions of the Protestant Bible in France despite a French prohibition against the sale of this text.³⁹

It is probably fair to say French officials would have preferred that texts which attacked Roman Catholicism did not reach the market. Yet, there were only three occasions in this period when the foreign ministry was prepared to take action to prevent the circulation of texts which were primarily focused on challenging the Catholic faith (in 1780, 1782 and 1787. See Appendix A for further details). As an example, in May 1787, Chrétien François de Lamoignon, marquis de Bâville, now the *garde des sceaux*, reported that 600 copies of a work promoting Jewish rights had made their way into France. According to Lamoignon, this text was *De La Réforme politique des juifs* by Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, a writer who also worked as a secretary within the Prussian foreign ministry.⁴⁰ Lamoignon specifically mentioned this title and author but it is likely that he was referring to a work attributed to Mirabeau which was published in

³⁸ Mark Curran, *Atheism, Religion and Enlightenment in Pre-Revolutionary Europe* (London: Royal Historical Society, 2012), p. 110.

³⁹ Freedman, *Books without Borders*, p. 147.

⁴⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 111, fol. 21, Lamoignon de Bâville to Montmorin, 24 May 1787.

1787. *Sur Moses Mendelssobn, sur la réforme politique des juifs et en particulier sur la révolution tentée en leur faveur en 1753 dans la Grande Bretagne* encompassed parts of Dohm's work within its pages.⁴¹ The French translation of Dohm's original work, *De la Réforme Politique des juifs* had initially been condemned by French censors and suppressed when it was published for the first time in 1782.⁴² Lamoignon stressed that foreign traders should not be permitted to simply ignore French laws but Montmorin, the foreign minister, declined to authorise any measures against this text. Again this shows how far the foreign ministry was prepared to tolerate the circulation of such texts because it was concentrating instead on halting the spread of works which attacked the French state or its leaders.

This willingness to overlook anti-Catholic literature has wider implications for current perceptions of the power of the illicit print trade in eighteenth-century France. Darnton has suggested that the old regime monarchy was 'desacralized' by forbidden literature.⁴³ In the eighteenth century, the King's right to rule was seen as being handed down from God. In Darnton's view, tales of the royal's family's sexual exploits and financial decadence in *libelles* undermined the sacred legitimacy of the French monarchy. Other scholars have doubted that the stories in *libelles* really had the power to fundamentally challenge the legitimacy of the monarchy in *ancien régime* France. Burrows, Eisenstein and Popkin have all pointed out that readers might just as easily have taken *libelles* with a pinch of salt.⁴⁴ The findings of this research project indicate that the French state was not overly concerned with the matter of protecting the Roman

⁴¹ Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, *Sur Moses Mendelssobn, sur la réforme politique des Juifs, et en particulier sur la révolution tentée en leur faveur en 1753 dans la Grande Bretagne* (London: [n. pub.], 1787).

⁴² Michael Löwy, 'Review of De La Réforme politique des Juifs', *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, 59 (1985), 257.

⁴³ Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, p. 165.

⁴⁴ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 77-78; Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, 'By-Passing the Enlightenment: Taking an Underground Route to Revolution', in *The Darnton Debate*, ed. by Mason, pp. 174-75; Popkin, 'Robert Darnton's Alternative', pp. 121-28.

Catholic faith from challenges expressed in print. The focus of extra-territorial policing was political and the state clearly saw power in political rather than religious terms. It was texts with a political resonance which were targeted for repressive measures. Works which discussed rights of Jews had political implications because it was the French state which decided whether or not political rights should be extended to this sector of the populace.⁴⁵ Texts which were simply anti-clerical or concerned with explicitly theological questions did not merit action in the extra-territorial arena.

Piracy was another aspect of the extra-territorial print trade which the foreign ministry tended not to concern itself with. As emphasised in Chapter 1, publishers working outside France routinely contravened the permissions and privileges issued by the French administration of the book trade. Yet counterfeit editions printed beyond France's borders were not seen as a pressing problem. The idea that foreign publishers were profiting from piracy and undercutting the business of provincial French traders in the process did concern the French government. However, it was not something that the foreign ministry concentrated on as part of its strategy of focused policing. Piracy was unfortunate but not something that they explicitly aimed to remedy. Counterfeit editions were discussed in the diplomatic correspondence on occasion but such works were never pursued with the same kind of vigour as *libelles* or political tracts. In August 1772, Jean-Pierre François Ripert de Monclar, the *procureur général* of the *parlement* of Provence, contacted d'Aiguillon to inform him that a counterfeit edition of a work that he had published in 1769 was being printed in Lausanne.⁴⁶ This was his *Mémoire du procureur général du Roi du parlement de Provence, sur la souveraineté du Roi à Avignon et dans le comtat Venaissin*. D'Aiguillon instructed Beauteville, the *ambassadeur* in Solothurn, to ask that the cantonal authorities in Berne to stop the work from circulating. Beauteville

⁴⁵ Ronald Schechter, 'The Jewish Question in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 32 (1998), 84-91 (pp. 85-86).

⁴⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 383, fol. 310, Ripert de Monclar to d'Aiguillon, 3 August 1772.

doubted that such measures would be successful and that was enough to convince d'Aiguillon to drop the matter completely, telling Beauteville: 'il serait superflu de faire de nouvelles démarches, et vous pouvez laisser tomber entièrement cette affaire'.⁴⁷

D'Aiguillon was unenthusiastic about continuing to pursue this work as it was illicit in economic rather than in ideological terms.

The economic threat of extra-territorial publishers who competed with their French counterparts was something that officials working within the internal administration of the book trade wrestled with. However, it did not take precedence for the foreign ministry which concerned itself primarily with trying to contain and control overly offensive titles. Scholarship on piracy in eighteenth-century France has emphasised that French officials were prepared to tolerate the publication of counterfeit books, both inside and outside France.⁴⁸ It can be argued that the same kind of clemency guided the government in its attempts to police the extra-territorial book trade. The state focused its attention on preventing the publication and curbing the circulation of what it considered to be the worst kinds of texts. As such, it was prepared to accept the circulation of works which were philosophical, profane or which criticised the Roman Catholic Church.

The foreign ministry had a pragmatic approach to the texts it endeavoured to pursue beyond French borders. Its strategy of focused policing to an extent confirms current views of forbidden literature in eighteenth-century France. Works with a political context were regarded as especially challenging. However, works which undermined religion or which had an explicitly sexual content were less important in the illicit print trade than once thought. French foreign ministers did not deem it necessary to chase these kinds of texts abroad. This is not to say that it was only works with a

⁴⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 330, fol. 329, d'Aiguillon to Beauteville, 3 September 1772.

⁴⁸ Chartier, *Cultural Origins*, pp. 73-74; Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs*, pp. 17-18; Mellot, pp. 55-58.

political edge which had subversive power in the later eighteenth century. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise how the French state perceived threats in the extra-territorial sphere and why it concentrated external censorship so closely.

Geography and Chronology of Policing Print

Based on findings from *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe Database, 1769-1794*, Curran has stressed that we need to pay more attention to geographical distinctions in the extra-territorial print trade. He has suggested that on the continent there were essentially two geographical spheres of trade: Dutch and Swiss.⁴⁹ It seems that Hennin, French *résident* in Geneva, might have agreed with this assessment. In January 1772, Hennin was engaged in a bibliographical fact-finding mission to discover where exactly copies of a second edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* had been published. Hennin noted that the copies of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* which were being sold by Téron in Geneva differed both in the quality of paper and in the typeset from another copy he been able to acquire. Hennin was a little confused. The typeset used on Téron's volumes looked Dutch to him but the poor quality of the paper it was printed on suggested that the job had been done in the Swiss states.⁵⁰ Hennin knew that Dutch publishers sometimes used bad quality paper from elsewhere to disguise the fact that they had printed a particular work. After conducting further investigations in Geneva, Hennin decided that this edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* had in all probability been printed by Rey in Amsterdam.

The difference between print trades in different areas of Europe had clear implications for the government's strategy of external policing. The French foreign

⁴⁹ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*; Mark Curran, 'Beyond the Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France', *The Historical Journal*, 56 (2013), 89-112 (pp. 103-4).

⁵⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 183, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772.

ministry had most difficulty imposing its will in Britain. Authors working there were not constrained by censorship, the relatively high level of press freedom made for a dynamic newspaper press and the British authorities were openly hostile to France. Some scholars have suggested that by the later eighteenth-century Holland was becoming less of a centre for illicit publishing and bookselling.⁵¹ These activities were shifting more to smaller states in the Swiss states and the regions of the Holy Roman Empire. This study corroborates this line of thinking to an extent. As the evidence presented in Chapter 3 makes clear, French officials spent more time trying to control the dissemination of texts which they deemed offensive in Brussels, Liège, Neuchatel and Geneva than they did the Netherlands. But this difference was not overwhelming and the Dutch publishing industry continued to concern the French government. Rather in the final decades of the old regime, the French foreign ministry risked becoming overwhelmed as illicit publishing flourished across the continent. Traders in the Swiss states and those based in territories which were part of or close to the Holy Roman Empire joined those in the Netherlands as publishers of contentious books.

Another important element of external policing was that the French authorities often looked to Paris to judge the seriousness of the threat posed by an illicit text. This was because the French capital came under the jurisdiction of the *lieutenant général* of the Paris police, the individual who furnished the French foreign minister with much information about literature. With Paris being France's cultural centre and close to the seat of power in Versailles, the government had more of an idea of the works which were circulating there than it did outside Paris. Foreign publishers tended to do most business with booksellers in the provinces. The officially legitimated printers in Paris

⁵¹ Roger Chartier, 'Magasin de l'univers', in *Le Magasin de l'univers*, ed. by Berkvens-Stevelinck and others, pp. 300-01; Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad*, p. 125; Jeremy D. Popkin, 'Print Culture in the Netherlands on the Eve of Revolution', in *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment and Revolution*, ed. by Margaret C. Jacob and Wijnand W. Mijinhart (London, Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 273-91 (p. 282).

dominated the trade within France which meant that provincial book dealers were keen to extend their commercial links abroad. Yet the foreign ministry still used the Paris book trade as a way of ascertaining whether certain books represented a real danger. As such, it could be argued that French officials were also worried about the effect that printed matter might have on the Parisian populace. There were several times when the issue of whether a work was circulating in Paris factored into Vergennes' decision about pursuing particular texts.⁵² Considering the print trade in the capital was an easy way for the French government to find out what was circulating within France but it also indicates that the state was especially concerned to control the kind of literature that reached the French capital. This relates back to the thinking behind extra-territorial policing. French officials knew that it was impossible to keep everything in check so they focused on the aspects that they could control. Paris was well within the reach of the French state so attention was centred there.

As referenced in Chapter 1, scholarly discussion of French attitudes to the extra-territorial book trade has concentrated on the *libelle* genre. Burrows and Darnton have both examined the way in which the French government attempted to impose its will on the writers, publishers and vendors of *libelles*. This research both encompasses and moves beyond the *libelles*. In doing so, it will add nuances to the chronology of policing outlined by these two historians. Burrows' evidence signifies that the number of *libelles* produced in London was at a relatively low level from March 1778 until mid 1781.⁵³ This was mirrored on the continent with the policing of print at a low level in the later 1770s and then exploding during the early 1780s. During the later period, the French government expended little energy on the extra-territorial book trade. The most

⁵² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 187, Hennin to d'Aiguillon, 11 January 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 51, Vergennes to Castelnau, 11 January 1782; Paris, AMAE, Hollande 540, fols. 329-30, Lenoir to Vergennes, 3 April 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 568, fol. 104, Thiroux de Crosne to Vergennes, 23 July 1786; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 419, fol. 336, comte de Vergennes to marquis de Vergennes, 5 November 1786.

⁵³ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 123-27.

threatening books that were published in this period emanated from London. The wider European picture also indicates that this period of quiet contrasted sharply with a flurry of illicit publishing activity in the period 1781 to 1783 which spread across other areas of Europe too. The beginning of the 1780s was a particularly challenging time for the French foreign ministry when it became embroiled in several protracted operations in pursuit of those involved in the production and dissemination of illicit texts.

This fresh evidence also presents a new perspective on a shift in governmental tactics which occurred in 1783. Burrows has argued that it was in 1783 that the foreign ministry decided to treat the London *libellistes* with greater detachment. The French government had become exasperated with chasing these writers and disillusioned with the practice of paying significant sums in the hope of maintaining the *libellistes'* silence. From 1783 onwards, then, the French authorities scorned and ignored the demands of the *libellistes*. This shift was not completely clear-cut. Vergennes certainly toyed with the idea of pouring scorn on seemingly offensive literature on several occasions prior to 1783 and in the years following he also worried about whether this was really the best strategy to adopt. As we have seen in Chapter 2, there was also wider uncertainty and disagreement between the foreign minister, his diplomats, the *lieutenant général* of the Paris police and the *garde des sceaux* over whether the government should be passive or aggressive in its approach to literature.

Yet this thesis argues that 1783 was indeed the crucial moment. It was in this year that the government began to try to ignore the threat of illicit books as far as possible. This shift was accompanied and encouraged by the implementation of a new regulation governing the importation of foreign books which was put into place on 12 June 1783. This edict was designed to undermine the extra-territorial print trade by making it law that all books imported into France had to be inspected centrally in Paris. The early 1780s was a turning point for the foreign ministry in matters relating to the

management of the extra-territorial book trade. This change applied to more than just *libelles*; it hit the illicit print trade in its entirety. Finding himself unable to deal adequately with an onslaught of illicit literature in the early 1780s, Vergennes resolved to try a different approach. The mechanisms for inspecting imported books were revised and the foreign minister tried as hard as he could to ignore deplorable texts which were being printed abroad.

Illicit Publishing in the 1770s

In line with this chronology, the early 1770s were a relatively calm period in the policing of books published in the extra-territorial arena. Relatively calm that is, aside from the campaign to constrain the *libelliste* Morande. In the early 1770s the foreign ministry invested a lot of energy into its pursuit of Morande. The first sign of official anxieties about Morande came in August 1771, a month after the first edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* was published in London. The French censor François Louis-Claude Marin sent a report to d'Aiguillon which expressed concern that the text contained 'des horreurs contre les personnes les plus respectables et on n'épargne pas même le roi'.⁵⁴ Sartine, the *directeur de la librairie* and *lieutenant général* of the Paris police issued orders against the work.⁵⁵ Booksellers in Paris and Versailles who sold *Le Gazetier cuirassé* were arrested and any copies found were confiscated.⁵⁶ The foreign ministry targeted a second edition of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* in Holland and in 1774 eventually agreed to pay

⁵⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 497, fols. 111-13, Marin to d'Aiguillon, 3 August 1771.

⁵⁵ Paris, BNF, MF 22101, fols. 149-50, 10 August 1771.

⁵⁶ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12400, fol. 270, d'Hémery to Sartine, 20 June 1772; Paris, BNF, MF, 22154, fols. 132-33, Sartine to d'Hémery, 14 December 1771.

Morande a life-long pension on the agreement that he would never again libel members of the French government or royal family.⁵⁷

However, the pursuit of Morande was really the aberration of the early 1770s. There were few other works which were targeted for similarly repressive measures. Political context goes some way to explaining this quietude in the extra-territorial arena. The French government was especially concerned to protect its image in the aftermath of Maupeou's high-handed coup. The rapid pace of events meant that most political commentary on the affair was to be found in the extra-territorial newspaper press as opposed to books and pamphlets. As outlined in Chapter 4, the French foreign ministry spent a lot of time trying to limit discussion of the Maupeou coup in the Francophone periodical press. Maupeou's reforms also sparked a wave of antagonistic pamphlets which were published inside France. The French government expended much energy to bring this oppositional writing under control. In the early 1770s a succession of booksellers were thrown into the Bastille for offering such pamphlets for sale.⁵⁸ It is also conceivable that *Le Gazetier cuirassé* worried the foreign ministry and provoked a harsh response partly because of the accusations of despotism it contained.

However, Hudson has suggested that the French state was never really able to get its hands on the publishers or authors of texts which decried Maupeou's reforms.⁵⁹ Looking back, Lenoir also suggested that the government lost its grip over the print trade in this period.⁶⁰ In the early 1770s, in the aftermath of the Maupeou *coup*, the French ministry was arguably distracted from its duties in the extra-territorial arena. It concentrated on its most immediate issue of policing the production of pamphlets

⁵⁷ For more on Morande, see Burrows, *A King's Ransom*; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 24-37; Paul Robiquet, *Théveneau de Morande: étude sur le XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Quantin, 1882).

⁵⁸ For details of this, see Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12400, 1772.

⁵⁹ Hudson, p. 59.

⁶⁰ Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, Electronic Supplement, Appendix 2, Lenoir's Notes on the Book Police and Libels http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/darnton_supplement.html#app2 [accessed 11 January 2013].

within France. Beyond the French state, the foreign ministry was focused on preventing journalists from discussing the affair. This was because most contemporary political commentary in this period was clustered in foreign gazettes. It was also because it was considerably easier to bring editors in line than it was to find and prosecute pamphleteers and publishers.

Another factor which explains why the policing of the extra-territorial book trade was not particularly active in the early 1770s relates to the leadership of d'Aiguillon as foreign minister. As described in Chapter 2, d'Aiguillon was much less involved in the processes of external censorship than his successor Vergennes. When the government was investigating the publication of an edition of the *Encyclopédie* in Geneva in 1771, Sartine, the *directeur de la librairie* and *lieutenant général* of the Paris police, implored d'Aiguillon to do something to curb its dissemination.⁶¹ D'Aiguillon maintained that external measures would have little impact and tried to shift the responsibility back onto Sartine by stating that it was better to concentrate on confiscating copies at the French border.⁶²

We also see evidence of French diplomats notifying d'Aiguillon of potentially dangerous texts to little avail. In March 1774, the marquis de Noailles, ambassador in The Hague, suggested to d'Aiguillon that measures should be taken against a new *libelle* which was being printed in London.⁶³ Presumably Noailles was employing the elastic definition of *libelle* to refer to Morande's *Remarques historiques et anecdotes sur le château de la Bastille* which was published in London in 1774. In April 1774, Desnoyers, another diplomat in The Hague, told d'Aiguillon that he had seen the prospectus for a new anthology called *La Gazette de Cythère; ou, histoire secrète de Madame la comtesse du Barry*, a

⁶¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 73, Sartine to d'Aiguillon, 23 July 1771.

⁶² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 78, d'Aiguillon to Hennin, 28 July 1771.

⁶³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 525, fols. 304-06, Noailles to d'Aiguillon, 18 March 1774.

work which has been attributed to François Bernard.⁶⁴ This collection included a scandalous life story of Louis XV's mistress which Desnoyers felt was 'contresens d'une véritable méchanceté'.⁶⁵ Desnoyers' suggestion that the author should be tracked down and punished was met with silence from d'Aiguillon. The diplomat tried to get d'Aiguillon to take his complaints seriously by stressing that 'C'est une saison dangereuse par la facilité que les libelles ont de se glisser dans les villes, au milieu des distractions de la nation.'⁶⁶ But Desnoyers was not listened to until Vergennes took over the post of foreign secretary.

Some of d'Aiguillon's failings can also be seen in an important affair from 1773. In March of this year, the bookshop of the widow Stockdorf, a bookseller in Strasbourg, was raided by the French authorities. Stockdorf and her assistant were taken all the way to Paris where they were locked up in the Bastille.⁶⁷ This was not the first time that Stockdorf had spent time in this fortress. In November 1771 she was incarcerated there for bringing illicit texts, including *Le Gazetier cuirassé* and *Système de la nature*, to Paris.⁶⁸ With Stockdorf being castigated for the second time in 1773, the matter was taken much more seriously.⁶⁹ She was again accused of trading heavily in seemingly repugnant books and was targeted in particular for selling *libelles* against Madame du Barry and Louis XV, entitled *La Putain parvenue: ou histoire de la comtesse de Barry* and *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Louis XV* respectively. French officials also strongly objected to Stockdorf's decision to sell *Les Adieux du duc de Bourgogne et de l'abbé Fénelon* by Dieudonné Thiébauld which was a text where the two named protagonists discussed the French system of government and possible alternatives. Finally, Stockdorf was targeted

⁶⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 173-78, Desnoyers to d'Aiguillon, 26 April 1774.

⁶⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 173-78, Desnoyers to d'Aiguillon, 26 April 1774.

⁶⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 526, fols. 7-8, Desnoyers to d'Aiguillon, 10 May 1774.

⁶⁷ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 6, November 1771.

⁶⁸ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 6, November 1771.

⁶⁹ Paris, BNF, MF 22101, fol. 240, March 1773.

for selling what was referred to as *La Correspondance complète*, although the author of this collection is not indicated in governmental documentation.

A letter found amongst Stockdorf's papers suggested that she had received these books from Du Four, a publisher in Maastricht. Sartine asked d'Aiguillon to request that the Dutch States-General issue a punishment to Du Four.⁷⁰ This was another occasion where d'Aiguillon had failed to be proactive and had to be prompted into taking action. On d'Aiguillon's instructions, Desnoyers and the comte Des Escotais, *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, arranged a meeting with a clerk from the Dutch States-General.⁷¹ During this meeting they arranged for the Dutch authorities to search and seize Du Four's papers and books.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Desnoyers complained to d'Aiguillon about the obstructionism employed by Dutch officials but he did express the view that the authorities in the United Provinces were likely to be more vigilant in future.⁷² Stockdorf was treated more severely. She spent more than four months in the Bastille. In July 1773 she was tied up on the Place de Grève in Paris holding a sign which carried the words, 'Marchande libraire faisant à Strasbourg en récidive le commerce de livres contraires à la religion et aux bonnes mœurs'.⁷³ The use of this phrase shows that the government desired to communicate a strong stance against works challenged the Roman Catholic faith, even if in practice officials tended to be more concerned by works with more political implications. Following her release from the Bastille in August she was banned from setting foot in Paris or Strasbourg for the next nine years. Placards detailing the treatment meted out to Stockdorf were posted up for all to see in

⁷⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 525, fol. 3, d'Aiguillon to Sartine, 6 April 1773; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 525, fols. 8-9, d'Aiguillon to Des Escotais, 18 April 1773.

⁷¹ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773; Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 166, Des Escotais to d'Aiguillon, 26 March 1773.

⁷² Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fol. 164, Desnoyers to Noailles, 26 March 1773.

⁷³ Paris, BNF, MF 12398, fols. 308-09, 8 July 1773.

Paris and the provinces.⁷⁴ The Stockdorf affair constitutes a clear instance of exemplary punishment. The foreign ministry did its best to attack Du Four but it directed its wrath primarily towards Stockdorf who could be easily punished. It also hints at d'Aiguillon's listlessness. The foreign minister only took action against Du Four after he had been pressed to do so by Sartine. The diplomatic corps tried their best to support him but policing the extra-territorial print trade was simply not a priority for d'Aiguillon. It was only when Vergennes came to power that external censorship became more systematic.

But it takes something more than the personal failings of d'Aiguillon to explain why policing of the print trade was less intensive in the early 1770s. During this period, extra-territorial print was constrained by protectionist legislation which was designed to promote French bookselling and publishing. Whilst the foreign ministry concentrated on containing the circulation of what it considered to be the very worst titles, the internal administration of the French book trade wished to lessen the involvement of foreign book dealers in the French trade. It was hoped that cutting off foreign traders would stimulate the French publishing industry. Yet any attempts to restrict the foreign print trade necessitated a delicate balancing act. Provincial booksellers were less successful than their Parisian counterparts who received the lion's share of any privileges which were granted. Consequently, provincial traders relied upon their connections with foreign publishers and booksellers to survive.

Across 1771 the French government raised the cost of paper, a move which buttressed the business of foreign traders who did not have to pay the same overheads.⁷⁵ In the hope of reviving the French print trade, a tax was levied on imported books in September 1771. This tax was set at 60 *livres* per quintal of books

⁷⁴ Paris, BNF, MF 12398, fol. 310, 13 August 1773.

⁷⁵ Darnton, 'Le Livre prohibé aux frontières', pp. 358-59.

which made importation a costly business.⁷⁶ This move was also met with a wave of protests from provincial book traders who wrote to the French government to stress that they actually depended on their trade with publishers and booksellers who worked outside France. Under pressure, the French state backed down and reduced the tax twice, once in November 1771 and again in October 1773.⁷⁷ In April 1775 it was finally abolished.⁷⁸ Policing foreign books was a less pressing concern in the early 1770s because the French state was quite successful in using internal legislation to restrict the business of extra-territorial traders. Unfortunately such legislation adversely affected the trade of provincial French booksellers too and by mid 1775 the French state had bowed to pressure to rescind it.

Chasing Authors

When dealing with errant publishers, the French foreign ministry usually followed a strategy of exemplary punishment by appealing to foreign authorities to issue reprimands and punishments. In the case of defiant authors, the French state was more likely to become heavily involved in the process of chasing and disciplining these individuals. Targeting writers allowed the French state to go right to the source of where literature was emanating from. This distinction came about partly due to the actions of the authors themselves. Whilst the most clandestine publishers could go about their business trying not to be noticed by the French authorities, writers would often get in touch with the French authorities on their own initiative. Authors habitually contacted the government threatening to publish a controversial pamphlet which they pledged that they could also suppress for the right fee. Blackmail payments

⁷⁶ Paris, BNF, MF 22070, fols. 30-34, 24 September 1771.

⁷⁷ Paris, BNF, MF 22179, fol. 317, 24 November 1771; Paris, BNF, MF 22179, fol. 409, 17 October 1773.

⁷⁸ Paris, BNF, MF 22179, fol. 548, 23 April 1775.

were most often issued to the writers of *libelles*. The French government was keen to protect the reputation of important elite figures, especially if they had political ties. The particular individuals who were maligned in these texts also worried about their possible impact and appealed to the French state to prevent their circulation. *Libellistes* recognised these dual spheres of concern and frequently sent their threats both to the French government and to the individuals they had attacked in the pamphlet.

Paying off a *libelliste* was considered to be an undesirable option but it was a tactic which the foreign ministry resorted to on several occasions in the 1770s. These agreements were well-known in the *libelliste* community and were even reported in some contemporary literature and this information encouraged other writers to seek payment from the French state.⁷⁹ The unique nature of the British context must be stressed here. Authors working in London had particular success in drawing money from the French government because British libel law offered no real help to non-residents.⁸⁰ The French foreign ministry tried to persuade the British government to reform these laws so that writers who defamed French subjects would be punished, but little progress was made. Moreover, as France and Britain were diplomatic enemies, the British authorities were reluctant to help France protect its international image. France had a lot more influence in continental Europe where it was able to lean on local authorities to become involved in pursuing authors and publishers. Both outside and within Britain, some authors tried to try to call the foreign ministry's bluff. They would offer to try to help the French government uncover information about the illicit print trade in return for a cash payment.⁸¹ Part of the reason that so many writers appealed to the state for pay-

⁷⁹ On the close links amongst the *libellistes*, see Paul Agnani, 'Libelles et diplomatie à la fin du dix-huitième siècle d'après la correspondance politique Angleterre conservée aux archives du ministère des affaires étrangères, 1771-1783' (Unpublished mémoire de Maîtrise, Besançon: University of Besançon, 2004), pp. 45-46.

⁸⁰ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 17.

⁸¹ For an example of this, see Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fols. 278-79, Duvernet to Vergennes, 4 August 1783.

offs was because they knew that the government took on individuals like themselves as agents and spies.

