

“Your greatest enemies, Rome, are within your gates.”¹

“Fools, Rogues, Protected Spies:” Diplomats during the French Revolution

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The revolutionaries critiqued not only the international system but also the actors in it as “fools, rogues, personal enemies and rivals.”² In the words of the journalist Prudhomme, these diplomats, “tainted by aristocracy,” were spies, glib, dangerous, and ambitious intriguers who reveled in outward luxury and show.³ Appointment remained problematic as the definition of loyalty constantly shifted during the Revolution. The vicious factionalism of the Revolution made the position of a diplomat particularly perilous. Some revolutionaries thought that in a reformed world, “based on reason, foreign policy and diplomacy would become unnecessary.... The new world would be a world without diplomats.”⁴ For the comte de Genlis, “the reign of the protected spies is over.”⁵

In the new world envisaged by the revolutionaries, permanent ambassadors by definition were not needed. For what purpose could they serve in the new order? Their very activities were discredited. The nobles’ preeminent association with diplomacy⁶ underlay the larger assault on privilege, on the international system of the *ancien régime*, and on diplomacy itself.⁷ So opprobrious did the word diplomat become that it was rarely employed during the Revolutionary era, although the words diplomacy and diplomatic were often used in the sense of negotiating with foreign powers.⁸ Diplomacy continued to be so abhorred that the most guileless of

¹ Camille Desmoulins, *Révolutions de France and et Brabant*, no. 6 (1790):275. This issue was an attack on Choiseul-Gouffier and Montmorin. Quoted in Kaiser, “From Fiscal Crisis to Revolution,” in *From Deficit to Deluge*, ed. Kaiser and Van Kley, 162.

² Sorel, *Europe and the French Revolution*, 18 quotes Cardinal Guillaume Dubois (1656-1723).

³ Louis Marie Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*, no.92, 16 April 1791.

⁴ Gilbert, *The ‘New Diplomacy’ of the Eighteenth Century*, 36.

⁵ Quoted in Masson, *Le Département des affaires étrangères pendant la Révolution*, 153-154.

⁶ Gilbert, *The New Diplomacy of the Eighteenth Century*, 10.

⁷ James der Derian, *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 165.

⁸ Ferdinand Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900*, 14 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1905-1927, 9: part 2:919.

revolutionaries would boast of their ignorance of such.⁹ Ever since the outbreak of the Revolution many castigated the Minister of Foreign Affairs for employing the agents and relying on the diplomatic methods of the *ancien régime*. For the revolutionaries the conclusion was inescapable: “the false prudence of our ministry and our diplomatic agents” had achieved only our debasement. Our “weakness” left us only enemies.¹⁰ At the very least France had to adopt a system of diplomacy “analogous to our constitution...[that] would deploy all the majesty of a great free and just nation.”¹¹ Diplomats accordingly had to adopt “the most courageous, the most prudent, the most frank, the most pure conduct.” Only by so doing would the ministers of France be able to “conserve or regain consideration and confidence.”¹²

These critiques of the old diplomatic methods led some to demand the replacement of all French representatives abroad. In a scathing indictment not only of the foreign minister but also of some of the ministers abroad such as Choiseul-Gouffier, Desmoulins, implicitly comparing France to Rome, argued that “Your greatest enemies, Rome, are within your gates.”¹³ Such proposals, coupled with the drastic reduction in the budget of the ministry of foreign affairs proposed on 6 October 1789, reflected the increasing hostility of the Assembly.

The mere mention of a profession so associated with the *ancien régime* as diplomacy tarred Barthélemy and others as well with the taint of treason for its purported virtues—reticence, formality, and deviousness—could only compare unfavorably with the frankness and openness of the ideal revolutionary. Throughout the Revolution the people preferred not to deploy professional diplomats who were automatically suspect, but the Revolution’s partisans.¹⁴ As early as year II the Committee of Public Safety urged the hiring of revolutionary apostolates who displayed a republican spirit and a pronounced love of the country. France needed to be served not by men cold, egotistical or indifferent to the Revolution but rather by men who loved France with as much passion as constancy. These simple citizens would disdain the old formulas and reject the hypocritical courtesies. The ministers of the republic would be pure and skillful and very different from those of the *ancien régime*.¹⁵ Compounding the difficulty of selection was the ever-changing view of what constituted a true revolutionary as the various factions vied for power.

