

# Gestionando la voz del pueblo. Cartas, memorias y peticiones en las manos del Comité de Reportes en los primeros años de la Revolución Francesa \*

## Managing the Voice of the People. Letters, *mémoires* and petitions in the hands of the Committee of Reports in the first years of the French Revolution

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**Resumen:** Se ha dicho que a través del derecho de petición aquellos que no gozaban de sus derechos políticos pudieron hacer llegar su voz para que esta se tradujera en palabra política. Pero, durante los primeros años de la Revolución francesa, ¿se gestionaron por igual todas las cartas, las memorias, las *adresses* y las peticiones recibidas fuera cual fuera su remitente? O bien, ¿hubo discriminación por motivos socioeconómicos, de género, religiosos o raciales? La localización de los registros del Comité de Reportes de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente y el análisis de las 6.555 piezas registradas entre 1789 y 1791 nos ha permitido analizar el tratamiento dado a cada una de las piezas.

**Palabras clave:** Revolución Francesa; Asamblea Nacional Constituyente; Comité de Reportes; Gestión de la Correspondencia; Derecho de Petición.

**Abstract:** It has been said that the right of petition enabled those who did not enjoy their political rights to make their voice heard, but during the first years of the French Revolution, were all the letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions received by the National Constituent Assembly attended to equally no matter who their sender? Or was there discrimination for socio-economic, gender, religious or racial reasons? The identification of the records of the Committee of Reports and the analysis of the 6,555

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items that this committee registered have allowed us to analyse the treatment accorded to each of the registered items.

**Keywords:** French Revolution; National Constituent Assembly; Committee of Reports; Correspondence Management; Right of Petition.

**Sumario:** Introduction. 1. The general table. 2. Against the seigneurial regime and liberal policies. 3. Martial law, municipalities and militias. 4. Ministers, courts, and civic oaths. 5. Secular clergy and religious orders. 6. Nobles, bourgeoisie and active citizens. 7. Women: Noblewomen, women religious and single, widowed and married women. 8. Jews, citizens of colour and Blacks. Overview and final conclusions.

## INTRODUCTION

For a good few years now the attention of academics has been powerfully drawn to the dialogue that subjects or citizens have maintained over the centuries with those who represented them in the institutions holding more or less significant amounts of legislative, executive or judicial power<sup>1</sup>. Complaints, pleas, demands and petitions, both individual and collective, in pursuit of personal or common benefit, submitted by natural or legal persons to the public authorities for their consideration<sup>2</sup>, have been the subject of innumerable scientific works which have investigated them under very different perspectives and objectives.

The right to petition was recognised in France shortly after the outbreak of the Revolution. At almost the same time that subjects mutated into citizens in the summer of 1789, and then mutated into active, passive or non-citizens<sup>3</sup> in the autumn of the same year depending on their age, gender<sup>4</sup>, wealth and

<sup>1</sup> On the dialogue between individuals and the State, see: ILLARE, Martine and SALMON, Roseline, “Les pétitions aux assemblées de la Révolution à 1958: constitution des sources et méthodologie d’approche”, *La Revue administrative*, (2008), p. 9. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43572668> (consulted 30 July 2020). See, too, BOWIE, Karin and MUNCK, Thomas (eds.), “Early Modern Political Petitioning and Public Engagement in Scotland, Britain and Scandinavia, c.1550-1795”, *Parliaments. Estates & Representation*, 38 (2018).

<sup>2</sup> RIGAULT, Anthony, “Les pétitions sous la Ve République: évolution des sources” and MORET, Frédéric and GRANDEMANGE, Philippe, “Les français face à l’État, les pétitions adressées aux Assemblées de 1815 à 1940: Objectifs et méthodologie d’un nouveau projet de recherche”, *La Revue administrative* (2008), pp. 33 and 40. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40142038> (consulted 30 July 2020).

<sup>3</sup> *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*, 6 (1791) p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> VERJUS, Anne, “La citoyenneté politique au prisme du genre. Droits et représentation des individus entre famille et classe de sexe (XVIIIème -XIXème siècles)” (Science Politique – ENS Paris, 2014 tel-00998659), pp. 211-212.

degree of dependence on their employer. Thus, although initially far from well defined, the right of petition can be traced in the internal regulations of the Assembly of 29 July 1789, in article 9 of a draft of martial law put forward on 15 October 1789, in article 5 of the martial law of 21 October<sup>5</sup>, in article 62 of the decree of 14 December 1789 on the organisation of municipalities and in article 34 of the decree of 22 December 1789 on primary assemblies<sup>6</sup>, and also in the decree of 10 May 1791<sup>7</sup> and in title I of the Constitution of 1791. With the beginning of the revolutionary process and the recognition of the right of petition, the National Constituent Assembly was inundated with letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions from all over France and even beyond. The overseas colonies made their voices heard, as did the subjects and citizens of other nations. People were eager that their voice be listened to and taken into consideration by their mandataries, and translated, as Sophie Wahnich has so ably shown, into just laws<sup>8</sup>.

Now, did all these letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions receive the attention that their senders hoped for? Were they read to the deputies who had sworn to draft a Constitution and remain in session until they had done so? Although the regulations established that petitions, demands, letters, *requêtes* and *adresses* should ordinarily be presented to the Assembly<sup>9</sup>, not all of them were. M. André Aubusson, secretary of the Correspondence office who received orders from the president of the Assembly, selected from all the items received those that were to be read in their entirety to the deputies, those that should be summarised before being read and those that should be forwarded directly to one or another of the Assembly's committees. The secretary also decided which items were most important and in most urgent need of being communicated immediately to the president or to the committees<sup>10</sup>. The records of the Referrals office (*Bureau des renvois*) conserved in the National Archives indicate that from August 1789 to 31 August 1791 the secretaries of this office, who also received orders from the

<sup>5</sup> *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, henceforth *AP*, Paris, Paul Dupont, 1877, vol. IX, pp. 475-476.

<sup>6</sup> DURELLE-MARC, Yann-Arzel, "Nature et origines du droit de pétition", *La Revue administrative*, (2008), pp. 55-57, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43572671> (consulted 30 July 2020) and SAMUEL, Paul, *Du droit de pétition sous la Révolution*, Paris, V. Girard et E. Brière, 1909, pp. 5-71.

<sup>7</sup> *AP*, vol. XXV, p. 693.

<sup>8</sup> WAHNICH, Sophie, *La Longue patience du peuple. 1792. Naissance de la République*, Paris, Payot, 2008, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> CASTALDO, André, *Les méthodes de travail de la Constituante*, Paris, PUF, 1989, p. 379.

<sup>10</sup> *AP*, vol. XXX, p. 24.

president of the Assembly and worked alongside the Correspondence office, registered 40,282 items, mostly to be distributed among the 33 committees established by the National Constituent Assembly. By way of example, 9,446 items were sent to the Constitution Committee, 7,796 to the Committee of Reports, 6,310 to the Ecclesiastical Committee and 5,938 to the Finance Committee. These four committees received the contents of 73.20 per cent of the registered correspondence distributed among the different committees<sup>11</sup>.

There is no doubt that M. André Aubusson acted as the first filter on the correspondence received by the Assembly (he was secretary of the Correspondence office until September 1793, when he was appointed principal secretary of the Committee of Public Safety)<sup>12</sup>, but he was not the only such filter under the first Assembly. In addition to the filtering that might be carried out by each of the committees, the Committee of Reports of the National Constituent Assembly was the other significant filter on the correspondence received or, rather, on the voices of those who sent letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions to the Assembly and expected a response.

Faced with a spate of breaches of public order at the beginning of the French revolutionary process and concerned that deputies should not be turned into policemen, Deputy Constantin-François-Chassebœuf de Volney proposed on 27 and 28 July 1789 the setting up of a committee to deal with all matters pertaining to policing and administration<sup>13</sup>. Some deputies considered that the Assembly was not competent to manage these matters, and one suggested removing the words ‘administration’ and ‘police’ from the motion and setting up a committee to take charge of all matters not related to the Constitution. In this deputy’s opinion, the provinces were in revolt, the

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<sup>11</sup> For the distribution of all the correspondence received, see: CASTELLÀ, Betlem, “Revolució, Poder i Informació. El control de la informació a les Assemblees parlamentàries durant la Revolució francesa (1789-1795)” (Univ. Autònoma de Barcelona and Univ. Paris I – Panthéon Sorbonne, Ph.D. thesis, 2008), vol. III, pp. 763-963. URL: <http://www.tdx.cat/handle/10803/4816>. (consulted 29 April 2022).

<sup>12</sup> CASTELLÀ, Betlem, “Monsieur André Aubusson, l’homme qui sait tout, ou gérer la correspondance sous les Assemblées parlementaires”, *La Révolution française. Cahiers de l’Institut d’histoire de la Révolution française*, 8 (2015). URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/lrf/1312> (consulted 29 April 2022); and “Monsieur André Aubusson, le secrétaire de grand mérite du Comité de salut public ou gérer la correspondance sous la première année de la République”, *La Révolution française. Cahiers de l’Institut d’histoire de la Révolution française*, 9 (2015). URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/lrf/1447> (consulted 29 April 2022).

<sup>13</sup> *AP*, vol. VIII, pp. 279 and 292.

people were refusing to pay taxes, and France was in the grip of anarchy<sup>14</sup>. Volney took note of the suggestion and proposed to establish a committee which would examine all the letters, complaints and *adresses* received by the Assembly and report on those it found to be of importance. This motion passed and the Committee of Reports was created<sup>15</sup>. Then, on 1 August 1789, the Assembly invited the towns and cities, municipalities and other bodies to make their wishes and their difficulties known by way of the Committee of Reports, which would in turn make these known to the Assembly<sup>16</sup>. On 15 October 1789 the Assembly established that the *adresses*, demands and complaints that the bodies, communities, meetings of citizens and individuals of Paris wished to present to the Assembly should be directed to the Committee of Reports, which would give account of these to the Assembly<sup>17</sup>. In this way the Committee of Reports came to be the conduit for the voices of the *commettants*. If they rose up in revolt, it received the communication of the fact; if they wrote a letter, a *mémoire*, an address or a petition, it was highly likely that this would end up in the hands of the Committee of Reports. It is therefore hardly surprising that on 1 August 1789 it was proposed to dedicate the morning sessions exclusively to discussion of the Constitution, and perhaps to specific matters that the president of the Assembly or the Committee of Reports judged to require attention<sup>18</sup>.

It has been said that the right of petition enabled citizens to participate in the government of the city and to appeal to the public authorities<sup>19</sup>. It has also been said that by means of their petitions, citizens could connect with parliamentary politics<sup>20</sup>, contribute to the formation of a general will and exercise a measure of legislative initiative<sup>21</sup>. It has also been said that the right

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<sup>14</sup> *Idem*, p. 292.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> *AP*, vol. VIII, p. 316.

<sup>17</sup> *AP*, vol. IX, p. 453.

<sup>18</sup> *AP*, vol. VIII, p. 315.

<sup>19</sup> DURELLE-MARC, *art. cit.*, p. 48 and ILLAIRE and SALMON, *art. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> HUZZEY, Richard and MILLER, Henry, "Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture: Petitioning the House of Commons, 1780-1918", *Past and Present*, 248 (2020), p. 142, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtz061> (consulted 26 August 2020), and PALACIOS CEREZALES, Diego, "France Speaks! Petitioning for Louis-Napoléon in 1851", *French Historical Studies*, 43 (2020), p. 425, URL: <https://eprints.ucm.es/id/eprint/61796/> (consulted 8 October 2020).

<sup>21</sup> Opinion of Le Chapelier of 11 May 1789. CONTAMIN, Jean Gabriel, "La réception parlementaire d'une pratique politique « périphérique ». Le droit de pétition entre réfraction et réflexion" in CURAPP (ed.), *La politique d'ailleurs* Paris, PUF, 1998, p. 39.

of petition allowed the voice of those who did not enjoy political rights (women and men excluded by census suffrage) to be heard<sup>22</sup> and translated into political voice<sup>23</sup>. But what attention did that voice, and many others, receive when it reached the Assembly to express concern or anger, an opinion or the outcome of deliberation on the part of those who, as the people, held themselves to be sovereigns and supreme legislators? Did they get through the filters of M. Aubusson and the president of the Assembly? Did they convince the deputies of the Committee of Reports to submit a report to the Assembly? How did the Committee of Reports handle all the correspondence it received in the early years of the French revolutionary process? How did this committee manage the voice of the *commettants*?

Although the Referrals office passed on 7,796 items to the Committee of Reports, 6,832 to it alone and 964 to be shared with other committees, between July 1789 and September 1791 the Committee of Reports only registered 6,555 items with their respective annexes<sup>24</sup>. 2,891 *mémoires* (44.10%), 2,433 letters (37.11%), 465 *adresses* (7.09%) and 174 *requêtes*, pleas and petitions (2.65%), among other items. Of all these registered items, the Committee communicated only 191 items to the deputies, 2.91 per cent of the total received, while 2,215 items were not dealt with, not deliberated on, and no decision was made about their content – 33.79 per cent of the total received. In short, the Committee of Reports failed to communicate to the deputies who business it was to translate the voice of the people into law more than 97 per cent of all the information that passed through its offices, and left almost 34 per cent of all registered correspondence unattended. To whom, then, did the majority of the items that were communicated to the Assembly correspond, and to whom the items that remained unanswered?

Without a doubt, there is a need to determine – and this is the objective of the present research – whether the Committee of Reports dealt with all the correspondence it received in the same way; whether it treated all the letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* or requests equally, regardless of the source or if the committee's management of the correspondence seems to indicate preferential treatment of certain institutions or social groups. There is a need to find out if there was discrimination on the basis of socio-economic status,

<sup>22</sup> BOCK, Fabienne, “Conclusion de la journée d'études: rencontre autour d'une source”, *La Revue administrative* (2008), p. 107. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43572677> (consulted 30 July 2020).

<sup>23</sup> On the translation of the voice of the people into political voice, see: WAHNICH, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

<sup>24</sup> Archives Nationales (AN), AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

gender, religion or race, and above all, if some voices were privileged at the expense of others.

## 1. THE GENERAL TABLE

To respond to the objectives posited in this research, the senders of the 6,555 letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions registered by the Committee of Reports have been classified into sixty categories. For each category a calculation was made of how many items had been dealt with, how many had not been attended to and how many had been communicated to the Assembly. A tally was also made for each category of how many items had been sent to the central executive power for consideration, and how many had been sent to other committees and officials of the Assembly for their attention. Finally, the items received in each category were divided into those that had been written collectively or in the name of a collective, and those written individually. The number of collective and individual items left unattended to was also tallied for each category. The result of this research can be seen in the accompanying general table. The categories have been ordered from one to sixty in relation to the percentage of its attention they were given by the Committee of Reports. At the top are the categories that received most attention and had a lower percentage of items not dealt with, and at the bottom those categories that received less attention and had a higher percentage of items not dealt with. At the same time, and scrupulously respecting an ascending order in the percentages of items not dealt with, from less to more, the sixty categories have been separated into five different groups, each of which comprises ten different consecutive percentages except for the last group, which has eleven. Thus, group one contains the categories with the ten lowest percentages of items not dealt with while group five contains the categories with the eleven highest percentages of items not dealt with.

