

# *Faith and Terror*



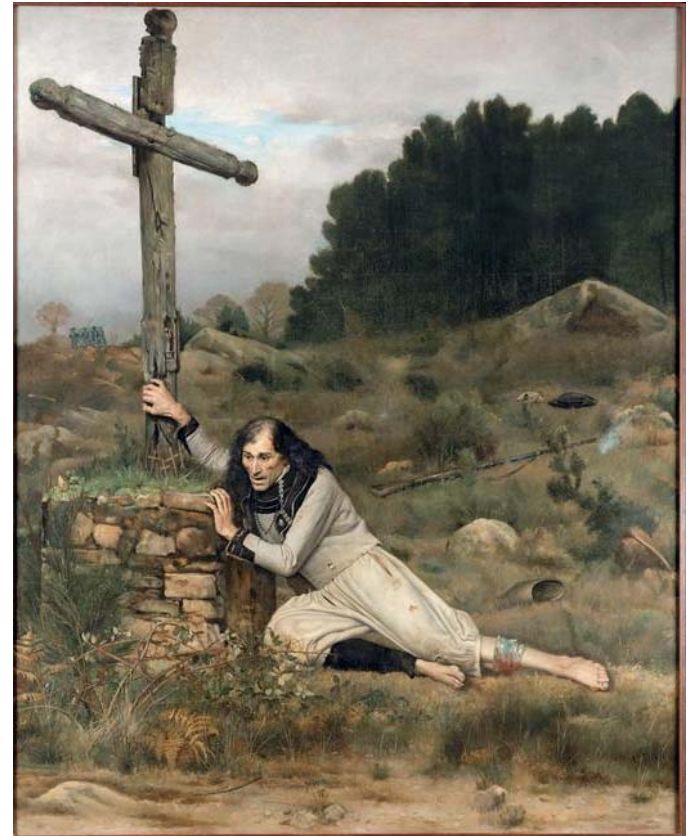


Louis Duveau, *A Mass at Sea in 1793* (1864), oil on canvas; 1.8 x 3.5 meters

Was the Revolution a war against religion?  
Civil War in the Vendée  
Republic-Church conflict, 1792-today

Revolutionary religious policy  
Civil Constitution; Ecclesiastical Oath  
problem of refractory priests  
dechristianization, 1793  
Festival of Supreme Being

Revolution as itself a religious war?  
natural law and the cult of virtue  
love of the fatherland



A. E. Bellet  
*Scene from the Chouans War* (1882)  
oil on canvas; 3.2 x 2.35 meters

# The Vendée: Uprising, Civil War, or Counter Revolution?

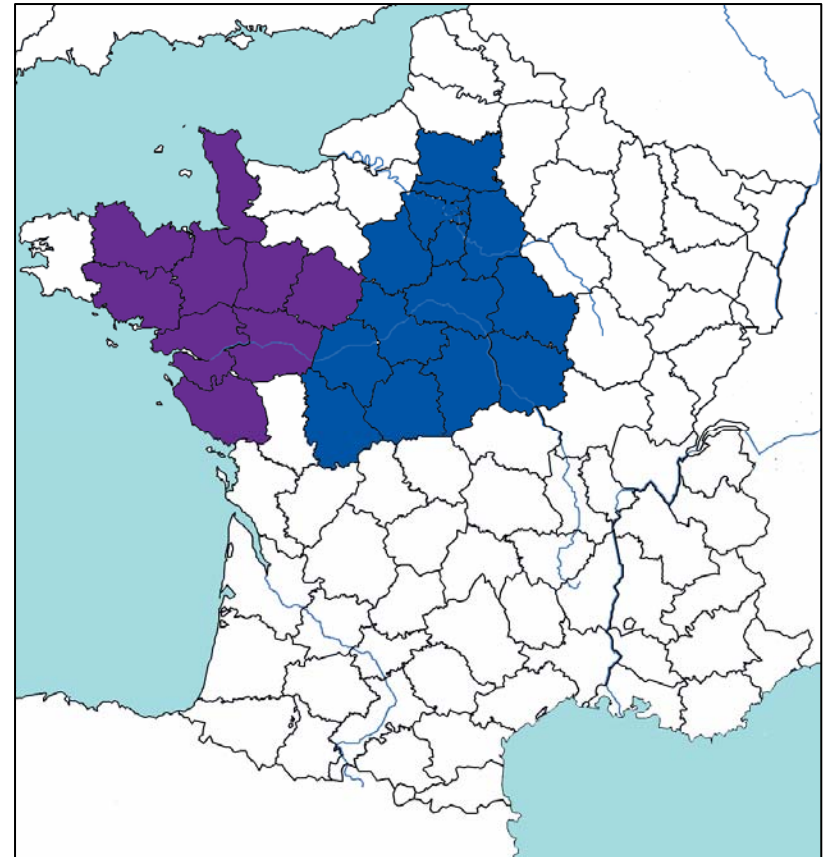


"God, the King"