These appeals were also related to the nature of the eighteenth-century literary market.⁸² It was during the eighteenth century that the commercialisation of the book business began to really take off as authors started to connect with a wider audience. Yet links between writers and patrons persisted. As Edward Andrew and Geoffrey Turnovsky have both recently emphasised, Enlightenment writers frequently trumpeted their independence despite recognition that economic necessity compelled most to continue to rely on patrons.⁸³ Authors who lacked social and literary connections found it practically impossible to live by the pen. They required the ongoing financial support of affluent benefactors since it was usual practice to sell manuscripts to publishers for a one-off fee without being able to take a share of any future profits. The prospect of securing employment with the French government was thus an attractive one. Issuing payments to authors was a way to stop *libelles* from hitting the market but French officials could never be sure of the efficacy of this method of suppression. It was hard for the foreign ministry to determine whether texts which had been threatened were genuinely in the pipeline. The state was also acutely aware that it could not trust authors and publishers to destroy every single copy of a *libelle*, even if they had received a payment from the government. Indeed, by the early 1780s French officials had begun to doubt whether paying off and chasing authors was really the best means of managing the extra-territorial print trade. After the French government was forced to wrestle with a wave of foreign literature, an important change of policy was enacted in 1783. Vergennes decided that he was no longer prepared to give in to the demands of the

⁸² This paragraph has been taken from my own article and reworked. See Seaward, 'The Société typographique de Neuchâtel'.

⁸³ Edward Andrew, *Patrons of Enlightenment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Geoffrey Turnovsky, *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

libellistes and began to try to scorn their attempts at intimidation. The circumstances and implications of this shift will be explored in full later in the chapter.

Handing out suppression payments was not the only manner in which the foreign ministry tried to deal with wayward writers. The French government also tried to hunt and punish the authors of contentious literature. Marie-Madeleine Anne Levasseur de la Touche, also known as Madame de Godeville was an author who caused problems for the French government. Similar to Morande, Godeville was a bold adventurer with many elite contacts. During the 1770s and 1780s, the foreign ministry tried to control her movements and prevent the publication of her memoirs. Godeville initially became known to the foreign ministry in the early 1770s after she uncovered the government plot to kidnap Morande in London and helped him to evade capture.⁸⁴ In 1774, Godeville published an account of her time in London as *Voyage d'une française à Londres; ou, la calomnie détruite par la vérité des faits* where she denied knowledge of both Morande and the milieu of the *libellistes*.⁸⁵

Godeville is probably best known for her affair with Beaumarchais which lasted from 1774 to 1777.⁸⁶ She most likely met Beaumarchais as a result of her involvement with Morande. Beaumarchais was associated with the *libellistes* in London and was sent to the British capital to suppress a number of works in the mid 1770s.⁸⁷ There has been some passing acknowledgement that Godeville's engagement with illicit literature continued into the early 1780s but the French government's determination to restrict her output has not yet been fully explored.⁸⁸ In mid 1779, Godeville arrived in The Hague, procured a printing press and began using two assumed names, the marquise de

⁸⁴ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 96.

⁸⁵ Marie-Madeleine Anne Levasseur de la Touche de Godeville, *Voyage d'une française à Londres; ou, la calomnie détruite par la vérité des faits* (London: Mesplet, 1774), pp. 51-52.

⁸⁶ Beaumarchais' letters from his amorous correspondence with Godeville have survived. See Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *Lettres galantes à Madame de Godeville: 1777-1779*, ed. by Maurice Lever (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

⁸⁷ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 99-103.

⁸⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 97.

l'Épine and the comtesse de Verrière.⁸⁹ Early in 1780 she attempted to blackmail Louis François Armand de Vignerot du Plessis, duc de Richelieu, a courtier and great nephew of the cardinal de Richelieu, the most powerful statesman of the seventeenth century. The duc de Richelieu was an infamous womaniser and Godeville warned him that she was about to publish *Les 74 aventures de Mathusalem*, a collection of erotic verse which would throw light on his love affairs.⁹⁰ Richelieu relayed this warning to Lenoir, who then authorised a payment of 25 *louis* to be sent to Godeville via Beaumarchais.⁹¹ This pay-off worked to dissuade Godeville from ever publishing her thoughts on Richelieu.

The foreign ministry became involved in February 1780 when La Vauguyon, the *ministre plénipotentiaire* in The Hague, told Vergennes that a woman was arranging the publication of a different book entitled, *Le Cri de l'humanité au Roi; ou, mémoires de Mme la Comtesse de Verrière*.⁹² La Vauguyon included a prospectus of the work in his dispatch to Vergennes. In it, Godeville promised that her memoirs would reveal 'les détails sincères de toutes mes persécutions, de chaque prison que j'ai subies, des cruautés que j'ai éprouvées et des particularités que je dois à l'humanité'.⁹³ In *La Bastille dévoilée*, a sensationalist exposé of the workings of the Bastille which was published in 1789, it was claimed that La Vauguyon was anxious because Godeville's work maligned his Spanish mistress.⁹⁴ Godeville said that she had been humiliated by her and publishing this pamphlet was part of a plan for revenge. La Vauguyon did not communicate any such worries to Vergennes and there seems to have been enough that was troubling in Godeville's memoirs without this element of slander. After consultation with Maurepas

⁸⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 108, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 1 February 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 310, Vergennes to Lenoir, 29 March 1780.

⁹⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 541, fol. 116, 1 June 1780.

⁹¹ Louis Charpentier, *La Bastille dévoilée; ou, recueil des pièces authentiques pour servir à son histoire*, vol 7 (Paris: Desenne, 1789), p. 100. Note that this text was supposedly based on papers from within the Bastille but that it was also published early in the revolution with the objective of denigrating the *ancien régime* government.

⁹² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 108, La Vauguyon to Vergennes, 1 February 1780.

⁹³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fols. 114-15, 1 February 1780.

⁹⁴ Charpentier, vol 7, p. 100.

and Lenoir, Vergennes agreed that Godeville posed a serious threat.⁹⁵ The police inspector Brugnières was already in The Hague and Vergennes commanded him to organise for her to be arrested and repatriated to France. Within two weeks Brugnières was able to track down Godeville and compel the Dutch authorities to incarcerate her in a civil prison until extradition could be arranged.⁹⁶ Godeville's return to France was delayed because she had many local creditors who were demanding repayments to the sum of 3000 Dutch *florins*. La Vauguyon negotiated with a local banker for these debts to be paid off and on 24 May Godeville reached the Bastille.⁹⁷

Godeville spent around a year in the Bastille and in March 1781 was transferred to the convent of the Madeleine in La Flèche where she remained for another year.⁹⁸ After escaping the convent, she began to trouble the foreign ministry again in mid 1784. This time she was in Lausanne, calling herself the marquise de l'Épine and trying to peddle her memoirs to Swiss publishers. Vergennes instructed the vicomte de Polignac, the French *ambassadeur* in Solothurn, to ask the authorities in Berne to arrest Godeville, along with any publisher who had been involved with her.⁹⁹ The foreign minister also wanted local officials to seize the manuscript of Godeville's memoirs and any printed copies which were to be found. The authorities in Berne moved speedily to conduct a thorough search of the shops of printers and booksellers in Lausanne but nothing was uncovered. Local traders acknowledged that Godeville had tried to interest them in her memoirs but maintained that they had refused to deal with her.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 310, Vergennes to Lenoir, 29 March 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 329, Lenoir to Vergennes, 3 April 1780.

⁹⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 413, 20 April 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 541, fol. 51, 12 May 1780.

⁹⁷ Frantz Funck-Brentano, *Les Lettres de cachet à Paris: étude suivie d'une liste des prisonniers de la Bastille, 1659-1789* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1903), pp. 405-06.

⁹⁸ Charpentier, vol 7, p. 100.

⁹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 417, fol. 194, Vergennes to Polignac, 13 May 1784.

¹⁰⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 417, fols. 206-17, Conseil de Berne to Polignac, 27 May 1784.

This was self-censorship at work. Godeville was notorious and traders in Lausanne did not want to risk incurring the wrath of the French authorities by agreeing to publish her memoirs. As in 1780, Godeville was being targeted for a text that she had not yet published but this time Vergennes did not authorise any further measures to be taken against her. Polignac advised Vergennes that Godeville had gathered around 3000 subscriptions for her memoirs but would be forced to pay this money back if she could not find a publisher.¹⁰¹ She had tried Neuchâtel without success and had now moved onto Geneva. Godeville was also heavily pregnant which Polignac felt would make the task of surveillance easier for the diplomatic team in the Swiss states. Vergennes was also content to let Godeville roam free in 1784 because, since the previous year, he had been following a policy of ignoring the threat of illicit literature as far as possible. He wanted to scorn Godeville and Polignac's points about Godeville's pregnancy and lack of success in finding a publisher confirmed that this was a rational strategy in the circumstances.

Within its policy of focused policing, the French foreign ministry only pursued those authors which it took particularly seriously. So why was Godeville taken to be so problematic? After all, her memoirs never made it into print in spite of her best efforts in 1780 and 1784. She did publish *Voyage d'une françoise à Londres* in 1774 but the incoherent composition of this text rendered it obscure and almost unintelligible. There were practical reasons why Godeville frightened the French government. In The Hague in 1780 she was able to acquire her own printing press which meant that she could publish exactly what she wished with ease.¹⁰² Godeville was also burdened with a multitude of debts and this poverty, coupled with 'La vivacité de sa tête', contributed to her audacity and recklessness.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 417, fols. 221-22, Polignac to Vergennes, 27 May 1784.

¹⁰² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 323, March 1780.

¹⁰³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 323, March 1780.

However, there was a much more important element of Godeville's personality which disturbed the French government. This was her personal connections with the French courtly and political elite. Godeville was beautiful (according to Beaumarchais at least) and promiscuous. Aside from her affair with Beaumarchais, Godeville was also rumoured to have had dalliances with the duc de Choiseul and the duc de Richelieu.¹⁰⁴ It was also insinuated that Lenoir himself had also been one of Godeville's lovers and used money from the state to support her.¹⁰⁵ In his letters to Vergennes, Lenoir indeed displayed anxiousness about Godeville's links with high society. Lenoir was uneasy about the sensitive information or significant papers that this *femme galante* might have got her hands on.¹⁰⁶

In 1780, the police chief determined that extradition was the best course of action since it would allow the French authorities to take possession of these papers. According to one source, this plan did not unfold as Lenoir had hoped. When the interrogating officer in the Bastille tried to open Godeville's letters, she protested that they were a private correspondence with men that she hoped to protect. When the officer persisted, Godeville created a distraction by snatching his wig. In the course of the ensuing tussle between these two, Godeville managed to throw her cache of papers into the fire, destroying them forever.¹⁰⁷ Vergennes and La Vauguyon shared Lenoir's concerns about Godeville's power to slander governmental figures.¹⁰⁸ Brugnières even fretted that she was planning to form an association of *libellistes* and use her own printing press to publish a slew of defamatory works.¹⁰⁹ A government report which summarised the affair of 1780 stressed that Godeville was a very dangerous individual

¹⁰⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 329, Lenoir to Vergennes, 3 April 1780.

¹⁰⁵ Charpentier, vol 7, p. 100.

¹⁰⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 329, Lenoir to Vergennes, 3 April 1780.

¹⁰⁷ Charpentier, vol 7, p. 100.

¹⁰⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 310, Vergennes to Lenoir, 29 March 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 541, fol. 116, 1 June 1780.

¹⁰⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 491, Brugnières to La Vauguyon, April 1780.

who should not be allowed to reoffend.¹¹⁰ Even though her memoirs never made it to publication, the French government was uncomfortably aware that Godeville's connections with elites would bring potency to her work. Lenoir and Vergennes were resolute that she needed to be imprisoned despite the fact that she was yet to have committed any real offence.

The comte de Mirabeau was another author who caused concern for the French foreign ministry but he was treated somewhat differently to Godeville. Mirabeau is best known for his pivotal role in leading the early stages of the French Revolution. Under the old regime, he gained infamy as an aristocratic adventurer who turned out a series of political, financial and erotic pamphlets in the hope assuaging his mounting debts. Most of the pamphlets which bore Mirabeau's name were the product of a collaborative effort with hired pens. Mirabeau's fame was perceived as a selling point. In addition to his pamphleteering, his pre-revolutionary life was marked by several spells in prison. Mirabeau's father invoked multiple *lettres de cachet* against his volatile son in an effort to curb his propensity to run up debts, clash with powerful figures and take up with unsuitable lovers. Indeed, the foreign ministry was drawn into tracking Mirabeau down in 1777 after he fled abroad with the wife of another man. In May of that year Vergennes arranged for Mirabeau to be arrested by the Dutch police and the comte was taken straight to Vincennes prison where he remained until August 1782.¹¹¹

It was during his time in Vincennes that Mirabeau wrote a series of pamphlets which would seriously alarm the foreign ministry. Following his release from incarceration Mirabeau travelled to Neuchâtel where he arranged for three of his pamphlets to be published: *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état*, *Le Libertin de qualité; ou ma conversion* and *L'Espion dévalisé*. This affair will be explored later in this chapter.

¹¹⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 541, fol. 116, 1 June 1780.

¹¹¹ Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *Mirabeau* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), pp. 66-67.

Suffice to say here that the French government were very anxious about the printing of these pornographic and political works and pressured the authorities in Neuchâtel to seek out and punish the publishers involved. The contrast with the manner in which Godeville had been treated a year earlier is marked. Mirabeau was released from prison and immediately arranged for not just one but *three* contentious texts to be printed abroad. Yet the foreign ministry did not call for Mirabeau himself to be punished; they concentrated their attention instead on the publishers. This could be evidence of Vergennes merely trying out a new technique. However, it is also striking to see that the French foreign ministry did not suspect Mirabeau as a matter of course. On 26 August 1782, Bâcher, the *chargé d'affaires* in Solothurn, notified Vergennes that Mirabeau had arrived in Neuchâtel eight days earlier and was trying to negotiate with local publishers to print his *L'Espion dévalisé*.¹¹² Vergennes did not heed this warning and only ordered that measures were to be taken against Mirabeau's pamphlets once they appeared on the market a few months later in November. On 3 November 1782 Bâcher told Vergennes that Mirabeau had left Neuchâtel but the foreign minister declined to instruct others within his diplomatic team to watch out for the comte taking shelter in their locality.¹¹³

Mirabeau held onto his freedom and continued to write provocative pamphlets across the 1780s. In February 1788 Falciola, *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin complained to the authorities there about the sale of Mirabeau's *Avis aux bataves sur le stathoudérat*.¹¹⁴ The text was considered inappropriate because it discussed French politics and finances, as well as the foreign policy interests of the French state in the Levant.¹¹⁵ Mirabeau's work was also diplomatically embarrassing for France. The French authorities had actually

¹¹² Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 205, Bâcher to Vergennes, 26 August 1782.

¹¹³ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 278-79, Bâcher to Vergennes, 3 November 1782.

¹¹⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 208, fols. 335-45, Falciola to Montmorin, 17 May 1788; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 209, fols. 3-4, Montmorin to d'Esterno, 3 June 1788.

¹¹⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 208, fols. 101-22, Falciola to Montmorin, 12 February 1788.

stationed Mirabeau in Berlin on a diplomatic mission in the latter half of 1786 and they were now forced to stress that the comte did not have official authorisation to interfere in external politics.¹¹⁶ But again it was the text rather than Mirabeau himself who was under fire here. A year later in January 1789, Mirabeau decided to publish an account of his diplomatic mission in Prussia as *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin*.¹¹⁷ Once more, this work was very embarrassing for the French government. A French diplomatic agent had concluded his mission by publishing an exposé which criticised the Prussian King as weak and ineffectual. This work was condemned by the French government, confiscated at customs and also pursued beyond the borders of France.¹¹⁸ Montmorin suspected that the text had originally been published somewhere in the Swiss states and d'Esterno, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Berlin, revealed that it had been reprinted in Frankfurt.¹¹⁹ Montmorin told d'Esterno that steps were being taken to prevent the dissemination of the work within France and asked for the same to happen in Berlin. Police in the Prussian capital rounded up all booksellers and publishers in the city and ordered them to hand over any copies of the text or face arrest.¹²⁰

It is easier to appreciate why Mirabeau escaped punishment in 1789. The French state was preoccupied with preparations for the Estates-General and Mirabeau himself was attracting even more attention as he sought election to the body, initially from the nobility and when this failed, from members of the Third Estate. Moving away from the context of 1789, it remains the case that the foreign ministry never chased Mirabeau himself in the way it did Godeville or other troublesome authors like Morande and Linguet. One reason that Mirabeau escaped punishment surely has to be

¹¹⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 208, fols. 335-45, Falcicola to Montmorin, 17 May 1788; Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 209, fols. 3-4, Montmorin to d'Esterno, 3 June 1788.

¹¹⁷ Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin; ou, correspondance d'un voyageur françois: depuis le mois de juillet 1786 jusqu'au 19 janvier 1787* (London: Bladon, 1789).

¹¹⁸ Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs*, p. 113.

¹¹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 210, fols. 13-14, Montmorin to d'Esterno, 15 January 1789.

¹²⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 210, fols. 41-46, d'Esterno to Montmorin, 17 February 1789. For more on this affair, see Chapter 5, pp. 272-73.

that he was a pamphleteer who concentrated on political matters rather than a *libelliste* who denigrated individual figures on a more personal level. *L’Espion dévalisé* did satirise those in power during the reign of Louis XV but in 1788 and 1789 it was Mirabeau’s more political texts relating to other nations which disturbed the French government. The writings of Godeville, Linguet and Morande consistently threatened to expose the intimate details of the lives of France’s political and social elites. As we have seen, these were the kinds of works which were taken most seriously by the French government.

The most important explanation as to why Mirabeau was never arrested for his pamphleteering relates to his close relations with powerful forces at court. Mirabeau was supported by Malesherbes and Calonne and was on the payroll of the police as an informant.¹²¹ There is still much more to discover about his pre-revolutionary political networks. Montmorin even admitted that ‘il paraît que M. de Mirabeau a dans cette compagnie des protecteurs qui mettront à profit la lenteur des formes pour le soustraire à la conviction et aux châtimens’.¹²² Mirabeau published a string of offensive works but his powerful protectors helped him to evade punishment. There are clear parallels with the manner in which the French government treated Linguet, another unruly author with elite connections. Linguet was imprisoned in the Bastille from September 1780 to May 1782 but was arrested on the pretext of a written attack on the duc de Duras. Linguet was not arrested in 1777 when he threatened to print several *libelles* nor in 1783 when he published his *Mémoires sur la Bastille*.

As with Linguet, perhaps the French authorities also appreciated that the Mirabeau’s skill for propaganda could make him an asset to the government. Vergennes’ biographer has highlighted that one of the foreign minister’s key tactics was to attempt to weaken the opposition by buying off one of its members, and we know

¹²¹ Chaussinand-Nogaret, pp. 88-89; Barbara Luttrell, *Mirabeau* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), pp. 77-80.

¹²² Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 210, fols. 65-68, d’Esterno to Montmorin, 10 March 1789.

that the foreign minister tried to win Linguet's support with such a scheme.¹²³ Indeed, Mirabeau appealed to Durival, *directeur des finances* in the foreign office and the man charged with subsidising pamphleteers for the French state. However, the French government turned against Mirabeau after he published a combative series of financial pamphlets in the mid 1780s.¹²⁴ With prompting from Calonne, Vergennes did later decide to bestow upon Mirabeau a foreign mission at the Prussian court. Mirabeau took a preliminary trip to Berlin in early 1786 and was officially stationed at the court from July 1786 to January 1787. The foreign minister's faith in Mirabeau backfired in January 1789, however, when *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin* was published, much to the anger of Prussia and the humiliation of France. French officials were frustrated by Mirabeau's pamphleteering and the diplomatic network was used to prevent the dissemination of the contentious works which he published abroad. However, it is clear that Mirabeau himself was too close to the French government to be targeted directly. Godeville had elite connections too, supposedly even with Lenoir, but her former lovers were not prepared to keep her safe from harm. Rather than antagonise Mirabeau through imprisonment, the foreign ministry attempted to tame him by bringing him closer into their sphere of influence.

A Period of Crisis: 1781 to 1783

Some of the campaigns against the writings of Godeville and Mirabeau occurred during a challenging period for the French government. The years from 1781 to 1783 were particularly fraught when it came to the matter of policing the extra-territorial print trade. This period was marked by several prolonged affairs during which the foreign

¹²³ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 41.

¹²⁴ Robert Darnton, *George Washington's False Teeth: An Unconventional Guide to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), pp. 137-55.

ministry struggled to find and punish authors and publishers who had brought contentious works onto the market. It is important to contextualise this somewhat extreme period. It was also preceded by a time of relative calm when there were hardly any protracted instances of external policing. In August 1781, there was an attempt to ensure that the regulations which governed the importation of printed matter into France were upheld. Yet, the subsequent problems faced by the foreign ministry in its efforts to keep print under control makes it evident that these reforms did not entirely succeed.

On 25 August 1781, an *arrêt* was issued from the *Conseil d'état* which reiterated the rules for the importation of books.¹²⁵ If customs officials discovered any illicit texts coming across the border, they were to put together a report and send this to the nearest *chambre syndicale* along with the books in question. All texts coming into France were then to pass through the nearest *chambre syndicale* where they would be examined by the officers of the guild and an inspector of the book trade. At this point, any objectionable literature would be confiscated. The edict warned that these procedures would be adhered to, 'à peine de cinq cents livres d'amende et de confiscation des chevaux, voitures, harnois et de plus forte peine en cas de récidive'.¹²⁶ It also incorporated a financial inducement for customs officials to watch out for potentially illicit texts. They would receive half the proceeds from any fine issued to the trader who was to receive such books. It must be emphasised that this statute contained little which was new. It was instead a means of reiterating the importance of following existing protocols to the letter. Other moves designed to restrain the print industry were also put in place in 1781. Also in August, a new *chambre syndicale* was established in Metz to apprehend a greater proportion of the texts which flowed into France from the

¹²⁵ Paris, BNF, MF 22063, fol. 277-78, 25 August 1781.

¹²⁶ Paris, BNF, MF 22063, fol. 277-78, 25 August 1781.

Netherlands and the German and Swiss states.¹²⁷ As explained in Chapter 4, efforts were also made in January 1781 to extend control over the extra-territorial newspaper press with the establishment of the state-supervised news bureau in Paris which could supply pre-approved information to the editors of foreign gazettes.¹²⁸

The small cluster of policies enacted in 1781 indicates that the French state was thinking seriously about how best to manage the extra-territorial trade. However, from late 1781 until 1783 the system of policing print was under immense pressure as a series of offensive books threatened to surge into France. A string of crises in external censorship underscored that the current structure of control was inadequate and induced Vergennes to rethink his approach in more radical terms.

Many of the problems that the foreign ministry encountered in the early 1780s ultimately stemmed from Jean Claude Jacquet de la Douai. Jacquet was one of Lenoir's spies and through his spying duties was able to develop connections with several members of the French ministry.¹²⁹ In April 1781 he was appointed the inspector in charge of foreign books having been involved in the suppression of a series of scandalous pamphlets which maligned the French royal family.¹³⁰ The creation of this position also offers more evidence that the French government was actively trying to bring the extra-territorial print trade under control in 1781. Jacquet was dispatched on a mission to Amsterdam and The Hague to buy up copies of *libelles*, including a scandalous story about Marie-Antoinette. This was probably the *Essais historiques sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette d'Autriche, reine de France* which was finally published in a full print-run in 1789.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Paris, BNF, MF 22079, fol. 436, 18 August 1781.

¹²⁸ Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', pp. 95-96.

¹²⁹ Charpentier, vol 3, pp. 36-48; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 124-36.

¹³⁰ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 124-26.

¹³¹ Pierre Étienne Auguste Goupil, *Essais historiques sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette d'Autriche, reine de France* (London: [n. pub.], 1789).

The government became suspicious of Jacquet after Lenoir received tip-offs from a number of sources, including Morande, who was now co-opted into state service as a spy. Jacquet took samples of pamphlets to Lenoir, claiming that he had received them from authors working abroad who were willing to suppress them for a fee. However, Jacquet was actually abusing his position as inspector by using it as a cover to manage a production line of *libelles* which were composed in Paris, printed abroad and then shipped back into France. Lenoir gave Jacquet money to suppress *libelles* but Jacquet poured this instead into his own publishing enterprise. Lenoir and Vergennes arranged for the police officer Receveur to follow Jacquet on a second trip to London. When Jacquet returned to Paris from London the police searched his belongings and uncovered a manuscript of the *Essais historiques* written in Jacquet's own hand. By this point, Lenoir was convinced that Jacquet was responsible for a number of other *libelles* which targeted prominent members of the French ministry. He was arrested and sent to the Bastille on 30 October 1781.¹³² Jacquet refused to confess and after claiming insanity was transferred to the asylum at Charenton in November 1782. A year later he was brought back to the Bastille where he remained until July 1789. He was released just five days before the storming of the prison.

In the aftermath of these arrests, the French government spent a lot of time tracking down and arresting any men who had collaborated with Jacquet. In October 1781, the Paris police were able to incarcerate several of these individuals including Costard, a printer-bookseller who had been Jacquet's copyist, and Michel-Louis de Marcenay, who was responsible for printing some of Jacquet's *libelles*. Writers associated with Jacquet were also arrested. Théophile-Imarigeon, the abbé Duvernet, was sent to the Bastille in October 1781, although he claimed to have been duped into

¹³² Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12453, fol. 41, 30 October 1781.

handing three of his manuscripts over to Jacquet.¹³³ The foreign ministry became engaged in this campaign to chase Jacquet's associates and prevent the dissemination of any *libelles* that he had arranged to be published abroad. In November 1781, the police inspector Brugnières was sent to Brussels where he was able to put pressure on the local authorities to arrest Jean-Baptiste Imbert de Villebon and Antoine La Coste de Mézières.¹³⁴ La Coste de Mézières was alleged to have written *libelles* (based on sensitive information provided by Jacquet and his contacts in Paris) which Imbert de Villebon then arranged to have printed in Brussels.

Papers seized from Mézières indicated that he had been involved in the composition of two texts, *Confession générale de Madame la comtesse du Barry* which discussed the final mistress of Louis XV, and *La Diligence, ou dialogue entre trois gens qui ne sont pas trop sots sur les affaires du temps*, a work on current affairs which slandered Marie-Antoinette.¹³⁵ Mézières and Imbert de Villebon were held in custody in Brussels until January 1782, when they were both extradited to France and incarcerated in the Bastille.¹³⁶ Père François Guillaume Imbert de Boudeaux, brother of Imbert de Villebon, was also arrested in Paris in December 1781 and sent to the Bastille the following January on suspicion of being one of Jacquet's stable of writers.¹³⁷ Later in 1782 Receveur was dispatched to Amsterdam where he arrested the chevalier de Launay on suspicion of writing *libelles* for Jacquet.¹³⁸ Launay was brought back to the Bastille on 4 September 1782 but was found dead in his cell 20 days later. From Brussels and

¹³³ Charpentier, vol 3, pp. 45-47.

¹³⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fols. 442-43, La Greze to Vergennes, 20 November 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fol. 448, La Greze to Vergennes, 28 November 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fol. 10, Vergennes to La Greze, 9 January 1782.

¹³⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fols. 442-43, La Greze to Vergennes, 20 November 1782.

¹³⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fol. 10, Vergennes to La Greze, 9 January 1782.

¹³⁷ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12452, fol. 63, 17 January 1782.

¹³⁸ Funck-Brentano, *Les Lettres de cachet*, p. 410.

Amsterdam, Receveur brought back printed copies of the *Essais historiques sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette*, two anti-Necker pamphlets and *Les Joueurs et M. Dusaulx*, a work about the exploits of French elite figures in Parisian gambling dens.¹³⁹

This assault on Jacquet's network of *libellistes* illuminates the testing conditions faced by those responsible for policing print in late eighteenth-century France. Jacquet had foxed the French state by becoming a double agent, using his official position to draw other men into an international ring of illicit publishing. He was able to engineer, or at least to threaten, the production of the kind of literature that most troubled the French authorities. Before he was found out, Jacquet told Lenoir that he had discovered a number of *libelles* which were in the pipeline with titles such as, *Les Aventures de Madame de Polignac*, *Le Ministère de Vergennes* and *Le Cri de la France contre M. de Maurepas*.¹⁴⁰ None of these titles appeared subsequently which suggests that Jacquet fabricated them and was probably planning to engineer their publication himself in the hope of encouraging Lenoir to continue funding his foreign missions. The printing of *libelles* which attacked Necker, Madame du Barry and Marie-Antoinette was set in motion by Jacquet and his accomplices. At least two of the men involved with Jacquet had also been police spies.¹⁴¹ Lenoir employed the Imbert brothers to feed him information about underground publishing but then realised that they might be inventing title in the hope of securing suppression fees. The Jacquet affair also looked to be an instance of history repeating itself. In March 1778, Pierre-Antoine-Auguste Goupil Des Pallières, the inspector of the Paris book trade, had been arrested and sent to the Bastille for his involvement with *libelles*.¹⁴² Jacquet was inspired by Goupil's

¹³⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 172, fol. 440, La Greze to Vergennes, 14 November 1781; Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fol. 11, La Greze to Vergennes, 11 January 1782.

¹⁴⁰ Charpentier, vol 3, p. 37.

¹⁴¹ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 133-34.

¹⁴² Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 111; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 116-17.

actions and followed a scheme of organising foreign missions to suppress *libelles* about Marie-Antoinette at the same time as commissioning these texts.

Yet this affair demonstrates that the French state could still impose its will on print even in challenging circumstances. The government sent out a strong message by imprisoning Jacquet and at least seven of his associates in the Bastille. Jacquet was kept locked up until 1789 and writers like Marcenay and Mézières spent relatively long spells of more than one and a half years in the Bastille, even though they confessed to their involvement in Jacquet's operation. This provides evidence that the foreign ministry was willing to go beyond its strategy of concentrated, exemplary punishment in extraordinary cases. The scale of the offences committed here was considerable and the foreign ministry was obliged to work closely with the Paris police to break up Jacquet's network. The French state was also remarkably successful in either pre-empting the publication or suppressing printed copies of Jacquet's *libelles*. The *Essais historiques sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette* was probably the worst that Jacquet had to offer and the French government was able to buy up copies at the source in Holland and Brussels.¹⁴³ Cooperation between the Paris police and the foreign ministry meant that Jacquet's time as a double agent came to a dramatic end in October 1781, but the whole affair had served to underline the French government's vulnerability to the menace or publication of *libelle* literature.

The exposure and termination of Jacquet's network of book dealing was clearly a major challenge for the foreign ministry, as well as a significant coup once the affair was resolved. Yet a consideration of the wider European context makes it clear that the French state faced a string of similarly taxing situations in the early 1780s. In January 1782, just as the Imbert brothers and Mézières were being jailed in the Bastille for their involvement with Jacquet, the foreign ministry became concerned about works which

¹⁴³ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fol. 11, 11 January 1782.

were being published in Geneva. Vergennes received word from Lenoir that a publisher called Jean Abram Nouffer had sent advertisements to Parisian booksellers in September and October 1781 which announced the sale of a number of provocative texts.¹⁴⁴ Lenoir also knew that Nouffer's business partner, Duvillard fils, had come to Paris in June 1779 to distribute book catalogues which advertised seemingly subversive texts. Vergennes declared that 'La licence du premier de ces écrits rend le Sr. Nouffer digne de punition'.¹⁴⁵ The foreign minister was referring to Joseph Lanjuinais' *Supplément à l'espion anglois*.¹⁴⁶ This text purported to be a continuation of the popular work *L'Espion anglois* by Mathieu-François Pidansat de Mairobert, which had been published in 1779.¹⁴⁷ The *Supplément à l'espion anglois* ostensibly centred its attention on the American War of Independence but dwelt heavily on the subject of French politics. Burrows has suggested that the *Supplément* shocked the French authorities largely because of two pages of calumny against Marie-Antoinette.¹⁴⁸ The text insinuated that Marie-Antoinette's excessive spending was weakening the French state;

Vous savez, Milord, que cette Princesse fait les dépenses le plus extravagantes; peut-être même n'ignorez-vous pas que son luxe effréné a coûté pendant un temps à la nation plusieurs millions par semaine.¹⁴⁹

Lenoir said that copies of this work had found their way into the hands of booksellers in Paris and Versailles.¹⁵⁰ Nouffer had also been promoting *La Vérité rendue*

¹⁴⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 85, Lenoir to Vergennes, 20 January 1782.

¹⁴⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 51, Vergennes to Castelnaud, 11 January 1782.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph Lanjuinais, *Supplément à l'espion anglois; ou, lettres intéressantes sur la retraite de M. Necker, sur le sort de la France et de l'Angleterre, et sur la détention de M. Linguet à la Bastille, adressées à Mylord All'Eye, par l'auteur de l'espion anglois* (London: Adamson, 1782).

¹⁴⁷ Mathieu-François Pidansat de Mairobert, *L'Espion anglois; ou, correspondance secrète entre Milord All'Eye et Milord All'Ear* (London: Adamson, 1779).

¹⁴⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 151

¹⁴⁹ Lanjuinais, pp. 18-19.

sensible à Louis XVI par un admirateur de M. Necker, a work which advocated toleration for Protestants, and *Histoire d'un pou françois*, a satirical account of the American War of Independence told from the perspective of a louse.¹⁵¹ Vergennes told the baron de Castelnau, *résident* in Geneva that he was to ask the *Petit Conseil* there to take measures against Nouffer. Vergennes also instructed Castelnau that he was to put pressure on the authorities in Geneva to do all they could to discover the authors of these texts, as well as those individuals who had been selling them.

On 16 January 1781, Nouffer's print-shop was sealed by Genevan officials and the publisher was taken into custody where he remained for close to a month.¹⁵² In the course of searching Nouffer's shop the Genevan authorities uncovered and confiscated four copies of *Supplément à l'espion anglois*, two or three copies of *Histoire d'un pou françois* and, more surprisingly, 'une partie assez considérable' of the two most recent volumes of the *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république des lettres en France, depuis 1762 jusqu'à nos jours*.¹⁵³ This multi-volume work was a renowned chronicle of political and cultural events which took place between 1762 and 1787. It was published anonymously in instalments from 1777 to 1789 and has been attributed to Louis Petit de Bachaumont. Vergennes despaired that 'les auteurs ont eu pour but d'y rassembler des matériaux pour l'histoire, et qu'ils s'y permettent tout à qui pert nuire au Royaume et ternir les réputations'.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 85, Lenoir to Vergennes, 20 January 1782.

¹⁵¹ Anon., *La Vérité rendue sensible à Louis XVI par un admirateur de M. Necker*, 2 vols (London: Peterson, 1782); Delauney, *Histoire d'un pou françois; ou, l'espion d'une nouvelle espèce, tant en France qu'en Angleterre: contenant les portraits de personnages intéressans dans ces deux royaumes, et donnant la clef des principaux évènements de l'an 1779, et de ceux qui doivent arriver en 1780* (Paris: [n.pub.], 1781).

¹⁵² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 82-83, 18 January 1782.

¹⁵³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 77, Castelnau to Vergennes, 18 January 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 141-42, 15 February 1782.

¹⁵⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 108, Vergennes to Castelnau, 27 January 1782.

Nouffer was interrogated in Geneva on the basis of a list of questions provided by Lenoir which Vergennes had forwarded to Castelnau.¹⁵⁵ The publisher admitted to printing and selling both *Histoire d'un pou françois* and *La Vérité rendue sensible* but maintained that he was not responsible for the *Supplément à l'espion anglois*. Nouffer claimed that the initial advertisement for this work actually came from a German publisher and cited the nature of the typeset and paper as proof that the first announcement had not been printed in the Swiss states.¹⁵⁶ The fact that Nouffer sent promotional material into France himself could not be denied, but the Genevan asserted that he was merely trying to gauge interest in the work before he stocked his shop with copies.

Despite being under intense pressure from the French authorities, the *Petit Conseil* accepted Nouffer's defence and cleared him of the charge of publishing the *Supplément à l'espion anglois*.¹⁵⁷ The *Conseil* even tried to counter French accusations by pointing out that Nouffer had just been selling a work with a similar title, *L'Espion anglois* by Mairobert. The body also claimed that Nouffer had made counterfeit copies of a Dutch edition of the *Mémoires secrets*. This is interesting because the publication history of the *Mémoires secrets* has long been ambiguous. The title page of the each volume of the text announced that it was published in London. Scholars have assumed that this was a false imprint and the latest bibliographical research indicates that the text might have been printed in the United Provinces.¹⁵⁸ The account presented by the Genevan authorities confirms this idea.

¹⁵⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 88, Castelnau to Vergennes, 20 January 1782.

¹⁵⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 137, Lenoir to Vergennes, 14 February 1782.

¹⁵⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 137, Lenoir to Vergennes, 14 February 1782.

¹⁵⁸ Suzanne Cornaud, 'Histoire éditoriale', in Louis Petit de Bachaumont (attrib.), *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république des lettres en France, depuis 1762 jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. 1, ed. by Christophe Cave and Suzanne Cornaud (Paris: Champion, 2009), pp. xlv-lxx (pp. xlvi-l); Moureau, *La Plume et la plomb*, p. 477; Jeremy D. Popkin, 'The *Mémoires secrets* and the Reading of the Enlightenment', in *The Mémoires secrets*, ed. by Fort and Popkin, pp. 9-35 (p. 17).

On 13 February 1782 the *Petit Conseil* determined that Nouffer had already been punished enough for the works that he had printed and sold; a short spell in prison had disrupted his business. Nouffer was formally admonished, ordered to pay the costs of the trial and set free. The Nouffer affair again highlights some of the difficulties that the foreign ministry experienced in its efforts to manage the extra-territorial book trade. The *Supplément* was a significant work. Burrows has suggested that this was the only *libelle* targeting Marie-Antoinette which circulated prior to 1789.¹⁵⁹ Castelnau, the *résident* in Geneva, was convinced that Nouffer had indeed published the *Supplément à l'espion anglois* but he could not compel the *Petit Conseil* to discipline him further without more evidence.¹⁶⁰ Fearing that important papers may have been deliberately destroyed prior to or during the raid on Nouffer's shop, Castelnau did manage to persuade the Genevan authorities to arrange a second enquiry into the *Supplément à l'espion anglois*.¹⁶¹

However, it is important to recognise that Castelnau's exasperation was not totally echoed by Vergennes. The foreign minister was not especially upset by Nouffer's publication of *La Vérité rendue sensible*, a work in favour of religious toleration, or *Histoire d'un pou François*, which discussed French politics and foreign policy.¹⁶² It was the *Supplément* which outraged him. Moreover, Vergennes told Castelnau to convey to the *Petit Conseil* that Louis XVI was very grateful for the manner in which it had treated Nouffer.¹⁶³ It is easy to understand why Vergennes might have been reluctant to admit that the Genevan government had defied his orders. The struggle to rebuke Nouffer also relates to the foreign ministry's policy of seeking exemplary and measured punishment for at least one individual. Regardless of whether Nouffer really had published the *Supplément*, he had been imprisoned, interrogated and formally chastised

¹⁵⁹ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 151

¹⁶⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 88, Castelnau to Vergennes, 20 January 1782.

¹⁶¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 135-36, Castelnau to Vergennes, 14 February 1782.

¹⁶² Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 51, Vergennes to Castelnau, 11 January 1782.

¹⁶³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 170-73, Vergennes to Castelnau, 24 February 1782.

and other local printers would presumably now be wary of making the same mistakes. It is also important to remember that Vergennes did little to chase up the second enquiry on the *Supplément à l'espion anglois*, confirming the idea that one exemplary punishment was sufficient in his view.¹⁶⁴

It is also interesting to note that whilst Vergennes expressed his disapproval of the *Mémoires secrets*, he did not issue explicit orders against it. Popkin has proposed that the French government might have tolerated the *Mémoires secrets* in order to discredit its own propaganda about just how subversive it really was.¹⁶⁵ It has also been underlined by Sarah Maza that the French government monitored the Parisian salon of Marie Anne Doublet, where the *Mémoires secrets* is believed to have started life.¹⁶⁶ When it came to Nouffer in 1782, however, the decision to accept the publication of the *Mémoires secrets* seems to have also been linked with the idea of exemplary punishment. Nouffer had been punished for the *Supplément à l'espion anglois* and that was deemed sufficient. Vergennes told Castelnau to stress to the authorities in Geneva that they needed to be more vigilant in future.¹⁶⁷ Castelnau was also instructed to find out more about the publishing industry in Geneva. Vergennes wanted the French *résident* to pinpoint the lawful traders and identify those who were more likely to be drawn into illicit printing. The foreign minister believed that the *Supplément à l'espion anglois* had come from Geneva and so he made a special effort to establish limits on the print trade there. Although the French government was only able to ensure the confiscation of a few copies of this work, it was hoped that the pressure it applied in Geneva would discourage other traders from getting involved with the *Supplément*.

¹⁶⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 137, 14 February 1782.

¹⁶⁵ Popkin, 'The *Mémoires secrets*', pp. 31-32.

¹⁶⁶ Sarah Maza, 'Secreting History: The *Mémoires secrets* as a post-revolutionary document', in *The Mémoires secrets*, ed. by Fort and Popkin, pp. 175-80 (p. 176).

¹⁶⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 170-73, Vergennes to Castelnau, 24 February 1782.

The foreign ministry was placed under further strain in February 1782 at around the same time as Nouffer was being tried in Geneva. This time it was the threat of a *libelle* which was the catalyst for an international policing campaign. This campaign illustrates many of the difficulties the French government faced in its attempts to keep the foreign print trade under surveillance and control. In February 1782, Charlotte de Bournon Malarme and her husband Jean-Etienne Malarme arrived in Paris, bringing with them (so they claimed) 500 copies of a *libelle*. They took their text, entitled *Les Fripons parvenus, ou l'histoire du sieur Delzenne*, straight to Delzenne himself. Fearing the impact of such defamation, Delzenne agreed to pay the Malarmes 1,500 *livres* to suppress the work.¹⁶⁸ At around the same time, Lenoir was visited in his office by Henri-Alexis Cahaisse. Cahaisse presented Lenoir with the manuscript of *Les Fripons parvenus* and promised that he could find the perpetrators of this and other *libelles*, including a defamatory work about the comte d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI. This offer appealed to Lenoir and he arranged with Vergennes for the police officer Brugnières to travel to Liège with Cahaisse in tow and the two arrived there on 28 February 1782.¹⁶⁹

Cahaisse declared that he knew at least five men who were implicated in the production of *libelles*. These men went by the names of Boissobert, Clary, Daulet, Milon and Knapen. On arrival in Liège, Cahaisse told Brugnières that Daulet was actually in Cologne. After arranging with Léonard, the *chargé d'affaires* in Liège to seize and search the papers of the other suspected culprits, Brugnières set off for Cologne. Cahaisse claimed to be too ill to manage the journey and the reason for his absence quickly transpired.¹⁷⁰ Brugnières' investigations in Cologne made it clear that Daulet and Knapen did not exist. Brugnières was now convinced that Cahaisse himself was

¹⁶⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fols. 159-62, Léonard to Vergennes, 28 April 1782; Charpentier, vol 3, p. 50.

¹⁶⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Cologne 110, fol. 132, Vergennes to Causan, 21 February 1782.

¹⁷⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fols. 159-62, Léonard to Vergennes, 28 April 1782.

implicated in the production of *libelles* and rushed back to Liège to confront him. Back in Liège, Léonard told Brugnières that after having investigated Clary and Milon, he was convinced of their innocence. Although they were both writers, there was nothing within their papers to suggest that they were involved with *libelle* literature. At this point Brugnières also received a letter from Lenoir which confirmed Cahaisse's guilt and presented information about his links with the Malarme family. The purpose of Brugnières' mission had shifted and he was now in hot pursuit of Cahaisse and the Malarmes.

The three associates sought shelter in nearby Aachen. Léonard, the *chargé d'affaires* in Liège, appealed to officials there to arrest and extradite them back to France. The authorities in Aachen were obstreperous. The *grand mayeur* of Aachen was conspicuously absent for weeks and his lieutenant claimed that he did not have the authority to issue orders for their arrest in his absence. These delays enabled the three to escape again, this time to the neighbouring principality of Jülich. On hearing this news, Brugnières travelled straight to Düsseldorf where the comte de Nesselrode, the chancellor of Jülich, resided. The police inspector persuaded the chancellor to remind the obstinate officials in Aachen that it was their responsibility to capture the wayward trio, even if they were now hiding out in Jülich. Simultaneously, the comte de Montezan, French envoy in Munich appealed to Charles Theodore, the Elector Palatine, to compel the authorities in Aachen to act.¹⁷¹

Feeling the force of the Elector Palatine's disapproval, the *grand mayeur* of Aachen finally made decisive moves to secure the capture of Cahaisse and the Malarmes. The *grand mayeur* sent word that proceedings against the three individuals would be halted if they presented themselves at the city hall in Aachen. When they arrived, they were duly arrested. After Léonard arranged for the debts that the trio had

¹⁷¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fols. 159-62, Léonard to Vergennes, 28 April 1782.

run up in the locality to be settled, Brugnières took them back to Liège accompanied by a military escort provided by the Elector Palatine, comprising of two officers and 15 grenadier guards. Locked in prison in Liège, Cahaisse confessed that he had written the *libelle* which maligned Delzenne and then sold it onto a printer in Liège named Urban. This admission was corroborated by Urban, who added that Charlotte de Bournon Malarne had promised him that further manuscripts would be forthcoming.¹⁷² The French government now had enough evidence to prove that Cahaisse and Charlotte de Bournon Malarne were *libellistes* and at the beginning of May 1782 they were taken back to Paris and imprisoned in the Bastille.¹⁷³

On this occasion, the guilty parties received their due punishment. But as before, the success of the foreign ministry's external policing campaign was far from total. The French state was at the mercy of uncooperative officials in Aachen who impeded French attempts to secure the arrest of Cahaisse and the Malarmes for as long as they possibly could. These delays were exacerbated as the trio leapt from state to state, forcing Brugnières and the French diplomats to become entangled with a range of foreign authorities. Cologne, Liège, Aachen, Jülich and Düsseldorf are all relatively close on the map, but it took Brugnières days to trail from town to town and close to two months to finally arrest the three. It must also be stressed here that the guilty parties were already known to the French government. Cahaisse had already been arrested twice and had spent time in the Prison of Saint-Lazare in Paris whilst the Malarmes had been exiled from France for fraud.¹⁷⁴ In this instance, the French state proved itself unable to prevent recidivism in spite of the penalties it had imposed on these individuals. As usual, the punishment administered here was measured. Jean-Etienne Malarne was not taken to the Bastille along with his wife because he was not

¹⁷² Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fols. 159-62, Léonard to Vergennes, 28 April 1782.

¹⁷³ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12453, fol. 5, 3 May 1782.

¹⁷⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 69, fols. 159-62, Léonard to Vergennes, 28 April 1782.

suspected of authoring any of the *libelles* in question. French officials also decided against trying to seek a punishment for the printer Urban who admitted to his involvement with the trio. The foreign ministry concentrated on making an example of Cahaise and Charlotte de Bournon Malarne and was less concerned about Urban because *Les Fripons parvenus* never reached the market. French officials certainly strained to deal with the twists and turns of this complex case but ultimately succeeded in punishing the main culprits.

The foreign ministry was challenged once again in October 1782 when Vergennes became concerned that Neuchâtelois printers were publishing a number of inflammatory works thought to be penned by the comte de Mirabeau. *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état* was a forceful treatise on the link between arbitrary imprisonment and despotism which Mirabeau wrote during his incarceration in Vincennes prison where he had been placed as a result of a *lettre de cachet*. *Libertin de qualité, ou ma conversion* was a pornographic novel and *L'Espion dévalisé* was a scandalous and satirical look back at the reign of Louis XV. The latter work is normally attributed to Baudouin de Guémadeuc but since Mirabeau sold the three manuscripts together in Neuchâtel he presumably wrote at least part of it. Darnton has considered the publication of these titles in one of his early articles.¹⁷⁵ New evidence from the diplomatic correspondence can shed light on the French government's response to this affair.

Around 13,000 copies of Mirabeau's work on *lettres de cachet* flooded the European market, causing a sensation which attracted the attention of the French government.¹⁷⁶ Lenoir was able to confirm Vergennes' suspicion that it was printers in

¹⁷⁵ Robert Darnton, 'Trade in the Taboo: The Life of a Clandestine Book Dealer in Prerevolutionary France', in *The Widening Circle: Essays on the Circulation of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Paul J. Korshin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), pp. 11-83 (pp. 24-25).

¹⁷⁶ Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité', p. 90.

Neuchâtel who were advertising the texts to French booksellers.¹⁷⁷ Vergennes then called upon Bâcher, the *chargé d'affaires* in Solothurn, and the baron von der Goltz, Prussian ambassador to France, to intercede with the authorities in Neuchâtel.¹⁷⁸ The foreign minister wanted Mirabeau's original manuscripts to be seized and the dissemination of any printed copies to be blocked. Under duress from both Prussian and French officials, the *Conseil d'état* in Neuchâtel moved relatively swiftly. Officials searched local print-shops and declared that it was a firm by the name of Jonas Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Jérémie Witel which had printed *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état*.¹⁷⁹ The three partners were sent to prison for three days and nights and were ordered to appear before the *Conseil d'état* on 12 November 1782 to explain their conduct.¹⁸⁰ The authorities in Neuchâtel confiscated copies of Mirabeau's works from the print-shop of Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel and decreed that the shop was to stay closed for the next two months.¹⁸¹

The French government found it much easier to deal with the government in Neuchâtel than with the authorities who became involved in the pursuit of Cahaisse and the Malarmes. The *Conseil d'état* in Neuchâtel was responsive to French demands and quickly arrested the culpable printers. Yet Swiss officials also deceived the French state during this affair. After Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel had been arrested for publishing Mirabeau's work on *lettres de cachet*, the Neuchâtelois maintained that they knew nothing of the publication of his other works.¹⁸² According to an associate of Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel, Mirabeau's presence in Neuchâtel in July 1782 had been a big event with the comte passing copies of the manuscript of *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état*

¹⁷⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 328, Lenoir to Vergennes, 11 October 1782.

¹⁷⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse, 201, fol. 336, Vergennes to Goltz, 17 October 1782.

¹⁷⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 278-79, Bâcher to Vergennes, 3 November 1782.

¹⁸⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 347, 21 October 1782.

¹⁸¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 360, Goltz to Vergennes, 30 October 1782; Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols 290-92, Bâcher to Vergennes, 13 November 1782; Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité', p. 81.

¹⁸² Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 360, Goltz to Vergennes, 30 October 1782.

around for several prominent officials to read over.¹⁸³ *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe Database* also suggests that Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel had indeed printed all three works. The STN received its copies of *L'Espion dévalisé* and *Le Libertin de qualité* from this neighbouring company.¹⁸⁴ Despite the lingering uncertainty over the full extent of the guilt of the Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel firm, Vergennes expressed satisfaction with the way events had played out in Neuchâtel.¹⁸⁵ The official strategy of securing a measured exemplary punishment had been realised. Vergennes vaguely suggested to Goltz that the *Conseil d'état* should continue to be vigilant to the printing of similar works but made no effort to follow up with Bâcher when it came to the source of the other two pamphlets.

In 1783, it was the print trade in London which began to cause real problems for the French government. The police inspector Receveur was sent to London in March 1783.¹⁸⁶ His primary goal was to prevent the appearance of two *libelles* in particular but Receveur was also directed to uncover whatever information he could about any other texts which might be forthcoming. Receveur entered into negotiations with the author Pelleport and the publisher David Boissière in the hope of suppressing *La Naissance du dauphin dévoilée* and *Les Petits soupers et nuits de l'hôtel de Bouill-n*.¹⁸⁷ The former work accused Marie-Antoinette of infidelity. The latter was the story of the love

¹⁸³ Paris, BNF, MF 22046, fols. 40-45, 2 July 1783.

¹⁸⁴ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Book, *L'Espion dévalisé* and *Le Libertin de qualité*
http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0003709&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table

and
http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0003903&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

¹⁸⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 201, fol. 367, Vergennes to Goltz, 7 November 1782.

¹⁸⁶ For a full account of this mission, see Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 124-25; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 150-60.

¹⁸⁷ Receveur was unable to prevent the appearance of the latter work, which was published in 1783. See Anne-Gédéon Lafitte, marquis de Pelleport, *Les Petits soupers et nuits de l'hôtel de Bouill-n. Lettre de Milord comte de ***** à Milord ***** au sujet des récréations de M. de C-stri-s; ou, de la danse de l'ours, anecdote singulière d'un cocher qui s'est pendu à l'hôtel de Bouill-n, le 31 décembre 1778 à l'occasion de la danse de l'ours* (Bouillon [London(?): [n. pub.], 1783).

lives of the German princess of Bouillon, her family and friends, written in the form of a conversation between strangers at the opera. It targeted the French naval minister, the marquis de Castries, as well as a number of other prominent members of the aristocracy. Pelleport and Boissière refused to accept the suppression fees suggested by Receveur and as negotiations dragged on, Pelleport threatened two further libelles: *Les Passe-tems d'Antoinette* was another work which maligned the French Queen whilst *Les Amours et aventures du vizir Vergennes* targeted the foreign minister. At the same time as Receveur was bargaining with Pelleport and Boissière, the French diplomatic team were lobbying the British government in the hope of prompting legal reform of the country's libel laws. Both of these efforts ultimately failed. Receveur returned to France in June having been unable to convince Pelleport and Boissière to agree put a stop attacking the French monarchy and ministry in print. It was not until 1792 that the British Parliament tightened the laws on defamatory writings with The Libel Act. Receveur was able to gain some ground, however, as the *libelles* against Marie-Antoinette and Vergennes which Pelleport had threatened never made it to market.

12 June 1783 and its Aftermath

Following Receveur's return to France in June 1783, the French government changed tack in an attempt to wrestle back control over extra-territorial print. On 12 June 1783, Vergennes sent a command to the *ferme générale*, the body in charge of customs and tax collections. Vergennes ordered that all books imported into France were to be sent immediately to Paris for inspection before going onto their final destinations. This measure had the potential to severely disrupt the normal trading practices of foreign publishers.

Complying with this edict necessitated new transport arrangements and resulted in long delays, both of which were costly. In usual circumstances, it was the provincial traders within France who paid the importation costs when they did business with foreign publishers. From June 1783 the additional costs of transporting books to and from Paris fell upon provincial booksellers, making cross-border trade an expensive exercise. The order of 12 June 1783 did not stop clandestine publishing and bookselling entirely but a more centralised system of inspection made it much more difficult to smuggle contentious texts past the French authorities. Crates of books now circumvented provincial officials who, being further away from the French centre of power, tended to be less efficient and more open to bribes. From 12 June 1783, every imported book was to be inspected by officers of the *chambre syndicale* in Paris. The long-established dominance of the Parisian book trade guild meant that these officers were generally hostile to booksellers in the provinces. Members of the *chambre syndicale* in Paris had no incentive to protect their provincial competitors. This measure also impacted upon the book trade in Paris. Typically, illicit books destined for Paris were sent to a nearby village and then smuggled into the French capital in stages. Vergennes had ordered that all texts were now to be sent to Paris in the first instance. Burrows and Darnton have both stressed the importance of this decree, but there is still more to be said about its implementation and implications.¹⁸⁸

The decree passed on 12 June 1783 was notable for being Vergennes' personal decision. Vergennes' edict constituted an independent judgement made by a minister at the height of his powers which did not go through the formal channels of the *direction de la librairie*. Across the early 1780s Vergennes amassed more and more power. Following the death of Louis XVI's chief advisor, the comte de Maurepas, in

¹⁸⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 125; Darnton, *The Literary Underground*, pp. 193-97.

November 1781, Vergennes' strength reached a peak. He informally took over Maurepas' role as first minister and had responsibility for financial as well as for foreign affairs.¹⁸⁹ The order passed on 12 June 1783 related to the internal administration of the French book trade as much as it did to extra-territorial print. Vergennes was able to extend his dominance beyond the sphere of foreign affairs at this juncture in an effort to try and keep the print trade under his control.

As a conservative individual, Vergennes was disturbed by the trade in *libelle* literature. But more importantly, he worried about how tales of monarchical and elite decadence, debauchery and despotism would affect French readers. As we have seen, the foreign ministry concentrated on trying to prevent the publication and spread of *libelles* across the final decades of the *ancien régime*. From 1782 to 1784 Vergennes was also lobbying the British government to prohibit the publication of *libelles* by act of Parliament in the place where the *libelle* trade was at its worst.¹⁹⁰ The lack of progress made in these negotiations played its part in convincing Vergennes to take matters into his own hands. The decision taken by the French foreign minister in June 1783 can thus be read as a proactive attempt to strengthen the foreign ministry's long-term policy of targeting and suppressing *libelles* as they appeared across the continent.

Vergennes certainly detested *libelles* but the decision he took in the summer of 1783 had serious implications which went far beyond controlling the content of texts which were imported into France. It is clear that the period from late 1781 to mid 1783 was a time of crisis for the foreign ministry as it struggled to maintain influence over the arena of extra-territorial print. Vergennes and his team battled to curb the

¹⁸⁹ Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 62.

¹⁹⁰ On these negotiations, see Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 541, fol. 204, de Moustier to Vergennes, 16 March 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 541, fol. 224, de Moustier to Vergennes, 17 March 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 541, fols. 234-37, de Moustier to Vergennes, 23 March 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre, 541, fol. 37-42, de Moustier to Vergennes, April 1783; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 541, fols. 102-04, Vergennes to de Moustier, 24 April 1783.

dissemination of a string of offensive works which appeared on the scene in these years. The texts which troubled the foreign ministry were largely *libelles* which slandered political figures and members of the royal family but politically charged works like *Supplément à l'espion anglois* or *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état* could also cause consternation. Extra-territorial control was contested by government officials becoming double agents, by *libellistes* trying to blackmail the French state and by obstructive foreign authorities resisting French demands. Dealing with this series of complex and protracted affairs was exhausting and by 1783 Vergennes had become convinced that something had to change. As Burrows has pointed out, Receveur's return to France in May 1783 following his failed mission to suppress *libelles* in London probably constituted the immediate trigger for a change in policy.¹⁹¹ Vergennes suggested as much in a letter to Lenoir in June 1783.¹⁹² However, as the preceding discussion has illustrated, it was a wider and sustained barrage of material from across Europe which really compelled Vergennes to set out in a new direction.

The data collected in the course of this thesis supports the idea that there was an escalation of the problem of extra-territorial print during the early 1780s. This is made clear in Figure 7.

¹⁹¹ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 126-27.

¹⁹² Manuel, *La Police de Paris dévoilée*, vol 1, pp. 153-55.

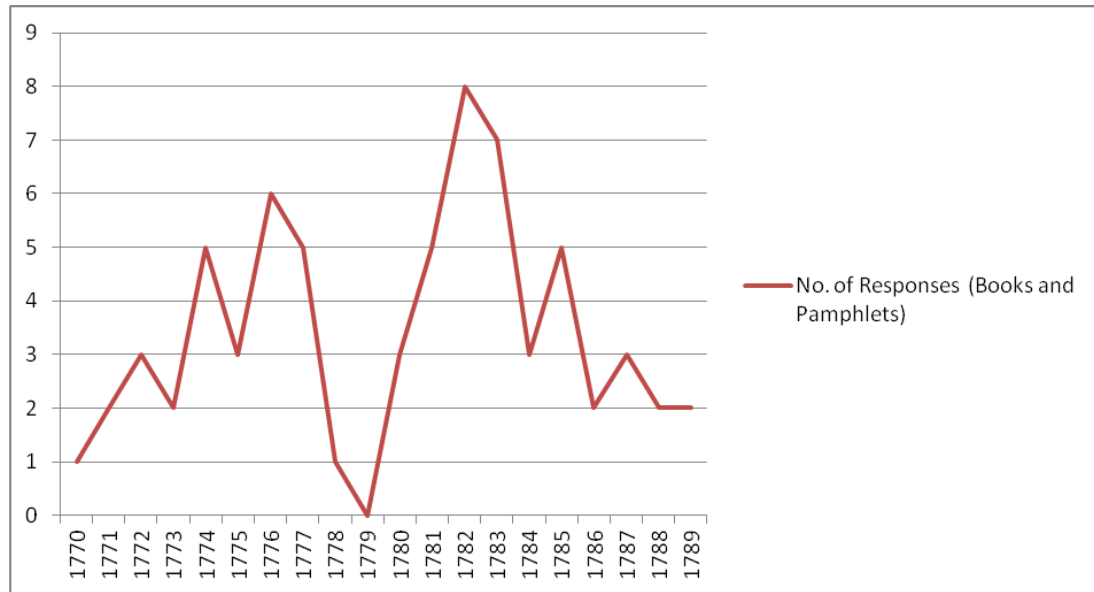


Figure 7: Frequency of Official Responses to the Extra-Territorial Print Trade (Books and Pamphlets) by Year, 1770-1789

The French government's involvement in the policing of literature began to intensify in 1781, reached a peak in 1782 and remained high in 1783. This graph does not tell us everything. The events that occurred from 1781 to 1783 were major affairs spanning several months and involving titles which the French government found intolerable. Taking the STN as an example of a sizeable extra-territorial book trader, sales data indicates that its trade was at a peak in the years 1781 to 1782.¹⁹³ There is also evidence that Vergennes appreciated how it was becoming increasingly difficult to manage the extra-territorial book trade. After the French government secured the arrest of Nouffer in January 1782 Vergennes despaired that offences relating to the book trade were becoming more and more common in Geneva.¹⁹⁴ In August 1781, the French state had tried to keep the extra-territorial book trade in check by restating the importance of following existing regulations relating to the inspection of imported

¹⁹³ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*.

¹⁹⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fols. 170-73, Vergennes to Castelnaud, 24 February 1782.

material. The challenging circumstances that the foreign ministry found itself in subsequent to these reforms make it clear that this approach did not work. The current measures for internal inspections were inadequate and the structures of external policing were strained.

The French government remained concerned about the same kinds of books, but in the early 1780s the extent of this literature began to become overwhelming. As such, it made sense to initiate a radical transformation of the manner in which books were imported into France. The inspiration for this reform may have come from Néville, the *directeur de la librairie*. In a memorandum on the book trade in Versailles written in February 1783, Néville postulated a number of ways in which the French state might be able to impose some form of control.¹⁹⁵ One of the tactics Néville suggested was making sure that all books were inspected in Paris before they made they entered Versailles.

Vergennes complemented his order of 12 June 1783 by encouraging his colleagues to pay closer attention to the illicit print trade. Vergennes asked Lenoir to watch closely over hawkers in Paris and to punish them severely if they were found to be selling books which seemed to be objectionable.¹⁹⁶ Claude-Jean Rigoley, baron d'Ogny, the *intendant général des postes*, was also told to halt the circulation of any suspicious looking packages of books that were found to be circulating through the postal system. Across late 1783 and early 1784 Vergennes also considered striking another blow at the extra-territorial print trade by re-introducing the tax on imported books which had been rescinded in April 1775.¹⁹⁷ The French government also mooted the possibility of formally reiterating the regulations on the inspection of imported

¹⁹⁵ Paris, BNF, MF 22129, fols. 23-25, 12 February 1783.

¹⁹⁶ Manuel, *La Police de Paris dévoilée*, vol 1, pp. 153-55.

¹⁹⁷ Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fol. 127, September 1783; Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fols. 75-78, 22 March 1784.

books, as it had already done in August 1781.¹⁹⁸ The moves made by Vergennes in 1783 were an attempt to move beyond reactive policing and were accompanied by other proposals which might strengthen French dominance. The French foreign minister initiated a strategic shift to try to subdue an illicit book trade which seemed to be spiralling out of control. Foreign publications were challenging the usual structures of external policing so Vergennes changed his focus to internal mechanisms for regulating the printed word.

Some contemporaries suspected that motives of economic protectionism were also at work here. In a letter to the STN, the author Louis-Sébastien Mercier mentioned the decree of June 1783, claiming that 'le prétexte, c'est le cours des libelles; le but c'est l'argent'.¹⁹⁹ Scholarship by Birn, Rigogne and Roche amongst others has made it clear that censorship in eighteenth-century France was influenced by economic as well as by ideological considerations.²⁰⁰ French officials had a responsibility to stimulate French trade and industry and the publishing business was no exception. Foreign publishers and booksellers who sold books to French clients generated profits at the expense of traders within France. In 1783, the task of buttressing French trade and industry took on a particular significance as the French economy was suffering from the huge debts incurred in the course of the American War of Independence. During his time in power Vergennes' understanding of finance also developed and he became more concerned with France's economic issues. In 1780 he was charged with the administration of a number of provinces and his jurisdiction included the big mercantile towns of Marseilles, Rouen and Lyon. The latter two towns were both

¹⁹⁸ Paris, BNF, MF 21834, fols. 114-17, 1783.

¹⁹⁹ Neuchâtel, BPUN, Fonds de la STN, MS 1180, Mercier to the STN, fols. 234-44, 17 August 1783.

²⁰⁰ Raymond F. Birn, 'The Profits of Ideas: *Privilèges en Librairie* in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 4 (1970-71), 131-68 (pp. 167-68); Thierry Rigogne, 'Printers into Booksellers: The Structural Transformation of the French Book Trade in the Age of Enlightenment', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 101 (2007), 533-61 (pp. 545-46); Roche, 'Censorship and the Publishing Industry', pp. 7-8.

centres of publishing and book-selling.²⁰¹ Later, in February 1783 Vergennes tried to implement a new approach to economic management through the coordination of a cross-departmental budget overseen by a committee which he headed.

Vergennes' engagement with the economic sphere was a clear component of his decision to tighten the system of inspection for books imported into France. The order of 12 June 1783 undercut the extra-territorial book trade and worked to the benefit of booksellers and publishers in Paris who could be closely supervised by the state. There is the possibility that Parisian booksellers put pressure on the French state to enact and then to uphold this order. The monopoly of traders working in the French capital had been damaged by the reforms implemented in August 1777 which were designed to give a boost to provincial booksellers. Parisian traders thus welcomed 12 June 1783 and the havoc it wreaked in the provinces.

However, it is important to recognise that protectionist motives were very much of secondary significance for Vergennes in 1783. Thanks to a deluge of provincial protests which flooded into central government, French officials quickly realised how far the decree of 12 June 1783 severely damaged the provincial trade. Jean-André Périsset-Duluc was a bookseller and publisher who was also a *syndic* at the *chambre syndicale* in Lyon. He fiercely objected to Vergennes' edict, asserting that the order was equivalent to 'une prohibition totale de la librairie étrangère'.²⁰² Provincial booksellers depended on their dealings with foreign book dealers and most could not afford the extra costs of sending all their imported titles to Paris and back. Since French booksellers regularly conducted their trade on the basis of exchanging copies, Vergennes' edict damaged French exports too. French officials paid little heed to complaints from the provinces and stressed that the security of the French state, its

²⁰¹ Hardman, *French Politics*, p. 124.

²⁰² Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fol. 107, Memorandum by Périsset-Duluc, 29 July 1783.

religion and its moral values should not be sacrificed to mercantile interests.²⁰³ This judgement also shows that the French authorities were keen to make clear their opposition to any assault on religious orthodoxy, even if texts which challenged Catholicism were seldom pursued abroad.

Vergennes did try to avoid making the situation worse. Although he considered introducing a tax on imported books, he never implemented this for fear of damaging the provincial trade still further. D'Ogny also contemplated the introduction of a system of state-employed wagon drivers who could be trusted to deliver books without succumbing to corruption. This idea was also rejected because it would have been too expensive for most booksellers to afford.²⁰⁴ The edict of 12 June 1783 furthered the dominance of Parisian traders who, being close to the French centre of power, tended to be less engaged in illicit trading than their provincial counterparts. Yet the benefits of boosting the trade in Paris could not compensate for the damage done to provincial bookselling. Vergennes' command of June 1783 had negative consequences for the French economy but he remained determined that it should stay in place. Preventing the circulation of illicit titles was clearly considered more important than boosting provincial trade at this juncture.

The decree of 12 June 1783 evidently marked a major change in policy. But regulations in eighteenth-century France did not always translate into reality, especially when it came to the matter of censorship. It was once assumed that, like much of the French government's rulings on the book trade, the efficacy of Vergennes' pronouncement was limited.²⁰⁵ It is fair to say that extending control over the importation of every single crate of books may have been an unattainable aim for a huge state in the eighteenth century. Robert Dawson recently re-emphasised that book

²⁰³ Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fols. 117-22, 1783; Paris, BNF, MF 22063, fols. 279-89, June 1783.

²⁰⁴ Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fols. 117-22.

²⁰⁵ Belin, p. 45; Hermann-Mascard, p. 102.

traders could find ways to circumvent this particular edict.²⁰⁶ Booksellers either made a special request to receive their books directly (these requests were often granted) or just did so illegally without formal approval. In a memorandum of protest which was sent to the French government, presumably to Néville, the *directeur de la librairie*, the Lyonnais bookseller Périsset-Duluc outlined eleven ways that books could still be smuggled into and around France in spite of the edict of 12 June.²⁰⁷ However, at this point Périsset-Duluc was trying to convince the French government to rescind this decree and so it was in his interests to claim that it simply was not working. There are examples of traders who were able to do business without adhering to the edict of 12 June 1783. For example, in June 1784 a bookseller from Liège complained to the French government after a bundle of his books which were destined for Turin had been stopped at customs in France and forwarded onto Paris. This execution of Vergennes' order came as a surprise to the trader from Liège, who had previously dispatched several crates through France without running into any problems.²⁰⁸

The ruling of 12 June 1783 may not have been enforced in every instance but there is evidence that it did indeed take effect. It fundamentally undermined the French book trade rather than merely pushing it further underground. Burrows and Darnton have both argued that this change in the law did major damage to the trade of extra-territorial publishers who relied upon their trade with French provincial booksellers.²⁰⁹ The impact of the decree was immediate. Protests from booksellers in Lille were sent to the French government as early as 25 June.²¹⁰

Evidence of the effects of the decree of 12 June 1783 has been one of the major outcomes of *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe Database, 1769-1794* project.

²⁰⁶ Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs*, pp. 143-44.

²⁰⁷ Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fols. 107-10, Memorandum by Périsset-Duluc, 29 July 1783.

²⁰⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 70, fol. 231, Sainte-Croix to Vergennes, 11 June 1784.

²⁰⁹ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 125; Darnton, *The Literary Underground*, pp. 193-97.

²¹⁰ Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fols. 70-71, 1783.

Data gathered from the STN records indicates that the firm's trade with provincial France fell dramatically in the aftermath of Vergennes' decree. After 12 June 1783 the STN's trade with France began to slow but more strikingly, its trade with Geneva fell.²¹¹ By the beginning of January 1784 hardly anything was being sent to Geneva. Such a marked fall implies the closure of the French market since the STN typically supplied French readers in collaboration with Genevan traders. Vergennes' order also seems to have been upheld for at least three years following its implementation. According to information from the database, the STN sent only 2,500 books to towns in western France during the years 1785-1786 and sent almost nothing to the rest of provincial France in this period.²¹² It is important to recognise that there were other reasons for the decline of the STN's trade in the mid-to-late 1780s. The firm was suffering from doing business with traders who refused to pay their costs. By August 1785 the STN had accumulated a deficit of 75,000 *livres* which exacerbated any damage which had been done by the edict of 12 June 1783.²¹³

However, it can also be argued that the STN was not the only Francophone book business which was hit hard by Vergennes' pronouncement. A similar decline in trade can also be discerned in the output of Samuel Fauche's publishing business in Neuchâtel, as well as in the publishing records of presses based in Lausanne.²¹⁴ Outside the Swiss states, Raymond Birn has also noted that the once lively business of the *Société typographique de Bouillon* dropped off in the mid 1780s, with only around twenty books

²¹¹ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Town, Geneva http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=town&e=all&id=p1171&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1782&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1787&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

²¹² Curran, 'Beyond the Forbidden Best-Sellers', pp. 111-12.

²¹³ Schlup, 'Points de repère', p. 102.

²¹⁴ Silvio Corsini, 'Les Presses lausannoises au siècle des Lumières', *Biblos 18* (1999) <http://dbserv1-bcu.unil.ch/biblos/rech.php?Arg=1783> [accessed on 11 January 2013]; Silvio Corsini, '42 Livres trouvés pour l'imprimeur Fauche, Samuel', *Fleurion* (1999) <http://dbserv1-bcu.unil.ch/ornements/scripts/LivresImprimeur.html?ImprimeurID=-8520822> [accessed 11 January 2013].

being published between 1784 and 1793.²¹⁵ Whilst other legislation may have fallen by the wayside, been reinterpreted, built upon or even ignored by those in positions of authority, Vergennes' directive seems to have taken effect. Vergennes changed the way in which the government approached the extra-territorial print trade and this shift played a major role in putting the French state back in control. The successful implementation of the decree of 12 June 1783 shows that the French state had the power to bring the print trade into line as long as it could find the right strategy to do so.

Dawson argues that the impact of this decree was only short term by pointing to its partial revocation on 23 November 1785. Yet this later order only freed up the passage of books passing through France en route to another destination.²¹⁶ Vergennes' directive still applied to books destined for French readers. One factor that might have undermined this decree relates to Vergennes himself. In November 1783, the foreign minister was discredited in the eyes of Louis XVI after d'Ormesson, the *contrôleur-général*, accused Vergennes of trying to exploit his office for personal profit.²¹⁷ Vergennes' *comité des finances* crumbled and he could no longer enjoy the prestige of being Louis XVI's de facto first minister. But we must be careful of overstating Vergennes' fall from grace. The foreign minister retained enough authority to keep his command of 12 June in place. Moreover, his position had begun to stabilise again by 1785 when he started to regain the trust of the King. Internal government memoranda indicate that Vergennes had to battle hostile voices who doubted the wisdom of reforming the system for inspecting imported books. There was criticism that this authoritarian restructuring could never be totally effective.²¹⁸ Vergennes was able to quieten this opposition and even facilitate the exploration of other avenues which might restrict the passage of books into France. For example, in June 1786

²¹⁵ Birn, *Pierre Rousseau*, pp. 160-61

²¹⁶ Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs*, p. 143.

²¹⁷ *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, p. 25.

²¹⁸ Paris, BNF, MF 22063, fols. 279-89, 1783.

Vergennes asked d'Hémery, the former inspector of the book trade, for his thoughts on how the regime could prevent postal couriers from introducing banned books into the French kingdom.²¹⁹ Vergennes fell out of favour in November 1783 but his weakened position was only short-term. Even without being the predominant minister in government Vergennes was able to ensure that the French state stayed committed to the changes he had instigated in June 1783.

The command issued on 12 June 1783 was the major element of a wider policy change which was implemented in the same year. With the American War of Independence coming to its conclusion, some of the pressure lifted from Vergennes. After enduring several years of contending with the extra-territorial print trade, Vergennes was now able to take stock and re-evaluate his approach to the external policing of print. Burrows has claimed that from 1783 onwards the French government began to spurn the demands of the London *libellistes* working in London by refusing to pay to suppress their offensive titles.²²⁰ Paying off writers who threatened to publish defamatory texts just encouraged other authors to seek the same kind of compensation. In 1783 Vergennes decided to stop pandering to the *libellistes'* demands. This was part of a broader decision to try to avoid as far as possible becoming engaged with the offensive elements in the foreign print trade as far as was possible. The foreign minister did not explicitly inform his diplomatic correspondents of this shift in attitude nor did he refer to the edict of 12 June 1783. Yet there is plenty of evidence of Vergennes' new approach to policing print in the extra-territorial arena. A government memorandum from 1783 confirms that French officials did feel that scorning illicit texts might be more effective than trying to implement authoritarian measures to control the

²¹⁹ Paris, BNF, MF 22081, fol. 373, 21 June 1786; Paris, BNF, MF 22070, fol. 145, 21 July 1786.

²²⁰ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 88.

dissemination of literature.²²¹ The memoirs of the *lieutenant général* Lenoir also indicate that the French government resolved to stop worrying about illicit texts in 1783 and claim that this new policy was successful.²²²

The wider European picture suggests that this posture of indifference was extended beyond the *libellistes* who hoped to blackmail the French government. From mid 1783 onwards Vergennes decided that, as far as was possible, contempt should be shown for illicit literature. He advised ignoring most of the foreign print trade and would only support action to suppress what he considered to be the most extreme titles. The French government's strategy of policing was now focused even more tightly. Vergennes was confident enough to do this because he had effectively transformed the French foreign ministry's approach to print in June 1783. Controlling the book trade internally was proving fruitful so Vergennes felt able to scorn the threat of further literature coming from abroad. This shift in approach was at least partly inspired by the stance of the comte d'Adhémar, French ambassador in London. Having been forced to deal with a succession of proposed and printed *libelles*, d'Adhémar was adamant that the government's current methods were not working. He advised Vergennes that the foreign ministry would be in a stronger position if it simply ignored the demands of the *libellistes* and the appearance of any *libelles*.²²³ This idea had support from other sources besides d'Adhémar. For example, the chevalier de Jaucourt's article on *libelles* in the *Encyclopédie* pointed out that all attempts to control this kind of literature had been unsuccessful and urged that 'Les honnêtes gens embrassent le parti de la vertu, & punissent la calomnie par le mépris'.²²⁴ This transformed attitude complemented

²²¹ Paris, BNF, MF 22063, fols. 279-89, June 1783.

²²² Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, Electronic Supplement, Appendix 2, Lenoir's Notes on the Book Police and Libels http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/darnton_supplement.html#app2 [accessed 11 January 2013].

²²³ Charpentier, vol 1, pp. 153-55.

²²⁴ *Encyclopédie*, vol 9, p. 459. University of Chicago: ARTFL *Encyclopédie* Project, ed. by Robert Morrissey (2013) <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/> [accessed 11 January 2013].

Vergennes' attempt to gain control over the extra-territorial print trade in June 1783.

By narrowing its focus even further, the foreign ministry made the job of watching over and managing the extra-territorial print trade easier to handle.

It must be recognised that the idea of scorning the threat of illicit literature was not an entirely new one in 1783. The French foreign ministry had experimented with this strategy before. As Burrows has outlined, the state stood firm against Linguet's threats to publish a work slandering d'Aiguillon in 1777.²²⁵ In April 1780 French officials refused to negotiate with Godeville when she attempted to secure a pay-off for a *libelle* attacking the duc de Richelieu.²²⁶ As discussed in Chapter 2, there were also a few cases where the French foreign minister disagreed with his diplomats' assessment of a text and instead decided that it could be ignored.²²⁷ In the course of their correspondence in September 1775, Louis XVI and Vergennes agreed that *libelles* should be scorned. Louis XVI even foreshadowed Vergennes' change of approach in 1783 by suggesting that the regime should concentrate on preventing the dissemination of these texts within France.²²⁸ These examples show that the French government had begun to question the efficacy of vigorously pursuing what it considered to be the most reprehensible texts. These doubts were confirmed in the early 1780s when the French government repeatedly struggled to suppress offensive material across several regions of Europe. This situation made it clear to Vergennes that something had to change.

The French government continued to be challenged by extra-territorial authors and publishers but did its best to pay less attention to such transgressions. By August 1783, French officials had lost heart in their pursuit of *Les Petits soupers et nuits de l'hôtel de Bouillon*, a work which Receveur was sent to suppress when it initially appeared in

²²⁵ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 105-07.

²²⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 540, fol. 491, Brugnères to La Vauguyon, April 1780; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 541, fol. 116, 1 June 1780.

²²⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 193, fol. 155, Gaussen to Vergennes, 3 June 1775.

²²⁸ *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, pp. 206-07.

London. The Parisian publisher Panckoucke alerted Lenoir to a new edition which was being published in Brussels. The foreign ministry also found information to suggest that *La Gazette noire*, another work which was probably composed by Pelleport, and Linguet's *Mémoires sur la Bastille* were both being printed in Holland.²²⁹ Lenoir displayed little anxiety about the latter two works and advised Vergennes that it was best to ignore the publication of *Les Petits soupers*.²³⁰ The police chief had adopted the new governmental mindset which refused to take *libelles* seriously. Lenoir even managed to convince the French naval minister, Charles Eugène Gabriel de La Croix, marquis de Castries, to pour scorn on *Les Petits soupers* despite the fact that it denigrated him personally. However, it was probably the case that Lenoir was also influenced by Panckoucke's assessment that it was already too late to stop the spread of this work.²³¹ Again, Vergennes followed Lenoir's advice and did nothing. Even when Bérenger, the *chargé d'affaires* in The Hague, claimed that two printers called Benet and Hack were likely to have printed the *La Gazette noire* in Rotterdam, Vergennes declined to seek any form of punishment for these men.²³²

Vergennes' new attitude was made plain again in January 1784. Laurent Joachim Xavier Bernier de Maligny, *chargé d'affaires* in Geneva, sent Vergennes a few copies of a pamphlet entitled *Histoire de la procédure*, which was circulating there.²³³ The subject matter of this work is not clear since copies do not seem to have survived. It can be assumed from the title at least that the text dealt with judicial processes within France and it may have discussed conflict between crown and *parlement*. Maligny explained that regional officials were taking steps to prevent printers from producing this work. Vergennes did not appear to be alarmed and replied that the work

²²⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fols. 299-300, 27 August 1783.

²³⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fols. 293-94, Lenoir to Vergennes, 25 August 1783.

²³¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fols. 299-300, 27 August 1783.

²³² Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 555, fols. 258-61, Bérenger to Vergennes, 5 September 1783.

²³³ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 94, fol. 354, Maligny to Vergennes, 15 January 1784.

was ‘si manifestement contraire à tous les principes de la raison et du droit qu’il ne peut faire impression’.²³⁴ The foreign minister reported that the work had probably been printed in London and stated that this indicated to him that publishers in Geneva were becoming less involved with controversial and offensive material. To Vergennes it seemed like one of the major extra-territorial centres for illicit printing was in decline; his new strategy was paying off.