## 2. AGAINST THE SEIGNEURIAL REGIME AND LIBERAL POLICIES

In the view of contemporary observers, in the summer of 1789 a war between rich and poor was raging<sup>25</sup>. For years, the peasants had suffered from the increasing harshness of the seigneurial regime, an increase in their rents and liberal policies that pursued full individual ownership and free

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<sup>25</sup> *AP*, vol. VIII, p. 337, p. 372.

exploitation<sup>26</sup>. The *corvées* (unpaid compulsory labour) and *banalités* had been increased by titles that the *seigneurs* granted themselves<sup>27</sup>. The existence of a market in seigneurial dues and *banalités* aggravated the conditions of the weakest<sup>28</sup>, and common lands were the subject of fierce disputes. The *seigneurs* appropriated them, either by legal means or by usurpation, while the richer cultivators and speculators were eager to rent them in order to exploit them commercially<sup>29</sup>. With no representation in the institutions, the country people agitated for the abolition of seigniorial dues, for the maintenance of the rights of use and for the return — and in some cases, the distribution — of common lands<sup>30</sup>. Peasants with land defended their small and medium-sized holdings and were opposed to the forming of large holdings<sup>31</sup>. In their struggle against the seigneurial regime and liberal policies, some of the rural population refused to pay dues and feu-duties, occupied common land that had been lost and sabotaged the *seigneurs*' property; they also attacked castles and, to a lesser extent, bourgeois houses and convents. Tensions escalated between the peasants and the *seigneurs* and their agents, who collected the dues and feu-duties and enjoyed a certain political prominence within the community<sup>32</sup>. There were also tensions between tenant farmers (*fermiers*) and landowners; and between the poorest peasants and the moderately well-off and / or extremely rich farm-owners.

<sup>26</sup> MARTIN, Jean-Clément, *Nouvelle histoire de la Révolution française*, Paris, Perrin, 2012, pp. 68-69 and JESSENNE, Jean-Pierre and VIVIER, Nadine, “Libérer la terre! Une Europe des réformes agraires (vers 1750-1850) ?”, *Revue d'histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 63, (2016), p. 31. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44987092> (consulted 7 August 2020).

<sup>27</sup> JESSENNE and VIVIER, *art. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> COBBAN, Alfred, *Le sens de la Révolution française*, Paris, Julliard, 1984, pp. 60-70.

<sup>29</sup> HUNT, David, “Les paysans et la politique dans la Révolution française”, in Thompson, Edward P. et al. (eds.), *La guerre du blé au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Les éditions de la Passion, 1988, p. 225.

<sup>30</sup> HUNT, David, *art. cit.*, p. 225 and GAUTHIER, Florence and IKNI, Guy-Robert, “Le mouvement paysans en Picardie : meneurs, pratiques, maturation et signification historique d'un programme (1775-1794)”, *La guerre du blé*, p. 197.

<sup>31</sup> GAUTHIER, Florence, *Triomphe et mort du droit naturel en Révolution 1789-1795-1802*, Paris, PUF, 1992, p. 66 and LEMARCHAND, Guy, “Troubles populaires au XVIIIème siècle et conscience de classe: une préface à la Révolution française”, *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, *AHRF*, 279, (1990), pp. 37 and 48. URL: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahrf\\_0003-4436\\_1990\\_num\\_279\\_1\\_1292](https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahrf_0003-4436_1990_num_279_1_1292) (consulted 7 August 2020)

<sup>32</sup> BOUTON, Cynthia A., “L'«économie morale» et la guerre des farines de 1775”, *La guerre du blé*, p. 109.



However, the tensions between rich and poor were not only due to a reinforcement of the seigneurial regime and the liberal policies designed to achieve full individual property and free exploitation. They were also exacerbated by the decided political will of the government not to regulate the price of cereals, even in times of famine, and to favour free trade in grain. A further grievance was the signing in 1786 of a free trade agreement with Britain for the exchange of French agricultural produce for British manufactured goods, to the detriment of the local industry<sup>33</sup>; yet another was the social and economic preponderance of the large producers and merchants and their ability to decide prices and wages<sup>34</sup>. The Physiocrats had long defended the interests of the producers, while the economists, disciples of Turgot, advocated commercial freedom and unlimited competition<sup>35</sup>. Landowners who sought to increase their holdings and who engaged in trade wanted to maximise the yield of the land, and as such were strongly opposed to any limitation of either their profits or their speculative ventures<sup>36</sup>. At the same time, however, the ordinary rural and urban poor people were calling for the opposite. They wanted fair prices to be set for staple products and a fair distribution of the grain, well stocked markets and transparent business transactions, and an end to monopolies, hoarding and the export of grain<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> BÉAUR, Gérard, “L’histoire économique de la Révolution n’est pas terminée”, in Lapiéd, Martine and Peyrard, Christine (eds.), *La Révolution française au carrefour des recherches*, Aix-en-Provence, Publications de l’Université de Provence, 2003, p. 32, MARTIN, *op. cit.*, p. 69, and VOSGIEN, Sébastien, “Le Bureau du Commerce et la Révolution (1788-1791)”, *Revue historique du droit français et étranger*, 4 (2012), p. 552. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43859236> (consulted 7 August 2020)

<sup>34</sup> MILLER, Judith A., “Commerce des céréales et problèmes des subsistances à la fin du XVIIIe siècle”, *La Révolution française au carrefour des recherches*, p. 56 and GAUTHIER, Florence, “De Mably à Robespierre. De la critique de l’économie à la critique du politique 1775-1793”, *La guerre du blé*, p. 119.

<sup>35</sup> MILLER, *op. cit.*, p. 55 and MATHIEZ, Albert, “Les subsistances pendant la Révolution : I- De la réglementation à la liberté”, *Annales Révolutionnaires*, 9 (2) (1917), pp. 173-174. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41921893> (consulted 7 August 2020)

<sup>36</sup> MATHIEZ, *art. cit.*, p. 174 and WEIR, David R. and SENÉ, Jean F., “Les crises économiques et les origines de la Révolution française”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 46 (4) (1991), p. 943. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27583941> (consulted 7 August 2020)

<sup>37</sup> MILLER, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-58 ; THOMPSON, Edward P., “L’économie morale de la foule dans l’Angleterre du XVIIIe siècle”, *La guerre du blé*, pp. 38-39 and MARGAIRAZ, Dominique and MINARD, Philippe, “Marché des subsistances et économie morale : ce que « taxer » veut dire”, *AHRF*, 352, (2008), p. 55. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41889774> (consulted 7 August 2020)

They claimed the right to exist and condemned the profiteering of the few at the expense of the misery of the many<sup>38</sup>. The high prices of basic necessities contrasted starkly with low wages, and tensions erupted in appropriations, price controls and riots. The merchants, traders, millers and bakers who traded in subsistence products were the subject of close, scrutiny by the ordinary poor people, as were the medium-sized landowners and tenant farmers, albeit to a lesser degree<sup>39</sup>, and all were frequently criticised for their selfishness and lack of morality<sup>40</sup>. Even Gabriel Bonnot de Mably denounced as enemies of society the owners and merchants in favour of unlimited freedom<sup>41</sup>; an unlimited freedom that at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth was dependent on the discreet intervention of local and regional authorities who, at the cost of importing, subsidising and selling at a lower price what they had bought at a higher, kept the lid on popular outrage<sup>42</sup>.

How, then, did the Committee of Reports deal with the letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions that gave an account of these tensions? What position did it adopt towards the disorder that was raging across France? The Committee of Reports took the side of the *seigneurs*, property owners and merchants, defending their interests and denouncing the attacks they suffered whether to their persons or to their property and merchandise. Moreover, only six days after it was established, on 3 August 1789, the Committee of Reports initiated the debate on the payment of seigneurial rents that would conclude the next morning with a ‘partial’ abolition of the Ancien Régime<sup>43</sup>. Servitude, mortmain and seigneurial jurisdictions would be abolished, but seigneurial dues were to be redeemed<sup>44</sup>. On that day the Committee of Reports had asked that all the rents, tithes, taxes, feu-duties and seigneurial dues that were rejected by the inhabitants of the parishes be paid until the Assembly had reached a decision. Two days later, on 5 August 1789, the Committee of

<sup>38</sup> WAHNICH, *op. cit.*, p. 440, and MARGAIRAZ and MINARD, *art. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>39</sup> RUDÉ, George E., “La taxation populaire de mai 1775 à Paris et dans la région parisienne”, *AHRF*, 143, (1956), p. 179, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41925691> (consulted 7 August 2020) and BOUTON, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>40</sup> MARGAIRAZ and MINARD, *art. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>41</sup> GAUTHIER, “De Mably à Robespierre”, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>42</sup> MILLER, *op. cit.*, p. 58 ; MATHIEZ, *art. cit.*, p. 185 ; GAUTHIER, “De Mably à Robespierre”, *op. cit.*, p. 123 and BÉAUR, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> BART, Jean, “L’abolition de la féodalité et des privilèges, ou les illusions de la nuit du 4 août 1789”, in Michel Biard (ed.), *La Révolution française. Une histoire toujours vivante*, Paris, Tallandier, 2010, pp. 239-250.

<sup>44</sup> *Collection générale des décrets rendus par l’Assemblée nationale avec la mention des sanctions & acceptations données par le Roi*, CGDRAN, I (Paris), pp. 51-52 and 61-63.

Reports condemned the riots that threatened the free circulation of grain and proposed that the bourgeois militias and the courts act to quell them<sup>45</sup>. Although its recommendation was not adopted it had important consequences. Firstly, it prompted a discussion in the Assembly as to how public force should be employed, and secondly, it led to the adoption of a proclamation inviting the municipalities and bourgeois militias to oppose the riots to restore the safety of all citizens, freedom of commerce and general good order. Five days after his intervention, on 10 August 1789, the Assembly adopted its first decree on the maintenance of public order and peace<sup>46</sup>. Or, to put another way, its first martial law.

On the other hand, and in relation to the letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions that ended up in the hands of the Committee of Reports, it must be said that the committee gave privileged treatment to letters from *seigneurs*, property owners, merchants, bakers, millers, innkeepers and wine merchants. In the rank ordering established in the general table accompanying this work, these groups are in the first positions. Only 11.53 per cent of letters written by *seigneurs*, 19.04 per cent of letters written by bakers and millers, 21.21 per cent of letters written by innkeepers and wine merchants, 21.42 per cent of letters written by property owners and 22.78 per cent of letters written by the merchants and traders were not attended to. In contrast to these privileged socio-economic groups, tenant farmers (*fermiers*), ploughmen (*laboureurs*), and guild masters and artisans who occupied an intermediate position received less attention. The Committee of Reports omitted to deal with 34.78 per cent of the letters written by tenant farmers, 36.84 per cent of the letters written by ploughmen and cultivators, nor 37.50 per cent of the letters written by guild masters and artisans, the letters from these socio-economic groups being above the average of letters not dealt with by the Committee of Reports, which was 33.79 per cent. However, the correspondence of these intermediate groups was far better attended to than that which came from workers and masons, day labourers and manual workers, butchers and shopkeepers, printers and booksellers, or sailors and master fishermen. Some 50 per cent and more of the letters written by these groups were not dealt with. If *seigneurs*, property owners and merchants occupied the first group in the ranking, workers, the day labourers and shopkeepers, the ordinary poor people, were located at the end of the ranking, in the fifth group. The Committee of Reports omitted to deal with 50 per cent of the letters written

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<sup>45</sup> *AP*, vol. VIII, p. 351.

<sup>46</sup> *Idem*, pp. 378-379.

by the sailors, 53.84 per cent of the letters written by workers, 56.25 per cent of the letters written by shopkeepers (butchers and sellers of spices, fruit and other foodstuffs...), 66.66 per cent of letters written by printers and booksellers, 71.42 per cent of letters written by day labourers and 75 per cent of letters written by master fishermen. In other words, the percentage of letters not dealt with by the Committee of Reports sent by tenant farmers, ploughmen and artisans was on the whole almost twice that of those sent by *seigneurs*, property owners and merchants, while the percentage of letters not dealt with sent by the lower orders almost tripled that of those sent by *seigneurs*, property owners and merchants. In the first years of the French revolutionary process, 88.47 per cent of the letters from *seigneurs* received by the Committee of Reports were dealt with, compared to 28.58 per cent of those written by day labourers. While they all used their right of petition to make their voices heard, not all were given the attention they sought.

### 3. MARTIAL LAW, MUNICIPALITIES AND MILITIAS

In August 1789, the National Constituent Assembly set out its political, economic and social programme. It partially abolished the Ancien Régime; undertook to repress any violence against property and persons; declared the rights of man and of the citizen; guaranteed free trade in cereals and prohibited the export abroad of grain and flour. In order to implement its programme, the Assembly involved the municipalities, the national militias, the *maréchaussées* and the troops. Thus, on 10 August 1789 it was decided that any seditious uprising should be immediately put down by the national militias, the *maréchaussées* and the troops on the simple requisition of the municipalities affected<sup>47</sup>. On 29 August the freedom of the grain trade within the realm was established and its export was prohibited. At the same time, judges and administrators were prohibited from adopting any measure that could infringe the freedom of commerce on pain of prosecution for lèse-nation<sup>48</sup>. On 5 October it was decreed that any municipality would be declared in breach of public order if it was not active in executing and enforcing the decrees of 29 August and 18 September that ensured free trade and prohibited the exportation of grain and flour<sup>49</sup>, and on 21 October 1789 martial law was adopted, a decree which historiographically has overshadowed the decree of

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<sup>47</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>48</sup> Idem, p. 511.

<sup>49</sup> *AP*, vol. IX, pp. 347-348.

10 August 1789<sup>50</sup>. In the event of a threat to the public peace, municipal officials were to declare that military force would be deployed immediately to restore public order<sup>51</sup>. Indefinite freedom of commerce on the one hand, bayonets on the other, as Maximilien Robespierre was to lament years later<sup>52</sup>. The Assembly's programme was clear; its application, less so.

The municipalities were not always willing to suppress riotous disturbances. They had long taken steps to mitigate the effects of liberal policies on the grain trade and could understand and even share the grievances of the common people<sup>53</sup>. On the other hand, there were tensions in some places between the old municipalities and those that had been recently established, and between the bourgeois militias that had been formed in the first instance and the national guards that were organised later. There were conflicts between these armed forces and the municipalities, and between the latter and the districts and departments once these were established<sup>54</sup>. The municipalities and the bourgeois militias and / or national guards did not always know how they should act<sup>55</sup>, they did not always have the means to take action and they were not always willing to do so against a riotous populace. Moreover, there were occasions on which municipal authorities,

<sup>50</sup> HAYAKAWA, Riho “La loi martiale : Son application et sa qualité”, *Trienio. Ilustración y liberalismo*, 67, (2016), pp. 69-79 and “L’assassinat du boulanger Denis François le 21 octobre 1789”, *AHRF*, 333, (2003), pp. 1-19, URL : [https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahrf\\_0003-4436\\_2003\\_num\\_333\\_1\\_2672](https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahrf_0003-4436_2003_num_333_1_2672) (consulted 23 October 2022), PERTUÉ, Michel, “Loi martiale, état de siège et législation révolutionnaire” in Gainot, Bernard and Denis, Vincent (eds.), *Un siècle d’ordre public en Révolution (de 1789 à la Troisième République)*, Paris, Société des études Robespierristes, 2009, pp. 71-113, NEUSY, Aurélie, “Opinions et réflexions sur la loi martiale dans la presse et les pamphlets (1789-1792)”, *AHRF*, 360, (2010), pp. 27-48, URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/ahrf/11639> (consulted 23 October 2022) and CARROT, Georges, *Révolution et maintien de l’ordre 1789-1799*, Paris, Kronos, 1995, pp. 111-114.

<sup>51</sup> *AP*, vol. IX, pp. 475-476.

<sup>52</sup> ROBESPIERRE, Maximilien, *Œuvres de Maximilien Robespierre*, Paris, Phénix Éditions, 2000, vol. IX, p. 111.

<sup>53</sup> MARGAIRAZ and MINARD, *art. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>54</sup> CASTELLÀ, Betlem, “Under the Eyes of the Committee of Reports: Local and popular involvement in the maintenance of public order under the National Constituent Assembly (France, 1789-1791)”, *Rechtskultur*, 8 (2019), pp. 50-54, and ANDRO, Gäid, “Le procureur général syndic en son chef-lieu : arbitre des conflits de légitimité, acteur des conflits de faction” in Biard, Michel (ed.), *Querelles dans le clocher. Tensions et conflits entre les autorités dans les chefs-lieux de département (1790-1795)*, Mont-Saint-Aignan, Presses Universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2014, pp. 31-47.