200,000-250,000 "civilian" deaths (1793-1794)

begins as large scale draft resistance

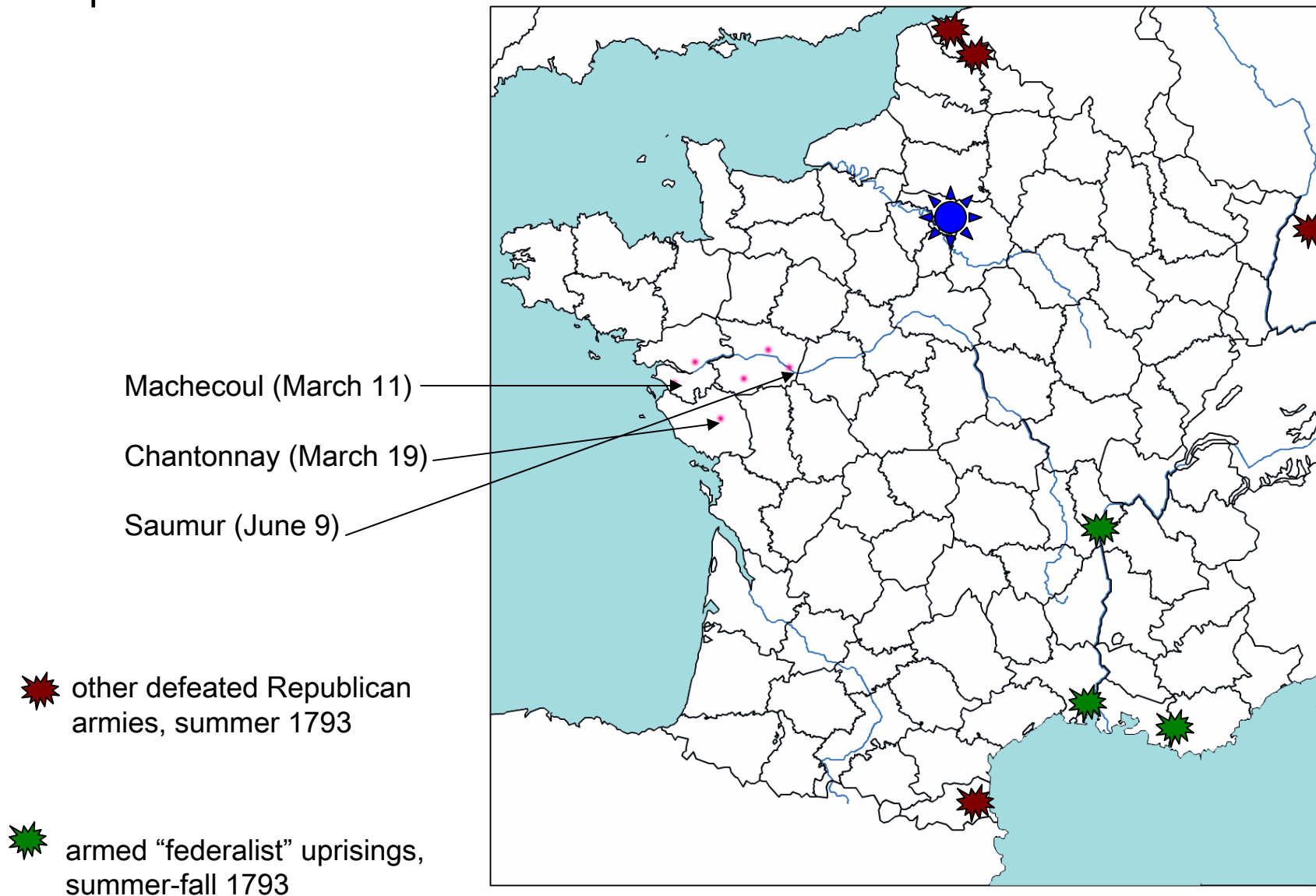
massacre of Republican officials at Machedoul  
ambush of General Marcé near Chantonnay



purple=support for "Royal and Catholic Army"  
blue=generally supportive of the Convention

winter-autumn 1793

# The Republic Under Attack



## The Royal and Catholic Army

no members of the royal family

no uniforms, few weapons, little discipline



Pierre-Narcisse Guérin  
*Henri Duverger, comte de la Rochejaquelein, 1772-1794 (1817)*  
oil on canvas, 2.16 x 1.4 meters



# The Vendée Today: A Catholic and Royal Army of America?

The United States of America (Sept. 3, 1783 – Jan. 20, 2009), no longer under the influence of its own, noble revolution, is now under the influence of THE Revolution; that is, the spirit of the anti-God, anti-clerical, atheistic Revolution that destroyed the thousand year old Catholic Monarchy in France and which later directly inspired Lenin in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia ...