Vergennes was still scorning the threats of *libelles* as late as July 1786. Charles-Olivier de Saint-Georges, marquis de Vêrac, the *ambassadeur* in The Hague, sent Vergennes a copy of a pamphlet.²³⁵ Vêrac referred to this as *Lettre du chevalier de *** à un anglois*. The authorities in Holland had just arrested a French man known as Chesneau de La Tour for defaming Dutch political figures. Upon his arrest, La Tour was searched and several copies of this pamphlet were found upon his person. Vêrac asked Vergennes for guidance as to how La Tour should be treated.²³⁶ The diplomat asserted that the French government should do something to stop La Tour since he was likely to reoffend but Vergennes did not heed this warning. Presumably after consulting with his cousin Louis Thiroux de Crosne, who took over from Lenoir as *lieutenant général* in July 1785, Vergennes declared that no copies of this pamphlet had been found in Paris. Although some Parisian booksellers were advertising the work to their customers, it had not yet reached the French capital. As such, Vergennes concluded, there was no need to seek punishment for La Tour. The foreign minister asked Vêrac to keep him informed but was happy to let the Dutch authorities deal with La Tour as they saw fit.²³⁷ This decision seems to have had the desired effect since copies of La Tour’s *libelle* did

²³⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 94, fol. 367, Vergennes to Maligny, 8 February 1784.

²³⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 568, fols. 97-98, Vêrac to Vergennes, 21 July 1786.

²³⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 568, fol. 104, Vêrac to Vergennes, 23 July 1786.

²³⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 568, fol. 142, Vergennes to Vêrac, 28 July 1786.

not make it to market.²³⁸ Later, in December 1786, when La Tour was released from prison in Holland, Véraç became anxious that he was preparing to publish new *libelles*.²³⁹ Vergennes told Véraç explicitly that he should not be concerned about La Tour since there was no news in Paris of the *libelles* that he was supposedly about to publish.²⁴⁰

From 1783 onwards French officials tried to turn a blind eye to illicit texts which were published abroad to be sent into France. Yet the state remained prepared to take measures against works which it saw as being completely unacceptable and the French government's reaction to the publication of *Le Diable dans un bénitier* in October 1783 shows that official strategy had shifted only up to a point.²⁴¹ This was another text emanating from Pelleport which this time went into detail about the foreign ministry's extraordinary efforts to police print abroad. It was a thinly veiled account of Receveur's 1783 mission to London.²⁴² Instead of negotiating with Pelleport or sending agents over to arrest him, Vergennes orchestrated a plan to lure him to Boulogne in July 1784.²⁴³ Once in Boulogne, Pelleport was arrested with ease and was taken to the Bastille. He remained imprisoned until October 1788. The French government changed the manner in which it dealt with Pelleport but remained determined to secure the capture of a notorious *libelliste* who had long been writing offensive material.

Continuing concerns over material which attacked royalty can certainly be seen in 1783 and beyond. At the beginning of August 1783, the abbé Duvernet wrote to the French government offering his services. Like Cahaisse in 1782, Duvernet proposed to help Lenoir track down the authors and printers of slanderous texts which were about

²³⁸ There are no extant copies of this text which can be found in French or British libraries (searches made via COPAC and *Catalogue collectif de France*).

²³⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 570, fols. 223-24, Véraç to Vergennes, 1 December 1786.

²⁴⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 570, fol. 303, Vergennes to Véraç, 7 December 1786.

²⁴¹ Anne-Gédéon Lafitte, marquis de Pelleport, *Le Diable dans un bénitier, et la métamorphose du gazetier cuirassé en mouche; ou, tentative du sieur Receveur, inspecteur de la police de Paris, chevalier de St. Louis, pour établir à Londres une police à l'instar de celle de Paris* (London: [n. pub.], 1784).

²⁴² See Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, pp. 24-38.

²⁴³ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 126-27.

to be published, this time in Brussels.²⁴⁴ Lenoir and Vergennes were already well acquainted with Duvernet because he had been arrested in 1781 for his role in Jacquet's network of *libellistes*. The writer had just left the Bastille a month earlier in July 1783.²⁴⁵ Duvernet's offer was ignored and Vergennes declined to issue any orders for the diplomats in Brussels to hunt *libelles*. Lenoir resolved to be vigilant against any texts from Duvernet which might make it into the market in Paris but this was the only measure that was taken.²⁴⁶

Lenoir did, however, express apprehension about Duvernet when he learnt that the author might have written a pamphlet about the French Queen, entitled *Les Soirées d'Antoinette*. Garnier, the *chargé d'affaires* in Brussels confirmed that Duvernet and his associates (including Jean-Baptiste Imbert de Villebon who had worked with Duvernet before in 1781, when they had both written *libelles* for Jacquet) had been trying to get the work published in Brussels.²⁴⁷ At first, Garnier believed that the text had not been published, but this view changed when he heard from someone who had been able to obtain a copy. Garnier promised Vergennes that he would try to locate any copies of *Les Soirées d'Antoinette* and added that the authorities in Brussels had put Duvernet under surveillance. Vergennes, however, declined to authorise any measures against Duvernet. Even though Duvernet had written a work which maligned Marie-Antoinette, Vergennes judged that, with only a few copies in circulation, the work did not pose enough of a threat to warrant further action. This course of action contrasted starkly with Vergennes' decision in 1782 to chase Cahaisse and the Malarmes across several

²⁴⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fols. 278-79, Duvernet to Vergennes, 4 August 1783.

²⁴⁵ Funck-Brentano, *Les Lettres de cachet*, pp. 409-10.

²⁴⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fol. 282, Lenoir to Vergennes, 13 August 1783.

²⁴⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 173, fol. 304, Garnier to Vergennes, 30 August 1783.

states when they were suspected of being guilty of composing *libelles* against Delzenne and the comte d'Artois.

Duvernet resurfaced in the diplomatic correspondence early in 1785. The authorities in Brussels had arrested him after copies of texts slandering local officials were found at his residence.²⁴⁸ Louis Joseph Hirsinger, the *chargé d'affaires* in Brussels, added that copies of *Les Soirées d'Antoinette* and another work called *Le Singe de 40 ans* had also been uncovered there. Vergennes asked Hirsinger to continue to report back on this affair but stressed that the French government should not become involved.²⁴⁹ The French authorities had compelling evidence that Duvernet had authored a scandalous pamphlet about Marie-Antoinette but Vergennes decided that, with only a few copies in existence, the text was not worth chasing. The threat posed by Duvernet was lessened still further in February 1785 when he was arrested and imprisoned by the authorities in Brussels.

In 1781 the French state had jailed Duvernet, along with several other *libellistes* who cooperated with Jacquet. In August 1783 and February 1785 the foreign ministry viewed Duvernet in a new light. Even though he had written works maligning the French Queen, it was better to starve him of the oxygen of publicity than become embroiled in the difficult task of punishing him and halting the dissemination of any *libelles* he had composed. However, it is important to stress here another reason why Vergennes was able to tolerate authors like Duvernet. The authorities in Geneva and Holland complemented French efforts to police print by arresting Duvernet and La Tour. The French foreign minister might have been more uneasy about these men if they were roaming free outside France.

²⁴⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 174, fol. 317, Hirsinger to Vergennes, 28 February 1785.

²⁴⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Pays-Bas Espagnols et Autrichiens 174, fol. 319, Vergennes to Hirsinger, 4 March 1785.

Vergennes departed from his decision to adopt a scornful standpoint however, when it came to the affair of the diamond necklace.²⁵⁰ The cardinal de Rohan was Bishop of Strasbourg but spent most of his time mingling with courtiers in Paris and Versailles. On 15 August 1785, Rohan was arrested on suspicion of fraudulently purchasing an extremely expensive diamond necklace in Marie-Antoinette's name. As the story went, Rohan had been convinced by Jeanne de Saint-Rémy, comtesse de La Motte, an adventuress who probably became his lover, that the Queen wanted him to purchase this necklace on her behalf. The comtesse de La Motte told Rohan that Marie-Antoinette very much desired the necklace but felt it improper to be seen to be buying something so extravagant in times of financial uncertainty. La Motte gained Rohan's confidence by sending him affectionate letters in Marie-Antoinette's name. More dramatically, the comtesse also arranged a brief, late-night rendezvous in the gardens of Versailles between Rohan and a prostitute who impersonated the French Queen. Won over by this supposed display of intimacy, Rohan negotiated with the Paris jewellers to pay for the necklace in instalments and handed over the precious item to La Motte. La Motte and her husband broke the necklace into pieces and the husband departed France in the hope of selling the stones abroad.

Rohan's arrest in 1785 brought this sensational tale out into the open. The affair also had important political consequences as ministers and courtiers took the side of either Rohan or the Queen.²⁵¹ In 1786 Rohan, the comtesse de La Motte and some of her associates were tried in the *parlement* of Paris. In May the *parlement* declared that the cardinal had been duped by the husband and wife team. Rohan was formally acquitted and the comtesse de La Motte was condemned to Salpêtrière, a prison for

²⁵⁰ On the Affair of the Diamond Necklace, see Frantz Funck-Brentano, *Cagliostro and Company: A Sequel to the Story of the Diamond Necklace* (London: Greening, 1910); Sarah Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 167-210; Frances Mossiker, *The Queen's Necklace* (London: Gollancz, 1961).

²⁵¹ Maza, *Private Lives*, pp. 190-92; Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, p. 170.

wayward women in Paris. The details of the scandal were made public in the defendants' judicial briefs which were printed and circulated in their thousands.

Vergennes, as a close personal friend of Rohan, was dismayed to see his ally's name denigrated during this affair. The foreign minister deviated from his new policy of ignoring literature which he found to be distasteful and threw himself into the tricky task of managing the spread of news relating to the case of the diamond necklace. He used his diplomatic network to chase the key players who had fled abroad in the hope that they would give evidence at the trial which indicated Rohan's innocence.²⁵² In November 1785, the comte de La Motte turned up in Amsterdam trying to persuade jewellers there to buy the stolen diamonds from him. Vergennes instructed V rac, French *ambassadeur* in The Hague, to ask the authorities there to arrest La Motte and his servant and to seize their papers and money.²⁵³ La Motte managed to evade capture in Amsterdam and moved on to Britain where Vergennes continued to chase him. The foreign minister engineered an elaborate plan to kidnap La Motte at South Shields in the spring of 1786, but the comte was forewarned and was able to escape once again.²⁵⁴

Burrows has uncovered evidence that Vergennes may have tried to sabotage this abduction attempt after becoming concerned that the comte de La Motte might actually implicate Rohan if he returned to France.²⁵⁵ Although the foreign minister had tried to secure the capture of La Motte in Amsterdam, Vergennes' perception of what the comte would say must have shifted by the time he arrived in Britain. Indeed, it was the comte d'Adh mar, *ambassadeur* in London, who expended most energy trying to get the comte de La Motte back to France. D'Adh mar was a close ally of Marie-Antoinette and believed that testimony from the comte de La Motte would underline that she had had no part in the affair. Vergennes also organised the arrest and extradition of Marc-

²⁵² Price, *Preserving the Monarchy*, pp. 176-77.

²⁵³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 565, fol. 211, Vergennes to V rac, 11 December 1785.

²⁵⁴ Burrows, 'Despotism without Bounds', pp. 537-38.

²⁵⁵ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 131-32.

Antoine Rétaux de la Villette, a former *gendarme* who had become associated with the La Mottes and fled to Geneva when the diamond necklace affair became public. In March 1786, at around the same time as the plot to kidnap the comte de La Motte, Vergennes leaned on the authorities in Geneva to arrest and interrogate Rétaux. When a report from an official in Geneva indicated that Rétaux possessed information on the La Mottes which could absolve Rohan, Vergennes arranged for the police officer Quidor to be sent to arrest him and bring him back to France.²⁵⁶

Vergennes' efforts to arrest – or, in the case of the comte de La Motte, prevent the arrest - of those involved in the affair of the diamond necklace demonstrates his resolve to manage the way in which this scandal was perceived. It is doubtful that Vergennes explicitly wished to implicate Marie-Antoinette. After all, he had spent his time in the foreign office chasing any works which maligned her. However, Vergennes was determined to protect his friend Rohan and this desire clashed with the foreign minister's duty to protect the Queen. In order to defend himself, Rohan claimed that he genuinely believed that he had met secretly with Marie-Antoinette during a night at Versailles. The idea that Marie-Antoinette would take part in such a meeting with a notoriously libidinous cardinal was a major slight on her character. In trying to support Rohan, Vergennes could not help but undermine the Queen.

The manner in which Vergennes attempted to bolster Rohan's cause is especially striking considering the evidence that the cardinal was, in fact, guilty. Correspondence between Vergennes and Louis XVI indicates that Rohan actually confessed to forging Marie-Antoinette's signature to obtain the diamonds as a means of relieving his mounting debts.²⁵⁷ Other incriminating evidence may have been lost when Rohan destroyed his private papers upon his entry to the Bastille. In the course of his

²⁵⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 400, Vergennes to Crosne, 18 March 1786; Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fols. 404-05, 19 March 1786 .

²⁵⁷ *Louis XVI and the comte de Vergennes*, p. 376.

interrogation in Geneva, Rétaux admitted that he was well acquainted with the La Mottes but did not admit to forging Marie-Antoinette's signature.²⁵⁸ Vergennes may well have seen the opportunity to make Rétaux take the blame for Rohan's colossal mistake. The foreign minister succeeded in his attempts to stage-manage the way this affair was perceived within France. Rohan was cleared of any guilt by the *parlement* of Paris. This affair underlines that Vergennes was far from totally disinterested in the extra-territorial arena, even though he tried to present himself in that manner. On this occasion Vergennes was largely influenced by his personal attachment to the person under attack and he sought to protect his ally in the way that his predecessor d'Aiguillon had done regularly in less extraordinary circumstances. Vergennes' defence of Rohan is all the more remarkable as it showed him to be breaking away somewhat from his new strategy of disregarding the printed word. The foreign minister was determined to manipulate the information that was available about the affair of the diamond necklace.

Vergennes was not, however, prepared to deviate from his policy of standing firm against any attempts at blackmail. From 1786 onwards, the La Mottes repeatedly threatened to publish an exposé of the diamond necklace affair.²⁵⁹ The foreign ministry did not take these threats seriously and they were simply ignored. This posture of indifference worked and the La Mottes' account of the scandal was not published until February 1789. Vergennes' control of the extra-territorial arena was clearly assured here but his actions may have done more harm than good. Exonerating Rohan of all guilt necessarily implicated Marie-Antoinette. It seems fair to suggest that Vergennes would have been well aware of the wider implications of defending Rohan since he had always directed his diplomatic team to concentrate their attention on works which maligned members of the royal family. However, the damage done by the affair of the diamond

²⁵⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 95, fol. 394-99, 12 March 1786.

²⁵⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 558, fol. 263, Barthelemy to Vergennes, 15 December 1786; Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 559, fol. 116, d'Adhémar to de Crosne, 24 February 1787.

necklace should not be overstated since most of the pamphlets which appeared in 1785 and 1786 discussing the case did not assert or imply that Marie-Antoinette had been involved.²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Vergennes overlooked the possibility of his friend's guilt and the wider implications of asserting his innocence. The foreign minister used his diplomatic network to ensure that a certain view of the diamond necklace affair prevailed.

During this affair Vergennes showed himself to be very much in control in the extra-territorial sphere. However, the assured position of the foreign ministry began to crumble in the final years of the old regime. The main explanation for this change relates to the growing economic and political tensions of the pre-revolutionary crisis. By late 1786 the French state was becoming increasingly weighed down by the debts it had incurred in the course of the American War of Independence.²⁶¹ With the *parlements* hostile to plans for financial restructuring, the government turned to another consultative body in the hope of legitimising its reform proposals. The Assembly of Notables was convoked in December 1786 but was fundamentally mishandled by a succession of finance ministers. The noblemen who sat in the Assembly of Notables were already predisposed to contest the government's attempt to rescind some their financial privileges and tax exemptions in order to boost reserves. The French government was now in a tricky position. The state needed some form of approval for its financial reform plans to shore up financial confidence but the Assembly of Notables was decidedly unsympathetic. The Assembly of Notables itself and a wave of contemporary pamphlets called for a meeting of the Estates-General. The monarchy eventually bowed to this pressure and in summer of 1788 declared that the Estates-General would meet the following May.

²⁶⁰ Maza, *Private Lives*, p. 195.

²⁶¹ J. F. Bosher, *French Finances 1770-1795: From Business to Bureaucracy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), pp. 172-82.

The pressures of the pre-revolutionary crisis preoccupied the French state and meant that managing the extra-territorial print trade became less of a concern. The pre-revolutionary years also changed the relationship between the French government and the extra-territorial print trade in another way. This exceptional period of political and economic turmoil undermined the appeal of foreign texts. Events in France were progressing rapidly and were being documented by hundreds of politically charged pamphlets.²⁶² It is estimated that between 1787 and 1789 around 1,500 to 2,200 pamphlets were published in France.²⁶³ Periodicals and books coming across the borders could simply not keep up with the pace of change. With demand for foreign books at a low point, the foreign ministry had less reason to focus attention on policing print abroad.

The pre-revolutionary crisis played the major role in the decline of extra-territorial policing, but it is also pertinent that Vergennes died in February 1787. He was succeeded by Armand Marc de Saint-Hérem, comte de Montmorin. Vergennes became involved in policing the book trade to an extent unprecedented for a foreign minister. It was he who made the move in June 1783 to change the way books were imported into France and it was ultimately his decision to complement this measure with the policy of scorning literature rather than becoming engaged in long and complex campaigns of policing. Vergennes was still debating the best way to prevent the flow of illicit literature in the months before his death. In January 1787, he declared that the government should concentrate on curbing the dissemination of distasteful

²⁶² On this pamphleteering, see Ralph Greenlaw, 'Pamphlet Literature in France during the Period of the Aristocratic Revolt (1787-1788)', *Journal of Modern History*, 29 (1957), 349-54; Vivian R. Gruder, 'Political News as Coded Messages: The Parisian and Provincial Press in the Pre-Revolution, 1787-1788', *French History*, 12 (1998), 1-24; Dale Van Kley, 'New Wine in Old Wineskins: Continuity and Rupture in the Pamphlet Debate of the French Prerevolution, 1787-1789', *French Historical Studies*, 17 (1991), 447-65.

²⁶³ Gruder, 'The Question of Marie-Antoinette', p. 165.

texts rather than waste energy on repressive measures abroad.²⁶⁴ He clearly believed that the policy change he had enacted in 1783 was working. Montmorin did not display the same dedication to his portion of his role. He simply did not reply to a lot of the letters which he received from his diplomatic team and did not reflect upon the best of means of controlling print in the same way that Vergennes had done.

The weakening of the French government's hold over the extra-territorial print trade links into questions surrounding the longevity of Vergennes' decree of 12 June 1783. On the basis of data mined in the course of the creation of *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe Database, 1769-1794*, Curran has suggested that by the end of 1786 books were starting to pass more freely into France again.²⁶⁵ A letter written by Vergennes to d'Ogny, the *intendant général des postes*, in June 1786 also indicates that crates of books were no longer going straight to Paris as a matter of course.²⁶⁶ There is also evidence that orders were issued to rescind Vergennes' decree after his death. Correspondence from the *direction de la librairie* suggests that by May 1787 French officials were no longer willing to accept the damage that this order was doing to the provincial book trade.²⁶⁷ There were clear economic imperatives to move away from the edict of 1783.

The extreme centralisation of 12 June 1783 meant that it was always difficult to implement. With the state becoming distracted by other problems at the end of the 1780s, the government put less energy into imposing this edict. Even if the edict of 12 June 1783 had fallen somewhat by the wayside by the end of the old regime, its effects remain clear. Vergennes' decision fundamentally disturbed the extra-territorial print trade. The government's lack of action in the extra-territorial arena in the mid-to-late

²⁶⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Angleterre 559, fol. 21, Vergennes to d'Adhémar, 9 January 1787.

²⁶⁵ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*; Curran, 'Beyond the Forbidden Best-Sellers', p. 111.

²⁶⁶ Paris, BNF, MF 22081, fol. 373, 21 June 1786.

²⁶⁷ Dawson, *Confiscations at Customs*, Online Appendices, Appendix H http://www.utexas.edu/people/dawson/Confs_appendixes.htm [accessed 11 January 2013].

1780s seems to suggest a period of relative quiet when the threat of illicit literature was lessened.

The impact of the decree of 12 June 1783 is clear to see in Figure 7. From 1784 onwards, the French government's involvement in the extra-territorial print trade went into steady decline until the end of the old regime. The policing which did occur in the period from 1784 to 1789 was also less intense because the texts in question were not seen as especially challenging. Godeville threatened to sell her memoirs again in 1784 but could not find a willing publisher. Duvernet was arrested by officials in Brussels and was found to have copies of a Marie-Antoinette *libelle* at his house. It is unclear whether these were manuscript or printed copies. *Les Soirées d'Antoinette* was probably never published. It does not appear in the exhaustive surveys of Marie-Antoinette material conducted by Burrows and Gruder.²⁶⁸ Crucially for the purposes of this study, the foreign ministry did not chase this text abroad. The French government became more detached in its approach to extra-territorial print after 1783, but it remained vigilant against texts which it viewed as particularly offensive. It can be argued that in the eyes of French officials, the circulation of the *Les Soirées d'Antoinette* did seem to represent a serious threat. There continued to be rumours and threats of the publication of *libelles* but the French government tried to rise above these rather than chase them as it had done in the past. As Burrows has rightly suggested, this new strategy largely worked.²⁶⁹ The next significant *libelle* was not published until 1789 when the comtesse de La Motte published her account of the diamond necklace affair.

The question of the lasting impact of the decision taken by Vergennes on 12 June 1783 has wider implications for our understanding of the links between the pre-revolutionary world of letters and the onset of revolution in France in 1789. The

²⁶⁸ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 147-70; Gruder, 'The Question of Marie-Antoinette', pp. 269-98; Vivian R. Gruder, 'Whither Revisionism? Political Perspectives on the Ancien Régime', *French Historical Studies*, 20 (1997), 254-85 (pp. 256-71).

²⁶⁹ Burrows, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, p. 88.

evidence presented here suggests that the model of an ever-expanding public sphere, full to the point of bursting with material hostile to the French government, is too simplistic. The French government was engaged in complex efforts to manage and manipulate the trade of foreign printers and the decisions of individual ministers like Vergennes could have a tangible impact on the kind of literature which circulated within France. The censorship system within France was arbitrary and confused but the French authorities were nevertheless capable of imposing their will on foreign publishers.

The trade of book dealers working outside France was damaged by the French Revolution and arguably by the pre-revolutionary crisis, when the French book trade began to open up and the public increasingly demanded speedy access to information about the latest developments in French politics. However, it can be argued that the decline of the extra-territorial trade began even earlier than this as a result of Vergennes' directive. The decree of 12 June 1783 seems to have severely damaged the business of Francophone traders like the STN and their provincial trading partners within France. This decline arguably contributed to the growth of the Parisian trade, which was dominated by 36 authorised printer-booksellers. There were issues which constricted the trade in Paris to an extent. The costs associated with publishing (especially labour) were high and the number of printers in the French capital was restricted even though the population was growing.²⁷⁰ However, the impact of the decree of 12 June 1783 allowed and even compelled Parisian publishers to benefit from the slowing down of provincial traders who could not cope with increased costs. A decline in the provincial and foreign print trades which benefited those in Paris may therefore have helped to pave the foundations for the rapid expansion of print during the French Revolution.

²⁷⁰ Rigogne, 'Printers into Booksellers', p. 545.

Extra-territorial censorship did continue into the final years of the old regime but its extent was much reduced. On 5 July 1788, the Bourbon monarchy formally requested that provincial and municipal officials report back with advice on the form that the Estates-General should take.²⁷¹ Historians have seen this as the symbolic end of censorship in France, arguing that this call legitimised and encouraged the intense pamphleteering which dominated the pre-revolutionary crisis.²⁷² However, it is important to remember that the French state had not totally given up on the idea of controlling the printed word. On 19 March 1789 the government granted permission for anyone to report on the proceedings of the Estates-General, but on 3 April and 6 May of that year it reaffirmed that the existing regulations which governed the book trade were still in force.²⁷³ Yet this stated resolve to continue to manage access to printed matter does not seem to have extended to the trade outside France. Indeed, there was an almost total dearth of external policing during the years 1787 and 1788. The French government continued to attempt to manage what was printed in Francophone gazettes but it seems that there were only five instances in these years when official attention focused on foreign books across these two years (see Appendix A for details). Controlling extra-territorial print had become a secondary concern.

In 1789, as the Estates-General prepared to meet and political tension was reaching fever pitch, the French state did make two efforts to impose its will abroad. This was less of a renewed endeavour to police the trade and more of a desperate attempt to restrict the circulation of exceptional works. In January 1789, Montmorin wrote to d'Esterno, *ministre plénipotentiaire* in Berlin, about Mirabeau's provocative published account of his diplomatic mission in Prussia, the *Histoire secrète de la cour de*

²⁷¹ Raymond F. Birn, 'The Pamphlet Press and the Estates-General of 1789', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 287 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1991), 59-69.

²⁷² Birn, 'The Pamphlet Press', p. 59; Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics*, p. 20; Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics', p. 114; Walton, p. 51.

²⁷³ Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics*, pp. 24-25.

Berlin.²⁷⁴ Mirabeau had been critical of Frederick the Great and this was acutely embarrassing for the French state. Montmorin suggested that the text could have been published in Switzerland but asked d'Esterno to involve the government in Berlin in curbing the circulation of copies which were being sold there.²⁷⁵ This crusade may have represented a touch of posturing on the part of the French government. Montmorin believed that Mirabeau's work had actually been published somewhere in the Swiss states but did not pass this information to his diplomats in Solothurn or Geneva.²⁷⁶ The foreign minister concentrated his attention on the circulation of the work in Berlin as a means of showing Prussia that France opposed what Mirabeau had done.

The foreign ministry also tried to halt the spread of the *Mémoires* of the comtesse de La Motte, the first edition of which was published in London in February 1789.²⁷⁷ La Motte had been threatening to publish her account of the diamond necklace affair for years in the hope of receiving a pay-off from someone in the French government. Having realised that a suppression fee would not be forthcoming, La Motte decided to publish her memoirs. Her account of the diamond necklace affair was a highly slanderous one which explicitly stated that Marie-Antoinette had manipulated both Rohan and the comtesse through sex. In June 1789, Poitevin de Maissemy, the *directeur de la librairie*, informed Montmorin that new editions of La Motte's work were being printed in the Austrian Netherlands and somewhere in the German states. Maissemy asked Montmorin to engage his diplomatic network in the task of stopping the spread of the work.²⁷⁸ Again, it was someone other than Montmorin who pinpointed and wanted to act upon a threat in the extra-territorial arena. Montmorin sent these

²⁷⁴ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 210, fols. 13-14, Montmorin to d'Esterno, 15 January 1789.

²⁷⁵ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 210, fols. 41-46, d'Esterno to Montmorin, 17 February 1789.

²⁷⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Prusse 210, fols. 13-14, Montmorin to d'Esterno, 15 January 1789.

²⁷⁷ Jeanne de Saint-Rémy, comtesse de La Motte, *Mémoires justificatifs de la comtesse de la comtesse de La Motte-Valois* (London: [n. pub.], 1789).

²⁷⁸ Paris, AMAE, SMD France 582, fol. 398, Poitevin de Maissemy to Montmorin, 28 June 1789; Paris, AMAE, SMD France 582, fol. 400, Poitevin de Maissemy to Montmorin, 11 July 1789.

instructions to Brussels and also asked the comte de Mercy, Austrian ambassador to France, to mobilise his countrymen against this text.²⁷⁹ The outcome of this campaign is unknown. La Motte's work was an extraordinarily bold *libelle* but the measures taken against it by Montmorin were somewhat belated. His diplomats were focused on trying to stop the dissemination of later editions of the work. In some ways the damage was already done. There were two notable cases of external policing in the first half of 1789 but the effective system directed by Vergennes had not been renewed. In spite of Montmorin's apparent lack of enthusiasm for the task, the government retained its relatively strong hold over the trade in the closing years of the old regime. The publication of La Motte's memoirs was the first major and overt threat to state's system of policing for some years.

Exemplary Punishment

We now have some idea of the kind of works which members of the French foreign ministry were most concerned about and how control fluctuated over time. The government's perspective on the extra-territorial print trade was limited and pragmatic. The circulation of most books was tolerated and attention was concentrated on what were considered to be the most reprehensible titles. The same pragmatic attitude was extended to the manner in which the French authorities sought to have a hold over what was being printed and circulated abroad. Total control over extra-territorial publishing and bookselling was impossible to realise, so French officials did the best they could to keep the print trade within manageable boundaries. Lenoir underscored the difficulties of policing print abroad:

²⁷⁹ Paris, AMAE, SMD France 582, fol. 399, Montmorin to Poitevin de Maissemy, 9 July 1789.

En général les déguisements, que ne manquent jamais d'employer les Imprimeurs et Libraires étrangers, pour répandre clandestinement les productions répréhensibles de leurs presses, ne laissent rien par des moyens d'acquérir des certitudes sur le lieu de l'impression et sur les noms de ces Imprimeurs et Libraires. De leur côté les libraires ou colporteurs français, qui se chargent de semblables ouvrages, emploient tout le mystère possible dans la distribution, qu'ils en sont, et presque toujours ces ouvrages ont passé dans plusieurs mains inconnues avant d'arriver dans celles, qui les livrent au public.²⁸⁰

This view of the tough task of managing the book trade was corroborated by Joseph d'Hémery, who, for a 25-year period, was the primary inspector of the book trade in Paris.²⁸¹ When he was passing on instructions to his successor, d'Hémery acknowledged the difficulty of searching for presses which produced provocative literature:

On ne peut donner aucun renseignement pour la découverte des imprimeries clandestines. Les ruses respectives s'emploient à cet égard de manière que le plus fin l'emporte.²⁸²

D'Hémery also warned that compelling those involved with illicit literature to tell the truth was not easy:

²⁸⁰ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 85, Lenoir to Vergennes, 20 January 1782.

²⁸¹ For more on d'Hémery, see *The Journal d'Hémery, 1750-1751: An Edition*, 2 vols, ed. by Marlinda Ruth Bruno (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1979); Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, pp. 145-89.

²⁸² Paris, BNF, MF 22053, fol. 44, 1773.

La prudence à son égard doit être toujours la compagne d'un chef. Tel coquin qui pour jouer pièce à son bourgeois, déclarera plus qu'il n'y a et dira des choses qu'il ne sait pas - cela sent diablement l'inquisition.²⁸³

As outlined in Chapter 3, when the foreign minister was alerted to the publication of a controversial work he asked his diplomatic team to lean on the local authorities. But exerting diplomatic pressure was not sufficient. Appreciating the magnitude of the challenge of external control, the French foreign ministry followed a consistent policy whereby it sought to make an example of at least one guilty party in the hope of discouraging others from becoming drawn into the kind of literature which the French government found to be most abhorrent.

This was exemplary punishment in order to elicit self-censorship and was primarily directed towards the publishers of illicit material. Traders were spread over Europe but their commercial dealings kept them in close contact, meaning that the actions of the French government could send shockwaves through the trade and persuade more cautious businesses to self-censor. Extra-territorial book dealers depended upon the large and lucrative French market and were reluctant to incur the wrath of the French authorities. For these traders, France was a huge market in close proximity which was also under-exploited due to the constraints of state censorship. To take the example of the STN, French sales represented around a third of the company's trade.²⁸⁴ Foreign reliance on the French market meant traders were vulnerable to the threat of being prevented from selling their wares within France. Publishers and booksellers were keen to stay on the right side of the French authorities in order to continue profiting from their French clients. French officials maintained

²⁸³ Paris, BNF, MF 22053, fol. 44, 1773.

²⁸⁴ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Rank Geographic Zones, Sales http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/rank_places.php?g=geographic_zone&e=rawsales&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

that arresting and interrogating these individuals was also a means of unearthing new information on the links which sustained the illicit book trade.²⁸⁵ In January 1782 Vergennes leaned on the authorities in Geneva to arrest Nouffer, the local publisher who had printed *Histoire d'un pou françois* and *La Verité rendue sensible à Louis XVI*. Lenoir provided Vergennes with a list of questions which he wanted officials in Geneva to ask Nouffer, including:

Quelle quantité il a tiré de chacun de ces deux ouvrages ?

A qui et combien il en a envoyé

Quels sont les auteurs de ces ouvrages ?

De qui tient-il les manuscrits les a-t-il encore ?

Avec quels libraires ou colporteurs français est-il en correspondance ?²⁸⁶

This strategy of exemplary punishment was often expressed overtly in the diplomatic correspondence. When Téron was arrested in Geneva in January 1772 for selling *Le Gazetier cuirassé*, d'Aiguillon felt that 'L'emprisonnement du Sr. Terron contiendra sans doute les libraires avides et peu scrupuleuses'.²⁸⁷ The French publisher Boubers was formally admonished by the authorities in Liège in April 1777 for printing a work the *Mémoires de M. le comte de Saint-Germain*. The foreign minister was happy with this outcome and declared that 'je pense que mieux serait de faire craindre Libraire Boubers une poursuite rigoureuse la première récidive'.²⁸⁸ When Vergennes authorised a search for the author of the *libelle* targeting the comte d'Estaing in 1782, he underlined that the ministry 'aurait été bien aise de faire un exemple de l'auteur d'un pareil

²⁸⁵ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12398, fols. 25-26, Chenon to d'Aiguillon, 21 November 1771.

²⁸⁶ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 90, fol. 87, Lenoir to Vergennes, 20 January 1782.

²⁸⁷ Paris, AMAE, CP Genève 80, fol. 224, d'Aiguillon to Hennin, 26 January 1772.

²⁸⁸ Paris, AMAE, CP Liège 67, fol. 223, Vergennes to Léonard, 18 April 1777.

ouvrage'.²⁸⁹ When the diplomats had trouble determining where exactly a book had come from, the French foreign ministers seems to have been satisfied as long as someone was punished. As an example, the French government knew that the widow Stockdorf traded with a number of foreign publishers including Barthélemy Chirol in Geneva, François Grasset in Lausanne and Jean-Gaspard Dubois-Fontanelle in the Palatinate-Zweibrücken.²⁹⁰ However, d'Aiguillon only issued orders against the publisher Du Four in Maastricht.

The recent digitisation of the STN records allows us to see how one prominent publisher self-censored its output in response to pressure from the French state. When the French authorities pursued a particular work, the directors of the STN decided against sending copies into France. Early in 1772, Samuel Fauche, one of the partners of the STN tried to market Morande's *Le Gazetier cuirassé* in France without the knowledge of his associates. The other directors of the STN were furious to discover these machinations in June 1772 and expelled their colleague from the company.²⁹¹ The STN did not deal in *Le Gazetier cuirassé* again until 1790, when the French government was busy dealing with the more pressing matter of the French Revolution.²⁹² Having heard that the Genevan printer Nouffer had been incarcerated for sending copies of the *Supplément à l'espion anglois* to France in January 1782, the STN only dealt in a few copies, none of which made their way across the border to France.²⁹³ It was a similar story when it came to the pamphlets which Mirabeau had printed in Neuchâtel; the firm's directors consciously avoided sending the incendiary works into France. Only 23 copies

²⁸⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fol. 216-17, Vergennes to Bâcher, 8 September 1773.

²⁹⁰ Paris, BNF, MF 22101, fol. 225, March 1773.

²⁹¹ Schlup, 'Points de repère', pp. 76-79.

²⁹² Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Book, *Le Gazetier cuirassé* http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0000943&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

²⁹³ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Book, *Supplément à l'espion anglois* http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0003645&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

of *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état* were sent to French clients and out of the 374 copies of *Libertin de qualité* which the STN marketed, not a single one was sent into the French market.²⁹⁴ Admittedly, the STN did send 174 copies of *L'Espion dévalisé* to France but 168 of these were sent to only two dealers before the French government began to target Mirabeau's works.²⁹⁵

The traders who were targeted by the French government for their involvement with these works, Téron, Nouffer and Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel, all did business with the STN. Even though there was a strong demand for these texts, the Neuchâtel publishers were not prepared to risk the same fate which had befallen their trading partners. These examples provide empirical evidence that the foreign ministry's strategy of very focused censorship bore fruit. This was in spite of the problems the French government faced in contending with the obstructionism and unhelpfulness of many foreign authorities. Propelling traders towards self-censorship was a shrewd strategy for French officials who were faced with a huge international network of Francophone publishing and bookselling.

The STN's reluctance to get involved with the works which most disturbed the French authorities also underscores the need to think more deeply about the nuances in the illicit print trade. Darnton has acknowledged that the STN did not print most of the prohibited works it sold, but the extent to which the firm censored its own trade with France has not yet been recognised.²⁹⁶ Indeed, Darnton has painted a vivid picture

²⁹⁴ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Book, *Des Lettres de cachet, Libertin de qualité*
http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0003750&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table
 and

http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0003750&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

²⁹⁵ Burrows and Curran, *FBTEE Database*, Query Events by Book, *L'Espion dévalisé*
http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/interface/query_events.php?t=book&e=all&id=spbk0003709&d1=01&m1=01&y1=1769&d2=31&m2=12&y2=1794&d=table [accessed 11 January 2013].

²⁹⁶ Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, p. 54

of the STN's trade in contraband, describing its directors as 'literary buccaneers' who employed 'obscure teams of smugglers' to haul 'crates of books over tortuous trails in the Jura Mountains for 12 livres the quintal and a stiff drink'.²⁹⁷ This portrayal of trading 'under the cloak' has been influential in our thinking about the STN and the illicit book trade in general. Yet evidence from the database indicates how far the STN's directors were wary of upsetting the French authorities. There was a stark difference between the STN and other more daring firms like Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel whom the French government found more difficult to manage. Ostervald, the main director of the STN, had a reputation for honesty and decency that he was keen to maintain. He came from one of the oldest families in Neuchâtel, held a number of political offices, taught arithmetic and geography and was a key presence in two local reading societies.²⁹⁸ The diplomatic correspondence shows that his reputation preceded him and from the very inception of the STN, French officials considered Ostervald a respectable and loyal servant of the Bourbon monarchy.²⁹⁹ One of the STN's correspondents explained Ostervald's conservative attitude during the Mirabeau affair:

Jusqu'il en soit M. donnez à votre société typographique la réputation d'être honnête, et décente, et soyez persuadé que le Débit éphémère de quelques productions méchantes et scandaleuses est exposé à trop d'embarras et d'inconvénients pour le suivre avec quelque succès.³⁰⁰

What is more, the company's commercial success was heavily dependent on the French market. Ostervald needed to continue to trade with France and so was

²⁹⁷ Darnton, *The Literary Underground*, pp. 183-84.

²⁹⁸ Schlup, 'Points de repère', pp. 67-68.

²⁹⁹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 380, fol. 46, 4 February 1770.

³⁰⁰ Neuchâtel, BPUN, Fonds de la STN, MS 1213, fols. 294-95, David-Alphonse de Sandoz-Rollin to the STN, 24 February 1783.

compelled to engage in efforts to stay on the right side of the French authorities. When the STN published the *libelle* relating to the comte d'Estaing in 1782, Vergennes called for the firm to be reprimanded but not punished.³⁰¹ Vergennes wished instead for the author of the text to be pursued, which indicates that the foreign minister had a close relationship with the STN. Exemplary punishment did persuade some traders to self-censor but this policy worked better on big companies like the STN who were closely tied to their French customers. More marginal dealers - those that concentrated on illicit titles or who did not rely so much upon the French market - were less vulnerable to pressure from France. This idea of encouraging self-censorship was a viable strategy but it did not resonate in the same way with those who were heavily implicated in the production of illicit literature. The French government was not able to completely eradicate the trade in works which it deemed offensive but this study suggests that it was able to impel print into different channels. It could discourage respectable traders from becoming too heavily involved in the production and sale of the most provocative literature.

The ultimate effectiveness of external censorship is a difficult question. We know that on many occasions the French foreign ministers claimed to be contented with the work that his diplomatic team had conducted. This was partly because the Bourbon state was keen to maintain the illusion of its predominance in Europe. The ministry did not want to admit that they were unable to fully impose their will in the smaller states which surrounded France. This level of satisfaction was also a result of the government's pragmatic strategy; its decision to centre attention only on what it felt to be the worst aspects of the print trade. Looking back at his time as *lieutenant général*, Lenoir had a negative view on the effectiveness of official policing. He maintained that the French government was fundamentally unsuccessful in attempts to prevent the

³⁰¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Suisse 415, fols. 216-17, Vergennes to Bâcher, 8 September 1782.

circulation of texts which discussed the private life of Louis XV.³⁰² In the hope of maintaining an illusion of strength, foreign ministers may thus have overstated their overall satisfaction with the processes of policing the print trade. As such, there is a need to consider other ways of assessing the efficacy of external censorship.

Firstly, we can take into consideration whether anyone was punished for transgressions relating to extra-territorial print. The French government impelled foreign authorities to reprimand and punish booksellers and publishers who had been involved with offensive titles. The texts in question were confiscated when they were found, although French officials may not have been able to commandeer all copies. The foreign ministry was also able to arrange for the arrest and extradition of wayward writers like Godeville, Linguet and Pelleport, who were put in prison for years. Yet in some cases, we never find out if a punishment was applied to a particular individual. In 1772 the Genevan-born publisher Marc-Michel Rey upset the French government by publishing a reprint of *Le Gazetier cuirassé* in Amsterdam. Rey was brought before local magistrates but it is not clear whether any penalties were administered to him.³⁰³ The uncertainty which surrounded the exact nature of the punishments administered by foreign governments is linked to the French foreign ministry's strategy of exemplary punishment. French diplomats frequently neglected to relay this information back to the foreign minister which suggests that it was not seen as especially important. It was enough for the French government to target a particular publisher and persuade foreign authorities that they needed to be reprimanded. It was more trouble than it was worth to extend French influence any further, particularly when local authorities tended to

³⁰² Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, Electronic Supplement, Appendix 2, Lenoir's Notes on the Book Police and Libels
http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/darnton_supplement.html#app2 [accessed 11 January 2013].

³⁰³ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 524, fol. 38, d'Aiguillon to Noailles, 16 February 1772; Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 524, fol. 48, d'Aiguillon to Noailles, 23 February 1772.

impede such efforts. External censorship was very tightly focused and the French foreign ministry had realistic goals of what they hoped to achieve in this arena.

Secondly, it must be pointed out that several book dealers and authors reoffended even after being reprimanded or punished by the French state. Contentious books were a risky business by their very nature and the desire to profit was enough to keep opportunistic book dealers trading in illicit material even after their colleagues or their own business came under fire from the Bourbon regime. For foreign publishers imprisoned in their locality, incarceration was only ever short-term. Sentences generally lasted a few days or weeks. It is important to recognise that a spell in prison of any length removed traders from their business and drained profits. Yet these relatively moderate sentences raise the question of whether confinement was really much of a deterrent. Moreover, there are some clear examples of recidivism in the extra-territorial print trade. Although the foreign ministry's idea that exemplary punishment would encourage self-censorship worked for businesses like the STN, there were other traders who did not scare so easily. In Neuchâtel, the firm Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel decided to continue to print Mirabeau's works after they were released from prison in Neuchâtel, where they had been detained for publishing *Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état*.³⁰⁴

The Imbert brothers were first sent to the Bastille in December 1772 for writing and selling illicit texts in Paris.³⁰⁵ Imbert de Boudeaux was arrested again in January 1781 for articles he contributed to the *Correspondance littéraire secrète*.³⁰⁶ The brothers both then entered in an association with Jacquet which ended up transporting them to the Bastille in January 1782. But these two had not been that disturbed by their experiences and both continued to write upon their release. Imbert de Villebon returned to Brussels

³⁰⁴ Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité', pp. 80-81.

³⁰⁵ Paris, BA, Archives de la Bastille, MS 12400, fol. 89, 1772.

³⁰⁶ Funck-Brentano, *Lettres de cachet*, p. 407.

where he started working on *libelles* with Duvernet, another man implicated in the Jacquet affair. Imbert de Boudeaux also left France and continued to write for the *Correspondance littéraire secrète*. In 1783 he authored and had published another scurrilous text, *La Chronique scandaleuse*.³⁰⁷ Repeated spells in the Bastille could not deter the Imbert brothers from defamatory writing. These were the kind of challenging individuals that the French government was battling with in its endeavours to control the printed word.

Thirdly, even if we ignore the recidivism of audacious individuals, the very fact that the French foreign ministry repeatedly clashed with foreign states over the publication of literature goes some way to suggest that external policing could only be a temporary solution. Foreign ministers and ambassadors repeatedly emphasised to regional officials that they had a duty to be vigilant, but publishers continued to print illicit texts as local officials turned a blind eye. The Bourbon regime was forced to battle continually against the threat presented by illicit books.

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There were certainly limits to the extent to which France could impose its will beyond its borders, but French officials recognised this and tried to devise a way to work effectively in spite of them. Official strategy entailed taking limited action in the hope of deterring foreign book traders from illicit undertakings.

The most stringent measure implemented by the foreign ministry was the edict issued by Vergennes in June 1783. As the most powerful figure in the French ministry at that time, Vergennes decided to severely tighten the system of inspection for imported crates of books. 1783 also marked a wider change in policy when it was

³⁰⁷ Guillaume Imbert de Boudeaux, *La Chronique scandaleuse; ou, mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs de la génération présente*, 2 vols (Paris: [n. pub.], 1783).

decided that it was better to ignore the threat of illicit literature as much as possible rather than waste energy chasing unruly authors, booksellers and publishers. External censorship was more successful after 1783 because the French government focused its attention even more narrowly. The foreign ministry streamlined its expectations and was remarkably successful in confining the extra-territorial print trade within what it deemed to be a set of manageable and realistic boundaries, especially after 1783. The research of Burrows and Darnton has made it clear that the French government made more determined efforts to police the libellistes in London from 1783 onwards, but the European context provides evidence that this change had more impact than previously realised. It was a series of prolonged affairs at the beginning of the 1780s which convinced French officials of the inefficacy of their current methods. The decision to scorn illicit literature was an extension of the ministry's tactic of concentrating its attention on what it considered to be the most intolerable titles. This new strategy worked well to contain the threat of illicit literature until the outbreak of revolution in 1789.

Conclusion

The comprehensive nature of this study can shed new light on the task of policing the printed word in eighteenth-century Europe. The French government utilised its extensive network of loyal ambassadors effectively but had to contend with resistance from foreign authorities who frequently disagreed with the French assessment of the threat of foreign literature. More significantly, the French state battled against journalists, authors and publishers who brought provocative works to market. Booksellers were continually monitored but not targeted for repressive measures.

This thesis argues that extra-territorial policing could be successful in spite of these challenges. The French government recognised the magnitude of the task it faced and the futility of trying to control everything. As such, it concentrated on what it considered to be the very worst examples of extra-territorial journalism, writing and publishing. The policing of books and gazettes went on in parallel and there were some areas of overlap. The most reprehensible texts, according to the *ancien régime* government, were those which combined political commentary with slander to malign political elites or members of the royal family. Repressive measures were centred on such texts, whether they were *libelle* pamphlets or defamatory journal articles. The primary motivation for controlling Francophone journals was a related desire to manage the news information about the French state which was available to French readers. The French authorities were determined to suppress the transmission of information about the corridors of power across all mediums. By contrast, officials were happy to let other topics circulate relatively freely. Efforts were only rarely made to suppress erotic material, philosophical treatises or works relating to religious questions. External

editorship thus operated according to guidelines which were not formally stated but which were nevertheless understood.

Geographical distinctions helped to shape the French government's approach to extra-territorial policing. Most of the works in this period which were considered to be particularly offensive were produced in Britain but texts which challenged the French state also appeared in the Swiss states, the regions of the Holy Roman Empire and in the Netherlands. Political and cultural factors help to explain why the foreign ministry found it so difficult to control print in Britain but had greater success on the continent. London was a major centre for the production of illicit material whilst cities in the rest of Europe were very much secondary. The French government also had much more influence in the Swiss states than it did in London, the capital city of a long-time enemy power.

When it came to the newspaper press, the French state could exercise a great deal of control. Following Maupeou's coup in January 1771, pressure from the French foreign ministry squeezed political commentary out of the foreign press. Regulating periodicals was largely a reactive operation. The foreign minister and his diplomatic team responded to the publication of inappropriate articles by communicating with (and threatening) editors and foreign powers to insist that a retraction was printed. The nature of the press meant that any success in controlling it was often short-lived. The government recognised that prohibiting gazettes entirely was not a viable option and so employed French diplomats to manage the press and make it clear what kind of coverage was acceptable. Although French officials continued to find fault with the extra-territorial press right into 1789, the state had a relatively efficient system of noticing and correcting any lapses.

Controlling the circulation of books and pamphlets was a trickier task. When illicit activities were uncovered, French officials were determined to make an example of

at least one of the individuals involved. It was hoped that these penalties would encourage other writers, publishers and booksellers to self-censor. In the case of the STN, we have evidence that French campaigns dissuaded the firm from becoming engaged with a number of inflammatory titles. The problems the French state was having in managing print reached a head in the early 1780s. Feeling bombarded by illicit material, Vergennes decided to change tack in the hope of gaining back some power over the trade. In 1783 Vergennes' reform devastated the trade of extra-territorial publishers who could no longer afford to trade with France to the same extent. At the same time, Vergennes altered his attitude. He encouraged French officials to ignore the threat of illicit literature as much as possible. The foreign minister was now only prepared to authorise external policing in the most extreme cases. Extra-territorial control was focused more tightly than ever before and in the process, it became more efficacious. The wave of contentious literature which the French government had endured during the early 1780s did not appear again. This effective arrangement only began to crumble towards the end of the old regime. Vergennes' death and the pressures of the pre-revolutionary crisis meant that extra-territorial policing became less of a priority.

The success of 12 June 1783 suggests that control of the book trade was at its strongest when the French government combined external policing with tough internal reforms. Policing of the print trade was less active in the early 1770s when the French government was upholding a tax on book importation. The change in the inspection system which was implemented in June 1783 had a similar, although much greater, effect in undermining the extra-territorial trade. The success of these two measures shows that the French state did have sufficient power to enforce its will on extra-territorial print. It was ultimately economic factors which meant that these two reforms were never completely successful. They both undercut the trade of native French

booksellers which meant that the French government could never be confident enough to uphold them in the long-term.

In many ways French officials only increased the difficulties they faced in managing the print trade by becoming complicit in the production of controversial literature. The French government was well aware of much of the illicit publishing industry and often chose to turn a blind eye. Moreover, individual officials deliberately authorised illicit activities. Popkin was one of the first to highlight the extent to which French ministers sponsored the production of pamphlet literature but this kind of complicity also occurred on a wider scale. Publishers and booksellers were routinely employed as police spies and it should not have come as much of a surprise to the French government when they reverted to their old ways. Yet to some degree the Bourbon regime was compelled to act in this manner. Preventing powerful elite figures from patronising pamphleteers was not a feasible course of action. What is more, the French government needed to consult individuals who were involved in the print trade in order to get a better idea about its workings. It was the information provided by its spying network which helped to inform the French government's approach to the print trade both within and outside France.

The decades of the 1770s and 1780s represent a substantial period of time across which fluctuations in external censorship can be perceived. Yet, it would also make sense to extend the study back still further to 1758 when the duc de Choiseul was made foreign minister for the first time. In 1761, he was succeeded by his cousin César Gabriel de Choiseul, duc de Praslin, who occupied the post until 1766. From 1766 to 1770, the duc de Choiseul was foreign minister once more. A starting point of 1758 would facilitate a deeper exploration of both how censorship shifted over time and the role played by individual foreign ministers in its development. Investigating how far the duc de Choiseul's approach to external censorship was consistent across his two terms

as foreign minister would presumably prove fruitful, as would an analysis of any similarities in strategy and viewpoint which might have been shared by the two cousins.

Widening the scope of this study would also deepen its engagement with the key scholarship on which it currently builds. The research conducted by Rétat and Vercruyse on the Dutch newspaper press encompasses the 1760s and 1750s respectively.¹ Burrows' work on the London *libellistes* commences in 1758 and much of Darnton's research on the print trade also covers this period.² Research directly related to wider developments in this earlier period would also help to contextualise a broader study of the policing of the extra-territorial print trade. The 1750s and 1760s were punctuated by high points of political, religious and cultural tension.³ The 1750s were marked by the campaign, led by Christophe de Beaumont, the archbishop of Paris, to dissuade priests from administering the last rites to Jansenists. The Paris *parlement*, under the influence of a limited number of vocal Jansenist magistrates, forcefully countered this offensive. The initiative of the *parlementaires* brought them into conflict with the crown, setting in motion a cycle of remonstrances, resignations, forced exiles and governmental attempts at rapprochement which extended beyond Paris to the provinces through the late 1750s and 1760s. Difficult relations between crown and *parlement* were especially problematic in the aftermath of the Seven Years War when the government aimed to lessen the war debt by impelling the *parlements* to approve measures of financial reform. The conflict between crown and *parlement* in this period has obvious parallels with the Maupeou coup in the early 1770s and the enforcement of

¹ Rétat, 'Les Gazetiers de Hollande'; Vercruyse, 'La Réception politique des journaux de Hollande'.

² Burrows, *Blackmail Scandal and Revolution*; Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, pp. 145-89; Robert Darnton, 'Policing Writers in Paris circa 1750', *Representations*, 5 (1984), 1-31; Robert Darnton, 'Poetry and the Police in Eighteenth-Century Paris', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 371 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999), 1-22; Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*.

³ For more on this period see, John Rogister, *Louis XV and the Parlement of Paris, 1737-1755* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 101-258; Julian Swann, *Politics and the Parlement of Paris*; Julian Swann, 'Politics: Louis XV', in *Old Regime France, 1648-1788*, ed. by William Doyle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 195-222 (pp. 208-211).

the May Edicts in the later 1780s. The French government's attempts to prevent commentary on its struggle with the *parlements* from appearing in the foreign newspaper press have been considered by Popkin, Rétat and Vercruyse but would merit further exploration in a comparative context.

The agitation of the *parlements* was also an important factor in cultural and intellectual developments around mid-century. It was in this period that the Enlightenment was at its peak.⁴ Many of the texts which have come to be known as the key works of the Enlightenment were published in these years, most notably the *Encyclopédie*. The city of Paris developed and cemented its reputation as the cultural centre of Europe and the influence of the Enlightenment began to be felt in some sections of government. Most notably, the famed liberal minister Malesherbes was *directeur de la librairie* from 1750 to 1763 and is credited with expanding the boundaries of tolerance in matters of censorship.⁵

Yet support for the Enlightenment was not unanimous. The Paris *parlement* made this clear in the late 1750s when it issued condemnations of the *Encyclopédie* and *De l'Esprit* by Claude Adrien Helvétius, two works of philosophy which had won the approval of French censors.⁶ The French government bowed to the consequent pressure and revoked the privileges which had been granted to these texts. The state was perhaps especially mindful of potential subversion following the 1757 attempt on Louis XV's life by Robert-François Damiens. Further research would illuminate how these tensions over the acceptability of Enlightenment philosophy were dealt with by officials with responsibility for policing the extra-territorial print trade. This study has shown that suppressing the dissemination of religious or philosophical material was not

⁴ Edelstein, pp. 1-6; Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 159-164.

⁵ Birn, 'Malesherbes and the Call for a Free Press', pp. 50-66.

⁶ Birn, *Royal Censorship*, pp. 25-31.

a priority during the 1770s and 1780s and the antecedents of this trend may be discerned in this earlier period.

Extending this study would help to situate the problems the French government faced in its attempts to police print abroad in a broader context. A government memorandum which considered the implications of the edict of 12 June 1783 described the trade in distasteful literature as a constant problem, ‘la prudence et la vigilance de l’administration ne sont prévoyantes mais ce mal a été de tous temps, il ne faut point espérer le couper dans sa racine, mais en empêcher, et retarder le plus possible les progrès’.⁷ The evidence presented in this study does go some way to confirming this view that the print trade was a continuing issue which the government struggled to deal with. The French state was not able to eradicate the trade in contentious texts but it was able to impose clear limits on the production and circulation of this material. French officials recognised that complete control of foreign print would probably always be beyond their grasp. Yet perceptions of the intensity of the problem, the desired reaction and the level of official satisfaction were factors which were variable when it came to the matter of imposing control over the extra-territorial print trade.

The rationale and enthusiasm for rigorously policing the extra-territorial print trade disappeared during the French Revolution. This was partly because the revolutionary regime deliberately rescinded the structures for controlling print. Pre-publication censorship was abolished by the National Assembly in August 1789. However, the decline of censorship should not be overstated. The French state continued to use surveillance, raids, arrests and seizures to manage print throughout the French Revolution.⁸ More important was the extent to which the extra-territorial print trade lost its *raison d’être* due to the outbreak of revolution. Events were progressing so

⁷ Paris, BNF, MF 21833, fol. 118, 1783.

⁸ Walton, pp. 97-225.

rapidly within France that the Francophone newspaper press could simply not keep up. Both newspapers and books published abroad suffered from the competition of political newspapers and pamphlets which were now permitted to be published within France in unprecedented numbers. 250 new gazettes flooded the market in the six months following the storming of the Bastille alone.⁹ With freedom of the press reigning inside France, the print industry beyond its borders came to be more associated with the forces of counter-revolution.¹⁰

International comparisons could also help to put France's strategy of external censorship in perspective. The method of using an ambassadorial network to inhibit the circulation of offensive literature was certainly not unique to France. Indeed, French diplomats sometimes referenced the objections of other powers as a means of justifying their own protests.¹¹ There is a need for more sustained studies of how this technique was employed by other European powers. Further research could show how these foreign complaints interacted or clashed with the French strategy of external censorship.

Regions like the United Provinces, the Swiss states or those of the Holy Roman Empire where political authority was fragmented were unlikely to have sufficient power to influence the literary trade far beyond their borders.¹² By contrast, the states of Austria, Britain and Prussia had cohesiveness and strength. Looking at external censorship from the point of view of these powers could thus go some way to shaping an understanding of the interaction between domestic and external censorship in this period. Subsequent to the lapse of the Licensing Act at the end of the seventeenth

⁹ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*, p. 208.

¹⁰ Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad*, p. 152.

¹¹ Paris, AMAE, CP Hollande 562, fols. 181-85, Vêrac to Vergennes, 29 March 1785.

¹² On the fragmented nature of censorship see, Pamela E. Selwyn, *Everyday Life in the German Book Trade: Friedrich Nicolai as Bookseller and Publisher in the Age of Enlightenment, 1750-1810* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), pp. 181-250; Paul Spalding, *Seize the Book, Jail the Author: Johann Lorenz Schmidt and Censorship in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1998), pp.1-13.

century, there was no formal structure of censorship in place in eighteenth-century Britain. In Austria during the 1780s, Joseph II made moves to liberalise his censorship regime; first by establishing a centralised censorship commission in Vienna in 1781 and then by abolishing pre-publication censorship in 1786.¹³ By contrast, Frederick William II of Prussia tightened censorship laws in 1788 as part of his campaign to maintain standards of religious orthodoxy.¹⁴ The extent to which tolerance was extended abroad in line with a government's internal stance on censorship is certainly worthy of further study.

However, it must be acknowledged that the question of censoring foreign material was less pressing where Austria, Britain and Prussia were concerned because they were not Francophone states. French-language periodicals, books and pamphlets were sold all across Europe but these regions did not constitute the primary audience for this material. These states could still be motivated to control the importation of a smaller proportion of French-language print, as well as literature published abroad in German and English. Yet it seems fair to conclude that external censorship was more crucial in the French market than elsewhere.

There is some extant research to indicate how these other states extended their influence abroad. The work of Schlup suggests that the state of Prussia generally left Neuchâtel to its own devices in matters of the book trade during the eighteenth century but Prussia may have been more active in its other dominions.¹⁵ Surveillance over the importation of books certainly took place in Austria.¹⁶ In 1750 for example, it was decreed that any individual caught importing subversive books would face the death penalty. It might be thought that the British government would take a liberal attitude to foreign publishing. Yet British MPs protested against what they saw as the misreporting

¹³ Madl and Wögerbauer, 'Censorship and Book Supply', pp. 76-78.

¹⁴ Freedman, *Books Without Borders* p. 72.

¹⁵ Schlup, 'Entre pouvoir et clandestinité', pp. 73-74.

¹⁶ Madl and Wögerbauer, 'Censorship and Book Supply', p. 73.

of their speeches in the Irish newspaper press.¹⁷ In addition, British diplomats complained about reports in the Dutch periodical press in a similar manner to their French counterparts.¹⁸

Yet it remains to be seen if the external censorship undertaken by other states was as systematic and significant as it was in the French context. Considering this question would be a way to build upon the ideas about attempts to police the extra-territorial print trade which have been elaborated upon in this thesis. The working relationship between diplomats and foreign ministers, the influence of individual officials and the potential for cooperation with foreign authorities are all factors which affected how censorship worked in practice. The idea of a focused censorship strategy could also be applied internationally. The extent to which official attempts to censor foreign material have continued to the present day underscores the persistent nature of this issue. Attempting to escape the jurisdiction of their government will always be an option for writers and publishers who are involved in the production of potentially controversial material. Governments in turn need to decide if they want to find ways to respond to this impulse. In the present day, the People's Republic of China places foreign content providers such as Google and Skype under strict surveillance and control.¹⁹ This practice continues in spite of China being alleged to be in contravention of the First Amendment to the US Constitution which upholds the right to freedom of expression. Policing print across European borders was a challenge which encouraged French officials to concentrate on restricting the dissemination of what they considered to be the most offensive titles. Examining how far such pragmatism was applied by the

¹⁷ James Kelly, 'Regulating Print: The State and the Control of Print in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 23 (2008), 142-74 (p. 167).

¹⁸ Steven Van Impe, 'With a Little Help from my Censor: Publishing a Newspaper in Antwerp in the Eighteenth Century', Presentation at The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) Annual Conference in Dublin, June 2012.

¹⁹ Ben Quinn, 'Google Services blocked in China', *The Guardian*, 9 November 2012 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2012/nov/09/google-services-blocked-china-gmail> [accessed 11 January 2013].

authorities in other regions of Europe would facilitate a closer appreciation of the motivations behind and efficacy of these methods.

This thesis places emphasis upon the perspective of the French government but it must be acknowledged that statements made by official figures cannot be entirely depended upon. There is the potential for other sources to be integrated into this study which could help to compensate for the limitations of documentation from the French government. One avenue would be to explore more closely how foreign powers reacted to the French censorship strategy. Some evidence of this can be found within the diplomatic correspondence itself in the form of letters from foreign officials where they outline their response to protests made by the French authorities. This information cannot be relied upon with complete confidence since there is evidence that foreign powers deliberately constructed an image of obedience whilst in practice making efforts to resist French demands. Further investigation of the actions of foreign authorities would broaden appreciation of how French censorship worked on the ground, especially the extent to which it engaged with local mechanisms of censorship which operated outside the borders of France. Geneva would constitute an appropriate case study since its relations with France were ambiguous. Geneva was dependent upon French political support but its officials consistently disrupted French attempts to control Swiss publishing.

Private papers and memoirs relating to French diplomats and foreign ministers could broaden comprehension of their individual points of view and thus, of the way in which they approached the extra-territorial print trade. Complementary to this would be a detailed study of chronicles, literary reviews and journals written by other late eighteenth-century contemporaries. Such an exploration would shed light on the perception of literature at this time and help to explain how individuals within the French government came to their judgements about the subversive nature of certain

types of material. This study could also be expanded through further bibliographical work, similar to that which has been conducted on the STN under the aegis of *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe Database* project. The STN archives are something of a unique resource but records relating to the publishing business of the Dutch Luchmans family are extant. Some documentation from the business of provincial booksellers is also scattered across France.²⁰ Further exploration of these areas could therefore give a greater idea of the books, pamphlets and journals which were sent into and then sold within France. However, it must be remembered that material which references the texts which were chased by the French government is unlikely to have survived in large quantities because the trade in the most offensive texts was illicit and potentially dangerous.

This thesis argues that extra-territorial policing was highly focused and could be effective when it was centred on certain texts. In his work, *The Corpus of Clandestine Literature in France, 1769-1789*, Darnton compiled a list of 720 illicit titles which circulated under the old regime.²¹ With the *Corpus* and its companion volume *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* Darnton's findings indicated that there was a huge network of underground book dealing which the French state struggled to control. Darnton claimed that through repetition, the messages in these books (when combined with public discourse) had an effect 'like the drip, drip of water on a stone', wearing away the sacred legitimacy of the French monarchy.²² Part of the reason for reaching this conclusion is that Darnton's data is concentrated in the period from 1780 to 1782. As we have seen, this was an atypical period when the French government became overwhelmed by illicit literature. The French state was able to regain command over the extra-territorial sphere with the new approach it pursued in 1783.

²⁰ These resources have recently been exploited in McLeod, *Licensing Loyalty*.

²¹ Darnton, *Corpus of Clandestine Literature*.

²² Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, p. 216.

It is also important to recognise that French officials did not ever aim to have total command over the printed word. They were not chasing all of the 720 titles with the same vigour. The authorities in France were prepared to tolerate much and put their energy into suppressing what they considered be the most dangerous texts. Indeed, Darnton has shown appreciation of this in his recent work, *The Devil in the Holy Water*.²³ Darnton considers the way in which the regime worked to smother *libelles* but only mentions a handful of titles which were targeted. Many of the texts which have been uncovered in the course of research for this thesis are the same titles which have already been pinpointed as points of external censorship by Burrows and Darnton. Yet this is a finding in itself. This study provides evidence that the intense policing of illicit works was a relatively rare occurrence. The notion of self-censorship could help to explain why this was the case. Extra-territorial writers and traders had a good idea of what kind of literature was unacceptable to the French government. Many of them avoided becoming engaged with works which touched upon the most intolerable topics. The change of strategy in 1783 was also crucial. When *libellistes* and publishers realised that the French government was no longer willing to pay suppression fees, there was less incentive for them to produce this kind of material.

The illicit book trade under the old regime, then, was finite and there were only a few key moments when these dangerous discourses entered the public sphere. These titles were printed abroad but the foreign ministry did its best to ensure that the extra-territorial trade was kept within something approaching acceptable limits. The corollary of this is that the print trade in the *ancien régime* was more constrained than we might once have thought. The explosion of press freedom in 1789 thus represented a marked transformation from what had gone before. It was not simply the inevitable zenith of an expanding print trade which the French state was failing to keep in check. The pre-

²³ Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water*.

revolutionary crisis in 1787 and 1788 was period of intense pamphleteering but this literature was different; it was legitimised and accepted by the French government. Up to and possibly beyond 1789, the state remained determined to police and suppress what it considered to be the most offensive texts and it was remarkably successful in this endeavour.

If extra-territorial policing was working, this means that the texts targeted by the French government had less of an impact within France. The ministry was able to restrict the readership of the material which it considered to be most offensive, such as the *libelles*. The dramatic nature of the foreign policing campaigns has directed historiographical attention towards these titles. But perhaps scholars need to think instead about the rest of the literary market. The successes of extra-territorial control had implications for the trade within France. The strong stance of the French government, especially in 1783 and beyond, undermined the foreign print trade. This in turn adversely affected the provincial book dealers who were dependent on trading with their counterparts outside France. With the provincial and foreign trade both relatively weak, the dominance of the Parisian print industry was reinforced. In addition, it could also be argued that the effects of the pronouncement of June 1783 were encouraging for Parisian writers. Across the eighteenth century, it was common for prominent essayists such as Brissot and Mirabeau to seek shelter with foreign publishing houses when their writings came under fire within France. Vergennes' decision to restrict access to the French market meant that such opportunities dried up and expatriate writers were forced back to France. Eisenstein has suggested that 'When the events of 1789 paved the way for freedom of the press, the francophone Republic of Letters could reclaim its central city at long last'.²⁴ Certainly, Brissot, Mirabeau and many other pamphleteers were back in Paris by the mid 1780s, much earlier than 1789. The success

²⁴ Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad*, p. 152.

enjoyed by Parisian authors and printers in this decade potentially placed these individuals in a prime position to profit from both the pre-revolutionary fervour and the revolution itself. Historians have yet to reach a firm conclusion as to how and why the press expanded so rapidly during 1789-1790 and this premise could provide a plausible explanation. Even before the pre-revolutionary crisis, Parisian printing accelerated as a consequence of the decline of foreign publishing.

Another outcome of this study has been to highlight the impact that individual officials had on the processes of censorship. The work of the diplomatic team was crucial, especially when it came to managing the extra-territorial periodical press. Officials had to stay alert lest they miss the appearance of any potentially dangerous pieces. The influence of the French foreign minister was huge. This was particularly the case when the position was occupied by Vergennes, an individual who spent time contemplating the best means of imposing his will on the foreign print trade. It was these officials who made the decisions about which texts were threatening and the level of the punishment which was to be handed out. In challenging circumstances, they came to understand the trade and made difficult decisions about whether writers and publishers should be trusted or targeted.

This focus on individual perspectives and decisions is important when thinking about the kind of works which were targeted for suppression. It is important to remember that the majority of literature was permitted to circulate in eighteenth-century France; only a minority of titles were actively suppressed. This study has shown that the French authorities were primarily concerned with suppressing information about two topics: French state affairs and political elites or the royal family. When it came to the book trade, it was overwhelmingly *libelles* which were pursued with vigour by the French state. Darnton has argued forcefully that *libelle* literature could have had a

subversive impact by encouraging a loss of respect for royal rulers.²⁵ Some readers undoubtedly took away such messages and official anxieties were not without foundation. Sovereignty in eighteenth-century France was concentrated in the hands of the King. France's political and financial stability rested upon those at the top of French society. A traditional code of honour which placed paramount importance on matters of reputation also lay at France's heart under the *ancien régime*. The content of many of the *libelles* thus represented a direct challenge to the very foundations of French state and society. It would thus be going too far to say that the French government was paranoid about the effects of *libelles*. Officials had good reasons to fear their potential to incite sedition in the context of eighteenth-century France. Nevertheless, it could be said that a preoccupation with defamatory texts blinded French officials to other potential threats. Part of the reason why *libelles* were frequently targeted in the extra-territorial arena might be that they were texts which were easy to recognise. The threat posed by other types of literature might have been harder to perceive and thus more difficult to evaluate and control.

Works which circulated with the tacit approval of French officials might have had just as much of an impact on public opinion as the texts which French officials saw as offensive and intolerable. Philosophical treatises, anti-clerical tracts or the legal briefs prepared and circulated in pamphlet form by magistrates were all in demand and readily available.²⁶ As such, they were able to make their mark on French readers. Circulation figures also tempered the influence of literature which the French government found to be particularly distasteful. The most controversial books and pamphlets which were printed abroad only reached a limited market and this was partly thanks to the efforts of the French government. The French state concentrated on the texts it perceived as

²⁵ Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, p. 165.

²⁶ On the subversive potential of these kinds of texts, see Curran, *Atheism, Religion and Enlightenment*; Julie Candler Hayes, *Reading the French Enlightenment: System and Subversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Maza, *Private Lives*.

threatening, but a range of other literature could have been just as important in destabilising the *ancien régime*.

The French government's objectives of external censorship were largely satisfied but its campaigns could also have had a wider significance. Forceful policing may have driven the book trade further underground; large businesses like the STN were worried about the French government's reaction and so largely stayed away from the most illicit material. The clandestine book trade existed in different channels and it remained a threat. Yet the bolder printers who were prepared to deal in this literature faced a problem. They needed to advertise their texts for sale without provoking the wrath of the French authorities. They could sell their copies door-to-door or give copies away but they could not advertise them widely without a significant risk of the French government finding out what they were up to. This desire to stay underground and remain unexposed can be seen in the decision of Morande and Godeville to set up their own printing presses. So, it is possible that the French foreign ministry was able to reach even the darkest corners of the extra-territorial print trade by making trading difficult for its participants. This line of argument has not yet been fully substantiated and should not be overstated. There were still five editions of *Le Gazetteur cuirassé* which made it to market in these years, in spite of the French government's strong opposition to this text. Moreover, the marginal nature of many of these traders means that documentation relating to their business has probably not survived. Further bibliographical research on the circulation of editions pursued by the French government in this period (such as that conducted by Gruder) could shed further light on whether the trade of those figures who were truly immersed in illicit book dealing was really that substantial.²⁷

²⁷ Gruder, 'The Question of Marie-Antoinette'.

If the French government was broadly successful in its attempts to police the worst aspects of the print trade, does this undermine ideas about the connection between the print trade and the French Revolution? This discussion links into the debate on continuity and change with regards to the origins of the revolution. Research centred on the earlier years of the eighteenth century such as that conducted by Peter Campbell has underscored that the pre-revolutionary upheaval was in many ways a repeat of earlier political crises which beset the *ancien régime*.²⁸ This thesis acknowledges and supports this line of thinking since it suggests that the policing of extra-territorial print was in many ways a continuing problem which the French government never managed to fully surmount. Yet there is also evidence that the literary landscape shifted in significant ways during the later eighteenth century. The chronology of policing outlined in this study indicates that the change implemented in 1783 was fruitful; the threat of illicit literature was much lessened in its aftermath. With this chronology in mind, the French Revolution does not seem to have been foretold by an increasingly intense offensive of illicit texts. The French government was in control over the extra-territorial trade in the later 1780s and the pamphlet literature of the pre-revolutionary crisis was somewhat different to the texts which the French government had attempted to suppress through most of the 1770s and 1780s. If foreign *libelles* really served to do such damage to the old regime, we might have expected revolution to explode a few years earlier in 1782 or 1783. We can only speculate about the impact of *libelles* on readers, but it is important to recognise how far the French government was able to keep them in check. When thinking about the link between print and revolution, it may thus make more sense to consider the effects of the works that the French state allowed to circulate.

²⁸ Peter R. Campbell, *Power and Politics in Old Regime France* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 1-2.

It seems pertinent here to underline that at the turn of the century Napoleon constructed a successful system of censorship by consolidating old regime techniques of bribery, coercion and diplomatic pressure.²⁹ Napoleon's hegemonic power made his system decidedly stronger than that of pre-revolutionary France but he nevertheless deliberately built upon the successes of previous strategies of state control. This link between *ancien régime* and Napoleonic censorship suggests that we need to re-evaluate the efforts of the French monarchy on its own terms. Rather than focusing our attention on everything that the French officials did not do, it seems more helpful to consider what exactly they were trying to achieve, how realistic these aims were and how far they were followed through. The French state recognised that it did not possess enough centralised authority to force through total control of print. Yet, it was still in a position of real strength. As the events in the year 1783 illustrate, censorship was at its most powerful when internal and external measures were combined. Censorship at the end of the old regime was tightly focused and French officials cooperated effectively to restrict the circulation of a limited range of provocative texts.

²⁹ Simon Burrows, 'The Struggle for European Opinion in the Napoleonic Wars: British Francophone Propaganda, 1803-1814', *French History*, 11, (1997), 29-53 (p. 31); Censer and Popkin, 'Some Paradoxes of the Eighteenth-Century Periodical', p. 15; Alan Forrest, 'Propaganda and the Legitimation of Power in Napoleonic France', *French History*, 18 (2004), 426-45 (pp. 427-29).

Appendix A

Explanatory Notes

The table presented in this appendix contains details of the 193 instances when the French government objected to or attempted to regulate the extra-territorial print across the period from 1770 to 1789. In some cases, all the pertinent details cannot be gleaned from extant documents and these instances have been presented as ‘unclear’ or ‘unknown’ in this table. The data upon which this thesis is based is grouped here according to the following headings:

Date: The initial date represents the first time that the title in question began to concern the French government. In most cases, a specific date can be pinpointed. Additional dates are provided in brackets when a title continued to trouble the French authorities for a period which lasted beyond a single month.

Location: The French government usually objected to the production and dissemination of literature in certain towns. The geographical region of each town is provided in brackets. This information provides the basis for Figure 4, which suggests how extra-territorial policing differed according to geography.

Title: This column provides the title of the works which were targeted by the French government, or a description of the texts in question if the titles are not known.

Book/Pamphlet or Journal: This column simply designates the format of the material that the French government was reacting to. Books and pamphlets have been grouped

together to reflect the difficulty of determining between these two formats in the eighteenth century. Journals are presented separately. This distinction also reflects the French government's different approaches to the policing of journals and of books and pamphlets, which are explored in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

Subject Matter: This column uses keywords to summarise a simplified version of the content of the texts that the French government protested against. In relation to books or pamphlets which were never published, remarks about their content have been informed by official correspondence or deduced from their titles. French officials sometimes objected to foreign journals in general terms and did not elaborate further upon the reasons for their remonstrances. In these cases, it can be assumed that official complaints were targeted towards coverage of French current affairs and politics. This was the main subject which was absent from French journals and thus was the topic which the French government watched over most closely when it came to the extra-territorial press.

Writers, Editors and Publishers: Information is provided here on any writers, editors and publishers who were known to be involved with the production of particular texts. Initials are given in brackets to designate whether each individual was an editor (E), a writer (W) or a publisher (P). In the case of journals, this column acknowledges that the editorship of certain journals changed hands across the period covered by this study.

Initial Response: A summary of the French government's initial response to each title or group of titles is given here. When it came to journals, the official response was usually a complaint relating to a specific article or a more generalised objection to the general tone of the foreign press. There were also negotiations over the right for

foreign periodicals to circulate within France. In the case of books and pamphlets, the French authorities mostly complained about the threat or publication of seemingly subversive texts.

Outcome: This column provides a condensed version of the actions taken by the French government in response to the publication and dissemination of these titles. Again there are differences in the responses which followed the appearance of journal articles as opposed to books and pamphlets. The Bourbon regime admonished editors who had printed inappropriate articles, requested that retractions be printed and prevented journals from reaching the French market. The state was more active when faced with books and pamphlets which it disapproved of. It involved foreign powers and its own police agents in its attempts at suppressing this literature.

Diplomat source: This column outlines those instances where a French diplomat was the first to perceive a potential threat in the extra-territorial print trade.

Foreign govt. involved: This column reflects occasions when the French government involved foreign authorities in its efforts to suppress literature.

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1770-01 (Jan-Feb)	Neuchâtel (Swiss)	<i>Journal diplomatique du droit public de l'Europe</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	STN (P)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government debates its approach, requests further information	No	No
1770-04	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics, Personal Libel	Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	Yes	No
1770-05 (May 1770-Feb 1771)	Amsterdam (Dutch)	<i>Mercure de France</i> (counterfeit edition)	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Rey (P)	Complaint re: counterfeit edition	Publisher admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1770-06	Liège (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Liège</i>	Journal	Unclear	Desoer (P), Fabry (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	Yes	Yes
1770-06 (Jun-Sep)	Neuchâtel (Swiss)	<i>Journal helvétique</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Literary Studies	Bertrand (E), STN (P)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	Permission granted to circulate through post	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1770-07	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	Personal Libel	Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	No	No
1770-09	Neuchâtel (Swiss)	<i>Questions sur l'Encyclopédie</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Literary Studies, Philosophy	STN (P), Voltaire (W)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government decides to tolerate this work	No	No
1771	Cleves (Prussian)	Foreign gazettes, especially the <i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: general tone of journals	French government debates approach to foreign press	No	No
1771-01 (Jan-Feb)	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	No	No
1771-04	Bern (Swiss)	<i>Gazette de Berne</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Druckerei company (P), Durand (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1771-04 (Apr-Jun)	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Pays-Bas</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France, pre-publication censorship arranged in Brussels	No	Yes
1771-05	United Provinces (Dutch)	Dutch Francophone gazettes	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Unclear	Complaint re: general tone of journals	French government asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant	Yes	Yes
1771-07 (Jul-Dec)	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Francfort, Gazette de Mannheim</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Béardé de l'Abbaye (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editors admonished by French government	Unclear	No
1771-07 (Jul-Sept)	Geneva (Swiss)	<i>Encyclopédie</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Philosophy	d'Alembert (E/W), Diderot (E/W)	Complaint: re counterfeit edition	Publishers admonished by French government	No	No
1771-08	London (British)	<i>Le Gazetier cuirassé</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Morande (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government condemns this text, no direct measures taken abroad	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1771-08 (Aug- Sep)	The Hague, Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye, Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics, Personal Libel	Gosse (E/P), Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journals temporarily banned from France	Yes	No
1771-09 (Sep- Oct)	Schaffhausen (Swiss)	<i>Gazette de Schaffhouse</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Caille (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	Yes	Yes
1771-10	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government blocks dissemination of latest issue(s)	Unclear	No
1771-12	Bern (Swiss)	<i>Gazette de Berne</i>	Journal	Personal Libel	Druckerei company (P), Durand (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	No
1772-01 (Jan-Feb)	Geneva (Swiss) and Amsterdam (Dutch)	<i>Le Gazetier cuirassé</i> (second edition)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Morande (W), Rey (P), Téron (P)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	Publishers admonished and imprisoned by foreign authorities	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1772-03	Düsseldorf (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette intéressante</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Neorberg (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government requests further information, editor admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1772-04	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	No	No
1772-05	Düsseldorf (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette intéressante</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Neorberg (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government requests further information, asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant	No	No
1772-05	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	Unclear	No
1772-06	Düsseldorf (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette intéressante</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Neorberg (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government requests further information, asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1772-08 (Aug- Sep)	Lausanne (Swiss)	<i>Mémoire du procureur général du Roi du parlement de Provence, sur la souveraineté du Roi à Avignon et dans le comtat Venaissin</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics	Ripert de Monclar (W)	Complaint re: counterfeit edition	Foreign authorities begin to suppress this edition, French government then decides to scorn this complaint	No	Yes
1772-08	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	Military Affairs	Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government debates issuing orders for a retraction, unclear whether action was taken	Yes	No
1772-08 (Aug- Sep)	Düsseldorf (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette intéressante</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Neorberg (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant	No	Yes
1772-10	Bonn (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Bonn</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French governments asks foreign authorities to admonish editor	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1772-11	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Negotiation re: financial support	French agents offer financial support to the editor on d'Aiguillon's behalf	No	No
1772-11	Düsseldorf (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette intéressante</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Neorberg (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant	Yes	Yes
1772- 1774	London (British)	<i>Mémoires secrets d'une femme publique depuis son berceau jusqu'au lit d'honneur</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Morande (W)	Complaint re: a book/pamp hlet (threatened)	Ongoing negotiations with author and deliberations about how best to control, French government eventually decides to pay a suppression fee	No	Yes
1773-01	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	Unclear	Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1773-03 (Mar- Apr)	Maastricht (Dutch)	<i>Les Adieux du duc de Bourgogne et de l'abbé Fénelon, La Correspondance complète, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Louis XV, La Putain parvenue; ou histoire de la comtesse du Barry</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Du Four (P), Thiébauld (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	Bookseller imprisoned within France, publisher admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1773-07	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	Unclear	No
1773-08 (Aug- Oct)	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	No	No
1773-09	United Provinces (Dutch)	Dutch print trade	Book/ Pamphlet	None specified	None specified	Complaint re: foreign print trade	French debates approach to Dutch print trade, expresses concern about Dutch bookseller increasing export duties	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1774-03	London (British)	<i>Libelle</i> (title unclear but possibly <i>Remarques historiques et anecdotes sur le château de la Bastille</i>)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, History, Personal Libel	Morande (W)	Complaint re: a book/pamphlet (published)	French government condemns this text, no direct measures taken abroad	Yes	No
1774-04	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Manzon (E), Plumeux (W), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government debates its approach, requests further information	No	No
1774-04	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>La Gazette de Cythère</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Bernard (W)	Complaint re: a book/pamphlet (published)	Diplomat suggests need to find and punish author, foreign minister does not respond	Yes	No
1774-05	United Provinces (Dutch)	<i>Libelles</i> in general	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Unclear	Complaint re: books/pamphlets (published and threatened)	Diplomat informs foreign minister that he is renewing his efforts against <i>libelles</i>	Yes	No
1774-05	United Provinces (Dutch)	Dutch Francophone gazettes	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editors admonished by French government	Yes	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1774-05 (May 1774-Jul 1776)	London (British)	<i>Avis à la branche espagnole sur ses droits à la couronne de France, à défaut d'héritiers, Épître à Louis XVI</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Beaumarchai s (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (threatened)	Beaumarchais sent to suppress the work, suspected of involvement with the text	No	No
1774-07 (Jul-Aug)	The Hague, Leiden, Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye, Gazette de Leyde, Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Gosse (E/P), Luzac (E/P), Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No
1774-08	The Hague (Dutch)	Dutch print trade	Book/ Pamphlet	None specified	Beaumarchai s (W), Diderot (W)	Complaint re: foreign print trade	French government debates its approach, requests further information	No	No
1774-09 (Sep- Oct)	Amsterdam, Leiden, Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Amsterdam, Gazette de Leyde, Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Dubreuil (E/P), Luzac (E/P), Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government threatens to ban these journals from France	No	No
1775-01	Leiden, Utrecht, Amsterdam, The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Amsterdam, Gazette de La Haye, Gazette de Leyde, Gazette d'Utrecht,</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Religion	Dubreuil (E/P), Gosse (E/P), Luzac (E/P), Peuch(E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editors admonished by French government, French government threatens to ban this journal from France	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1775-02	Berlin (Prussian)	German language gazette (title unknown)	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Lindsey (W)	Complaint re: an extract	Unclear whether action was taken	Yes	No
1775-02 (Feb 1775-Jan 1776)	London (British)	Various articles (titles of journals unknown)	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Linsing (W)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government decides to pay a suppression fee	No	Yes
1775-02 (Feb 1775-Jan 1776)	London (British)	Various pamphlets (titles unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Linsing (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published and threatened)	French government decides to pay a suppression fee	No	Yes
1775-04	London (British)	Journal (title unknown)	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Vignoles (W)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government sends Beaumarchais to suppress this work	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1775-05	Erlangen (Holy Roman Empire)	German language gazette (title unknown)	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Unclear	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	No
1775-05 (May-Jul)	Berlin (Prussian)	<i>Gazette littéraire de Berlin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Francheville (E)	Complaint re: an extract	Editor admonished by French government and ordered not to print extract of work on Louis XV	Yes	Yes
1775-05 (May-Jul)	Berlin (Prussian)	<i>Mémoire de Louis XV</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Francheville (E)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	Diplomat confirms that copies of the text are not in wide circulation	Yes	Yes
1775-08 (Aug- Sep)	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	Personal Libel, Religion	Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1775-09 (Sep- Oct)	United Provinces (Dutch)	<i>L'Anti-Monopoleur</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics, Personal Libel	Crajeuscot (P), Jonsac(W)	Complaint re: a book/pamp hlet (published)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	No
1775-10	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Deux-Ponts</i>	Journal	Unclear	Dubois- Fontanelle (E)	Unclear	French government blocks dissemination of latest issue(s)	No	No
1776 -01 (Jan-Mar)	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	Military Affairs	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	Unclear	No
1776-03 (Mar- Apr)	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Deux-Ponts</i> , <i>Gazette de La Haye</i> and other Dutch Francophone Gazettes	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics, Philosophy	Castilhon (E), Dubois- Fontanelle (E), Le Tellier (E), Gosse (E/P), Boncerf (W), Voltaire (W)	Complaint re: an extract	Editors admonished by French government	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1776-04	Liège (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Liège</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Desoer (P), Fabry (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No
1776-04 (Apr- May)	Düsseldorf (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Correspondance littéraire secrète</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Neorberg (E/W)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by foreign authorities	Yes	Yes
1776-05	United Provinces (Dutch)	Dutch Francophone gazettes	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Unclear	Complaint re: general tone of journals	French government debates its approach to Dutch press	No	No
1776-05	Lausanne (Swiss)	<i>Le Monarque accompli; ou prodiges de bonté, de savoir et de sagesse, qui font l'éloge de Sa Majesté Impériale Joseph II</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Foreign Affairs	Lanjuinais (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government debates its approach, requests further information	Yes	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1776-06 (Jun 1776-Jan 1777)	London (British)	Threat of a <i>libelle</i> (title unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Macdonagh (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government condemns this work, no direct measures taken abroad	No	Yes
1776-06	Mainz (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Les Intérêts du roi et ceux du peuple considérés dans la distribution des impôts</i> , plus threat of another similar work	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics	Unclear	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published and threatened)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	No
1776-07	London (British)	<i>Courier de l'Europe</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Serres La Tour (E), Swinton (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France, pre-publication censorship arranged, second edition to be printed in Boulogne	No	No
1776-08	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	None specified	Luzac (E/P)	Negotiation	French diplomat is visited by editor	Yes	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1776-09	London (British)	Threat of a <i>libelle</i> (title unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Lenoir de La Bussière (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to pay a suppression fee	Unclear	No
1776-10	London (British)	<i>Considérations sur les mœurs de mon siècle</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Campagnol (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government sends Beaumarchais to suppress this text	Unclear	No
1776-12	Geneva (Swiss)	<i>Encyclopédie</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Philosophy	d'Alembert (E/W), Diderot (E/W), Felice (P)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government condemns this text, no direct measures taken abroad	No	No
1777-01	Liège (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Liège</i>	Journal	Military Affairs	Desoer (P), Fabry (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction, editor admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1777-01	United Provinces (Dutch)	Dutch Francophone gazettes	Journal	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Editors admonished by French government	Unclear	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1777-02	Regensburg (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Libelles</i> in general	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	None specified	Complaint re: foreign print trade	French government debates measures against <i>libelles</i> , imperial authorities issue condemnation of their writers	Yes	Yes
1777-02 (Feb- Oct)	London (British)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Linguet (E/W)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government ambivalent at first, pre- publication censorship arranged and permission to circulate through the posts granted	No	Yes
1777-02 (Feb- Oct)	London (British)	Threat of seven <i>libelles</i> , including <i>Aignilloniana</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Linguet (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (threatened and published)	After deliberation, French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1777-03	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Deux-Ponts</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Castilhon (E), Dubois- Fontanelle (E), Le Tellier (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government debates approach to this journal, keeps editor under surveillance	No	Yes
1777-04	Liège (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Mémoires de M. le comte de Saint-Germain</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Military Affairs, Personal Libel	Unclear	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	Publisher admonished by foreign authorities	Yes	Yes
1777-05 (May- Nov)	London (British)	<i>Vie et anecdotes des maîtresses du roi de France, et des ministres de ce royaume</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Saint-Julien (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to suppress the work but is not willing to pay a suppression fee	No	Yes
1777-05 (May- June)	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1777-06 (Jun 1777-Feb 1778)	London (British)	<i>Guerlichon femelle</i> , later known as <i>La Reine des welches et sa surintendante ou les deux amans femelles</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Goupil (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened and published)	French government decides to pay a suppression fee	No	Yes
1777-10 (Oct 1777-Jan 1778)	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Legal Reform	Luzac (E/P)	Negotiation re: specific article	Editor requests approval from French government to print a particular article, request is denied	No	No
1777-11	London (British)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Linguet (E/W)	Complaint re: counterfeit edition	Linguet complains about a counterfeit edition, French government takes no action	No	No
1778-01	Amsterdam, The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Amsterdam, Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Dubreuil (E/P), Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	No
1778-02	London (British)	<i>Courier de l'Europe</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Serres La Tour (E), Swinton (P)	Complaint re: an extract	French government blocks dissemination of latest issue(s)	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1778-03	London (British)	<i>L'Espion françois à Londres; ou, observations critiques sur l'Angleterre et sur les anglois</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Foreign Affairs, Personal Libel	Goudar (W)	Complaint re: foreign print trade	French government condemns this work, keeps it under surveillance, no direct measures taken abroad	Yes	No
1778-06	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Pays-Bas</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction, asks foreign authorities to admonish the editor	No	Yes
1778-07	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs	Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government threatens to ban this journal from France	Yes	No
1778-07	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Linguet (E/W)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government approves the journal's move to Brussels	No	No
1778-08	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Cologne</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs	Jeaurinvillier (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	Yes	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1778-09 (Sep- Nov)	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Deux-Ponts</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Castilhon (E), Dubois- Fontanelle (E), Le Tellier(E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government refuses to bestow permission to circulate through the post	Yes	No
1778-11	The Hague (Dutch), London (British)	<i>Gazette de La Haye, London Evening Post</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Personal Libel	Gosse (E/P), Nutt (E), Meres (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government condemns the article but no further action taken	Yes	Yes
1778-11	Hamburg (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Le Journaliste de Hambourg</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Petit et fils (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by foreign authorities, privilege to publish removed	Yes	Yes
1778-12	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Personal Libel	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant	Yes	Yes
1779-03 (Mar- Apr)	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Cologne</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs	Jeaurinvillier (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government threatens to ban journal from France	Yes	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1779-10	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Cologne</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs	Jeaurinvillier (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	No
1779-12	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	No
1780-02 (Feb-Jun)	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Le Cri de l'humanité au Roi ou mémoires de Mme la comtesse de Verrière</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Godeville (W)	Complaint re: a book/pamphlet (threatened)	Paris police sent on mission to arrest author, author sent to Bastille	Yes	Yes
1780-02 (Feb-May)	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Un Juif seul contre tout le parlement de Paris</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Legal Reform, Religion	Gerlache (P), père Richard (W)	Complaint re: a book/pamphlet (published)	French government asks foreign authorities to confiscate copies	No	Yes
1780-03 (Mar-Apr)	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Cologne</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs	Jeaurinvillier (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government debates ways to control this gazette	Yes	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1780-05 (May- Jun)	London (British)	British gazettes (titles unknown)	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Foreign Affairs	Beaumarchai s (W)	Complaint re: an extract	French government writes to British journalists to ask them not to mention a text by Beaumarchais	No	No
1780-06	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Linguet (E/W)	Unclear	French government blocks dissemination of latest issue(s)	Unclear	No
1780-06	United Provinces (Dutch)	Dutch Francophone gazettes	Journal	Religion	Unclear	Complaint re: an extract	French government tells editors not to include this extract	No	No
1780-07	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	Personal Libel, Religion	Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	No
1780-07 (Jul-Aug)	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Cologne</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Jeaurinvillier (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government refuses to bestow permission to circulate through the post	Yes	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1780-08	London (British)	<i>Courier de l'Europe</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs	Serres La Tour (E), Swinton (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Vergennes approves the publication of this article	No	No
1780-09 (Sep 1780- Dec 1781)	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	Personal papers belonging to Linguet, threat of their publication	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Linguet (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	Paris police sent on mission to confiscate Linguet's papers	No	Yes
1780-09 (Sep- Oct)	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No
1780-11	Frankfurt (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Francfort</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	Unclear	No
1780-12 (Dec 1780-Jan 1781)	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Cologne</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs	Jeurin villier (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	Journal temporarily banned from France	No	No
1781-01	Geneva (Swiss)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Mallet Du Pan (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government refuses to bestow permission to circulate through the post	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1781-01 (Jan-Feb)	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	Unclear	Luzac (E/P)	Unclear	Editor admonished by French government	Yes	No
1781-04	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Legal Reform	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Unclear whether measures were taken	Yes	No
1781-05	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Gosse (E/P), Mallet Du Pan (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	Yes	No
1781-06	London (British)	<i>Les Amours de Charlot et Toinette</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Boissiere (P)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French agent sent to suppress text, French government decides to pay a suppression fee	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1781-10 (Oct 1781- Sept 1782)	Amsterdam (Dutch) and Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Les Aventures de Mme de Polignac, Confession générale de Madame la comtesse du Barry, Le Cri de la France contre M. de Maurepas, La Diligence, ou dialogue entre trois gens qui ne sont pas trop sots sur les affaires du temps, Essais historique sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette, Les Joueurs et M. Dusaulx, Le Ministère de Vergennes</i> , two anti-Necker pamphlets (titles unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Costard (W), La Coste de Mézières (W), Duvernet (W), Launay (W), Imbert de Boudeaux (W), Imbert de Villebon (P), Marcenay (P)	Complaint re: books/pamphlets (threatened and published)	Paris police sent on mission to arrest authors and publishers	No	Yes
1781-10 (Oct 1781- Sept 1782)	Neuchâtel (Swiss)	<i>Journal helvétique</i>	Journal	Literary Studies	Chaillet (E), STN (P)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	Negotiations stalled, French government declines to give permission.	No	No
1781-11 (Nov- Dec)	Liège (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>La Nymphé de Spa à l'abbé Raynal</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Philosophy	Bassenge (W), De Gallinaire (W), Raynal (W)	Complaint re: foreign print trade	French government debates whether to support the author of this work, no direct measures taken abroad	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1781-11 (Nov- Dec)	Europe	<i>Nouvelles à la main</i> relating to Marie- Antoinette	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Unclear	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (threatened)	French government debates its approach, requests further information	Unclear	Yes
1781-12 (Dec 1781-Jan 1782)	United Provinces (Dutch)	<i>Confession de M. de Sartine à M. Necker</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Gruyore (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to pay a suppression fee	No	Yes
1781-12 (Dec 1781-Jan 1782)	Geneva (Swiss) and London (British)	<i>Courrier de Londres</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Boissière (P), La Touche (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	No
1781-12 (Dec 1781-Mar 1782)	London (British)	<i>Journal anglois</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	De Lolme (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government is prepared to tolerate this text	No	No
1782-01	Geneva (Swiss)	Pamphlet on Genevan politics (title unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	Foreign Affairs	Clavière (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government condemns the text, no direct measures taken abroad	Yes	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1782-01 (Jan-Mar)	Geneva (Swiss)	<i>Supplément à l'espion anglois, La Vérité rendue sensible à Louis XVI par un admirateur de M. Necker, Histoire d'un pou françois, Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république des lettres en France</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Religion, Scandal	Bachaumont (E), Delauney (W), Lanjuinais (W), Nouffer (P)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	Publisher imprisoned and admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1782-02	Cologne, Liège (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Les Fripons parvenus, ou l'histoire du sieur Delzenne, plus other libelles including one attacking the comte d'Artois</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Bournon de Malarme (W), Cahaisse (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published and threatened)	Paris police sent on mission to arrest authors	No	Yes
1782-07 (Jul-Sep)	Neuchâtel (Swiss)	<i>Extrait du Journal d'un officier de la marine de l'escadre de M. le comte d'Estaing</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs, Personal Libel	STN (P)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	Publisher admonished by French government	No	No
1782-08	Utrecht, Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde, Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	Personal Libel, Religion	Des Essarts (E/P), Gilbal (E), Luzac (E/P), Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1782-08 (Aug- Oct)	Geneva (Swiss)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Mallet Du Pan (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government refuses to bestow permission to circulate through the post	No	No
1782-09 (Sep- Oct)	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs, Personal Libel	Des Essarts (E/P), Gilbal (E), Peuch (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government asks foreign authorities to admonish editor, journal temporarily banned from France	Unclear	Yes
1782-09	Amsterdam, Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Amsterdam, Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Dubreuil (E/P), Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	Yes
1782-09 (Sep- Dec)	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Deux-Ponts</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Castilhon (E), Dubois- Fontanelle (E), Le Tellier (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	Unclear whether these negotiations were successful	Yes	No
1782-09 (Sep- Oct)	Erlangen (Holy Roman Empire)	German language gazette (title unknown)	Journal	Personal Libel, Religion	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1782-09 (Sep- Oct)	Schaffhausen (Swiss)	<i>Gazette de Schaffhouse</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs, Personal Libel	Caille (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction, publisher admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1782-10 (Oct- Dec)	Neuchâtel (Swiss)	<i>Des Lettres de cachet et des prisons d'état, Le Libertin de qualité; ou ma conversion, L'Espion dévalisé</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, History, Legal Reform, Personal Libel, Pornography, Scandal	Fauche fils aîné, Favre et Witel (P), Mirabeau (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	Publishers imprisoned and admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1782-10	Geneva (Swiss)	Swiss print trade	Book/ Pamphlet	None specified	None specified	Complaint re: foreign print trade	French government considers ways to stop importation of books from Geneva	No	No
1782-11	Geneva (Swiss)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Mallet Du Pan (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government refuses to bestow permission to circulate through the post	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1782-11 (Nov- Dec)	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government contemplates scorning this complaint, editor admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1782-12	Berlin (Prussian)	Pamphlet which is critical of Louis XVI (title unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Unclear	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	No
1782- 1784	London (British)	Negotiations for legal reform	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Unclear	Negotiations re: possibility of legal reform to ban <i>libelles</i>	Negotiations stalled, reform by act of Parliament not instigated until 1792	No	Yes
1782- 1784	London (British)	Negotiations for legal reform	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Unclear	Negotiations re: possibility of legal reform to ban libel in newspapers	Negotiations stalled, reform by act of Parliament not instigated until 1792	No	Yes
1783-02 (Feb- Mar)	Prussia	Threat of a <i>libelle</i> (title unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Créqui (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1783-02 (Feb- Mar)	Geneva (Swiss)	<i>Mémoires historiques, politiques et littéraires</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Mallet Du Pan (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	French government refuses to bestow permission to circulate through the post	No	No
1783-03 (Mar- Jun)	London (British)	<i>Les Amours et aventures du vizir Vergennes, La Naissance du dauphin dévoilée, Les Petits soupers et nuits de l'hôtel de Bouill- on, Les Passe-tems d'Antoinette, Les Rois de France dégénérés</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Boissière (P), Pelleport (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (threatened and published)	Paris police sent on mission to negotiate with author and publisher, negotiations stalled	No	Yes
1783-04 (Apr- Sept)	United Provinces (Dutch)	<i>La Gazette noire, Mémoires sur la Bastille</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Legal Reform, Personal Libel, Scandal	Linguet (W), Pelleport (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	French government asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant, Publisher admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1783-07	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Deux-Ponts</i>	Journal	Unclear	Castilhon (E), Dubois- Fontanelle (E), Le Tellier (E)	Unclear	French government blocks dissemination of latest issue(s)	Yes	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1783-08	London (British)	Threat of a <i>libelle</i> (title unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Goudar (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	No
1783-08	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Le Cri de l'indignation,</i> <i>La Gazette noire,</i> <i>Mémoires sur la Bastille,</i> <i>Les Petits soupers et nuits</i> <i>de l'hôtel de Bouill-n</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Legal Reform, Personal Libel, Scandal	Boubers (P), Duvernet (W/P), Linguet (W), Pelleport (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (threatened and published)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	Yes
1783-08	Hamburg (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Hambourg</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Foreign Affairs	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	Yes	No
1783-10 (Oct 1783-Jul 1784)	London (British)	<i>Le Diable dans un bénitier</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Pelleport (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government contemplates scorning this complaint but then arrests the author in France	Yes	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1783-10 (Oct- Nov)	London (British)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Linguet (E/W)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government prevents issue from circulating within France	Unclear	No
1783-11	Geneva (Swiss)	Texts by Mercier (titles unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	Unclear	Mercier (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	French government condemns these texts, asks foreign authorities to be more vigilant	No	Yes
1784-01 (Jan-Feb)	Geneva (Swiss) and London (British)	<i>Histoire de la procédure</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Unclear	Unclear	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened and published)	French government contemplates scorning this complaint, asks foreign authorities to take measures against this text	Yes	Yes
1784-05	Lausanne (Swiss)	<i>Le Cri de l'humanité au Roi ou mémoires de Mme la comtesse de Verrière</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Godeville (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1784-10	London (British)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Linguet (E/W)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government considering ways to keep censorship and distribution under control	No	No
1784-12	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	Yes
1784-12 (Dec 1784-Jan 1785)	London (British)	British gazettes, especially <i>The Morning Post</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Bell (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government contemplates scorning this complaint but protests to the British government	Yes	Yes
1784-12 (Dec 1784-Jun 1785)	London (British)	Pro-Austria pamphlets, especially <i>Nouvelles considérations sur l'ouverture de l'Escant</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Foreign Affairs	Linguet (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	French government decides to allow these works to circulate within France, then decides against it. No direct measures taken abroad	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1785-02 (Feb- May)	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Les Soirées d'Antoinette, Le Singe de 40 ans</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Duvernoy (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published and threatened)	Publisher imprisoned and admonished by foreign authorities. French government decides to take no further action	Yes	Yes
1785-03	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France	No	No
1785-03	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Considérations sur l'ordre de Cincinnatus</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Foreign Affairs	Mirabeau (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	Paris police sent on mission to raid print- shops	Unclear	Yes
1785-03	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government decides to scorn this complaint	Yes	No
1785-08	London (British)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Linguet (E/W)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government blocks dissemination of latest issue(s)	Unclear	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1785-09 (Sep- Dec)	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished and fined by foreign authorities	Yes	Yes
1785-09	London (British)	<i>Lettre de l'abbé G. à la comtesse de ***</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Georgel (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government decides to scorn this complaint	No	No
1785-11	London (British)	<i>Libelles</i> (titles unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Fini (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	French government arrests author in France after he fled London, sent to Bicêtre prison	Unclear	No
1785- 1787	London (British)	Threat of publication of accounts of diamond necklace affair	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	La Motte (W) and ghost- writers (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (threatened)	French government considers kidnapping La Motte but decides to scorn instead	Yes	No
1786-06	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by French government	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1786-06	Liège (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Journal général de l'Europe</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Foreign Affairs	Lebrun-Tondu (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Unclear if measures were taken	Yes	No
1786-07 (Jul-Dec)	United Provinces (Dutch)	<i>Lettre du chevalier de *** à un anglois</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Chesneau de La Tour (W)	Complaint re: a book/pamphlet (threatened and published)	Author imprisoned and admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1786-09	Bern (Swiss)	Swiss gazettes, especially the <i>Gazette de Berne</i>	Journal	Military Affairs	Druckerei company (P), Durand (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No
1786-10	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Foreign Affairs, Personal Libel	Detune (E/P), Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No
1786-10	Cleves (Prussian) and United Provinces (Dutch)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i> and Dutch Francophone gazettes	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Unclear whether action was taken	Unclear	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1786-11 (Nov 1786-Apr 1787)	Bern (Swiss)	<i>Essai sur quelques changements qu'on pourrait faire dès à présent dans les loix criminelles de France</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Legal Reform	Manuel (W)	Complaint re: a book/pamp hlet (published)	French government asks foreign authorities to suppress work, French government then decides to scorn this complaint	No	Yes
1786-12	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Pays-Bas</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government asks foreign authorities to admonish editor	Yes	Yes
1787	London (British)	<i>Libelles</i> relating to the diamond necklace affair (titles unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Gordon (W)	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (published)	French government asks foreign authorities to admonish editor	Unclear	Yes
1787-01	Utrecht (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Utrecht</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Economics	Detune (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France	Unclear	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1787-05	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Sur Moses Mendelssohn, sur la réforme politique des Juifs et en particulier sur la révolution tentée en leur faveur en 1753 dans la Grande Bretagne</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Religion	Mirabeau (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government condemns the text, no direct measures taken abroad	No	Unclear
1787-06 (Jun- Aug)	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Pays-Bas</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editor admonished by foreign authorities	No	Yes
1787-07	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Nouvelliste politique d'Allemagne</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Bourrel (E)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France	No	No
1787-08	Leiden, Amsterdam (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Amsterdam, Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	Foreign Affairs	Dubreuil (E/P), Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Editors admonished by French government	No	No

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1787-08	Cologne (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette de Cologne</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Jeurinvillier (E), Madigne (E)	Complaint re: general tone of journal	French government debates approach to this journal, worried that pre- publication censorship breaking down	Yes	Yes
1787-08	London (British)	Threat of <i>libelles</i> attacking Calonne (titles unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel, Scandal	Unclear	Complaint re: books/ pamphlets (threatened)	French government gathers information on these texts, stays alert to their possible publication	No	No
1787-09	Holy Roman Empire	German-language gazettes (titles unknown)	Journal	Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs	Unclear	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Unclear whether action was taken	Yes	No
1787-10	Cleves (Prussian)	<i>Courier du Bas-Rhin</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Manzon (E), veuve Sitzmann (P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Unclear whether action was taken	Yes	Yes
1788-02 (Feb-Jun)	Berlin (Prussian)	<i>Avis aux bataves sur le statboudérat</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Current Affairs/French Politics, Foreign Affairs	Mirabeau (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government tells Prussian authorities that it did not authorise this work	Yes	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1788-04	Palatinate- Zweibrücken (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Gazette des Deux-Ponts</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Castilhon (E), Dubois- Fontanelle (E), Le Tellier (E)	Negotiation re: permission to circulate within France	Editor tries to secure permission to circulate through the post, unclear if this was forthcoming	No	No
1788-07	London (British)	<i>Annales, civiles, politiques et littéraires du dix- huitième</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics, Personal Libel	Linguet (E/W)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government blocks dissemination of latest issue(s)	No	No
1788-07	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France	Unclear	No
1788-09 (Sep- Dec)	London (British)	Threat of a <i>libelle</i> attacking Calonne (title unknown)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics , Personal Libel, Scandal	Unclear	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (threatened)	French government searches for author but takes no further action	Yes	No
1789-01 (Jan- Apr)	Berlin (Prussian)	<i>Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin</i>	Book/ Pamphlet	Foreign Affairs	Mirabeau (W)	Complaint re: a book/ pamphlet (published)	French government asks foreign authorities to confiscate copies	No	Yes

Date	Location	Title	Book/ Pamphlet or Journal	Subject Matter	Editors (E), Writers (W) and Publishers (P)	Initial Response	Outcome	Diplomat source?	Foreign govt. involved?
1789-03 (Mar- May)	Amsterdam (Dutch)	<i>Gazette d'Amsterdam</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics , Economics	Dubreuil (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction and threatens to ban this journal from France	Yes	No
1789-06	Leiden (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de Leyde</i>	Journal	Unclear	Luzac (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	French government issues orders for a retraction	No	No
1789-06	The Hague (Dutch)	<i>Gazette de La Haye</i>	Journal	French Current Affairs/Politics	Gosse (E/P)	Complaint re: specific article(s)	Journal temporarily banned from France	Yes	No
1789-06 (Jun-Jul)	Brussels (Holy Roman Empire)	<i>Mémoires justificatifs de la comtesse de la comtesse de La Motte-Valois</i> (second edition)	Book/ Pamphlet	French Current Affairs/Politics , Personal Libel, Scandal	La Motte (W) and ghost- writers (W)	Complaint re: book/ pamphlet (published)	French government asks foreign authorities to take measures against this text	No	Yes

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