<sup>55</sup> BIARD, Michel, *Les lilliputiens de la centralisation. Des intendants aux préfets. Les hésitations d’un « modèle français »*, Seysell, Champ Vallon, 2007, p. 174.

whether voluntarily or instigated and / or compelled by their fellow citizens, headed riots and revolts<sup>56</sup>.

The Committee of Reports was soon aware of the outbreaks of disorder that were unleashed throughout the French territory and of the tensions being experienced by those responsible for maintaining the peace and public order. 31.56 per cent of the correspondence registered by the Committee came from the municipalities (1,680 items), from the bourgeois militias and / or national guards (217 items), from the *maréchaussées* and the police (25 items), from the military (135 items) and from naval captains and officers (12 items). It also received letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions from towns and cities (265 items), and from inhabitants and parishioners (268 items). In fact it can be said that the Committee of Reports maintained a very close relationship with the local fabric until the summer of 1790. In June 1790 that intense connection with the local situation began to weaken, at the very moment that the relationship between the Committee of Reports and the departmental authorities began to strengthen. On one hand there was a sharp decrease in correspondence from the local level and on the other the Committee of Reports prioritised contact with the departmental authorities with a view to managing the correspondence it was receiving<sup>57</sup>. Thus, written communications from mayors and municipal officials fell by 79.04 per cent between June and September 1790, correspondence from towns and cities fell by 83.33 per cent, and correspondence from parishioners and inhabitants fell by 87.5 per cent. However, in the same period written correspondence from districts and departments increased by 500 per cent (see graph No. 1). By the summer of 1790 the elections for the district and department assemblies had taken place<sup>58</sup>, and the National Constituent Assembly had a very well-defined hierarchy of communication, subordination and obedience between the local level, the districts and the departments<sup>59</sup>.

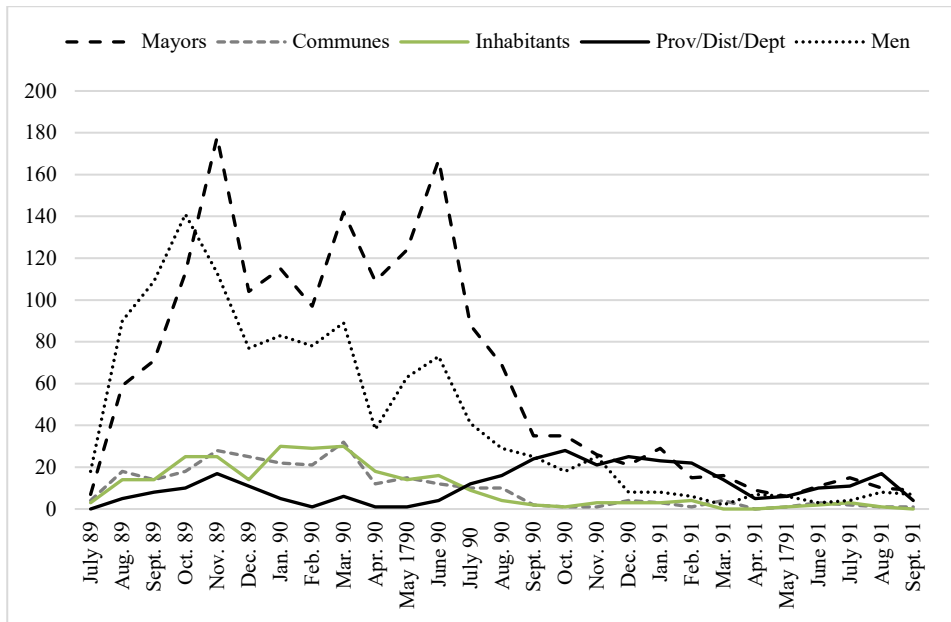
<sup>56</sup> CASTELLÀ, “Under the Eyes”, *op. cit.*, 53.

<sup>57</sup> *Idem*, p. 66.

<sup>58</sup> GLÉNARD, Guillaume, *L'exécutif et la Constitution de 1791*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2010, pp. 388-389.

<sup>59</sup> “Décret portant constitution des Municipalités”, *CGDRAN*, vol I, pp. 207-208 ; “Décret sur la vente des domaines nationaux”, *CGDRAN*, vol. IV, p. 40 and “Teneur de l’Instruction de l’Assemblée nationale sur les fonctions des assemblées administratives”, *CGDRAN*, vol. V, pp. 80-84. GLÉNARD, Guillaume, “Les rapports entre les pouvoirs administratifs locaux selon la Constituante de 1789”, *Querelles dans le clocher*, pp. 13-15 and 21, and PERTUÉ, Michel, “La réforme administrative de la Constituante : portée et limites”, in Le Bozec, Christine and Wauters, Eric (eds.) *Pour la Révolution française*, Rouen, Publications de l’Université de Rouen, 1998, pp. 301-306.

Graph 1. Correspondence registered by the Committee of Reports



Source: AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

It must be said that the municipalities were always in the eye of the hurricane. The deputies seated to the right of the president, in favour of reinforcing the executive power in the hands of the king, were not disposed to see the requisitioning of the national militias, the *maréchaussées* and the troops delegated especially to the municipalities, whom they distrusted and denounced for being reluctant to deploy armed force when necessary<sup>60</sup>. The Committee of Reports tried to protect the municipalities from the attacks of the right and the king and, under the presidency of deputy Henri Grégoire, contributed to the drawing up of two new draft decrees for the maintenance of the peace and public order. The Committee of Reports wished to leave the requisitioning of national guards, *maréchaussées* and troops in the hands of the municipalities (9 and 18 February 1790)<sup>61</sup>. However, in September 1790, in view of the fact that the conflicts and tensions had not abated and some municipalities had come into conflict with their respective districts and

<sup>60</sup> AP, vol. XI, p. 537.

<sup>61</sup> Idem, pp. 536 and 641-642.

departments, the Committee of Reports began to propose that the Assembly should send out commissioners, appointed by the executive, to some areas to put an end to the more significant altercations<sup>62</sup>. The Committee of Reports did not always get the municipalities to follow its instructions and comply with the dictates of districts and departments, which were much more in favour of proclaiming martial law to suppress the disturbances that were taking place<sup>63</sup>.

Bearing all of this in mind, how did the Committee of Reports treat the letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions it received from the municipalities, the national guards, the *maréchaussées*, the troops, the local fabric and the intermediate authorities (provinces initially, then cantons, districts and departments)? The table at the end of this work shows that the Committee of Reports gave slightly more attention to the letters written by the intermediate authorities (28.66% of letters not dealt with, henceforth LNDW) than to the letters written by mayors and municipal officials (32.50% LNDW), and also paid a little more attention to the letters from the forces of order – bourgeois militias and / or national guards (30.41% LNDW), military (31.11% LNDW) and police (32% LNDW) – than to those from the municipalities. If we analyse the results obtained, we can see that the letters of the intermediate authorities and of the bourgeois militias and / or national guards are in group two together with the letters written by the general administration and the ministers, while the letters written by the municipalities, the military and the police are in group three together with the letters written by the communes and the inhabitants.

Although it is true that the percentages bin these categories are very similar in terms of the attention they received from the Committee of Reports, it should be noted that much more of the correspondence from the departments and the national guards was communicated to the deputies than was the correspondence from the municipalities. In view of the fact that the Committee of Reports only communicated 2.91 per cent of the correspondence delivered to its offices, it is interesting to note that it communicated 7.16 per cent of the correspondence from the provincial and / or departmental administration and 5.52 per cent of correspondence from the bourgeois militias and / or national guards. On the other hand, although the most abundant body of correspondence in the office of the Committee of Reports was that from the municipalities, only 3.63 per cent of this was

<sup>62</sup> CASTELLÀ, “Under the Eyes”, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-70.

<sup>63</sup> *Idem*, 67.



reported, which indicates once again that this committee was a little more inclined to favour the intermediate authorities and the militias and the national guards than the local administration.

Within the framework of the Committee of Reports, the voice of the local fabric was not one of those accorded most attention, perhaps because the National Constituent Assembly was not greatly interested in listening to it. On January 7, 1791, the Assembly decided that only the deputations of the administrative bodies of the departments and those of the municipality of Paris would be admitted *à la barre*<sup>64</sup>. On 10 May 1791 the deputies adopted a draft decree recognising the right of petition as pertaining to individual persons such that it could not be exercised collectively by the an electoral, judicial or administrative body nor by the municipalities, sections of communes or citizens' societies<sup>65</sup>. 82.85 per cent of the correspondence registered in the Committee of Reports from the municipalities was written collectively or on behalf of a collective (see general table). At the same time this decree also established that assemblies of the communes could only be held and only be authorised to deliberate on strictly municipal issues. Any deliberation that was not strictly municipal would be considered null and unconstitutional. A month later, further restrictions were imposed on the municipal authorities. On 14 June 1791 they were forbidden to receive any *adresse* or petition that was made in the name of an estate or profession, a prohibition designed to ensure that citizens did not gather together or petition to collectively defend their occupational or professional interests<sup>66</sup>. In light of all this, was the special relationship that had been forged at the start of the revolutionary process between the Assembly and the municipalities, when they had mutually legitimised each other<sup>67</sup>, now breaking down? It is difficult to affirm this categorically, but for the moment the handling of disorders by the Committee of Reports and its treatment of the correspondence it received indicates that, from the summer of 1790 on the municipalities submitted less correspondence to the Assembly, the Committee of Reports communicated less with the municipalities and that the voice of the intermediate authorities was favoured over the voice of municipalities that were not always in agreement either with martial law or with the Assembly's liberal programme.

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<sup>64</sup> "Décret relatif aux députations & pétitions qui seront faites à l'Assemblée nationale", *CGDRAN*, vol. X, pp. 28-29.

<sup>65</sup> *AP*, vol. XXV, pp. 693-694.

<sup>66</sup> "Décret relatif aux Assemblées de citoyens d'un même état ou profession", *CGDRAN*, vol. XV, p. 167.

<sup>67</sup> DURELLE-MARC, *art. cit.*, p. 54.

#### 4. MINISTERS, COURTS, AND CIVIC OATHS

The Committee of Reports not only managed fairly well the items it received from the intermediate administration (28.66% LNDW), it also attended rather well to the correspondence it received from the king's ministers (30% LNDW) and from the former general administration of the kingdom of France (27.95% LNDW). Namely: the submissions from the tax collectors (*fermiers généraux* and *receveurs*) (33.33% LNDW), from the staff of the water and forestry administration (*Eaux et Forêts*) (32.14% LNDW) and above all from the postal services (*La Régie des Postes*) (16% LNDW). To this last the Committee of Reports gave an almost privileged degree of attention, leaving very few of its letters not dealt with.

In fact, the Committee of Reports maintained a very close relationship with the king's ministers, not in terms of the number of items that it received from them (110 items) but because of the number of items that it managed with their assistance (1099 items). The Committee of Reports relied especially on the king's ministers, and especially on the *Garde des Sceaux* (the minister of justice from 1790), in its management of the correspondence it received from the courts and the police of the realm and from persons who had been deprived of their liberty. However, the Committee of Reports was even more reliant on the various committees of the National Constituent Assembly to manage the correspondence came from local authorities, towns and cities, inhabitants and parishioners, intermediary authorities and the general administration of the realm (see general table). In other words, and taking into account the links that existed between justice and police in the Ancien Régime<sup>68</sup>, it could be said that the Committee of Reports handled 'judicial' issues with the ministers but preferred to manage 'administrative' issues with the other committees of the Assembly.

Busily engaged as it was in quelling the disorders that were taking place throughout France and in trying to ensure that the decrees adopted by the National Constituent Assembly were respected and observed, the Committee of Reports expected that the courts of the realm should act diligently, instituting the necessary proceedings, punishing those who opposed the

<sup>68</sup> MANNORI, Luca, "Centralisation et fonction publique dans la pensée juridique de l'Ancien Régime: justice, police et administration" in Pertué, Michel (ed.), *L'administration territoriale de la France (1750-1940)*, Orléans, Presses de l'Université, 1998, pp. 247-257, and NAPOLI, Paolo, *Naissance de la police moderne. Pouvoir, normes, société*, Paris, La Découverte, 2003, pp. 185-206.

decrees of the Assembly and delivering justice to those deserving of it<sup>69</sup>. It was perhaps for this reason that the 520 items conveyed to the Committee of Reports from the different courts of the realm and from those who worked or had worked in these jurisdictions were among the most attended to (23.26% LNDW), an even greater number than the items that reached the Committee of Reports from ministers, the general administration of the realm, the intermediate authorities, the national guards or the military.

If we analyse in detail the manner in which the Committee of Reports dealt with the 520 items it received, it becomes clear that it did not treat equally the items it received from the different courts that there were or had been in the realm before the judicial reform took place<sup>70</sup>, and nor did it accord privileged treatment to all the personnel of these judicial jurisdictions. The Committee of Reports paid far more attention to the items that came to it from the courts established by the National Constituent Assembly (10.15% LNDW), cornerstones of the new justice<sup>71</sup>, and from the courts responsible for trying cases of lèse-nation<sup>72</sup> (initially the court of Châtelet and subsequently the court of Orléans) (14.28% LNDW) than to the items that came to it from the old parliaments and / or sovereign courts (27.08% LNDW) and the presidial courts (30.76% LNDW) which were swept away during the revolutionary process<sup>73</sup>. It also dealt with more items from the latter than items that came to it from the courts of first instance, such as the *Bailliages* and the *Sénéchaussées* (39.24% LNDW) or the *Mairies*, the *Prévôtés* and the *Vigueries* (38% LNDW) (see table 1).

<sup>69</sup> AN, D\*XL 42 and 45.

<sup>70</sup> “Articles sur l’organisation judiciaire”, *CGDRAN*, vol V, pp. 170-94.

<sup>71</sup> LEUWERS, Hervé, “Élire les juges. L’exemple des juges des tribunaux de district du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais (1790-1792)”, in Chagny, Robert (ed.), *La Révolution française. Idéaux, singularités, influences*, Grenoble, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2002, p. 303.

<sup>72</sup> On the establishment of these courts and crimes against the nation, see CASTELLÀ, “Revolució, Poder i Informació”, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 267-277, GAVEN, Jean-Christophe, *Le crime de lèse-nation. Histoire d’une invention juridique et politique (1789-1791)*, Paris, Les Presses de Sciences Po, 2016 and KELLY, G. A., “From Lèse-Majesté to Lèse-Nation: Treason in Eighteenth-Century France”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *AHRF*, 42, (1981), pp. 269-286. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2709320> (consulted 23 October 2022)

<sup>73</sup> LEUWERS, Hervé, “Rendre la justice à la nation. Révolution constituante et réforme judiciaire (1789-1791)”, *La Révolution française. Une histoire toujours vivante*, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-127.