⁹ Jacques- Pierre Brissot de Warville, *J.P. Brissot, Deputy of Eure and Loire to his Constituents* (London: John Stockdale, 1794), 83.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹¹ France, *Recueil*, 18: *Diète germanique*, 378.

¹² *Ibid.*, 380.

¹³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant* 6 (1790):275.

¹⁴ Brissot, *Discours sur la dénonciation contre le comité autrichien et contre M. Montmorin*, 21.

¹⁵ Custine, *Le Général Custine au président de la Convention Nationale*, 7.

As Black somewhat wryly notes, although the revolutionaries intended to substitute the “parasites” of the *ancien régime* and the enemies of the new with men of “proven ability and loyalty” they rarely agreed on how to do so.¹⁶ In the diplomatic corps the revolutionaries wanted to replace the servants of the *ancien régime* with men more noted for their probity and patriotism than their knowledge, experience, or machiavellianism.¹⁷ Such patriots, however, were not easy to find. They too often resorted to men who had no experience in foreign affairs.¹⁸ Du Pont in Charleston lamented that “rogues, intriguers, Jacobins, and fools of the republic advanced and triumphed.”¹⁹

Although revolutionaries often referred to the necessity of removing the “gangrene” of aristocracy from the corps, they continued to grapple with the problem of appointing men loyal to the regime. Diplomats thus found themselves under increased surveillance. The revolutionary regimes tried to ensure revolutionary ardor by scrutinizing credentials for revolutionary sympathies and by imposing a succession of loyalty oaths throughout 1791-1793. Some predictably refused. After the abortive flight to Varennes in the spring of 1791, 50% of the ambassadors and 30% of the ministers resigned.²⁰ As the king’s position became more precarious, still others left the service. Successive crises: the king’s abortive flight in the spring of 1791, the outbreak of war in 1792, the Second Revolution of August 10, 1792, the proclamation of the republic in September 1792, and the king’s execution in January 1793, saw the severance of relations with revolutionary France by many states and the reduction of French representatives abroad. For example, the marquis de Noailles, who represented Louis XVI in Vienna, demanded that he be recalled. That demand was regarded as treasonous and he was incarcerated during the Terror, only to be saved by Robespierre’s death.²¹ He was but one of many. By January 1793 the foreign minister Lebrun had few experienced diplomats. A new elite arose, replacing the nobles. Political recommendations from either the assembly or the ministry replaced court favor. Increasingly revolutionary governments chose younger men to serve; those as Martin points out, who were “formed under the Revolution” and those who had “made the Revolution.”²²

¹⁶ Black, *British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolution, 1783-1793*, 48.

¹⁷ Clive H. Church, *Revolution and Red Tape: The French Ministerial Bureaucracy, 1770-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 84.

¹⁸ Victor Du Pont complained that he found himself working next to a young man who had never worked in foreign affairs but who made considerably more than he did. Hagley, W3-238, 26 December 1794.

¹⁹ Hagley, W3-265, Victor Du Pont to his father, 1 Thermidor, n.y. [19 July 1795].

²⁰ The data for these figures comes from Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, “Proven Patriots”: *The French Diplomatic Corps, 1789-1799* (St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrew Studies in French History and Culture, 2011.) Also available on line: <http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/1881>.

²¹ Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 2:428-429.

²² Virginie Martin, “Devenir diplomate en Révolution: Naissance de la ‘carrière diplomatique,’” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 63,no. 3 (2016): 110-135.