Democratic Republics are inferior forms of government to that of the Catholic Monarchy...the “will of the people” itself is an insufficient and most capricious principle to exalt. ... Is God pleased that “the will of the people” chooses to legalize intrinsically evil homosexual unions?

The Catholic and Royal Army of America is set forth here as a potential social and political counter-revolutionary movement with the objective of changing the course of America back to the goodness of Catholic government and culture.



*Vive le Roi. Vive la culture Catholique.  
Vive des Etats-Unis. Vive la France.*

<http://joanandtherese.net/> (March 2011)

Was the Revolution a war against religion?

## Civil Constitution of the Clergy (decree voted July, 12 1790)

parish priests all paid by the state

State becomes responsible for poor relief, nursing, education

bishops to be elected by all active citizens (including Protestants and Jews)

all members of the clergy have to take oath of loyalty to the Nation



March 1791 condemned by Pope

May 1791 priests who refuse to take oath can still preach, but have to find their own buildings, pay own expenses, etc.

“I swear to uphold the Constitution with all my power”

## Who Took the Oath?

52% of parish clergy (26,542)

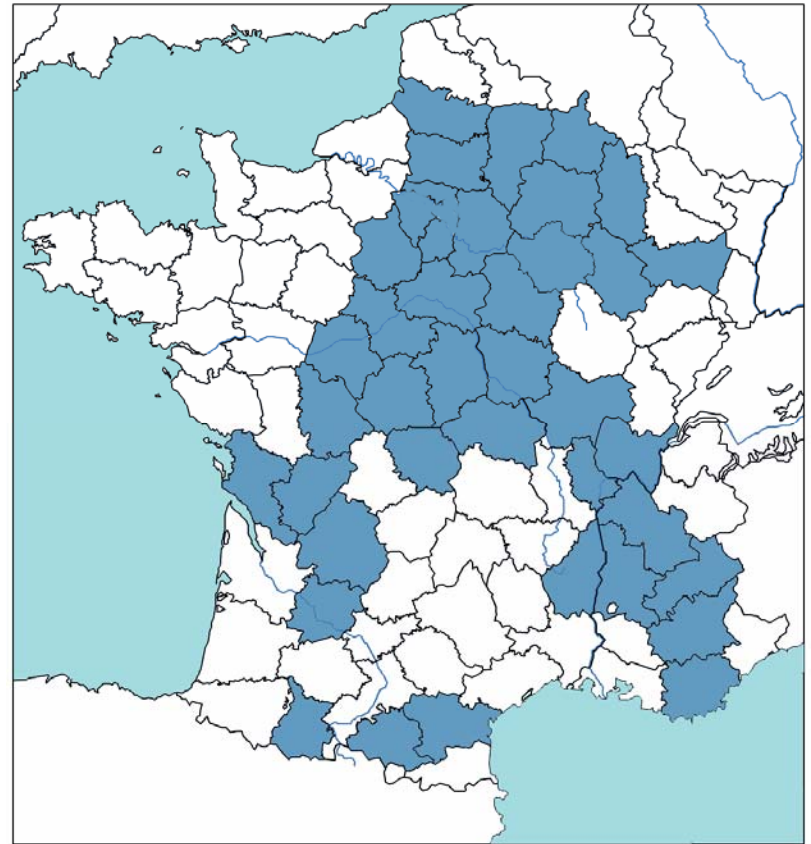
10% fewer *vicaires* (assistant priests)  
than *curés*

41% of clergy in towns of 8000-20,000

32% in towns of 20,000-50,000

25% of clergy in provincial towns with  
populations over 50,000

57% in Paris



blue=above national average  
white=below national average

May 1792	Refractory priests (those who did not take the oath) can be deported at the request of twenty active citizens
August 16, 1792	Paris city government (Commune) prohibits religious processions
March 1793	“deported” priests still in France subject to execution
August 27, 1793	All refractory priests to be deported
November 1793	republican calendar adopted (no more Sundays) dechristianization encouraged by Representatives on Mission
December 1793	Convention re-affirms freedom of worship
May 1794	Robespierre attacks atheism; calls for Festival of Supreme Being
June 9, 1794 (20 prairial II)	Festival of Supreme Being