Table 1. Correspondence registered by the Committee of Reports

Judicial jurisdictions	No. of items	% of items not dealt with	Personnel	No. of items	% of items not dealt with
District courts/ Criminal chambers	256	10.15%	King's commissioners in the district courts	67	5.97%
Court of Châtelet/ Court of Orléans	7	14.28%	Royal judges/ Justices of the peace/ District court judges	60	8.33%
Peace Offices	4	25%	Presidents	33	12.12%
Parliaments/ Sovereign Courts/ Chambers of Accounts	48	27.08%	Public prosecutors	43	20.93%
Presidial Courts	13	30.76%	King's lawyer ( <i>Avocat du Roi</i> ) / Lawyers of parliament	44	27.27%
Seigneuries/ Baronies/ Courts	6	33%	Lieutenants General	14	28.57%
<i>Mairies/ Prévôtés/ Vigueries</i> - Royal jurisdictions	50	38%	Officers/ Magistrates	28	32.14%
Bailiwick/ <i>Sénéchaussées</i>	79	39.24%	Counsellors/ Deans of Counsellors	12	33.33%
Finance office/ <i>Grenier à sel</i> / Consular court	11	54.54%	Judicial officers/ Court bailiffs ( <i>Huissiers</i> )	9	33.33%
			Royal Mayors ( <i>Maires royaux</i> )/ Provosts	39	33.33%
			Clerks of the Court ( <i>Greffiers</i> )	22	40.90%
			Prosecutors ( <i>Procureurs</i> )/ King's prosecutors	66	40.90%
			Bailiffs/ <i>Sénéchaux</i>	10	50%

Source: AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

At the same time, the Committee of Reports privileged the voice of the new personnel of the newly established judicial jurisdictions over the voices of those who had held positions in the institutions that were suppressed. To cite an example, the Committee of Reports omitted to deal with 5.97 per cent of the items received from the king's commissioners in the district courts, compared with 50 per cent of the items sent by the *baillis* and the *sénéchaux*. In turn, the Committee of Reports paid more attention to items submitted to it by those who held or had held a significant position in the different administrations of justice than to items submitted by those who occupied or had occupied a modest position within these jurisdictions, such as *huissiers*

(33.33% LNDW), *greffiers* (40.90% LNDW) or prosecutors (40.90% LNDW)<sup>74</sup> (see table 1).

Not only letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* or petitions arrived at the Committee of Reports; it also received more than two hundred judicial proceedings (238 items), by far the most numerous of these being criminal and extraordinary proceedings (224 items), mainly against the refractory clergy (83.92%) and to a lesser extent against other persons (16.07%), some of whom were accused of distributing inflammatory papers (as was the case with the widow Caran), taking part in the looting of grain or being counterrevolutionaries. The fact is that the Committee of Reports received a large number of criminal proceedings as a result of two draft decrees which, together with other committees, it had placed before the National Constituent Assembly in the spring of 1791. On 4 April 1791 the Committee of Reports had requested that the municipalities and administrative bodies denounce, and the district courts prosecute, all those ecclesiastical or lay persons who, regardless of whether they had taken an oath of loyalty to the nation, to the law and to the king, refused to obey the decrees of the Assembly or opposed their implementation. It had also asked the courts to send a copy of any proceedings in course to the Assembly so that it could decide whether or not the case fell within the jurisdiction of the national High Court established to try crimes against the nation<sup>75</sup>. Furthermore, on 28 May 1791 the Committee of Reports had asked the Assembly to be able to forward directly to the executive branch, without first consulting the Assembly, those judicial proceedings that had been placed before it and that it considered not to come within the jurisdiction of the national High Court in Orléans<sup>76</sup>. Although his proposal had provoked the indignation of some deputies who considered the Assembly to be the only body competent to determine what did and did not constitute a crime of lèse-nation, the draft decree was adopted and the Committee of Reports was granted the power to decide, together with the Committee of Investigations, what proceedings were or were not constitutive of a crime of lesion-nation. Every one of the 186 items that reached the Committee of Reports as a result of the decrees of 4 April and 28 May 1791 was dealt with. The other criminal

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<sup>74</sup> LEUWERS, Hervé, “La fin des procureurs. Les incertitudes d’une recomposition professionnelle (1790-1791)”, *Histoire, économie & société*, 33 (2014), p. 19. URL : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-histoire-economie-et-societe-2014-3-page-18.htm> (consulted 7 September 2020)

<sup>75</sup> *AP*, vol. XXIV, pp. 553-554.

<sup>76</sup> *AP*, vol. XXVI, p. 591.

and extraordinary proceedings that came before were less fortunate: 46.51 per cent were not attended to.

The Committee of Reports not only prioritised items from the nation's courts and its personnel over items submitted by the administration and the forces of order. It also prioritised over the latter the items sent to it by detained persons and prisoners, reporting an above-average proportion of these items (3.51%) and omitting to deal with only 26.31 per cent of the total received. Moreover, in its work under the National Constituent Assembly, the Committee of Reports paid special attention to information pertaining to some of the arrests and convictions then taking place in the realm. More than a few of the reports that the Committee presented to the Assembly gave an account of these<sup>77</sup> (9.94% of the total) and on more than a few occasions it went behind the Assembly's back and on its own account applied to the Garde de Sceaux or to the municipalities of the realm for the release of a detained person<sup>78</sup>. Of course, the Committee of Reports did not always decide to intervene. On consideration of some of the items it received it opted to recuse itself, as it did, for example, in relation to those items that called for the release of Louise Renée Audu<sup>79</sup>, also known as Queen Audu or the Queen of les Halles, detained in September 1790 by order of the court of Châtelet<sup>80</sup> in relation to the excesses of 6 October 1789 that ended with the relocation of the royal family from Versailles to Paris. Excesses that the Committee of Reports had lamented in its report on the events that occurred on 5 and 6 October 1789, in which Louise Renée Audu had played a prominent role<sup>81</sup>. The Queen of les Halles had managed, together with other women, to get the

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<sup>77</sup> AP, vol VIII, p. 337, p. 356, p. 455, p. 507, p. 587, p. 608, p. 641; vol. IX, p. 25, p. 41, p. 223; vol X, p. 427; vol. XII, p. 62; vol. XIII, p. 95-96; vol. XV, pp. 630-631; vol. XVI, p. 1; vol. XX, p. 142, p. 431; vol XXVIII, p. 682.

<sup>78</sup> AN, AF/I\*/6, No. 1563, No. 1956, No. 2095; AF/I\*/7, No. 2397; D/XL\*/58, No. 4523, No. 4568, No. 4587.

<sup>79</sup> The items registered on 2 February 1791 by the Committee of Reports were: "Requête pour Reine Louise Audu accusée dans l'affaire du 5 au 6 octobre 1789" and "Protestation d'incompétence". The first of these can be consulted in: AULARD, François-Alphonse, *La Société des Jacobins. Recueil de documents pour l'histoire du Club des Jacobins de Paris*, Paris, Librairie Noblet, 1889, vol. I, pp. 326-330. The second item can be consulted at: <https://archive.org/details/protestationdinc00audu/mode/2up> (retrieved 12 January 2021)

<sup>80</sup> LE BOZEC, Christine, *Les femmes et la Révolution, 1770-1830*, Paris, Passés Composés, 2019, pp. 66-68, and BURSTIN, Haim, *Rivoluzionari. Antropologia politica della Rivoluzione francese*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2016.

<sup>81</sup> AP, vol. XIX, pp. 338-393.

king to commit to supplying the capital and to sanction the decree on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen<sup>82</sup>.

## 5. SECULAR CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Gwénaél Murphy wrote a few years ago that the Revolution entered the convents, on the political level, with the provisional suspension of religious vows<sup>83</sup>. If we take into account that the Committee of Reports proposed this suspension as a result of two letters written by a nun from the Récollettes in Paris, we can say that this committee brought the Revolution into the convents in the autumn of 1789<sup>84</sup>.

The National Constituent Assembly created an ecclesiastical committee on 12 August 1789 to deal with matters concerning the clergy, but the Committee of Reports had more than three hundred letters written by the regular and secular clergy waiting to be processed: 98 items from the regular male clergy, 25 items from the regular female clergy and 221 items from the secular clergy. However, the items submitted by the male and female clergy, by those who in their day constituted the first state and enjoyed a privileged status, were not among those most attended to by the Committee of Reports. In the general table that accompanies this work we place them in group three, at the same level as the correspondence from the local fabric. In general terms, they received less attention than the correspondence sent by the *seigneurs*, property owners and traders in group one and the correspondence sent by the courts and the general and intermediate authorities of the realm in group two, but it is worth noting that they were more managed than the letters written by the artisans, cultivators and the common people in general in groups four and five of the general table.

Although they were frequently accused throughout the eighteenth century of being useless and unproductive, of excessive ambition, selfishness

<sup>82</sup> AULARD, *op. cit.*, p. 326 and LE BOZEC, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>83</sup> MURPHY, Gwénaél, “Destins de religieuses pendant la Révolution française : l'exemple du diocèse de Poitiers”, *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 15, (2002), 115. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44405397> (consulted 5 August 2020)

<sup>84</sup> Item No. 1162 in register AF/\*/5 indicates that the Committee of Reports agreed on 27 October 1789 to propose to the Assembly the provisional suspension of the vows. However, the Parliamentary Archives record that Deputy Rousselet of the Committee of Reports proposed their prohibition to the Assembly on 28 October, and that Deputy Target proposed their suspension. *AP*, ix, 597. Is there an error in the *AP* or did the Committee of Reports change its opinion? Whatever the truth of the matter, the Committee of Reports introduced the debate that concluded with the provisional suspension of religious vows.

and avarice, of parasitising society and violating individual freedom, of not paying taxes and possessing untold wealth<sup>85</sup>, letters from the regular male clergy (31.63% LNDW) and regular female clergy (32% LNDW) were dealt with by the Committee of Reports rather more than letters from the secular clergy (33.93% LNDW). The Committee of Reports also dealt with more letters from the hospital and teaching orders than those from the mendicant and monastic orders, which received most of the criticism and were the first to have their convents closed.

If we consider table two in relation to the female religious orders that have been identified in the annotations of the Committee of Reports<sup>86</sup>, it will be possible to observe – with much prudence, as there are so few items – that the Committee of Reports dealt with all the items sent to the Assembly by the religious of the hospital and teaching orders that ended up in its hands, while the items that it received from the monastic (44.44% LNDW) and mendicant orders (60% LNDW) were attended to much less, although it is known that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the original aims of female convents shifted towards achieving some measure of social utility<sup>87</sup>. At the same time, if we consider table three in relation to the male religious orders identified in the annotations of the Committee of Reports<sup>88</sup>, it will be possible to observe that all the items sent by the Trinitarians with a hospital vocation were dealt with; that the items from the Carthusians (20% LNDW) and the Benedictines (25% LNDW), alarmed by the abolition of monastic vows and their suppression<sup>89</sup>, were managed rather less; and that the items from the

<sup>85</sup> MERAT, Alix, “Les bibliothèques des couvents de femmes à la Révolution d’après l’enquête nationale de 1790-1791 : entre tradition et influences” (Université Lumière Lyon 2, Mémoire de Master 2, 2014), pp. 18-20, BOURDIN, Philippe, “Collégiales et chapitres cathédraux au crible de l’opinion et de la Révolution”, *AHRF*, 331 (2003), p. 30. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41916787> (consulted 8 August 2020)

<sup>86</sup> The design of this table has drawn on the study by MERAT, *op. cit.*, and on the article by ANNAERT, Philippe, “L’apport des religieuses enseignantes à l’éducation des filles dans les villes du Nord-Ouest de l’Europe, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles”, *Association Revue du Nord*, 394, (2012), pp. 9-31. URL : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-du-nord-2012-1-page-9.htm> (consulted 6 August 2020)

<sup>87</sup> MURPHY, *art. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>88</sup> The design of this table has drawn on the study by HENRYOT, Fabienne, “Le livre dans les couvents mendiants à la fin de l’Ancien Régime, d’après l’enquête nationale de 1790-1791”, *Histoire et Mesure*, 27-2, (2013), pp. 165-204. URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/histoiremesure/4843> (consulted 8 August 2020)

<sup>89</sup> BORNE, Laurent, “« Fleurs du Désert » : Dom Éphrem Coutarel, un chartreux en Révolution”, *AHRF*, 355, (2009), p. 136. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41890159> (consulted 8 August 2020)



mendicant orders, conventionally regarded as intellectually mediocre<sup>90</sup>, were the most neglected overall (40% LNDW), with the items received from the Franciscan family (Franciscans, Friars Minor and Capuchins) and from the Order of Minims, consecrated to a life of poverty and charity, the ones that received least attention from the Committee. In a different vein, if we analyse the two tables – always with caution because the number of items is small – we find that the items from the mendicant orders were the most neglected, and also that the majority of items written by female religious were from followers of the rules of Saint Augustine (41.66% of the total) and Saint Benedict (37.5% of the total) while the majority of items written by male religious were followers of the rule of Saint Benedict (54% of the total).

Table 2.

Rules	Female orders/ No. of items	Description	% of items not dealt with
Rule of Saint Augustine	Augustines (2)	Hospital and teaching orders	0%
	Canonesses (1)		
	Ursulines (1)		
	Visitandines (4)		
Rule of Saint Benedict	Bernardines (2)	Monastic and contemplative orders	44.44%
Rule of Saint Augustine	Blue Nuns (1)		
	Order of the Annunciation (1)		
Rule of Saint Benedict	Benedictines (2)		
	Daughters of Calvary (1)		
	<i>Sainte Croix</i> (2)		
	Cisterciennes (2)		
Rule of Carmel	Carmelites (1)	Mendicant orders	60%
Rule of Saint Clare	Clarisses (3)		
		<i>Récollettes</i> (1)	

Table 2.

Male orders/ No. of items	Rules	% of items not dealt with	Description	% of items not dealt with
Trinitarians (2)	Rule of Saint Jean de Matha	0%	Hospital and mendicant order	0%
Carthusians (5)	Rule <i>Consuetudines Cartusiae</i>	20%	Monastic and contemplative orders	25%
Benedictines (16)	Rule of Saint Benedict	25.92%		
Maurists (4)				
Cistercians (7)				
Carmelites (3)	Rule of Carmel	33.33%	Mendicant orders	40%

<sup>90</sup> HENRYOT, *art. cit.*, p. 166.

Augustins (4)	Rule of Saint Augustine	25%		
Franciscans (3)	Rule of Saint Francis of Assisi	37.5%		
Cordeliers (2)				
Capuchins (3)				
Minims (1)	Rule of Saint Francis of Paola	100%		

Source: AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

In relation to the items that the Committee of Reports received from the secular clergy, it must be said, first of all, that it privileged those from priests with administrative functions, omitting to deal with only 15.78 per cent of the items received from priests who served as mayors, secretaries or committee chairmen. Secondly, we should also note that the items from canons and from the cathedral chapter composed of second sons of the nobility and the urban bourgeoisie<sup>91</sup>, which were suppressed along with the regular orders, were attended to fairly well, with only 27.58 per cent of these being neglected, and, thirdly, that the least attention was accorded, in ascending order, to the items from archbishops and bishops (36.36% LNDW), the items from priests, rectors and vicars (36.50% LNDW) and the items from parish priests (*prêtres*) and almoners (38.88% LNDW) (see table 4)

Table 4.

Secular clergy	No. of items	% of items not dealt with
Priests with administrative functions (mayors, secretaries or committee chairmen...)	19	15.78%
Canons	29	27.58%
Bishops/ Archbishops	11	36.36%
Priest/ Rectors/ Vicars	126	36.50%
Parish priests/ Almoners	36	38.88%

Source: AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

## 6. NOBLES, BOURGEOISIE AND ACTIVE CITIZENS

In spite of not being a homogeneous estate either in origins, functions, training, wealth, aspirations or ideals and of the tensions, rivalries and resentments that existed between its members<sup>92</sup>, the nobility was not in

<sup>91</sup> BOURDIN, *art. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>92</sup> CARRASCO, Raphaël and PÉREZ, Béatrice, “Les pouvoirs de la noblesse : définitions, moyens et clientèles”, *e-Spania* [online] 34, (2019). URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/32580> (consulted 11 February 2021); BLAUFARB, Rafe, “Une révolution dans la

general favour at the outbreak of the revolutionary process. Its hereditary superiority, combined with its wealth, possessions, and income aroused resentment and its members were criticised for living in luxury and excess and for their unbridled selfish and corrupt libertine attitudes. Emmanuel-Joseph Sièyes went so far as to characterise the nobility as parasites and an impediment to national unity<sup>93</sup>.

Under the National Constituent Assembly, the privileges and the seigneurial jurisdictions of the nobility were abolished (decrees of 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11 August 1789)<sup>94</sup>, together with the right of primogeniture (decree of 15 March 1790)<sup>95</sup> and their titles and distinctions when the decree of 19 June 1790 put an end to the hereditary nobility<sup>96</sup>. However, the nobility did not lose its socio-political preponderance nor was it ruined as a result of the revolutionary process<sup>97</sup>. Some of its members took advantage of the sale of *biens nationaux* or property of first origin (ecclesiastical) – and to a lesser extent, of second origin (emigres) – to acquire these, while others whose own property had been seized and sold were subsequently able to recover it or be compensated for its loss<sup>98</sup>.

The items that the nobility wrote to the National Constituent Assembly and were registered in the Committee of Reports received more attention than

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Révolution : mérite et naissance dans la pensée et le comportement politiques de la noblesse militaire de province en 1789-1790”, *Histoire, Économie et Société*, 33 (2014), pp. 32-51, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24467696> (consulted 7 August 2020) ; RANCE, Karine, “Les nobles victimes de la Révolution”, *La Révolution française. Une histoire toujours vivante, op. cit.*, pp. 209-217 ; FIGEAC, Michel, “Les magistrats en révolte en 1789 ou le fin du rêve politique de la monarchie des juges”, *Histoire, Économie et Société* 25, (2006), pp. 395-400, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23613568> (consulted 8 August 2020) ; LEMARCHAND, Guy, “La France au XVIII siècle : élites ou noblesse et bourgeoisie ?”, *Annales de Normandie*, 30 (2000), pp. 107-113, URL : [https://www.persee.fr/doc/annor\\_0570-1600\\_2000\\_hos\\_30\\_1\\_2373](https://www.persee.fr/doc/annor_0570-1600_2000_hos_30_1_2373) (consulted 12 February 2021) ; GOUJARD, Philippe, “ « Féodalité » et Lumières au XVIII siècle. L'exemple de la noblesse”, *AHRF*, 227 (1977), pp. 103-118, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41915896> (consulted 7 August 2020) and COBBAN, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>93</sup> LEMARCHAND, “La France au XVIII siècle”, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112 and MARTIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 77, 148 and 250-251.

<sup>94</sup> *Décrets de l'Assemblée nationale des 4, 6, 7, 8 & 11 août 1789*, Lyon, 1789, pp. 13-18.

<sup>95</sup> *AP*, vol. XII, p. 173.

<sup>96</sup> *AP*, vol. XVI, p. 378.

<sup>97</sup> LEMARCHAND, Guy, “L’histoire sociale de la Révolution depuis 1989”, *La Révolution française au carrefour des recherches*, 74-75 and Martin, *Nouvelle histoire*, p. 72.

<sup>98</sup> BODINIER, Bernard and TEYSSIER, Éric, “Les biens nationaux en France : état de la question”, *La Révolution française au carrefour des recherches, op. cit.*, p. 90.

the items written by the clergy who had also, like the nobility, enjoyed privileged status. Only 25 per cent of the items written by noblewomen and 30.65 per cent of the items written by noblemen and the nobility in general were not dealt with, placing them in group two of the general table. However, table five of this work clearly shows that the Committee of Reports did not attend to the items it received in accordance with the rank of the sender: prince, duke, marquis, count, viscount, baron, knight, squire and gentleman<sup>99</sup>. While it is true that all of the letters written by princes and dukes were attended to and that the letters from knights (46.42% LNDW) and viscounts (50% LNDW) who occupied a lower rank were the most neglected, it is no less true that the items from squires (0% LNDW), barons (11.76% LNDW) and gentlemen (16.66% LNDW), who were not at the head of the hierarchy, were comprehensively or very largely dealt with. Perhaps, as François Bluche suggested, beyond the privileges of the duke, the hierarchy of title and rank did not exist (see table 5)<sup>100</sup>.

Table 5.

Noblemen/Nobility – No. of items	Noblewomen – No. of items	% of items not dealt with	Nobility	% of items not dealt with
Prince (4)	Princess (1)	0%	Princes/Princesses	0%
Duke (2)	Duchess (1)	0%	Dukes/Duchesses	0%
	Lady of the <i>Croix Étoilée</i> (1)	0%	Lady of the <i>Croix Étoilée</i>	0%
Baron (15)	Baroness (2)	11.76%	Barons/Baronesses	11.76%
Nobles/Nobility (5)		20%	Nobles/Nobility	20%
Count (32)	Countess (4)	25%	Counts/Countesses & Viscounts/Viscountesses	31.11%
Viscount (7)	Viscountess (1)	50%		
Counts & Viscounts (1)		100%		
Marquis (33)	Marquise (2)	31.42%	Marquis/Marquesses	31.42%
Squires (4)		0%	Squires/Gentlemen/Knights	34.21%
Gentlemen (6)		16.66%		
Knights (28)		46.42%		

Source: AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

Nevertheless, the items from the nobility as a whole were attended to less than the items that arrived from *seigneurs*, notables and the principal

<sup>99</sup> MAURY, Alfred, “Les titres nobiliaires en France avant et depuis la Révolution”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 54 (1882), pp. 781-823. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44753009> (consulted 10 February 2021)

<sup>100</sup> BLUCHE, François, *La noblesse française au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1995, p. 13.

inhabitants of a place (who may have also held noble rank), the property owners, merchants, traders and entrepreneurs. Indeed, they received somewhat less attention than the items sent by the active citizens who, in the course of the revolutionary process, and in the words of Jean-Paul Marat, replaced the old hereditary aristocracy with the aristocracy of money<sup>101</sup>.

Money had long been establishing new social hierarchies<sup>102</sup>, and under the National Constituent Assembly, wealth ended up dividing citizens in two: the active and the non-active or passive<sup>103</sup>; or in three: the active, the passive and the null if we accept the judgment of the *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*<sup>104</sup>. Frenchmen aged twenty-five and older and domiciled in France who were not servants of anyone and who took the civic oath would enjoy the status of active citizens and the right to vote if they paid equivalent taxes or a direct contribution equal in value to three days' work. However, with the establishment of suffrage in two degrees, active citizens would not directly elect their deputies but the electors who would be empowered to elect the deputies. In order to obtain the status of elector it was necessary to pay a contribution equivalent to ten days' work and to be elected deputy you had to pay a contribution equivalent to a silver mark (52 livres)<sup>105</sup>. In the words of Maximilien Robespierre, with these limitations not even Jean-Jacques Rousseau would have been a deputy<sup>106</sup>. Or as a 1791 cartoon read: *Adieu talens, savoir, vertus, sagesse, l'âne fera des lois s'il a de la richesse*<sup>107</sup>. The Committee of Reports attended to a higher proportion of the items written to

<sup>101</sup> POUTHAS, Charles-H., "La Constituante et la classe ouvrière", *Annales Révolutionnaires*, 4, (1911) p. 175, and COBBAN, *op. cit.*, p. 99. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41921705> (consulted 7 August 2020)

<sup>102</sup> PINEAU-DEFOIS, Laure, "Une élite d'Ancien Régime : les grands négociants nantais dans la tourmente révolutionnaire (1780-1793)", *AHRF*, 359, (2010), pp. 97-98. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41890417> (consulted 7 August 2020)

<sup>103</sup> ABERDAM, Serge, *Démographes et démocrates. L'œuvre du Comité de division de la Convention nationale*, Paris, Société des études Robespierriéristes, 2004, pp. 44-50.

<sup>104</sup> *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>105</sup> VOVELLE, Michel, *Nueva historia de la Francia contemporánea. La caída de la Monarquía, 1787-1792* Barcelona, Ariel, 1979, pp. 193-194.

<sup>106</sup> *Encyclopédie méthodique. Assemblée nationale constituante, contenant l'histoire de la Révolution, les débats & les actes de l'Assemblée, avec la collection des lois ou décrets sanctionnés par le Roi*, Paris, Panckoucke, 1792, vol. II, p. 116.

<sup>107</sup> This print can be consulted at Gallica.bnf.fr: *Marc d'argent, je suis éligible : Le premier des décrets calqué sur la raison, se trouve avec ce marc en contradiction. Adieu talens, savoir, adieu vertus, sagesse, l'âne fera des lois s'il a de la richesse* (1791): "Goodbye talents, knowledge, virtues, wisdom, the donkey will make laws if he has wealth.". URL: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6943979c>. (consulted 23 October 2022)

the Assembly that it received from active citizens (26.08% LNDW) than it did those from nobles (30.65% LNDW), the bourgeoisie (38.70% LNDW) or men who styled themselves *monsieur* (38.73% LNDW), *sieur* (42.03% LNDW), *citoyen* (42.85% LNDW), *particulier* (58.33% LNDW) or *habitant* (59.09% LNDW).

In fact, the letters from active citizens (26.08% LNDW) are in group two of the general table, while the letters from those who styled themselves as bourgeois (38.70% LNDW) are in group four, the same group in which we find tenant farmers (34.78%), ploughmen and cultivators (36.84% LNDW), guild masters, manufacturers and artisans (37.87% LNDW), and women (37.97% LNDW) and men (40.80% LNDW) who for the most part styled themselves *madame* and *monsieur*<sup>108</sup>. In fact, we find the bourgeoisie in group four and not in group five with sailors (50% LNDW), workers (53.84% LNDW), butchers and fruiterers (56.25% LNDW), printers and booksellers (66.66% LNDW), day labourers (71.42% LNDW) and master fishermen (75% LNDW). The question, then, is who were those who identified themselves as bourgeois in the letters they addressed to the National Constituent Assembly? Who were those who identified themselves as notable bourgeois of La Roche Bernard and Haguenau or as bourgeois of Clermont-en-Argonne, Doullens, Le Cateau-Cambrésis, Montpellier and Bavay who signed their items in the name of a collective? Were they bourgeois properly so called, living in the manner of the nobles on their rents and properties?<sup>109</sup> Or were they a conglomeration of different socio-economic and occupational groups, including property owners, officials, lawyers and notaries, doctors, teachers and artists, manufacturers and artisans, financiers and traders?<sup>110</sup>

A few years ago, Sarah Maza wrote that the bourgeoisie was, in the French context, more a myth than a social group. She had not found a sufficient number of written materials produced by a bourgeoisie that unabashedly identified itself by that name, and while acknowledging that the

<sup>108</sup> In the category “women” we have included all the pieces written by non-noble women, not *mesdemoiselles*, not religious, not widows, not written jointly with a man or men. In the category ‘men’ we have included all the pieces written by those men for whom the only available information comes mainly from the designation of *monsieur*, *sieur* or *citoyen*.

<sup>109</sup> VOVELLE, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73, COBBAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74 and MAZA, Sarah, “Construire et déconstruire la bourgeoisie: discours politique et imaginaire sociale au début du XIXe siècle”, *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, 34 (2007) p. 24. URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/rh19/1262> (consulted 6 November 2020)

<sup>110</sup> LEFEBVRE, George, 1789. *La Revolución francesa* (original title: *Quatre-vingt-neuf*) (Consulted online at epubgratis.org on 19 February 2021), VOVELLE, *op. cit.*, p. 69 and COBBAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

bourgeoisie as an urban category had existed for a long time, she suggested that the bourgeois was a monster on account of its hybrid condition between the plebeian and the great *seigneur*. For Maza, the bourgeoisie had been looked down upon under the Ancien Régime, hated and erased during the Revolution and ‘invented’ in the historical and political discourse of the Restoration<sup>111</sup>. Now, if we review the items registered in the Committee of Reports, we can say that we find evidence both of bourgeois groups that identified themselves as such and a group of bourgeois who clearly subscribed to the programme of eradicating the Ancien Régime. Having said that, and thereby casting much doubt on Maza’s ‘myth of the bourgeoisie’, we can also see that these bourgeois groups were deliberately excised from the revolutionary discourse. Proof of this is to be found in an item registered by the Committee of Reports.

On 13 November 1789 an item was registered with the number 1608 and the observation: “Motion of a part of the Montpellier bourgeoisie.” Three days later, on 16 November, the Committee of Reports took the following decision in relation to the registered item: “Forward to the Secretary of the Assembly to be read to the Assembly”<sup>112</sup>. Two days later, on 18 November, the parliamentary session began with the reading of various items received by the Assembly, among which was a decision (*arrêt*) of several citizens of Montpellier declaring themselves ready to pour out the last drop of their blood in defence of the decrees adopted on 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11 August 1789 (on the abolition of the Ancien Régime) as an essential part of the French Constitution and of liberty<sup>113</sup>. What had happened to the motion received from ‘a part of the Montpellier bourgeoisie’ that was to be read to the Assembly? Was this motion replaced by a decision (*arrêt*) adopted by a group of citizens of Montpellier? We do not think so and there is no trace of it. Does it not seem more plausible that, in the temple of the laws, the bourgeois of Montpellier had been transformed into citizens of Montpellier?

Raymonde Monnier wrote a few years ago about the definition of the term *citoyen* in Gautier’s *Dictionnaire de la Constitution* of 1791 – ‘Title of free man in society’ – and commented that it possessed a positive value in the republican lexicon while the term *bourgeois* invoked the privileges accorded to the inhabitants of some cities<sup>114</sup>. That said, and taking into account the item

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<sup>111</sup> MAZA, *art. cit.*, pp. 22-24 and 27.

<sup>112</sup> AN, AF/1\*/6, pp. 37-38.

<sup>113</sup> AP, vol. X, p. 87.

<sup>114</sup> MONNIER, Raymonde, “« Bourgeois, citoyen, habitant » la grammaire des républicains”, in Gauvard, Claude and Robert, Jean-Louis (eds.), *Être parisien*, Paris, Éditions de la

registered with the number 1608, did the deputies of the National Constituent Assembly revolutionise political language, and thereby at a stroke convert the bourgeois (of Montpellier) into citizens (of Montpellier)? Micah Alpaugh, in his study of the bourgeois militias formed by those who were eager to protect their property, not only observed at the start of the revolutionary process in France a shock force that defined itself as bourgeois but also noted how ‘bourgeois’ discourse was purged from the vocabulary of revolutionary officials in the mid-1790s<sup>115</sup>. If the deputies turned the bourgeois into citizens, and ‘bourgeois’ terminology was eliminated from the vocabulary of revolutionary officials, how could we expect to find an abundance of documents written by the bourgeois proudly identifying themselves as such? Perhaps it was necessary for the political context to change, for the Revolution and the Empire to pass and give way to the Restoration and the liberals of the 19th century, as Eric J. Hobsbawm reminded us<sup>116</sup>, for those bourgeois to become visible once more.

The study we have carried out indicates that the letters written by bourgeois (38.70% LNDW) who so defined themselves, with all the negative connotations attaching to the name, did not receive much attention from the Committee of Reports, and in those cases where they were dealt with, some of them ended up being from reassigned ‘bourgeois’ senders to ‘citizens’. However, letters written by architects and engineers (18.18% LNDW), property owners (21.42% LNDW), traders (22.78% LNDW), hairdressers (30% LNDW), teachers and artists (31.42% LNDW), doctors and surgeons (32.14% LNDW), goldsmiths (33.33% LNDW) or lawyers and notaries (34.61% LNDW), all of whom have been considered as ‘bourgeoisie’, did receive more attention. That said, was there simply a repudiation of the title ‘bourgeois’ in the first stages of the revolutionary process which dissuaded the ‘bourgeois’ and those who claimed to be ‘bourgeois’ from continuing to so style themselves in the documents that they signed? Was the revolution in political language responsible for the ‘bourgeois’ being recognised in the negative, as against other social groups?

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Sorbonne, 2004. URL: <https://books.openedition.org/psorbonne/1463> (consulted 23 October 2022)

<sup>115</sup> ALPAUGH, Micah, “A Self-Defining «Bourgeoisie» in the Early French Revolution: The «Milice Bourgeoise», The Bastille Days of 1789, and Their Aftermath”, *Journal of Social History*, 48 (2014), p. 699 and 712. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43305956> (consulted 8 August 2020)

<sup>116</sup> HOBBSAWM, Eric J., *Echoes of the Marseillaise*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1990, pp. 30-61.



## 7. WOMEN: NOBLEWOMEN, WOMEN RELIGIOUS AND SINGLE, WIDOWED AND MARRIED WOMEN

Although the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was universal and common to both sexes<sup>117</sup>, women could not exercise the right to vote or serve in the national guards<sup>118</sup>. The Declaration of Rights of 1789 established that men (understood to mean human beings or men of either sex, in the words of Gilbert Romme)<sup>119</sup> were born and remained free and equal in law, but not all men (and, of course, no women) who belonged to the French nation enjoyed the same rights. For this reason, during the Revolution, not only women but also Protestants, Jews, citizens of colour, actors, servants and men without fortune had to claim them and fight for them, with different results<sup>120</sup>. The latter obtained their rights sooner or later, permanently or only for a short period of time, but women, even though they were citizens and members of the sovereign people, never did<sup>121</sup>.

However, the fact that they did not enjoy the right to vote or to serve in the national guards did not exclude women from either the revolutionary

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<sup>117</sup> VERJUS, Anne, “Regards croisés. Femmes, Genre, Révolution”, *AHRF*, 358 (2009), p. 154, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24912527> (consulted 30 July 2020) ; GODINEAU, Dominique, “Histoire sociale, histoire culturelle, histoire politique : la question du droit de cité des femmes”, *La Révolution française au carrefour des recherches*, *op. cit.*, p. 296 and GODINEAU, Dominique, “Femmes en citoyenneté : pratiques et politique”, *AHRF*, 300 (1995), p. 200. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41915990> (consulted 30 July 2020)

<sup>118</sup> LE BOZEC, *op. cit.*, p. 78 ; GODINEAU, Dominique, “Regards croisés”, *art. cit.*, p. 158, GODINEAU, “Histoire sociale”, *op. cit.*, p. 294 and GODINEAU, “Femmes en citoyenneté”, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>119</sup> On the generic use of the category “Man” to include men and women see VERJUS, Anne and MARTIN, Jean Clément, “Regards croisés”, *art. cit.*, pp. 153-154, 158 and DESAN, Suzanne, “Pétitions de femmes en faveur d’une réforme révolutionnaire de la famille”, *AHRF*, 344, (2006), p. 32. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41889307> (consulted 30 July 2020)

<sup>120</sup> HUNT, Lynn, “Regards croisés”, *art. cit.*, p. 153; GODINEAU, Dominique, *Les femmes dans la France Moderne XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2015, p. 194; DURELLE-MARC, Yann-Arzel, “Sur la question coloniale durant la Constituante (1789-1791) : l’idéal libéral à l’épreuve des colonies”, communication presented at the conference “Les colonies, la Révolution française, la loi” (Paris, 2011), 11 (long version consulted on 27 February 2021) URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236658716>, and GODECHOT, Jacques, “La Révolution française et les juifs (1789-1791)”, *AHRF*, 223 (1976), p. 56. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41915838> (consulted 7 Auguste 2020)

<sup>121</sup> GODINEAU, “Histoire sociale”, *op. cit.*, pp. 293, 297 and 302 and VIENNOT, Elianne, *Et la modernité fut masculine. La France, les femmes et le pouvoir 1789-1804*, Paris, Perrin, 2016.

process or the counterrevolutionary backlash. Women were actively involved in many different ways in each of the factions. They sent petitions, individual and collective, to the Assembly; they took their lawsuits to court<sup>122</sup>; they made patriotic offerings<sup>123</sup>; they organised and presided over gatherings in their homes – especially royalist noble and bourgeois women close to the deputies and ministers – in order to influence the framing of policies or to build political opposition<sup>124</sup>; they wrote books and newspaper articles<sup>125</sup>; they sat in the public galleries of clubs, sections and the Assembly; they participated in mixed clubs and founded clubs of their own<sup>126</sup>; they were present in popular societies and in counterrevolutionary committees when these met<sup>127</sup>; they monitored their representatives and held them to account<sup>128</sup>; they hid or denounced their refractory priests<sup>129</sup> and rioted and took up arms both to defend the ideals they pursued, common to all citizens or to the side on which they were active, and their own interests or the rights they were prevented from exercising<sup>130</sup>. They were present on all the great occasions and took the lead on some of them, such as the 5 and 6 October 1789 that ended with the relocation of the royal family from Versailles to Paris and with the revolutionary leaders frightened by such female mobilisations<sup>131</sup>.

<sup>122</sup> DESAN, *art. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>123</sup> FAURE, Christine, “Doléances, déclaration et pétitions, trois formes de la parole publique des femmes sous la Révolution”, *AHRF*, 344, (2006), pp. 23 and 28, URL <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41889306> (consulted 30 July 2020) and LE BOZEC, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>124</sup> BLANC, Olivier, “Cercles politiques et « salons » du début de la Révolution (1789-1793)”, *AHRF*, 344 (2006), pp. 64, 75 and 91, URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/ahrf/5983> (consulted 30 July 2020) and LE BOZEC, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>125</sup> ALLEN, Robert, “La justice pénale et les femmes”, 350, *AHRF* (2007), p. 105. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41890130> (consulted 30 July 2020)

<sup>126</sup> LE BOZEC, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70 and LAPIED, Martine, “Parole publique des femmes et conflictualité pendant la Révolution, dans le Sud-Est de la France”, *AHRF*, 344, (2006), pp. 52-56. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41889308> (consulted 30 July 2020)

<sup>127</sup> MARTIN, Jean-Clément, “Femmes et guerre civile, l’exemple de la Vendée, 1793-1796”, *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 5 (1997), p. 105. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44406241> (consulted 30 July 2020)

<sup>128</sup> LAPIED, *art. cit.*, p. 48, and GODINEAU, “Femmes en citoyenneté”, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>129</sup> HUNT, Lynn, *art. cit.*, pp. 149-150.

<sup>130</sup> DEVANCE, Louis, “Le féminisme pendant la Révolution française”, *AHRF*, 229, (1977), p. 351, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41915922> (consulted 30 July 2020) and LE BOZEC, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>131</sup> HUNT, Lynn, *art. cit.*, p. 157, and MARTIN, *Nouvelle histoire, op. cit.*, p. 183.

But how were the letters, *mémoires* and petitions which women sent to the National Constituent Assembly and that ended up in the hands of the Committee of Reports attended to? What treatment was received by the 238 items in which they communicated their demands, requests or grievances? Were they dealt with in the same way as the items submitted by other citizens of the nation who could not exercise all the rights that the Declaration of 1789 gave them? Fifty per cent of the items written by Jews, by citizens of colour and by Blacks were not dealt with, while passive citizens were probably among the categories 'men', 40.80 per cent of whose items were not dealt with, and 'poor', with 45.45 per cent of items unattended to.

With reference to the general table and the results of this research, it must be said that the items sent to the Assembly by women were attended to considerably more than the items written by others who, like them, were unable to exercise all the rights granted to them by the Declaration of 1789. Moreover, the items from noblewomen (25% LNDW) were better attended to than those from noblemen (28.24% LNDW)<sup>132</sup>, while items from women religious (32% LNDW) were attended to only a little less than those from regular clergy (31.63% LNDW) and slightly more than those from the secular clergy (33.93% LNDW), while the items by women who mostly signed themselves *madame* and were not nobles, women religious, *Mesdemoiselles* or widows (37.97% LNDW) were attended to more than those from the men who mostly signed themselves *monsieur* (40.80% LNDW). There was no gender discrimination in the treatment by the Committee of Reports of the items sent to the Assembly by women, although there was unequal treatment, as has been seen throughout this research, on the basis of social status or wealth, with the items from nobles (men and women) being in group two, the items from male and female religious in group three and the items from the men and women who mostly styled themselves *madame* and *monsieur*, respectively, in group four.

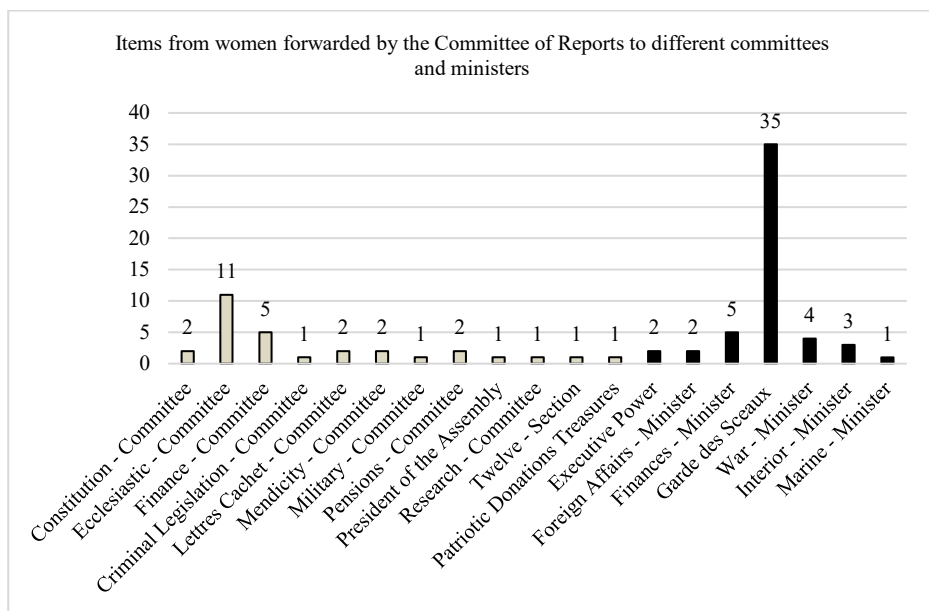
Now, were the items from women more likely to be attended to in consequence of their supposed social and / or economic vulnerability? We cannot know, but the records of the Committee of Reports indicate that most of the items sent to the Assembly by women and from there passed to the Committee of Reports were forwarded not to the Committee of Mendicancy or the Pensions Committee but to the executive. Only 30 items were attended

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<sup>132</sup> This percentage differs from the percentage in the general table, which also includes items written by nobles / nobility, counts and viscounts, among whom there may be an unknown number of noblewomen.

to with the help of the committees or the president of the Assembly – highlighting the items from women religious who were forwarded to the Ecclesiastical Committee – while fifty-two items were processed with the help of ministers, especially that of the Garde de Sceaux, the minister of justice. Perhaps the items from the women were for the most part petitions for justice? When the time comes to discover more about women’s voices during the Revolution, it will be necessary to carefully explore the archives of the executive branch and especially the justice minister (see general table and graph 2).

Graph 2.



Source: AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

In a different vein, we must indicate that the items that women sent to the National Constituent Assembly by way of a man or men or an institution were the most attended to (6.66% LNDW); and that the items that women wrote together with a man or men (33.33% LNDW), whether of their family or not, were attended to more than the items written by women who mostly signed themselves *madame* (37.97 % LNDW) or widows (40% LNDW) and less than the items written by noblewomen (25% LNDW), by *mesdemoiselles* or *demoiselles* (28.57% LNDW) – the latter title could designate women from a

noble or bourgeois family, as well as those who were unmarried<sup>133</sup> – or women religious (32% LNDW). However, the items that men wrote together with a woman or women – wives, daughters or sisters – were the least attended to (45.45% LNDW), even less than the items whose senders mostly signed themselves *monsieur* (40.80% LNDW). Was it considered unacceptable for men to address the Assembly jointly with the women of their family?

In 2007, Robert Allen, drawing on the work of Merry Wiesner, wrote that women were under strong social pressure in relation to marriage, and that a male-dominated society seemed to feel especially threatened by independent unmarried and widowed women<sup>134</sup>. Analysing Dijon court records, Allen observed that judges acquitted married women more often than single women or widows, arguing cautiously that judges displayed greater severity towards single women than legitimate wives<sup>135</sup>. In the light of Allen's research, how did the Committee of Reports treat the items written by married women, widows or single women? Did it pay less attention to items written by independent women?

Of the seventy-nine items written by women (not by noblewomen, not by *mesdemoiselles*, not by women religious and not written with men) only seventeen items attributable to married women have been located, leaving sixty-two items written by women for whom we have no evidence as to whether they were married, single or widowed. Taking this into account, it has been observed that the items written by married women (17.64% LNDW) were well attended to and the letters written by *mesdemoiselles* or *demoiselles* (28.57% LNDW), both categories including married women in good standing and single women, by widows (40% LNDW) or by those women whose marital status is not known (43.54% LNDW) considerably less so. That said,

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<sup>133</sup> In the conduct of this study and the assigning of the senders of items to different 60 categories, very extensive use has been made of the online French dictionary *Lexilogos* linked to the website Ortolang of the CNRS's Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales, according to which the term *mademoiselle* to designate a married woman who was not noble or was noble but had no title, while *demoiselle* was used until the end of the 18th century for both the young daughter of noble parents and the wife of the petty nobility or the *bonne bourgeoisie*. The dictionary also indicates that these titles could also be used of an unmarried woman. URL: [https://www.lexilogos.com/francais\\_dictionnaire.htm](https://www.lexilogos.com/francais_dictionnaire.htm) (consulted 7 November 2022)

<sup>134</sup> ALLEN, *art. cit.*, p. 96, and WIESNER, Merry, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp.75-77 and 90-91.

<sup>135</sup> ALLEN, *art. cit.*, p. 96.

Allen's arguments and consequently those of Merry Wiesner appear to be corroborated.

## 8. JEWS, CITIZENS OF COLOUR AND BLACKS

When, protected by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, Jews, citizens of colour and Blacks established on French soil and dominion decided to ask for equal rights<sup>136</sup>, the request was opposed by the deputies of the Northeast with regard to the Jews of the East and the colonial lobbies with regard to citizens of colour and Blacks and the deputies who supported them. The Jews of the south of France, also known as Portuguese, Spanish or Avignon Jews, mostly Sephardic, obtained citizenship on 28 January 1790, but the Eastern Jews – the Ashkenazis, known as German Jews, located in the territories of Alsace-Lorraine and the Three bishoprics – had to wait almost until the closure of the National Constituent Assembly, on 27 September 1791, to achieve citizenship<sup>137</sup>. In the case of citizens of colour and Blacks, only the free, the offspring of a free father and a free mother, were granted citizenship on 15 May 1791, only to lose it again on 24 September 1791<sup>138</sup>. The powerful colonists and wealthy businessmen of the Massiac Club, opposed to the demands made by the Society of the Friends of the Blacks, worked to maintain slavery and the slave trade and to forge a separate constitutional regime for the colonies and prevent free persons of colour, some of whom themselves owned landed property and slaves, from obtaining their civic rights<sup>139</sup>.

Given the presence of competing pressures, for and against abolishing the trafficking in Black slaves or extending political and civil rights to Jews and citizens of colour, how were the items that Jews, citizens of colour, and Blacks wrote to the National Constituent Assembly and that ended up in the

<sup>136</sup> GODECHOT, *art. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>137</sup> MULLER, Claude, "Religion et Révolution en Alsace", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, AHRF, 337 (2004), p. 71. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41889535> (consulted 7 August 2020)

<sup>138</sup> GAUTHIER, *Triomphe et mort du droit naturel*, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>139</sup> COVO, Manuel, "Le Comité des colonies. Une institution au service de la « famille coloniale » ?", *La Révolution française. Cahiers de l'Institut d'histoire de la Révolution française*, 3 (2012), paragraphs 6-9. URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/lrf/692> (consulted 29 April 2022) and REGENT, Frédéric, "Préjugé de couleur, esclavage et citoyennetés dans les colonies françaises (1789-1848)", *La Révolution française. Cahiers de l'Institut d'histoire de la révolution française*, 9 (2015), paragraph 17-18. URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/lrf/1403> (consulted 29 April 2022)

hands of the Committee of Reports dealt with? And, no less important, how were these items managed under the chairmanship of Henri Grégoire in the Committee of Reports from 29 January 1790 to 28 April of the same year? The question is not trivial, given that Henri Grégoire championed the citizenship of the Jews and defended the programme of the Society of the Friends of the Blacks in favour of the citizenship of free persons of colour and the immediate abolition of the traffic in slaves and gradual abolition of slavery<sup>140</sup>.

Fifty per cent of the items written by Jews registered in the Committee of Reports were not dealt with. On the other hand, of the fourteen recorded items written by Jews, the provenance of eleven is known. One came from the southwest, where the Jews had integrated well, enjoyed certain privileges and had even participated in the electoral assemblies of 1789 and where some of them engaged in international trade and acquired plantations in the colonies, while the other ten items came from the East where the majority of Jews lived precariously, almost like serfs, burdened by heavy taxes, without full freedom to marry or to move, deprived of some essential civil rights, marginalised both by their neighbours and by the Jews of the Southwest, and generally hated for their commercial and financial activities<sup>141</sup>. The item that came from the Southwest was dealt with, but seventy per cent of the items that came from the East were left unattended.

Of the items written by citizens of colour and Blacks, the Committee of Reports only registered two items, one written by several Blacks from Marseille and the other written by citizens of colour gathered in Paris as American colonists. The item written by the Blacks from Marseille was not dealt with, while the item written by citizens of colour in Paris, which was read in the National Constituent Assembly on 6 July 1790, without the Assembly discussing its content, and which was registered in the Committee

<sup>140</sup> REGENT, *art. cit.*, paragraph 21.

<sup>141</sup> SAGNAC, Philippe, “Les juifs et la Révolution française (1789-1791)” and “Les juifs et la Révolution française (1789-1791) (Suite et fin)”, *Revue d'histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 1 and 3 (1899/1900), pp. 5-23, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20523047> (consulted 7 August 2020) and pp. 209-234, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20523074> (consulted 7 August 2020), RAPHAËL, Freddy, “Les juifs d’Alsace et leurs coreligionnaires d’Europe Orientale”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 3687, (2007), pp. 123-124, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44191996>, (consulted 7 August 2020), BIRNBAUM, Pierre, “Les juifs entre l’appartenance identitaire et l’entrée dans l’espace public : la Révolution française et le choix des acteurs”, *Revue française de sociologie*, 30 (1989), pp. 502-505, URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3321592> (consulted 7 August 2020) and GODECHOT, *art. cit.*, pp. 49-55.

of Reports a month later, was forwarded to the Minister of the Navy De la Luzerne in order that the rights of citizens of colour were respected and that they be allowed to embark in French ports and return to the colonies<sup>142</sup>.

Now, why was the item written by several Blacks from Marseille not dealt with when Grégoire was the chairman of the Committee of Reports? The committee's register records the reasons for its decision. There was nothing to deliberate considering that the Assembly had not changed its views on either Blacks or people of colour<sup>143</sup>. The item written by several Blacks from Marseille had been written on 13 February 1790, had been registered on 27 February and had been deliberated on 24 March in the framework of the Committee of Reports when the National Constituent Assembly was adopting the first decrees concerning the colonies, and the Friends of the Blacks deputies were attempting, unsuccessfully, to ensure that these decrees clearly specified the participation of citizens of colour in the elections of the colonial Assemblies<sup>144</sup>. In view of the fact that the Assembly was not prepared to specify that participation, deliberately resorting to ambiguity, did the deputies of the Committee of Reports consider that it was not appropriate to deliberate on an item written by several Blacks residing in one of the great Mediterranean ports? On the basis of the register entry, it seems so.

However, the item written by several Blacks from Marseille was not the only one that was not dealt with because of the National Constituent Assembly's lack of interest in an issue. When Grégoire entered the Committee of Reports on 29 January 1790, he left unattended to a *mémoire* from the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine and the Three bishoprics which had been registered six days before and had come into his hands<sup>145</sup>. The day before his entry into the Committee of Reports, Grégoire had seen to it that all Sephardic Jews, and not only the Jews of Bordeaux, would enjoy active citizenship if they met the required conditions<sup>146</sup>. Now, according to the historian Ruth F. Necheles, when Grégoire tried to talk about the status of some Jews from the East who had letters patent similar to those of the Jews of Bordeaux, there was indescribable disorder in the Assembly. According to Necheles, the anti-Jewish coalition accepted that the Sephardic Jews could be allowed active

<sup>142</sup> AN, D\*XL 59, n°5128.

<sup>143</sup> AN, AF/I\*/8 n°3462.

<sup>144</sup> GAUTHIER, Florence, *L'aristocratie de l'épiderme. Le combat de la Société des Citoyens de Couleur, 1789-1791*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2007, pp.141-149 and REGENT, *art. cit.*, paragraph 25.

<sup>145</sup> AN, AF/I\*/7 n°2858.

<sup>146</sup> AP, vol. XI, p. 365.



citizenship if they met the requirements, but referred the question of the Ashkenazis to the Constitution Committee, which was to take more than a year to submit its report<sup>147</sup>. Given that the Assembly was not willing to discuss the situation of the Ashkenazis, did Grégoire, together with the Committee of Reports, consider that it was not appropriate to manage the *mémoire* from the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine and the Three bishoprics? Since there is no note of any kind as to the treatment of this item, perhaps they came to the conclusion that it was not appropriate to deliberate on it and the item written by the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine and the Three bishoprics was left unattended.

That said, was there any racial or religious prejudice in the handling of correspondence by the Committee of Reports? The question is difficult to answer considering that the items from Jews and from Blacks and citizens of colour are located in group five of the general table; that very few items written by citizens of colour or Blacks have been located; that the two items written by self-declared Catholics were as likely to be undealt with as items from Jews (fifty per cent per cent for both groups); that the item from the Jews of the Southwest was treated differently from the items from the poorer and more marginalised Jews of the Northeast; and that a far smaller proportion of items from workers, butchers and shopkeepers, printers, day labourers and master fishermen were dealt with. However, in light of the two examples cited, namely the letter written by several Blacks from Marseille and the *mémoire* from the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine and the Three bishoprics, and taking into account that these cases occurred under the presidency of Grégoire, one of the firmest defenders of the rights of these groups, it may be said that the Committee of Reports abstained from deliberating on those issues that were not a priority for the National Constituent Assembly and on those that the majority of deputies declined to discuss. This might explain the small percentage of items handled by the Committee of Reports concerning Eastern Jews and Blacks and Citizens of Colour, since in addition to the items already mentioned, the Committee of Reports registered two more items that directly affected Blacks and citizens of colour: an item on the trafficking of Blacks which it decided to send to the Commerce Committee and another in favour

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<sup>147</sup> NECHELES, Ruth F. “L’émancipation des juifs 1787-1795: Aspects intellectuels et politiques”, *AHRF*, 223, (1976), pp. 80-81. URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41915839> (consulted 7 August 2020)

of citizens of colour, written by the Count of Jarnac on 18 October 1789 in defence of the interests of this group, which it decided not to deal with<sup>148</sup>.

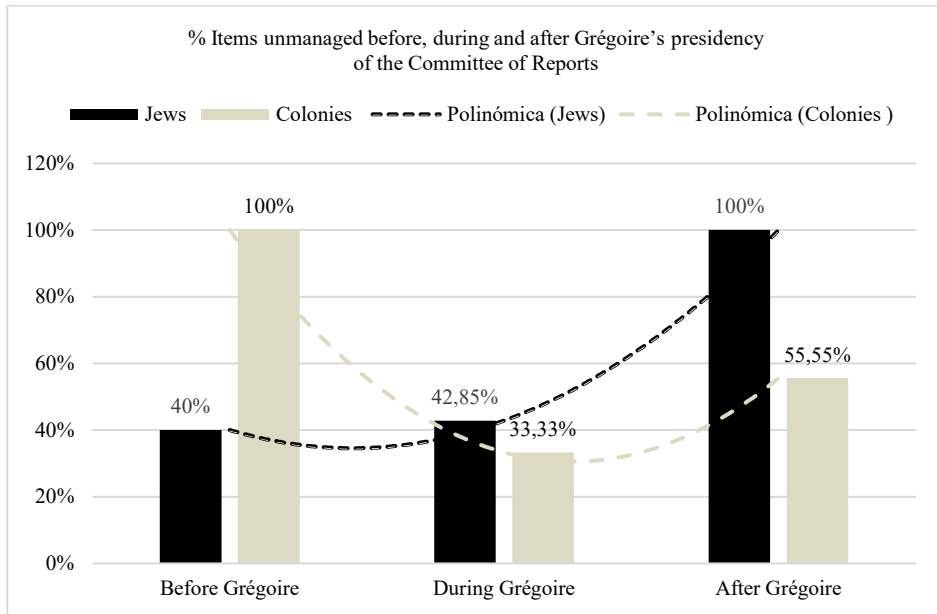
Finally, although the colonial lobby was able to set up a Colonial Committee to manage colonial correspondence and prevent some of this from coming into the hands of the Committee of Reports chaired by Grégoire<sup>149</sup>, items from the colonies continued to reach the Committee of Reports. In fact, 64.28% of the items from the colonies registered in the Committee of Reports were received when the Colonial Committee was in place. However, like the items written by Blacks and citizens of colour or by others who wrote about issues directly concerning Blacks and citizens of colour, the items from the colonies did not receive much attention under the Committee of Reports. 57.14% of the registered items were left undealt with. However, under Grégoire's presidency, the percentage of items from the colonies left unattended to was lower (33.33% CNG) in comparison to its treatment of these items before (100% CNG) and after (55% CNG) Grégoire's presidency. This contrasts with the treatment of items written by Jews, most of which were recorded under the presidency of Grégoire. The percentage of undealt with items under Grégoire's presidency was slightly higher (42.85% CNG) than in the previous period (40% CNG), with a much greater increase after Grégoire's departure from the Committee of Reports when no written items by Jews were dealt with (100% CNG).

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<sup>148</sup> AN, AF/I\*/5 n°1160 and AF/I\*/6 n°1190. DEBIEN, Gabriel "Gens de couleur libres et colons de Saint-Domingue devant la Constituante (1789-mars 1790)", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 4 (1950), p. 56, URL : <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/haf/1950-v4-n2-haf3158/801635ar/> (consulted 12 November 2020) and KOUFINKANA, Marcel, "Les esclaves noirs en France et la Révolution (1700-1794)", *Horizons Maghrébins. Le droit à la mémoire*, 18-19 (1992), p. 155. URL : [https://www.persee.fr/doc/horma\\_0984-2616\\_1992\\_num\\_18\\_1\\_1129](https://www.persee.fr/doc/horma_0984-2616_1992_num_18_1_1129) (consulted 26 August 2020)

<sup>149</sup> COVO, *art. cit.*, paragraph 10.

Graph 3.



Source: AF/I\*/5-8 and D\*XL 58-61.

**OVERVIEW AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS**

In an interesting article published by Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller in the journal *Past and Present* in August 2020, the researchers argue that, although Edward P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm shared the radicals’ critique of the petition as useless as a medium of political action, the act of petitioning could bring about substantial changes<sup>150</sup>. Although we do not deny that the act of petitioning may generate benefits at many times and in many places, the study we have carried out supports the mistrust of radicals and so-called historians from below in the petition as a useful form of political action, especially in the case of those in greatest need<sup>151</sup>. The analysis we have carried out and the general table that accompanies this work leave no doubt that the

<sup>150</sup> HUZZEY and MILLER, *art. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>151</sup> We should also note that Huzzey and Miller make the following qualification in their article: “The openness of the right to petition does not mean that all petitions or petitioners were regarded with equal favour by MPs or that individuals possessed equal opportunity to petition”, HUZZEY and MILLER, *art. cit.*, p. 127.

items from the ordinary poor, from the poorest, the most disadvantaged and the most marginalised people, were among those least dealt with by the Committee of Reports. Furthermore, if we look at the general table we find that, with the exception of the anonymous items and items of unknown authorship, the items in the group of those least attended to, group five, were never communicated to the deputies. At no time did the Committee of Reports decide to report their contents to the National Constituent Assembly, although it must also be said that neither did the Committee of Reports report the items written by the *seigneurs*, property owners and active citizens, which were among those most dealt with.

If we consider the percentages of items communicated to the National Constituent Assembly by the Committee of Reports, we find that the most communicated items were those written by foreigners and volunteers, ministers and departments, militias and maritime officers, merchants and teachers and artists. These are followed by the items written by deputies, mayors, municipal officials and communes, courts and detainees, wine merchants and artisans, bourgeois and female religious. The group of the items written by nobles and male religious, the general administration and the military, lawyers, ploughmen and inhabitants, and men and women who mostly wrote under the title of *Monsieur* or *Madame* are those of which the lowest percentage, below the average of 2.91%, was communicated to the Assembly<sup>152</sup>.

On the other hand, if we look at the number of items written collectively or in the name of a collective for each of the sixty categories that we have analysed in this work<sup>153</sup>, we find that apart from the items written by departments, mayors, municipal officials, communes, inhabitants, militias and clubs and popular societies, all of which for the most part wrote their items collectively or in the name of a collective, the groups that wrote the most items collectively or in the name of a collective, above the average of 44.86%, were,

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<sup>152</sup> In the first group, with 7 percentages, are the most communicated items with a percentage that ranges between 5.06% and 25%; in the second group, with 8 percentages, are the items ranged between 3.03 and 4.54% and in the last group are the items that were communicated to the Assembly to a lower than average extent.

<sup>153</sup> In identifying the collectively signed items registered by the Committee of Reports we have taken into consideration the following definition that we found in the law No. 43 / 90 of 10 August 1990 of the Parliament of Portugal: “Les pétitions, les représentations, les réclamations et les plaintes sont dites collectives lorsqu’elles sont déposées par un ensemble de personnes par le biais d’un seul instrument et en nom collectif lorsqu’elles sont déposées par une personne morale en représentation de ses membres.”

on the one hand, property owners, active citizens, foreigners and volunteers, whose collective items were well attended to, and on the other hand, hairdressers, master fishermen, the poor, Jews, Catholics, citizens of colour, Blacks and inhabitants and the administration of the colonies, whose collective items were least well attended to.

Moreover, if we look at the percentages of the less dealt with collective items in the general table, we find that we can form two groups, the second being the less attended to<sup>154</sup>. In the first group of collective items in which the proportion not dealt with is above the average, at 31.79%, we find the items from mayors, communes and inhabitants, the military and the bourgeoisie, hairdressers, ploughmen and workers, female religious and the clubs. In the second group, even less attended to, we find the items from nobles, guild masters and manufacturers, women and men who wrote mostly under the title of *Madame* and *Monsieur*, butchers, shopkeepers and master fishermen and the poor, Jews, Blacks and citizens of colour plus the items from the colonies. As a final point, it is important to note that the records of the Committee of Reports indicate that ploughmen and artisans, workers and day labourers did not write very many items collectively or in the name of a collective. Did it perhaps take a while for them to organise to defend their labour interests?

In relation to the items written individually least attended to by the Committee of Reports, we can also see two groups in the general table, with the second again being less attended to<sup>155</sup>. In the first group of individual items of which the proportion not dealt with is greater than the average, at 34.26%, we find the items from deputies, members of the military order of the Knights of Saint Louis, militiamen, the bourgeoisie, lawyers, doctors, ploughmen, religious men, and women who wrote mostly under the title *Madame*. In the second group, the least attended to, we find the items from volunteers, tenants, butchers and shopkeepers, coachmen, printers, workers, day labourers and sailors, Jews and widows, men who wrote jointly with their womenfolk and men who wrote mostly under the title of *Monsieur*.

What can be observed from the research carried out is that it was often not easy for the ordinary poor people to make themselves heard within the framework of the Committee of Reports, and consequently within the

<sup>154</sup> In the first group, with 7 percentages, are the items with a percentage of collective items not dealt with ranging between 32.46% and 48.97%, while in the second group, also with 7 percentages, are the items with a percentage ranging between 50% and 85.71%.

<sup>155</sup> In the first group, with 9 percentages, are the items with a percentage of individual items not dealt with ranging between 34.46% and 38.70%, while in the second group, also with 9 percentages, are the items with a percentage ranging between 40% and 71.42%.

framework of the National Constituent Assembly, in spite of the proclamation of equality and of their being the undisputed protagonists of great memorable days and of the entire revolutionary process itself. If they addressed their mandataries individually, their items were little attended to; if they wrote collectively, they did not receive much attention either, and if they rioted to make themselves heard there was an arsenal of decrees for the maintenance of the peace and public order which could be applied<sup>156</sup>. Furthermore, the items from clubs and popular societies that could have been written in defence of their interests were not much dealt with (48% CNG) and the deputies were not always inclined to hear the contents of their items<sup>157</sup>. However, despite all these impediments in the way of ordinary citizens making their voice heard in the framework of the National Constituent Assembly, some deputies worked to consolidate some more. And although some left-wing deputies defended the right of petition by all citizens, active or passive<sup>158</sup>, the Assembly chose to decree that the right of petition could not be exercised in the name of a collective<sup>159</sup> and that the local authorities could not receive the items that were they did in the name of an estate or profession<sup>160</sup>.

In general terms, the Committee of Reports, in line with the liberal programme of the Assembly, privileged the treatment of items from those who had a dominant social and economic position, lords, property owners, traders, merchants and active citizens, attended to many more of the items from central and intermediary authorities than those from the local fabric and from those in higher positions of responsibility than those in lesser positions and from those who worked in the new executive and judicial institutions than in the old ones they replaced. The Committee of Reports also attended to more of the items from hospital and teaching orders than from monastic and mendicant orders, and also on occasion avoided attending to those items with which the National Constituent Assembly was not willing to deal, such as those from Eastern Jews or from Blacks or citizens of colour. This would

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<sup>156</sup> CASTELLÀ, Betlem, “Les comités des rapports et des recherches : aux origines de la terreur ?”, *Trienio. Ilustración y liberalismo*, 68, (2016), 194, HAYAKAWA, “La loi martiale”, *art. cit.*, pp. 69-79 and GAUTHIER, *Triomphe et mort du droit naturel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-66.

<sup>157</sup> WAHNICH, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66 and CONTAMIN, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>158</sup> WAHNICH, *op. cit.*, p. 317 and PREUVOT, Perrine, “Le droit de pétition: mutations d’un instrument démocratique”, *Jurisdoctoria*, 4, (2010), p. 79. URL : [https://old.jurisdoctoria.net/aut4\\_PREUVOT.html](https://old.jurisdoctoria.net/aut4_PREUVOT.html) (consulted 23 October 2022)

<sup>159</sup> *AP*, vol. XXV, pp. 693-694.

<sup>160</sup> “Décret relatif aux Assemblées de citoyens d’un même état ou profession”, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

support the thesis of Jean Gabriel Contamin according to which the peripheral ideas that the right of petition brought before the Assemblies were introduced to support positions already established within them and not to alter the parliamentary order<sup>161</sup>. On the other hand, it must also be said that there was no gender bias in the management of the correspondence carried out by the Committee of Reports, although the items from married women were dealt with more than those from women that could be considered independent.

Ordinary poor people often used the right of petition to convey their letters, their hopes, their petitions and their complaints to the National Constituent Assembly, but having this right never guaranteed that their voice would be heard or heeded. And the deputies must have known this, because, in October 1791, the left-wing deputies of the Legislative Assembly protested at the manner in which the committees of the National Constituent Assembly treated the correspondence they received, and not only asked that such committees not be set up but also requested that all the items received be read to them. On the other hand, in April 1793, when the Constitution of 1793 was being drafted within the framework of the National Convention, Maximilien Robespierre wrote a Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in which Article 26 read as follows: "It corresponds to every individual the right to present petitions to the depositaries of the public authority. Those to whom such requests are addressed are obliged to decide on the points that are the object of such requests, but in no case may they prohibit, restrict or condemn their exercise"<sup>162</sup>. Robespierre considered it an obligation of the depositaries of the public authority to decide on all issues raised in the petitions, but his proposal was not accepted by his fellow deputies, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen that was finally adopted merely specified in its article 32 that: "The right to present petitions to the depositories of the public authority cannot in any case be forbidden, suspended, nor limited"<sup>163</sup>. From this it can be deduced that the obligation of the public authorities to attend to the content of the petitions was not accepted by the majority of deputies of the National Convention.

In conclusion, everything seems to indicate that ordinary men and women, and the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups, would not have found it easy to make their voices heard by their mandataries, and not only

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<sup>161</sup> CONTAMIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>162</sup> MUNIESA, Bernat, *El discurso jacobino en la Revolución francesa*, Barcelona, Ariel, 1987, pp. 105-106.

<sup>163</sup> CASTELLS, Irene, *La Revolución francesa (1789-1799)*, Madrid, Síntesis, 1997, p. 281.

because they were excluded from the right of suffrage, but because the right of petition on which they relied to make their voice reach the deputies, through letters, *mémoires*, *adresses* and petitions did not imply in any case that the items they sent had to be taken into consideration by their recipients. Consequently, their letters were at the mercy of the favourable disposition of the deputies and of the various political tendencies, and of their knowledge and their prejudices, as well as of the general position adopted by the Assembly on each of the questions it debated and even of the amount of time allotted to dealing with them. Be that as it may, under the National Constituent Assembly, and given the exercise of its functions by the Committee of Reports, the items from ordinary women and men and those from the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups were among the least attended to. In light of this, was the right to petition a useful form of political action? If we look at the treatment of the correspondence it received by the Committee of Reports, we can say that it was useful for those who enjoyed a good social and economic position. However, for those that were not in such a position, it may not have been as useful as might have been hoped.



**ANNEX: THE GENERAL TABLE**

Nº Categories and Group	Name	No. of Items	% LNDW (33.79 %)	% Items Reported (2.91%)	% LDW with Executive Central Power (16.73%)	% LDW with Legislative Power (19.75%)	% Items written collectively (44.86%)	% Items written collectively not dealt with (31.79%)	% Items written individually not dealt with (34.26%)
1 – G1	Etrangers (Foreigners)	4	0%	25%	25%	25%	75%	0%	0%
2 – G1	Par l'intermédiaire d'un homme - Affaires de femmes (Through the mediation of a man - Women's affairs)	15	6.66%	0%	20%	13.33%	0%	(–)	6.66%
3 – G1	Seigneurs/Notables & Principaux habitants (Seigneurs/ Notables & Principal inhabitants)	26	11.53%	0%	30.76%	19.23%	34.61%	0%	17.64%
4 – G1	Invalides/Aveugles (Invalids/ Blind people)	14	14.28%	0%	14.28%	50%	28.57%	0%	20%
5 – G1	Marine- Capitaines/ Lieutenants/ Officiers (Maritime – Captains/ Lieutenants/ Officers)	12	16.66%	8.33%	25%	33.33%	41.66%	20%	14.28%
6 – G1	Architectes/Ingénieurs (Architects/ Engineers)	11	18.18%	0%	18.18%	18.18%	0%	(–)	18.18%
7 – G1	Boulangers/Mouliers (Bakers/ Millers)	21	19.04%	0%	14.28%	23.80%	42.85%	11.11%	25%
8 – G1	Aubergistes/Cabaretiers/Maitres du Vin (Innkeepers/ Cafe-owners/ Wine merchants)	33	21.21%	3.03%	27.27%	24.24%	36.36%	25%	19.04%
9 – G1	Propriétaires/Héritiers (Property owners/ Heirs)	28	21.42%	0%	10.71%	25%	64.28%	16.66%	30%
10 – G1	Négociants/Marchands/Entrepreneurs (Traders/Merchants/Entrepreneurs)	79	22.78%	5.06%	27.84%	18.98%	32.91%	30.76%	18.86%
11 – G2	Baillis/Tribunaux (Baillifs/ Courts)	520	23.26%	3.26%	47.30%	12.30%	27.11%	17.02%	25.59%
12 – G2	Volontaires (Volunteers)	16	25%	25%	12.50%	6.20%	75%	16.66%	50%
13 – G2	Nobles – Femmes (Noblewomen)	12	25%	0%	16.66%	8.33%	0%	(–)	25%
14 – G2	Citoyens actifs (Active citizens)	23	26.08%	0%	13.04%	21.73%	69.56%	31.25%	14.28%
15 – G2	Détenus/Prisonniers (Detainees/ Prisoners)	57	26.31%	3.51%	43.85%	10.52%	29.82%	17.64%	30.00%
16 – G2	Administration générale (General administration)	93	27.95%	1.08%	8.60%	26.88%	30.10%	21.42%	30.76%
17 – G2	Demoiselle/ Mademoiselle (Damsel/ Miss)	14	28.57%	0%	7.14%	21.42%	28.57%	25%	30%
18 – G2	Provinces/Canton/District/Département (Provinces/ Cantons/ Districts/ Departments)	307	28.66%	7.16%	14.65%	20.84%	76.54%	27.65%	31.94%
19 – G2	Ministres/Commissaires du Roi (Ministers/ King's commissioners)	110	30%	6.36%	28.18%	11.81%	3.63%	25%	29.90%
20 – G2	Coiffeurs/Perruquiers/Barbiers (Hairdressers/ Wigmakers/ Barbers)	10	30%	0%	20%	30%	60%	33.33%	25%
21 – G2	Milices/Gardes nationales (Milicias/ National Guards)	217	30.41%	5.52%	11.98%	12.44%	71.42%	27.09%	38.70%
22 – G2	Nobles/ Noblesse (Nobles/ Nobility)	137	30.65%	1.45%	11.67%	21.89%	3.64%	60%	29.54%
23 – G3	Militaires (Military)	135	31.11%	2.22%	19.25%	29.62%	27.40%	35.13%	29.59%
24 – G3	Maitres d'école/Professeurs/Artistes/Académies (School teachers/ Teachers/ Artists/ Academies)	35	31.42%	8.57%	5.71%	34.28%	14.28%	20%	33.33%
25 – G3	Religieux - Clergé Régulier – Hommes (Regular male clergy)	98	31.63%	2.04%	8.16%	28.57%	20.40%	30%	32.05%
26 – G3	Police (Police)	25	32%	0%	28%	12%	40%	30%	33.33%
27 – G3	Religieuses – Femmes (Regular female clergy)	25	32%	4%	4%	44%	40%	40%	26.66%
28 – G3	Médecins/Chirurgiens (Doctors/ Surgeons)	28	32.14%	0%	14.28%	14.28%	7.14%	0%	34.61%
29 – G3	Habitants/Villageois/Paroissiens (Inhabitants/ Villagers/ Parishioners)	268	32.46%	2.61%	11.19%	23.88%	100%	32.46%	0%
30 – G3	Maires/Officiers municipaux/Comités locaux/Municipalités (Mayors/ Municipal officials/ Local Committees/ Municipalities)	1680	32.50%	3.63%	11.30%	20.95%	82.85%	32.61%	31.94%
31 – G3	Voturers/Bateliers/Loueurs de Carrosses (Coachmen/ Boatmen/ Carriage renters)	9	33.33%	0%	11.11%	44.44%	44.44%	25%	40%
32 – G3	Femmes & Hommes (Women & Men)	6	33.33%	0%	50%	16.66%	0%	(–)	33.33%
33 – G3	Horlogers/Jouilliers/Bijoutiers/Orfèvres (Clockmakers/ Jewellers/ Goldsmiths)	6	33.33%	0%	33.33%	0%	0%	0	33.33%
34 – G3	Religieux - Clergé Séculier – Hommes	221	33.93%	0.90%	13.57%	25.79%	6.78%	26.66%	34.46%

Nº Categories and Group	Name	No. of Items	% LNDW (33.79 %)	% Items Reported (2.91%)	% LDW with Executive Central Power (16.73%)	% LDW with Legislative Power (19.75%)	% Items written collectively (44.86%)	% Items written collectively not dealt with (31.79%)	% Items written individually not dealt with (34.26%)
	<i>(Secular clergy)</i>								
35 – G3	Communes/Villes/Paroisses/ Communautés (Communes/ Towns/ Parishes/ Communities)	265	33.96%	4.52%	14.33%	22.26%	100%	33.96%	0%
36 – G4	Avocats/Notaires/Administrateurs (Lawyers/ Notaries/ Administrators)	78	34.61%	1.28%	10.25%	27.50%	3.84%	0%	36%
37 – G4	Fermiers (Tenant farmers)	23	34.78%	0%	13.04%	21.73%	21.73%	0%	44.44%
38 – G4	Députés/Secrétaires-clerks (Deputies/ Secretary-clerks)	44	36.36%	4.54%	6.81%	31.81%	15.90%	28.57%	37.83%
39 – G4	Laboureurs/Cultivateurs/Jardniers (Ploughmen/ Cultivators/ Gardeners)	57	36.84%	1.75%	15.78%	7.01%	10.52%	33.33%	37.25%
40 – G4	Ordre militaire - Chevaliers de Saint Louis (Military Order – Knights of Saint Louis)	32	37.50%	0%	9.37%	15.62%	0%	(--)	37.50%
41 – G4	Maîtres/Fabricants/Artisans (Guild masters/ Manufacturers/ Artisans)	66	37.87%	3.03%	15.15%	9.09%	22.72%	60%	31.37%
42 – G4	Femmes (sans veuves, demoiselles, nobles, religieuses) (Women – not widows/ not mademoiselles/ not nobles/ not nuns)	79	37.97%	2.53%	25.31%	6.32%	2.53%	50%	37.66%
43 – G4	Bourgeois (Bourgeois)	31	38.70%	3.22%	25.80%	9.67%	32.25%	40%	38.09%
44 – G4	Veuves (écrivant seules ou avec ses filles) (Widows – Writing alone or with daughters)	65	40%	0%	27.69%	9.23%	0%	(--)	40%
45 – G4	Messieurs/Sieurs/Citoyens (Messrs/ Sirs/ Citizens)	1169	40.80%	1.11%	15.39%	18.64%	5.64%	53.03%	40.07%
46 – G5	Hommes & Leurs Femmes/Seurs/Filles ou une autre femme (Men & Their Wives/ Sisters/ Daughters or another woman)	22	45.45%	0%	18.18%	4.54%	0%	(--)	45.45%
47 – G5	Pauvres (Poor people)	11	45.45%	0%	18.18%	18.18%	72.72%	50%	33.33%
48 – G5	Inconnu (Unknown)	134	47.01%	2.23%	6.71%	28.35%	(--)	(--)	(--)
49 – G5	Clubs/Sociétés patriotiques (Clubs/ Patriotic Societies)	50	48%	0%	16%	16%	98%	48.97%	0%
50 – G5	Mariniers/Matelots (Sailors/ Seamen)	2	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
51 – G5	Juifs (Jews)	14	50%	0%	0%	42.85%	50%	57.14%	42.85%
52 – G5	Nègres/Citoyens de couleur (Blacks/ Citizens of colour)	2	50%	0%	50%	0%	100%	50%	0%
53 – G5	Catholiques (Catholics)	2	50%	0%	0%	50%	100%	50%	0%
54 – G5	Ouvriers/Maçons/Compagnons/Garçons/ Domestiques (Workers/ Masons/ Journeymen/ Apprentices/ Servants)	13	53.84%	0%	15.38%	15.38%	38.46%	40%	62.50%
55 – G5	Bouchers/Épiciers/Regrattiers/Frutiers (Butchers/ Sellers of spices/ Sellers of leftovers/ Fraterers)	16	56.25%	0%	12.50%	12.50%	37.50%	66.66%	50%
56 – G5	Colonies – Habitants et Administration (Colonies – Inhabitants and Administration)	14	57.14%	0%	0%	35.71%	50%	85.71%	28.57%
57 – G5	Imprimeurs/Libraires (Printers/ Booksellers)	6	66.66%	0%	0%	0%	0%	(--)	66.66%
58 – G5	Journaliers/Manouvriers (Day labourers/ Manual workers)	7	71.42%	0%	28.57%	0%	0%	(--)	71.42%
59 – G5	Maîtres Pêcheurs/de Bateaux (Master fishermen/ Master boatmen)	4	75.00%	0%	0%	33%	100%	75%	0%
60 – G5	Anonyme (Anonymous)	54	79.62%	1.85%	0%	14.81%	(--)	(--)	(--)

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