The evisceration of the diplomatic corps would have been even more critical but for the increasing isolation of France within the European international order. By January 1793 of the 39 who had served the *ancien régime*, only six remained in the rank of *chargé* or higher. Those who had survived were from the second *couche* such as Barthélémy. Only one, Helflinger, served from 1771 to 1812 because of his ability to tack to the ever-changing political winds, his relatively low rank, *chargé* and later resident, and his comparatively obscure post, the Valais. Shifting definitions of loyalty coupled with the rise and fall of various factions from the Reign of Terror to the Thermidoreans to the Directory accounted for a number of the dismissals, purges still more, and expulsions by host governments the rest. The continuous turnover of diplomatic personnel directly impacted foreign relations. The Committee of Public Safety selected diplomats on the basis of revolutionary credentials and excluded all former nobles. As the formal diplomatic apparatus collapsed, the Committee of Public Safety sent ten agents abroad. After 5 September 1793, foreign relations virtually ceased; the French recalled all their representatives except those accredited to other republics. Excluding the Turks, France had relations only with the United States and republics in Italy (Genoa and Venice) and the Swiss lands (Geneva, the Valais and the Helvetic Corps). France had eviscerated her diplomatic corps just at the time when she was waging war with most of Europe.

The few diplomats left found themselves in a precarious position because of the vicious factionalism. Saint Just in March 1794 asked the committee to at least send “true republicans.” He wanted to replace those “imbecile diplomats,” specifically those “ex-Brissotins.”²³ After the attack on the Girondins, Genet and Otto were dismissed. Genet’s fears of forced repatriation were not unfounded. Otto, on his part, had disdained the revolutionary diplomacy. He only escaped the guillotine because of the fall of Robespierre. Fauchet also suspected de la Forest, the consul general who had returned to Philadelphia in 1794, and placed spies inside the consulate. De la Forest was damned by association. Fauchet accused him of royalist sympathies and of fraternizing with *émigrés*. He only escaped the terror net because of his absence from Paris.²⁴ Another caught up in the dragnet against the so-called Girondins was Desportes, who had served in Zweibrücken and was arrested in April 1794. After the Girondin crisis of June 1793 he was suspect because of his ties with Dumouriez and Lebrun, his ostentatious living style, his expulsion from the Jacobins in June 1793, and his missions abroad. Moreover, he had been ill advised enough to have used titles in his correspondence, a practice contrary to revolutionary ideology. He was arrested and eventually cleared after Thermidor and unlike many others returned to his diplomatic career, serving in Geneva.²⁵

After the move against the Dantonists, Noël was dismissed. Noël, who had been a professor before the Revolution, had had no prior diplomatic experience. Shortly after the August 1792 Revolution he went to London on a short and unsuccessful mission. At the beginning of 1793 he went to The Hague as *chargé d'affaires* but again very briefly. In late 1793 the government sent

²³ Ibid., 2:334-350.

²⁴ Hill, *French Perceptions of the Early American Republic, 1783-1793*, 8.

²⁵ OÉdouard Chapuisat, *De la Terreur de l'annexion: Genève et la République française, 1793-1798* (Geneva: Edition ATAR, 1912), 93-94.

him as minister plenipotentiary to Venice, where he remained until his recall in September 1794. In Paris he was denounced as a counter-revolutionary and a friend of Danton. His situation deteriorated to the extent that letters from Paris were sent not to him, but to his secretary, prompting his resignation.²⁶ When the political sands shifted yet again and the Thermidoreans came into power, they recalled five of the seven representatives abroad. After the Reign of Terror just as the army was purged of its terrorists, so too the diplomatic corps. The diplomatic corps also paralleled the army in its reinstatements. Just as many of the officers who had lost their positions in the Terror were reinstated, so too in the diplomatic corps. For example, Noël resumed his diplomatic career at The Hague as minister plenipotentiary in 1795. Still accusations of being too radical or too moderate could trigger a recall.

The Directory's *politique du bascule* influenced the diplomatic service just as it did the army. Only a complete commitment to the prevailing orthodoxy gained one an appointment. Cronyism also played a major role as friends or associates of the Directors were appointed. For example, La Revellière-Lépeaux secured the appointment of a fellow botanist and a Girondin, Bosc, as vice-consul in Wilmington in 1797. Of the twelve posted abroad when the Directors came to power, only eight remained. The Directors recalled those on both ends of the political spectrum. For example, Le Hoc had served under the *ancien régime* and the new. Arrested during the Terror, he was sent to Sweden by the Thermidoreans, but suspicions lingered, and the Directory dismissed him. In year IV the Directory decided to recall many of those with radical Jacobin leanings who had maintained unusually close relations with local revolutionaries. That group included Villars, who had been sent to Genoa ironically after Thermidor in October 1794. By November of 1795 rumors were circulating that he was to be replaced and even arrested. Despite his efforts and his previous service, he was relieved of his duties.²⁷ He was replaced by Maisoncelle, an intelligent, honest man, a sincere republican, and an ex-noble who had been banished by the decree of 26 germinal, year II. He was a *protégé* of Carnot with whom he attended engineering school, but that connection meant his recall after Fructidor 1797.

Like the army, the diplomatic service saw royalists ousted and Jacobins reinstated after Fructidor 1797, a coup directed against the right. Eight diplomats were recalled. Friendships with men now discredited, accusations of moderation, aristocratic birth, relations who were *émigrés*, service in the *ancien régime*, general distrust or a lethal combination of the above led to dismissal. Now the criterion was a “dogmatic and proselytizing spirit.”²⁸ The next revolutionary gale of 22 Floréal (11 May 1798), this one against the left, led to a purge of radicals, including two diplomats who had gained their posts after Fructidor. The coup of 30 Prairial (18 June 1799) purged the right and two of the Directors. The most notable casualty in the diplomatic corps was Perrochel. During the Revolution he had served as a volunteer in the army before his promotion to captain in 1793. One of the Directors, La Revellière-Lépeaux, who knew him, had him appointed first

²⁶ France, *Recueil*, 26: *Venise*, 316-317.

²⁷ B.L. ,Add. Mss. 46832, fol. 326, 18 February 1796; fol. 328 20 February 1796; fol. 330, March 1796. Also see B.L. Add. Mss. 46830, fol. 161 Genoa, 9 November 1795; fol. 170, 24 November 1795.

²⁸ André F. Miot de Melito, *Memoirs of Miot de Melito, Minister, Ambassador, Councillor of State*, ed. Wilhelm August Fleischmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), 117.

secretary to Truguet at Madrid, where he also served briefly as *chargé* before being appointed minister plenipotentiary to Lucerne. After his dismissal, like his protector, he went into political retreat, never serving again.²⁹

Given the virulence of revolutionary politics, diplomats, even more than other revolutionary officials were not free from scrutiny. Secret agents and not so secret commissioners were sent to ensure that its representatives behaved in ways befitting a republic.³⁰ The representatives found themselves walking the revolutionary tightrope and continually under pressure to prove their ideological credentials. In Solothurn, Barthélémy found himself under scrutiny from Payan, a secret agent and friend of Robespierre's.³¹ In addition, Barthélémy was undermined by Soulavie, the resident at Geneva. Barthélémy alleged that Soulavie, a former priest, consorted with shady characters, acted in a disgraceful fashion, uttered gibberish and, in short, dishonored the republic. Soulavie's arrest was decreed in December 1793 with the support of Hébert, but it was never carried out because of Barère's intervention. After Thermidor, Soulavie was arrested in Geneva on the grounds that he was a supporter of Robespierre and interned until the amnesty of 1796. He was luckier than most; he escaped both the guillotine and later, after 18 Brumaire, deportation.³²

Barthélémy faced another struggle in 1796 with the *chargé* at Basel, Poterat who disapproved of both his principles and conduct of Barthélémy.³³ There was also dissension inside the mission. Barthélémy was forced to request authorization to hire two German speaking aides in order to stop his first secretary, Bacher, from "re-wording some of their outgoing correspondence."³⁴ Despite these machinations, Barthélémy retained his position until 1797.

The Revolution had its costs. The Directory continued to question the commitment of those diplomats who had served the *ancien régime* or those associated with a traitorous faction. That definition constantly changed. Even the *politesse* of Barthélemy was in question. He was, one complained, "too smooth tongued, too humble."³⁵ His words discredited him for they revealed

²⁹ Michaud, 32: 540-541; Otto Friedrich Winter, *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit des Westfälischen Frieden* (Graz:Verlag Herman Böhlau, 1965), 3: 136,137, 140.

³⁰ Guyot, *Le Directoire et la paix de l'Europe*, 87.

³¹ Robespierre's support had garnered Payan the appointment to the committee of correspondence of the Committee of Public Safety in August 1793 and in September appointment to the Revolutionary Tribunal. He would die in Thermidor.

³² Édouard Chapuisat, *La Suisse et la Révolution française: Episodes* (Geneva: Edition du Mont-Blanc, 1945), 56-57; Marc Peter, *Genève et la Révolution* (Geneva: Alex Julien, 1950), 2:29; Michaud, 39: 675-6.

³³ OHüffer, ed. *Quellen zur Geschichte des Zeitalters der französischen Revolution*, part 2: vol. 1: 39, Degelmann to Thugut, Basel, 15 April 1796.

³⁴ Thomas M. Iiams, *Peacemaking from Vergennes to Napoleon* (Huntington, New York: Robert E. Krieger, 1979), 104

³⁵ Jean-Paul-Francois-Nicolas, vicomte de Barras, *Memoirs of the Directorate* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1895), 2:497.

that he was *du très ancien régime*.³⁶ Barthélemy who had served in Sweden, Great Britain, and the Swiss lands, was subsequently condemned to deportation after the coup of Fructidor.³⁷ The mere mention of a profession so associated with the *ancien régime* as diplomacy tarred Barthélemy and others as well with the taint of treason, for its purported virtues - reticence, formality, and deviousness - could only compare unfavorably with the frankness and openness of the ideal revolutionary.³⁸ The challenges Barthélemy faced illustrate how revolutionary ideology fostered a climate of mutual recriminations and denunciations.

That atmosphere poisoned other missions as seen in the enmity between the Jacobin Villars at Genoa and the moderate François Cacault in Rome. In 1795 Villars was undermined by rumors of his recall and even of his arrest.³⁹ Ironically Villars was recalled in 1796 because of his extremism and Cacault in 1797 because of his moderation. In Madrid, Perignon was undermined by the secretary of the embassy, Mangourit, an ardent revolutionary who condemned Perignon as "polite," a damning indictment in an era when politeness was equated with aristocracy. In the contest between the two, Perignon ultimately prevailed and Mangourit was recalled and dispatched to Philadelphia.⁴⁰ This poisonous atmosphere extended even to the remote United States. In Charleston rumors spread that the legation was to be replaced with Jacobins.⁴¹ Létombe, the French consul general assured Du Pont that your letters marked "tibi soli" were burned "as soon as read."⁴² Létombe also marked a number of his own letters for you only.⁴³ In this atmosphere Adet, the French representative to the United States, shared his happiness to be returning home; he could happily say "adieu to all diplomatic titles" and would be content if he could forget every day he held them.⁴⁴ Many shared this disenchantment.

The Committee of Public Safety and the Directory often set more than one agent to a given post in order to report on the other. The situation at the French legation in Constantinople, a house divided against itself, was not uncommon. Descorches, who arrived in Constantinople on 7 June 1793, found himself betrayed by the *chargé*, Hénin.⁴⁵ Oddly enough Hénin was sent to

³⁶ Adrien Fleury Dry, *Soldats ambassadeurs sous le Directoire, an IV- an VIII* (Paris: Plon, 1906),1:43.

³⁷ Guyot, *Le Directoire*, 76-77.

³⁸ After Brumaire he returned to France and was chosen for the Senate. Louis XVIII made him a marquis in 1818.

³⁹ B.L. Add. Mss. 46830, fol. 161, Drake Papers, 9 Octobre 1795.

⁴⁰ Grandmaison, *L'Ambassade française*, 115-125.

⁴¹ Hagley, W3-288, Victor Du Pont to his family, 10 June 1796.

⁴² Hagley, W3-1360, Létombe to Victor Du Pont, 23 ventôse, VI [13 March 1798].

⁴³ Hagley, W3-1359, Létombe to Victor Du Pont, Philadelphia, 23 ventôse VI [13 March 1798].

⁴⁴ Hagley, W3- 1262, Adet to Victor Du Pont, Philadelphia, 15 floréal, V [4 May 1797].

⁴⁵ Hénin had served in 1785 as secretary of legation at Triers, in 1786 as secretary of embassy at Venice, from 1788-1793 as *chargé* at Venice, and from 1793-1795 as *chargé* at Constantinople.

Constantinople to take charge pending the arrival of the official envoy.⁴⁶ The men, both ex-nobles, disliked each other on sight. "Descorches was dumbfounded to discover that not only did Hénin's orders differ from his own, but that a third plenipotentiary was en route, reportedly carrying a new set of instructions." The third, Sémonville, was arrested by the Austrians at Novale and imprisoned for thirty months.⁴⁷ Hénin, who had been sent to report on Descorches, soon began to plot against him,⁴⁸ undermining Descorches not only with the French government but also with the local French community.⁴⁹ The complaints against Descorches ranged from his being "an insolent aristocrat" to "an extravagant revolutionary." He was, according to other allegations, too modest, too obscure, and did not have sufficient "*éclat*."⁵⁰ Hénin scattered his charges widely. He also attacked the secretary, Gaudin, the retired dragoman, Fonton, and the courier, Duclos.⁵¹ To further compound this imbroglio, Descorches was authorized to act against Hénin.

The Committee of Public Safety dispatched three commissioners, but only two actually left and arrived in March 1794.⁵² Their mission was to check on Descorches' activities and replace him if necessary.⁵³ Their distrust meant that Descorches received few orders (he received only one dispatch)⁵⁴ and never concluded an alliance with the Turks. Oddly enough, Descorches was abruptly recalled in 1795 on the allegation that he was a Robespierrist. Descorches, whom Hénin damned as a royalist, seems to have been guilty of being simultaneously insufficiently revolutionary and too revolutionary. Hénin, "a relentless enemy" of Descorches, was caught up in the Thermidorean dragnet and also recalled.⁵⁵

⁴⁶ Iiams, *Peacemaking from Vergennes to Napoleon*, 128.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴⁸ Étienne-Félix Hénin de Cuvilliers, *Sommaire de correspondance d'Étienne-Félix Hénin, chargé d'affaires de la République française à Constantinople pendant la 1re 2e et 3e années de la République* (Paris: Imprimerie du dépôt des lois, an IV), 3, 12-13, 24-25, 33, 55, 68, 160.

⁴⁹ Alphonse Aulard, *Études et leçons sur la Révolution française*, (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1902), 240; Sorel, *L'Europe and la Révolution française*, 4:66. At least one of those men urged the Committee of Public Safety to name a patriotic and Montagnard negotiator and to put Descorches under surveillance. Édouard de Marcère, *Une Ambassade à Constantinople: La Politique orientale de la Révolution française* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1927), 1: 309-348.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 303-305.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2:109-154.

⁵² They sent Jean Marie Claude Alexandre Goujon, a member of the Mountain, (1766-1795), who never went and two other commissioners, Charles François Dubois-Thainville and Fourcade.

⁵³ Silverman, "Informal Diplomacy," 148-149.

⁵⁴ Iiams, *Peacemaking from Vergennes to Napoleon*, 129.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:348.

Nor was there only official scrutiny. The conduct of French representatives often incurred the wrath of the French abroad, sailors, merchants, and travelers.⁵⁶ Hardouin, the French ambassador in Portugal, was accused of failing to intervene when the government had forbidden two French soldiers from wearing cockades.⁵⁷ The vice-consul at Charleston Fonspertius⁵⁸ fell under the scrutiny of the Committee of Public Safety when he was accused of negligence, misconduct, embezzlement, and general ineptitude.⁵⁹ Du Pont wrote that not only was Fonspertius incompetent but that his conduct was "scandalous;" he passed his days in bed and his nights gambling.⁶⁰ The report on Fonspertius' conduct was enlivened by tales of his alleged immorality: he stayed out until 3 am and then slept until noon, dressed ridiculously, revealed secret affairs, and in general made "inexcusable errors."⁶¹ Fonspertius' obvious unsuitability illustrates how very difficult it proved to find "pure" and "prudent" patriots, especially as the definition constantly shifted.⁶² Once found, those sent faced certain difficulties unique to the Revolution. Periodic purges of the ministry worsened an already difficult situation. The turnover in personnel and the decision to appoint often inexperienced cronies worsened the difficulties inherent in a premodern diplomatic service, including communication. Those stationed across the Atlantic found the situation even more challenging. In the United States Ternant received no dispatches in eight months, Genet none in nine, and Fauchet none in a year.

Diplomats, too often cut off from their governments, also faced hostility from an *émigré* community only too eager to undermine them. Such was the case with Genet in Russia where Bombelles represented the king and Esterhazy the *émigrés*.⁶³ At Coblenz Bigot de Sainte Croix, insisted on having loaded pistols to hand before admitting anyone. When he finally left, he did so secretly after taking the precaution of drafting a dispatch to be read the next day and ordering his servants to stay an additional twenty-four hours.⁶⁴ At Madrid representatives found themselves obstructed by a large *émigré* community. In 1796 Perignon complained that he was obstructed at

⁵⁶ Martin, "La Révolution française ou l'ère du soupçon 'Diplomatie et dénociation,'" *Hypothèse* 12 (2009): 136.

⁵⁷ A.N., F. série administration générale de la France, F/7, Police générale, 4395 Comité de sûreté générale., 13 October 1792.

⁵⁸ A. A. E., CP États-Unis, 44, 1795, part 2, fol. 176-182, Philadelphia, Adet and Lecombe to the Committee of Public Safety.

⁵⁹ Turner, ed., *Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States 1791-1797*, 1:316 and 386.

⁶⁰ Hagley, W3-261, Victor Du Pont to his family, 28 June 1795.

⁶¹ A.A.E. C.P. États Unis, 44, 1795, part 2, fols. 176-182, report of Adet and Lecombe. See also fols. 183-184 and 187-191.

⁶² Turner, ed. *Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States 1791-1797*, 2: 390, Fauchet and Le Blanc to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 7 May 1794.

⁶³ B.Mirkine-Guetzévitch, "L'Influence de la Révolution française sur le développement du droit international dans l'Europe orientale," *Recueil des Cours* 2 (1928): 299-456.

⁶⁴ P.R.O., FO, 27/38, dispatch of 9 March 1792, Paris.

each step by the hissing of these vipers."⁶⁵ Nor were these fears always unfounded. At Zante in Dalmatia, the house of the French consul was set on fire.⁶⁶

French representatives also had to deal with the suspicions and hostility of British representatives. These problems began even before war broke out between the two. Eden, who was stationed at The Hague, sent frequent reports on a "very evil" person, Maulde who, though "guarded and plausible in society," was "incessantly" and "malignantly occupied," mingling with "malcontents, libellers, and printers."⁶⁷ Tensions worsened when the two powers were at war. For example, Worsley in Venice tried to prevent Lallement from being received and when that failed, retired to the country rather than be present at his public entry.⁶⁸ In another case, Paget in Munich, thought that Alquier was "doing as much mischief as possible."⁶⁹ British envoys not only reported such activities but also, as Paget vaunted, "continue to do as mischief to their cause as lays in my power."⁷⁰ It was certainly true that both sides attempted to intercept the other's correspondence. In general, French diplomats abroad often found themselves in a precarious position in a hostile Europe, suspect by their hosts, their enemies, and most especially, their own government.

⁶⁵ Grandmaison, *L'Ambassade française en Espagne pendant la révolution (1789-1804)*, 131.

⁶⁶ Joseph-Henri Lasalle, *J. H. Lasalle à M. Mallet du Pan, sur la Révolution de Venise et les affaires d'Italia* (Paris: Chez les marchands de nouveautés, 1797), 7.

⁶⁷ H. T. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken der Algemeene Geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840*. vol 1: *Nederland en de revolutie, 1789-1795* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1905), 283, 12 June 1792, Auckland to Grenville.

⁶⁸ Lincolnshire Archives, Papers of Sir Richard Worsley, 13, fol. 178 Worsley to Grenville, Venice, 31 October 1794 and 13, fol. 240, Worsley to George Baldwin, Venice, 12 December 1794.

⁶⁹ B.L. Add Mss. 48388, fol. 9 Paget to Grenville, 18 October 1798.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 40, Paget to Grenville, Munich, 31 March 1799.