F. Verly, "Interior Decoration for the Temple of Reason, showing the Statue of Liberty" (1794)



**Church of Saint Maurice, Lille**

Dechristianization in the provinces



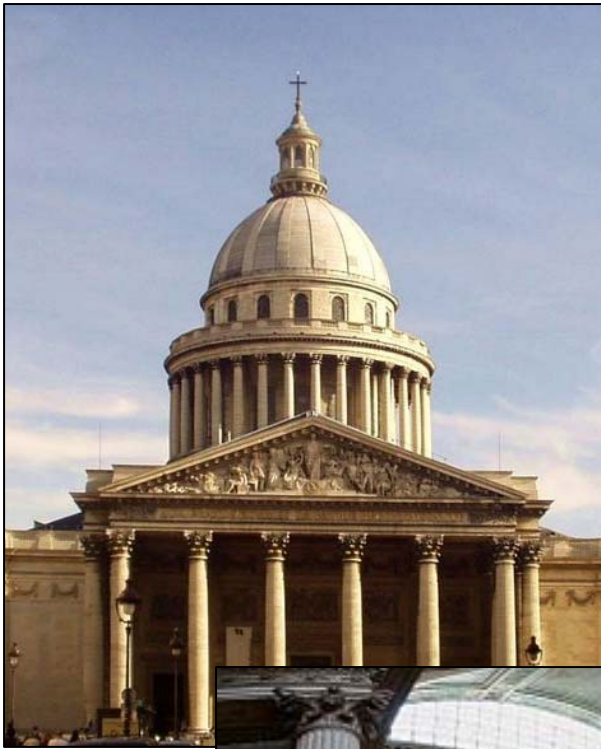
F. Verly, "Exterior Decoration for the Temple of Reason" (1794)

Dechristianization in the provinces



Cathedral of Saint Cyr and Sainte Juliette, Nevers (Nièvre)  
Dechristianization in the provinces

## The Revolution—a New Religion?



1791-1806	Temple of Great Men
1806-1821	combined functions
1821-1830	Church of Ste Genevieve
1830-1848	Temple of Glory
1848-1851	Temple of Humanity
1851-1870	Church of Ste Genevieve
1885- present	Pantheon





The Supreme Being ... He it is who adorned the brow of beauty with modesty to make it more beautiful and who makes the mother's heart beat with tenderness and joy; who bathes with delicious tears the eyes of the son pressed against his mother's breast. He it is who silences all the passions before the sublime love of country; who has covered nature with charms, riches, and majesty. Everything that is good is his work... Evil belongs to the depraved man who oppresses his fellows or acquiesces in that oppression.

Robespierre at the Festival of the Supreme Being.

All political and civil revolutions have been confined to a single country. The French Revolution had no country... It united and divided men, in spite of law, traditions, characters, or language; it converted enemies into fellow countrymen and brothers into foes... No similar feature can be discovered in another political revolution... But it occurs in certain religious revolutions. ... The French Revolution, though political, assumed the guise and tactics of a religious revolution.

The French Revolution acted, with regard to things of this world, precisely as religious revolutions have acted with regard to things of the other. It dealt with the citizen in the abstract, independent of particular social organizations, just as religions deal with mankind in general, independent of time and place. ...

By seeming to tend to the regeneration of the [whole] human race...it roused Passions such as the most violent political revolutions had never awakened.

Alexis de Tocqueville

*The Old Regime and the French Revolution*  
(1856)

Why did the Paris *sections* demand that terror be put “on the agenda”?

No one will be able to stand against you. **The Lord your God, as he promised you, will put the terror** and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go.

Deuteronomy 11: 24-26

**Strike them with terror, Lord;**  
let the nations know they are only mortal.

Psalms 9:20

**When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous  
but terror to evildoers.** Proverbs 21:14-16



Louis the Great (XIV), The Terror and Admiration of the Universe (1686).

## Image Sources

1. Church, Les-Lucs-sur-Boulogne (Vendée), France; <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>
2. Louis Duveau, *Mass at Sea in 1793* (1864); Musée des Beaux Art, Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine); [www.photo.rmn.fr](http://www.photo.rmn.fr)
3. A. E. Bellet, *Scene from the Chouans War* (1882); oil on canvas; 3.2 x 2.35 meters; Musée des Beaux Arts, Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine); [www.photo.rmn.fr](http://www.photo.rmn.fr)
4. Map adapted from [www.hist-geo.co.uk](http://www.hist-geo.co.uk); data from Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France* (1986); see also his article in the *Journal of Modern History*, 1982.
5. map from [www.hist-geo.co.uk](http://www.hist-geo.co.uk); data from David A. Bell, *The First Total War* (2007) and Colin Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution* (1988).
6. Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, *Henri Duverger, comte de la Rochejaquelein, 1772-1794* (1817); oil on canvas, 2.16 x 1.4 meters; [www.photo.rmn.fr](http://www.photo.rmn.fr)
7. <http://joanandtherese.net/>
9. map from [www.hist-geo.co.uk](http://www.hist-geo.co.uk) ; data from Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture*
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13. photo by RLS
14. [commons.wikimedia.org](http://commons.wikimedia.org)
15. *Festival Celebrated in Honor of the Supreme Being* (1794?); [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr)
17. "Louis the Great, the Terror of the Universe" (Paris: N Langlois, 1686); [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr)