Chapter 2

Revolution beyond Borders: Conceptualizing the Universal and Cosmopolitan in the French Revolution, 1789–1815

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At first sight, the extension of the French Revolution beyond borders seems to be a classic topic. Factualist accounts on revolutionary 'cosmopolitanism', 'universalism', or 'fraternity' are prominent both in historical and political theory research. The phenomena have recently gained further attention due to the transnational and global turns in post-bicentenary scholarship as well as ahistorical, normative uses of 'cosmopolitanism'. However, except for van den Heuvel's article on *cosmopolite* and *cosmopoli(tis)me* in *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich* and Helge Jordheim's work on the late eighteenth-century 'ismatization' of cosmopolitan thinking in German (Jordheim 2018: 311) there are hardly any systematic semantic analyses of these or related concepts. Many phenomenological or typological approaches to cosmopolitanism or universalism tend to carry normative implications about revolution as a transnational experience.

In this chapter, we analyse the political experiences and dynamics of the revolutionary debates of the 1790s and their aftermath in the 1800s, focusing on the relationships between nations and on cross-national contacts and transfers. Our interest lies in changing conceptualizations of what is in present-day research called the transnational that the French Revolution together with the revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars brought about in French, British, German and Dutch political discourses. We are thereby complicating a seemingly straightforward narrative of revolutionary liberation and emancipation by looking at the ambivalences and contestations of French world discourse and by tracing subsequent discourse cycles in neighbouring countries as they responded to experiences of Revolution and increasingly unchained warfare.

Our approach takes its inspiration from David Armitage's and Sanjay Subramanyam's call for writing 'transitive' histories, i.e. histories with defined transnational objects (Armitage and Subramanyam 2010: xiv). In our case, rather than simply speaking of 'revolutionary cosmopolitanism' or 'universalism', we intend to make clear how these concepts were used: which

actors (sympathizers, foreigners, military etc.) or institutions (such as the law) they referred to, in which way and with which limits. Aware that 'transnational' is a modern analytical category for a historical phenomenon expressed in very different terms in the Age of Revolutions, we argue that the revolutionary experiences and discourses presented a large spectrum of competing, mirroring or overlapping imaginations beyond the nation. These opened up universalist visions of an exported revolution but, at the same time, reinforced ways of thinking supportive of nationalism and imperialism. French revolutionaries and British parliamentarians, for instance, understood the law of nations and its implications for international relations in competing ways. When transnational interaction and exchange of ideas, goods etc. between individuals and networks crossing borders mobilized ideas of fraternity and cosmopolitanism, the consequences were evaluated very differently in mainstream French and British political discourse.

For conceptual historians, a frequent empathic understanding of revolution linked to concepts like cosmopolitanism, universalism or humanity poses three challenges. First, while they are often positively connoted in scholarship, the risk is that these concepts reify the revolutionaries' Francocentric or expansionist imaginaries and established sympathetic readings of the Revolution, in particular with regard to hegemonic stances in revolutionary discourse on progress, emancipation or liberation. Second, in the late eighteenth century, the French term *cosmopolite* carried not only positive, but also pejorative connotations (see Chapter 1). The 1762 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* defined the term as 'one who does not adopt a fatherland' (Albrecht 2005: 35). On the eve of the Revolution, *cosmopolite* had established itself as the negative, or at least suspicious, 'other' to the positive 'we' category of *patriote*, the model of the new citizen, and to the idea of an upcoming regeneration of the French nation. This negative semantic pattern collides with historiographical accounts that distinguish between an early 'cosmopolitan' phase of the Revolution until 1792 and a subsequent turn towards radicalization and nationalism. Third, the growing literature on 'transnational' or 'global' aspects of the French Revolution critically assessing the French republican model and diffusionist interpretations of the Revolution puts strong emphasis on warfare, emigration, and upheaval in French colonies (Armitage and Subramanyam 2010; Desan 2011; Bell 2015; Forrest/Middell 2016). Integrating these perspectives allows us to shed new light on the exclusion and violence within the Revolution that were associated with categories like 'universalism' or 'humanity'.

For these reasons, a look on France alone cannot be sufficient. We have therefore included the British debate on the 'universal', the 'law of nations', and the 'cosmopolitan' moulded by the experiences of wars against revolutionary and Napoleonic France. This panorama is complemented by transnational entanglements of revolutionary vocabularies which reflect other experiences of revolution, war and mobilization, including the Batavian Republic which emerged as a Sister Republic of France. We review uses of this political vocabulary in Franco-German relations after 1800 to highlight the impact of warfare, occupation and reform on the emergence of national consciousness.

Our analysis is based on four large source corpora. For France we relied on the debates of the revolutionary assemblies that have been edited as *Archives parlementaires* and digitized for the period between 1789 and January 1794 (both the printed and digital editions are still ongoing). Though our coverage of this short period in the French deliberations, we identified major conceptualizations of 'cosmopolitan', 'universal', 'humanity', 'fraternity', or the 'globe' (primarily designating a space beyond France) and related terms for the Constituent (1789–91) and Legislative Assemblies (1791/92) as well as for the National Convention (1792–95). For British and Dutch discourse, we explored the digitized records of the respective representative bodies in the Eighteenth Century Collections Online, the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers and Delpher, as well as the collocation tool of Hansard Corpus. The search terms included (selectively) the world, earth, globe, mankind/humanity, Europe/European, universal, cosmopolitan, fraternity and international, connected with the Revolution and France. As no equivalent to these legislative bodies existed for the German states, we relied on the collection of digitized newspapers and journals provided by the Bavarian State Library.

Relating the Revolution to the World: French Debates on the Universal Nature of Revolutionary Principles, 1789–1794

French discourses on universalism derived from France's self-perceived special position within Catholic Christendom and a historical tradition that saw France as an heir to the Roman Empire. Enlightenment thinking and the Revolution's promise to 'recover' of rights for all humanity fuelled

ideas of placing the French nation at the centre of the universe with a particular mission. The originally religious mission was secularized by the radicalizing Revolution and targeted the European monarchies. France was to be the model for 'humanity': French revolutionaries exported the universal values of their republic in the name of humanity and by force of arms, if necessary. This exportation of Revolution was potentially unlimited, reaching from neighbouring provinces to 'Europe', the 'world' or even the 'universe'.

Ambivalences of Cosmopolitanism

When French revolutionaries debated the relation between France and the outside, the figure of *cosmopolite* was significant. For the beginning of the Revolution until the fall of the monarchy and the radicalization of revolutionary warfare, van den Heuvel observes two usage patterns of *cosmopolite* – a more neutral one related to foreign trade and a more radical variant of *culte cosmopolite*, aiming at republican universalism (van den Heuvel 1986: 7–10). This universalism quickly took more ambivalent meanings against the backdrop of war and terror; it began to imply exclusion as well as liberation (Desan 2013: 87). From 1793 on, *cosmopolite* became more and more assimilated into the category of 'foreigner' and thereby associated with conspiracy against and subversion of the French Republic.

In the early debates of the revolutionary assemblies, across the political spectrum, *cosmopolites* designated those uprooted individuals that had no stable links to family, society, country, or region (Jean Joseph Mounier, 4 September 1789: 556; Claude Ambroise Régnier, 2 May 1790: 359; Bertrand Barrère, 9 December 1790: 358). Like 'capitalists' or professional soldiers, they either posed a threat to the regenerated society or they were expected to change their status and put down roots in it (Félix de Wimpffen, 15 December 1789: 586; Adam Philippe de Custine, 25 September 1790: 224; Pierre Louis Goudard, 30 November 1790: 135; Charles Tarbé, 15 May 1792: 405). Tellingly, the emancipation of France's Jewish community was debated as overcoming the cosmopolitan by integrating the French part of a scattered global diaspora into the revolutionary nation that would then spread its principles over the world: 'The Jews are members of this universal family which should establish fraternity among the peoples; and the revolution spreads its majestic veil over them as over you.' (Emmanuel Marie Michel Philippe Fréteau de Saint-Just, 23 December 1789: 774; see also Isaac Ber-Bing, 14 October 1789: 446; Charles Louis Victor de

Broglie, 24 December 1789: 779; Pétition des juifs établis en France, 13 April 1790: 723; Popkin 2015).

Revolutionary Worldviews, Francocentrism and War

When we broaden our scope of revolutionary discourse on the world to categories such as *universel, monde, globe, humanité* and *fraternité*, we observe that French revolutionaries and their sympathizers used these terms in a Francocentric way. They correlated with invocations of *nous* and *vous*, or of the French nation and people in general, often in superlative forms such as 'the most ingenious nation in the universe' (Adresse de la ville de Coire, 2 April 1790: 517). As a general pattern, the 'world' French deputies imagined as having its eyes fixed on France was either to become more 'French', or France needed to defend itself against hostile machinations from outside. At the beginning of the Revolution, the deputies compared the situation at home to other parts of the 'world' and concluded that France had achieved more liberty than most other countries. Exceptions to this perceived superiority were Britain, before the image worsened with the declaration of war in 1793, and the United States.

When French legislators located their country in relation to the 'world' or the 'universe', they became convinced that the Revolution had a large potential impact outside. Based on our analysis, we can distinguish three phases of 'transnational' here. First, the deputies looked beyond borders in order to congratulate themselves on their revolutionary exceptionalism. In the debate on the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789, the comte de Crillon practiced such self-adulation: 'The most enlightened and patriotic society that has ever been reunited among any people of the Universe will take care of a highly important work such as the constitution of a monarchy' (14 July 1789: 231). As Georges Danton's remarkable statement from June 1790 illustrates, this exceptionalist French understanding of the universal could be synonymous with patriotism: 'patriotism must have no other limits than the universe' (quoted from Vovelle 1995: 16).

In a second phase self-adulation turned into calls for this exceptionalism to be acknowledged from outside France. When talking about public finances, the Marquis de Condorcet declared in 1790: 'The National Assembly has earned itself the gratitude of humanity' (3 September 1790: 535). Finally, the revolutionaries understood their transformation of the French political order as a model

of change for the world – an ambition that became closely linked to the egalitarian constitution of 1793 as 'the general code of the humanity' (Armand Gensonné, 27 October 1792: 15): 'Soon, all peoples, who are conquered by reason, will covet our constitution, which is the first example of the pact that should unite humans by the links of fraternity. Soon, liberty and equality, installed on the terrestrial globe, will alone dominate the nations and preside the congress of humanity', declared Nicolas Guénin, mayor of Cambrai and one of the frequent radical non-members speaking to the National Convention after 1792 (30 July 1793: 5, see also *Adresse des membres du conseil général d'Annecy*, 23 June 1793: 90). With the first advances of the revolutionary armies in 1792, the belief in the universality of revolutionary principles expanded in scope: liberating the people of the 'world' from despotic repression by revolutionary propaganda, sending 'missionaries', or practising outright military 'liberation' (François Chabot, 21 August 1792: 690; Henri Grégoire 27 November, 1792: 610).

References to broader relevance of the Revolution played a pivotal role in legitimizing French warfare against the European powers. At first, in May 1791, the Constituent Assembly had made a solemn declaration on the *droits des nations*: for all time France would profess fraternity with foreign nations, renouncing any ambition of territorial conquest (Belissa 1998: 184–97). Eleven months later, the Legislative Assembly pushed Louis XVI to declare war on Francis II of Hungary and Bohemia. At this occasion, Condorcet turned what was strictly speaking a French war of aggression into an act of defence of the 'universal liberty of humanity' (20 April 1792: 212). When the Assembly had to decree *la patrie en danger* in July 1792 as Prussia had joined Austria and France was facing foreign invasion, Marie Jean Hérault de Séchelles and others justified new measures of mobilization and delimited warfare by an early expectation of fighting a war 'to end all wars': 'The war we have undertaken in no way resembles the common wars which so often distressed and tore up the globe; it is the war of equality, liberty, and the Constitution .... This war, therefore, is the last war between all foreign powers and us' (11 July 1792: 336).

Only a brief interlude sparked by the fall of the monarchy in August 1792 made the revolutionaries renounce conquests by force in the name of 'fraternity' with the peoples (Desan 2013: 96). Some months later, in their address to the National Convention, an army battalion dispatched to Mainz expected to keep on fighting until the 'universe' declared that 'humanity is free' (*Adresse du 10e*

bataillon de la Meurthe, à l'armée de Custine à Mayence, 19 February 1793: 5). Indeed, the first major victories of the revolutionary army in late 1792 triggered a phase of self-fulfilling prophecies about republican universality beyond all borders:

> Legislators, declare to the Universe that all peoples who will shake off the yoke of despotism and desire the protection of the French and the reunion with their Republic will be protected and recognized as French. ... the peoples ... only wait for this desired moment to break their chains; and it is only out of fear of collapsing/yielding, by lack of your support, that they have not yet done so (*Adresse du maire et des officiers municipaux du baillage de Berg-Zabern*, 18 November 1792: 461).

As became clear during 1793, this *fraternité universelle* was a clearly Francocentric endeavour brought about by 'the Republic regenerating the universe' that would plant tricolour flags – and French guns – over Europe – even in parts from where no calls for liberation from despotic regimes had arrived in Paris (*Adresse des administrateurs du département de la Côte-d'Or*, 5 March 1793: 608; *Lettre des amis de la liberté et de l'égalité de la ville de Gand*, 5 February 1793: 218). At first, war mobilization was directed against Austria and Prussia. For Condorcet, their support for the outlawed French émigrés marked an act of disrespect of French law and, by extension, turned the foreign monarchs into 'enemies of humanity' who were likewise betraying their own peoples (20 April 1792: 211; see also Jeismann 1992: 127). After the execution of Louis XVI, the French declaration of war on Britain and the British conquest of Toulon turned 'the new Carthage' over the Channel and its Prime Minister William Pitt into yet more 'enemies of humanity' and into violators of the 'law of nations [*droit des gens*]' (*Lettre des membres du conseil général de la commune de Nîmes*, 29 November 1793: 333; *Adresse de la Société populaire de Niort* 12 December 1793: 350; *La Société républicaine de Montpasier*, 5 December 1793: 653). In the antagonistic logic of French republicans, defeating British 'despotism' became equivalent to 'giving liberty to the Universe' (*Adresse du conseil général du département du Nord*, 15 February 1793: 573). In September 1793, after failed attempts to 'denationalize' warfare against foreign governments (but not nations), the National Convention refrained from all *idées philosophiques* in warfare returning to the *lois de guerre* (André Jeanbon Saint-André, 15 September 1793: 231; see also van den Heuvel 1986: 51; Belissa 1998: 356–57).

A Cosmopolitan Nation? Inclusion and Exclusion of Foreigners and Enemies

There were significant exceptions to the general reproach that foreign states were 'despotic' or 'tyrannical'. In the revolutionary assemblies, the vocabulary of the cosmopolitan was used in numerous emphatic invocations of foreign sympathizers of the Revolution, in particular in response to addresses and declarations of solidarity with the revolutionary cause. The proceedings also reveal the important role of foreigners who spoke to the assemblies, including British and Irish Whig clubs, constitutional or reform societies and American or German Francophiles.

After the outbreak of the war with Austria and Prussia and even despite the end of the French monarchy, British and Irish revolutionary societies stuck to their solidarity with the Jacobins (Belissa 1998: 362). In their letters, addresses and speeches to the revolutionary assemblies, these Francophiles from abroad stressed the universal impact of the Revolution around categories such as 'cosmopolite', 'fraternity', 'humanity', 'citizenship', or 'citizens of the world'. Despite the ambiguity of such 'cosmopolitanism', French observers could also present a British radical like Joseph Priestley as 'a cosmopolitan and, by consequence, French man' (François Chabot, 24 August 1792: 690). Members of the British corresponding societies did not see a problem in associating themselves with the French Revolution as 'citizens of the world' (Revolution Society 1789: 9).

The most notorious of these emphatic foreigners was the Prussian noblemen Anacharsis Cloots who took residence in Paris as 'capital of the Globe' in 1789 and stylized himself as *orateur du genre humain*. As such, he became a French citizen when the Assembly presented as eighteen European and American foreigners as *citoyens du monde,* elevating them to French and prospectively 'world' citizenship (Israel 2014: 266; Desan 2013; Coignard 2017: 54–63). As a French citizen, Cloots was then elected to the National Convention. Even before that, he had been admitted to speak to the deputies: in 1790, he led a delegation of twenty-one 'nations' from Europe and Asia, who had come to Paris for the *Fête de la Fédération* on Bastille Day, to demonstrate that the French Revolution had given a sign of resurrection 'in all quarters of the world' (Anacharsis Cloots, 19 June 1790: 373). A month after a Paris crowd had dethroned the king in August 1792, he made a speech in favour of the pantheonization of Johannes Gutenberg that expressed the

political possibilities of that historical moment. As Cloots saw the emergence of print culture at the origins of the Revolution and mass mobilization, the dramatic changes in France represented for him only the first step to a *législature cosmopolite* for a *confédération universelle* leading to a *globe organisé à la française*:

> Gutenberg's art ... will make you one day the representatives of one billion brothers. The Universe, put into equal departments, will forget about its old national denominations and contestations, to eternally keep fraternal peace under the aegis of a law which ... will never face the slightest resistance anywhere. The Universe will form one state of united individuals, ... the Universal Republic (Cloots, 9 September 1792: 500).

Such sympathies expressed by foreign supporters to French deputies and the pathetic reception of their addresses and speeches in the assemblies stood in sharp contrast with the public ostracism of fellow French citizens, performed in the interest of *l'humanité tout entire* (Charles Louis François Gabriel Morisson, 13 November 1792: 388). We find this specific world discourse applied to the 'foreigner' (Saint-Just) Louis XVI. His trial and execution served as a 'prelude to the revolutions of the entire globe' anticipating the imminent republicanization of the world (*Société populaire des Montagnards de Saint-Omer*, 30 September 1793: 333; see also *Adresse des administrateurs du directoire du département des Deux-Sèvres*, 17 February 1793: 636; Jacques Nicolas Billaud-Varenne, 9 June 1793: 221).

Moreover, the universal proscription of enemies of the Revolution targeted émigrés: 'roaming and vagabonding over the entire globe, may their torture be to find a fatherland nowhere' (Pierre Vergniaud, 18 November 1792: 493). Their condemnation resembled the early discourse on France's 'cosmopolitan' Jewry. Whereas the latter was to be integrated into the new community of citizens that formed *la patrie*, the émigrés were to be treated as the 'scum of the earth' (*Proclamation des administrateurs du département des Pyrénées-Orientales*, 29 October 1793: 6). As mentioned above, German princes hosting them in their territories were accused of violating the *droit des gens* (*Le comité diplomatique*, 22 November 1791: 291; Vergniaud, 27 November 1791: 440). As the opposite of a *citoyen de l'univers* (Mathurin Louis Étienne Sédillez, 9 February 1792: 303), the émigrés' positive contribution to the Revolution could only be indirect as the

Breton deputy Joseph Lequinio declared: ‘The more of them leave France, the more fermentation will spread over the neighbouring empires; the more the attention of the other peoples will rise; and the sooner the revolution of the Universe will take place’ (20 October 1792: 299). The émigrés themselves shared this revolutionary degradation of cosmopolitanism when they referred to themselves as *cosmopolites malgré eux* (Pestel 2015: 492). However, some German or Swiss magistrates did not see émigrés as possible catalysts of revolution but welcomed them as an antidote to tendencies of insurrection among the local populations (Pestel 2015: 306; Pestel and Winkler 2016: 155).

Universality and Colonialism

A strand of cosmopolitan discourse during the French Revolution that has been underestimated to date is its colonial dimension related to slavery, the status of free people of colour and the Haitian Revolution (cf. Covo 2015). Though the revolutionaries also spoke about *l’esclavage* and ‘the universal enfranchisement of nations’ (Pierre François Aubry-Dubochet, 23 September 1790: 148; Antoine Adrien Lamourette 24 August 1792: 689) in purely metaphorical terms referring to France and Europe, the impact of the Revolution in the Caribbean nonetheless resonated in the debates. This occurred early: the *cahiers de doléances* set up in 1788/89 at local level in preparation for the Estates General put reforming slavery on the political agenda as the ‘wish of humanity’ (*Sénéchaussée du Boulonnais, cahier de doléances*, 426). In his opening speech at the Estates General in May 1789, Finance Minister Jacques Necker mentioned the slave trade as a ‘global’ evil to be remedied by the National Assembly (read by Charles Louis François de Paule de Barentin, 5 May 1789: 20). In the following months, pressure groups such as free people of colour from the colonies or the abolitionist association *Les Amis des Noirs* demanded citizen rights and denounced the oppression of a large part of *le genre humain* (*Adresse des citoyens de couleur*, 6 July 1790: 722; *Adresse de la Société des Amis des Noirs* 21 January 1790: 273). Accordingly, the deputies conferred full citizenship to free people of colour who had two free parents in spring 1791 as an act of ‘worldwide’ significance (Jean Louis de Viefville des Essarts, 11 May 1791: 765).

In contrast to this emancipatory world discourse, colonial lobbyists made use of the same categories to defend the colonial system. Louis de Curt, a deputy from Guadeloupe, praised France as *première nation de l’univers* for being the first to admit representatives of the colonies to a

metropolitan legislative body, in contrast to Britain and its American colonies in the 1770s. Hardly surprisingly, the Caribbean representatives were White plantation owners (26 November 1789: 265). Regarding the Assembly's projects of colonial reform, delegates from the colonies subsequently argued against lifting the *ligne de démarcation* between White people, free people of colour and Black enslaved people citing the 'global' economic importance of the Caribbean sugar plantations. A deputy from Nantes, a centre of the French slave trade, invoked anthropological differences between the inhabitants of different *parties du monde* that justified the enslavement of Africans (*L'adresse des députés extraordinaires de la commune de Saint-Pierre de la Martinique*, 30 December 1790: 720; Joseph Michel Pellerin, 1 March 1790: 771).

With the slave insurrections in Saint-Domingue in August 1791 that marked the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution this anti-emancipatory strand of world discourse prevailed. The subsequent interventions of Jacques Pierre Brissot in the Legislative Assembly illustrate the ambivalence between French emancipatory universality and its application to colonial slavery. Though, as a leading representative of the *Amis des Noirs*, he understood himself as an *ami de l'humanité* that included enslaved people and free people of colour, he admitted that slavery reforms should not happen at the expense of the colonists (9 November 1791: 722). Given the violence committed in the Caribbean, for him the *cri universel* for *nos frères de Saint-Domingue* implied support and solidarity exclusively for the White settlers and those free people of colour who stood on their side (30 October 1791: 522). There was no question of emancipation, little space for expressing ideas of fraternity with Black populations either (Salvador Paul Leremboure, 9 December 1791: 721; *Proclamation de l'assemblée coloniale de Saint-Domingue*, 11 February 1792: 697).

Into the Late 1790s: the Persistence of War

From 1793 onwards, the political vocabulary of the cosmopolitan in France was largely discredited, marked by negative significations related to warfare, outlawed émigrés, the slave insurrections in the colonies and the suspicious figure of *l'étranger* (see Wahnich 1997). Suspected of adhering to the *République universelle* at a time when nationalism was mobilized to support external and internal warfare, the emphatic Anacharsis Cloots ended his career under the guillotine calling upon the 'fraternity of nations' (Polasky 2015: 269; see also Polasky 2019: 114). Linked to a nationalist turn in the French understanding of 'patriotism', the political discourse revolving

around the ‘world’ or ‘humanity’ became strongly tinctured with Francocentric universality. This implied the spread of French republicanism abroad but evolved from scenarios of solidarity and liberation to controversies about hierarchy, sovereignty or conquest, and finally annexation and occupation. For the later 1790s, existing research suggests that the ambivalent power relations between revolutionary France, Europe, and the world prevailed throughout the Revolutionary Wars (van den Heuvel 1986: 52–53). Persistently reproached for lacking patriotism in a nation under political and military strain, cosmopolitanism in France remained largely discredited.

In contrast to these shifts in French political discourse, throughout the 1790s and early 1800s ‘cosmopolitanism’ in Germany remained a largely positive concept, complementary to the nation and patriotism (*Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 24 June 1795; 4 December 1802; 8 February 1805; see also Weichlein 2006). This stability created a tension with European warfare from 1792 as German cosmopolitanism was understood in opposition to French Jacobinism, regicide and expansionism or even to revolution as such, but also to British hegemony (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 June 1798; *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 19 April 1799). Jeismann has poignantly observed the diverging Franco-German conceptions of ‘humanity’ in that respect: Whereas German propagandists interpreted this in terms of ‘Germankind’, French authors equalled the Revolution with humanity (Jeismann 1992: 132). By politicizing cosmopolitanism at different degrees, German observers reframed the concept as the disinterested, peaceful, observing other of revolutionary universality without being reduced to national terms (Albrecht 2005: 301; Klinger 2008: 213).

British Reactions to French Revolutionary Universality and Fraternity

Next, we turn to analysing how French revolutionary claims to universality and fraternity on behalf of all humanity and the world were received by British parliamentarians – as representatives of the leading military opponent of the French Republic from 1793. According to David Armitage, as the British Empire expanded in the late eighteenth century, parliamentary debates became increasingly international. Knowledge of international law was increasing, particularly after the publication of Robert Ward’s *Enquiry to the Foundation and History of the Law of Nations in Europe* (1795), critical of French republican attempts to redefine the law of nations, and James Mackintosh’s

Discourse on the Study of the Law of Nature and Nations (1799) (Armitage 2013: 135–36, 150, 152–53).

Early revolutionary discourse on universality vindicating the 'inalienable rights of mankind' – or norms of international law – had been based in both Britain and France on shared ideals of rights and liberty inspired by anti-slavery debates. As the Revolution radicalized and the implications of popular sovereignty were extended, British corresponding societies joined this radicalization. The abolition of the monarchy and the outbreak of war between Britain and France in February 1793, however, made any interaction with French revolutionaries appear treasonous (Alpaugh 2014: 594–6, 607; cf. Dupuy 2015: 245, 255). Initial enthusiasm about the Revolution by Richard Price and others turned into rising anti-revolutionary loyalism in favour of the status quo. While Charles James Fox and especially Thomas Paine were ready to interpret the sovereignty of the people and democracy in radically new ways, William Pitt turned into a defender of the established mixed constitution and redefined traditional concepts for that purpose. Edmund Burke became the leading critic of revolutionary principles. Governmental voices increasingly represented French revolutionary liberty as a threat to the British laws, liberties and constitution and questioned the motives of British radical societies, accusing them of republicanism supportive of 'the assumed sovereignty of the universe' claimed by the French (Mori 2003: 35, 37; Ihalainen 2010: 488–93).

Opposition to French Universality

In Parliament, the French threat to the balance of power was the real issue, while more explicit opposition to French claims of expansive universality emerged towards the end of the 1790s. Discourse on the *British* parliament as the defender of 'the universal liberties of mankind' rose as a reaction to revolutionary ideas on universal suffrage (Thomas Erskine, HC, 26 May 1797: 584). As Peter Burrell put it, the rulers of France aimed at 'universal domination' on the European continent: while talking about justice, good faith and humanity to persuade neighbouring peoples, they committed atrocities to attain universal dominance (HL, 2 November 1797: 82). For William Fitzwilliam, little had changed in France since the ancien régime, the government still aiming at a 'universal empire', this time through 'Jacobinical' deeds (HL, 2 November 1797: 86). Britain was typically seen as the major opponent of such 'universal domination', particularly after the French government declared that the British constitution was incompatible with that of the French

Republic (John Proby, HC, 10 November 1797: 184; Henry Dundas, Secretary at War, HC, 4 December 1797: 341). According to Prime Minister Pitt, the French held 'principles which professed to be universal' and were 'intended to be established and perpetuated among all nations of the earth' but, in practice, entailed perpetual changes in native constitutions and rulers (HC, 3 February 1800: 324–5). They still seemed to aim at 'universal empire' in Europe and globally (William Elliot, HC, 24 November 1802: 124, 129). In 1805, Pitt completed a memorandum on the deliverance and security of Europe after discussions with Russians, implying the existence of a concept of Europe, balance of power, 'public law' and constitutional order opposed to French warfare and hegemony (Jarrett 2013: 39–41).

The revolutionary principle of popular sovereignty was another major challenge. As George Canning, a rising Tory politician, put it, the French republicans destroyed all freedom by claiming that power originated from the people. According to him, no class had been involved in creating or was ready to preserve such power. Popular sovereignty implied despotism free from laws at home and military despotism 'proposing to maintain itself by universal peace' abroad (HC, 3 February 1800: 489). The rise of popular sovereignty implied major transformations in the law of nations as it questioned treatises traditionally based on dynastic and feudal rights. This interpretation resulted from the revolutionary process: the revolutionary assemblies gradually concluded that popular will should be the basis of the law of nations – only to find themselves opposed by the rest of Europe, and international tensions rising surrounding interpretations of such law. It remained difficult to deduce what the will of the people was, who they were, and to what extent foreign peoples' attitudes towards the Revolution mattered at all (Kolla 2017: Introduction). In the British parliament, few sympathizers of the Revolution would have negotiated with France in the name of 'universal order and civilization' (Charles James Fox, HC, 18 October 1796: 114); most viewed Britain as the leader of the anti-French alliance (Richard Brinsley Sheridan, HC, 20 April 1798: 21).

The war between Britain and France continued almost without intermission until 1814/15. Napoleon, too, was viewed in Britain as aiming at 'universal domination' in the style of an early modern universal monarchy (Dwyer 2010: 306). British universalist conceptualizations were evolving in a direction not so different from the French; the British, too, considered it their duty to

defend the entire ‘civilized world’. ‘Civilization’ was becoming a counter-concept of its supposed opposite, the French Revolution (den Boer 2005: 55). Prime Minister Henry Addington called France ‘the common enemy of the civilized world’ due to its tendency to ‘subjugate’ other nations (HC, 22 November 1803: 26). The role of the British parliament was to defend liberty on behalf of Europe and ‘the whole civilized world’, Britain and France being ‘tried at the tribunal of the nations of the world’ as alternative centres of universality (John Doyle, HC, 23 January 1807: 540, 544; also George Hibbert, HC, 12 March 1807: 100, and Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, HL, 9 February 1807: 693).

British Emphasis on the Law of Nations

The philosopher Jeremy Bentham coined the term ‘international’ in 1789 to more clearly express the law of nations that extended beyond one nation state and mainly concerned relations between them (also Chapters 1 and 3). Bentham considered his neologism ‘sufficiently analogous and intelligible’ (*An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, London, 1789: cccxxiv) but ‘international’ did not yet find its way to public discourse. In Parliament, it remained reserved for references to ‘international law’ or to ‘international forces/troops’ fighting against Napoleon (Dillon, HC, 5 April 1807: 515). Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh recognized ‘a code of international law’ in line with regulations created in connection with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) as the basis of ‘rights acknowledged and maintained by every nation’ and as regulation for ‘intercourse with her neighbours’ (HC, 18 February 1813: 596).

The law of nations – as a counter-revolutionary if not even counter-Enlightenment concept – remained the expression for international law going beyond a single nation (Armitage 2013: 39–41). It was typically invoked to justify foreign policy action in any part of the Empire or Europe as Britain was believed to have a duty ‘to instruct other states in the law of nations’ (Edvard East, HC, 17 March 1794: 620). French revolutionary discourse provoked debates on international law particularly as the French ‘violated the law of nations by a decree, declaring war against all Governments, and forcing those countries, into which their armies should enter, to form a constitution of their own’, imposing the sovereignty of the people (Edmund Burke, HC, 28 December 1792: 218). By contrast, French positive references to *le(s) droit(s) des nations* only extended to republics that had broken with the rights of kings and ‘tyrants’. As an enemy, the

British monarchy was accused of violating these laws when occupying the French port city of Toulon or supporting royalist insurrectionists in the Vendée (Billaud-Varenne 17 September 1793: 307; *La Société républicaine de Niort*, 12 December 1793: 350). As we shall see, the Revolutionary Wars consolidated a gap between two different concepts of 'laws of nations' – the French republican and expansionist, the British aiming at balance of power, full national sovereignty, and imperial public order (Belissa 2006).

British parliamentarians contributed to the construction of the alternative British concept of the law of nations. While some sympathizers of the Revolution rejected intrusions to the internal affairs of France as a violation of the law of the nations (Charles Stanhope, HL, 4 April 1794: 201; Charles James Fox, HC, 17 April 1794: 174), the majority presented British military campaigns as justified by the same token. Once a war was threatening in 1793, Prime Minister Pitt said that the French were applying their 'new code of law of nations … to establish their Government wherever they should carry their arms' while only causing universal anarchy (HC, 4 January 1793: 296). When the war broke out, he presented the French as 'taking themselves the office of the arbiters of Europe … in entire contradiction to whatever had been sanctioned by established practice' (HC, 1 February 1793: 390–1). He insisted that the French regicide should be put on trial on the basis of 'the laws of humanity' (HC, 23 April 1793: 304). Later on, peace with France was opposed with references to the political instability of its regime (George Canning, HC, 30 December 1794: 25–26). The war was not 'a dispute between nations in general at war, but was of a particular nature', concerning the very type of government in France (Charles Grey, HC, 26 January 1795: 305). The Prime Minister consistently insisted that 'every principle of the law of Nations' justified Britain resisting 'a system hostile to the interests of this country and safety of Europe' (William Pitt, HC, 16 January 1795: 324). According to him, the French were applying a 'private law of their own making, a mere internal regulation' as opposed to 'the universally received maxims and laws of nations' (HC, 30 December 1796: 564).

The British political elite increasingly saw themselves as the primary defender of the 'European' law of nations – the concept itself remaining highly Eurocentric. According to George Spencer, 'the principles advanced by France would go to subvert all the acknowledged laws of nations' so that 'the laws and Constitution of France' would be 'paramount to the laws of Europe' (HL, 30

October 1796: 40). William Grenville expressed the same view this way: the Directory was totally mistaken to suggest that 'the French Republic possessed the only supreme power in Europe, and that all other countries might be parcelled out by them at pleasure into what they were pleased to call Republics' (HL, 30 December 1796: 32). The Prime Minister condemned France inventing a 'sacred law of nature' that extended the French borders and tried to bypass 'by a new code of their own, all recognized principles of the law of nations'. For Pitt, 'the Laws of Nature and Nations' was the authority on which the British parliamentarians should construct as opposed to 'the inherent principles of the French Revolution' (William Pitt, HC, 3 February 1800: 306, 318–19, 321).

All this was contestable. In the inaugural session of the representative institution of the Batavian Republic, the Speaker presented the British as isolated, 'cursed by all the peoples of the world', when fighting a war to establish 'a tyranny over humanity' (Pieter Paulus, *Dagverhaal*, 1 March 1796: 7). They were violating the most sacred laws of nations (*heiligste rechten der Volken*) through their measures against Dutch shipping, carrying on commercial rivalry between the two nations (*Extract uit de Decrete*, vol. 1, 1796: 392; Vitzinga, *Dagverhaal*, 1 December 1797: 28).

During the Napoleonic Wars, British parliamentary discourses on the law of nations typically concerned justifying British military measures with French violations of the law of nations. Sometimes the British government also faced allegations that it had broken international law. Senior opposition parliamentarians might argue that Britain held a particular responsibility as the only imperial power to consistently defend the legal basis of international relations. Thomas Erskine, the former Lord Chancellor who had defended Thomas Paine and the London Corresponding Society against charges of treason raised by the government, protested in 1808 against the bombardment of Copenhagen and the seizure of the neutral Danish fleet. He described the long process through which 'civilized nations have emerged from a state of continual insecurity and violence, by the establishment of an universal public law' and insisted that this 'ought to be held sacred and inviolate by all governments, as binding the whole civilized world under one politic and moral dominion'. It remained 'the duty and the interest of G[reat] Britain, and her pledge to the world, to maintain inviolate the acknowledged principles of public law' (HL, 21 January 1808: 32–34). Britain was to be 'the shield, the disinterested protector, and the saviour of

Europe; and the nations of the earth might expect to have their chains broken' (HL, 8 February 1808: 356), reflecting allegories of British global exceptionalism as evoked in 'Rule Britannia'. If Britain failed to do its providential duty, the impact of the French Revolution would become permanent and universal, destroying 'all the sanctions of morals and policy, which the wisdom of ages has ripened into universal law, for universal security and peace' (HL, 8 March 1808: 929).

The tendency to identify Britain as the primary champion of international law was also expressed by Charles Abbot, the Speaker of the House of Commons, in his speech at the opening of Parliament in 1813. For Abbot, the British 'national character' was based on the responsibility to work for the benefit of all 'Europe', indeed 'mankind' and 'humanity', that counted on British leadership and example, learning 'what was the spirit of those ancient institutions, what the genius of that international law'. Britain possessed 'inexhaustible resources of power consolidated by justice, and operating only for the benefit of mankind' (HC, 4 November 1813: 37–38). This conceptualization of the 'international' community was not that different from the French: it was based on a universalist (imperialist) notion of setting an example which the other nations should follow. The rise of such a notion of Britain as *the* champion of international law that regulated relations between nations in Europe would support the emergence of Anglophone and Anglocentric worldviews.

French Fraternity as Revolutionary Influence

British experiences of the radicalized Revolution also left a legacy of pejorative discourse on French fraternity as transnational ideological interaction. As 'liberty' in its British form remained an overwhelmingly positive concept and the French concept of 'equality' was too challenging a notion to be discussed, 'fraternity' was the third term of the revolutionary slogan that was constantly attacked.

In late 1792, the approaching military conflict was audible in the words of the Home Secretary. Henry Dundas interpreted French talk about fraternity as a mere disguise to 'the aggrandisement of their dominions, and the establishment of their own Government' (HC, 13 December 1792: 59). Edmund Burke presented the French Declaration of the Rights of Man as comparable to the Koran in that it ordered the French to propagate the revolutionary doctrine and violently conquer

countries that did not submit to their ‘system of fraternizing’ (HC, 13 December 1792: 85–86; 28 December 1792: 219). In the debate on war, Prime Minister Pitt cited the declaration of the French National Convention on 19 November 1792 addressed to foreign peoples and granting ‘fraternity to all those people who should be desirous to gain their freedom, and offer them assistance for that purpose’. Pitt’s interpretation of this as a revolutionary threat was clear: the French were hostile ‘to the human race’ when offering the peoples ‘fraternity’ with the purpose of subverting governments and abolishing the constitution. The British should not worry, as their fellow subjects would welcome the hostile subtext of this message (HC, 1 February 1793: 389; 12 February 1793: 445, 457). The British government saw the French revolutionary system as having changed so that its declarations of ‘universal liberty and fraternity’ stood for ‘universal conquest’ (Grenville, HL, 1 February 1793: 73).

The Terror in France only reinforced such views. While some hoped by 1795 that ‘the spirit of Jacobinism and fraternization’ was declining (William Wilberforce, HC, 27 May 1795: 396), the discourse rejecting fraternity continued unabated. A bishop might concede that war was not the preferable way of communicating to the French that their ‘fraternizing system must be given up’, yet assured that the British stood united to ‘protect the people themselves from the insidious machinations of their demagogues, from the bloody tyranny of French fraternities’ (Richard Watson, HL, 27 January 1795: 74, 82).

The Prime Minister presented British liberty as the major counterforce to ‘French fraternization’ (William Pitt, HC, 13 March 1797: 33), citing the Netherlands and Switzerland as warning examples of countries destroyed by French or Jacobin ‘fraternity’ (William Drummond, HC, 2 November 1797: 12; Richard Temple, 14 February 1797). The only way to earn ‘French fraternity’ seemed to be murdering legitimate monarchs, destroying parliaments and overturning constitutions (Richard Temple, HC, 10 November 1797: 162). During the Irish rising of the late 1790s, parliamentarians were shocked by attempts to import ‘French fraternity and French liberty’ and to destroy British ‘liberty’ and Empire (William Grenville, HL, 18 December 1798: 301; George Grey, HC, 7 February 1799: 731). The Irish were advised to prioritize ‘the English connection to French fraternity’ (Richard Temple, 14 February 1797: 88, 94, 97; Gilbert Elliot, HL, 11 April 1797: 394).

Those on the other side of the Revolutionary Wars saw French fraternity very differently. The Dutch States General spoke favourably about 'the closest fraternity between two nations yet mentioned in the history of the human race' (HL, 2 June 1795: 515) when referring to the bonds between Revolutionary France and the Batavian Republic. In their National Assembly, F. M. W. Ruisch thanked these strong ties to 'our sister, the most powerful republic of the world' for domestic peace in the Netherlands (*Dagverhaal*, 8 March 1796: 42). The Dutch parliamentarians typically saw revolutionary France as the model of liberty and equality when formulating their own republican constitution (J. A. de Mist, 22 April 1797: 716). They did not hesitate to associate themselves with 'the largest, the most famous, the bravest of all republics in the world, our ally' (Speaker H. Midderigh, 23 January 1798: 428), which demonstrates the centrality of the concept of republic for a revolutionary understanding of international relations. The Batavian Constitution, once completed in 1798, was described as 'the seal on the friendship and alliance between this Republic and her sister the French' (*Dagverhaal*, 18 May 1798: 86). The Sister Republics not only accommodated supranational ideals borrowed from France to their native political traditions but could at times be innovative (Desan 2011: 148; Serna 2015: 39–42; Oddens and Rutjes 2015: 17–19, 27, 29; Jourdan 2015: 187, 198–9). Yet direct French domination over Dutch politics had become evident and increased under Napoleon, leading to annexation by France in 1810.

In Britain, rejections of French fraternity did not cease with the fall of the Republic in France. Napoleon's plans to invade Britain seemed to carry on the anarchy and despotism threatening European constitutions. Parliamentarians believed, however, that the Irish had become sufficiently aware of 'the horrors of French fraternity' (John Berkeley Burland, HC, 22 November 1803: 18–20), their rebellion having been no more than 'conspiracy, fomented by the intrigues of France' (John Browne, HL, 22 November 1803: 5). In 1805, Prime Minister Pitt claimed that, after 'bondage which has been introduced by republican fraternity' and 'by the audacity of jacobinism [*sic*]', the French government was offering 'avowed despotism', revolutionary ideas being still disseminated across borders (HC, 8 February 1805: 320–1). This statement made James Martin emphasize that there was no longer 'an organised republic existing in Ireland, and ready to fraternize with the then democratical [government] of France' (HC, 8 February 1805: 335). Foreign Secretary George Canning recommended that other nations model themselves on the

British, rather than the French: ‘It was to be hoped that any nation whose intercourse and union with Great Britain were intimate, would gradually imbibe the feelings of Great Britain’ (HC, 31 May 1809, 827).

The Few Cosmopolitans in Britain, the Netherlands and Germany

Expressions of cosmopolitan attitudes in countries surrounding France after the experiences of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were few. A parliamentary instance of the competing meanings of ‘cosmopolitan’ can be found from 1807, again with reference to revolutionary influence in Ireland. As Henry Grattan suggested that the British constitution should be suspended in Ireland due to the continuous presence of ‘cosmopolitan principles’ there (HC, 13 August 1807: 1205), two colleagues responded by defending both parliamentary government and the positive connotations of cosmopolitan. John Ingram Lockhart defined the British parliament itself as one of ‘cosmopolitan beneficence’ (HC, 13 August 1807: 1211), only to be echoed by Richard Brinsley Sheridan that ‘our cosmopolitan and philanthropic parliament’ was pursuing the right policies in Ireland (HC, 13 August 1807: 1216). ‘Cosmopolitan’ could thus stand both for rejected (transnational) revolutionary ideas and for British imperial policies defined as beneficial and even philanthropic for all peoples. This illustrates the presence of two competing imperialist concepts of universality.

In Germany, a peculiar kind of ambiguity was attached to the term ‘cosmopolitan’, recalling its anti-revolutionary connotations in the British parliament. After debates on *Weltbürgertum* led by Schiller, Kant, and Fichte in the 1790s (see Chapter 1) and occasional associations of cosmopolitanism with Freemasonry conspiracy theories (Jordheim 2018: 313), as a consequence of the Napoleonic conquests German evocations of cosmopolitanism after 1800 became increasingly associated with patriotism and political and cultural independence from French dominance. The concept of a ‘citizen of the world’ had clearly become politicized and an object of competing definitions. In 1811, the Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung concluded for a patriotic definition: ‘The inauthentic cosmopolitans [Kosmolopoliten] want a constitution to be common to all peoples…. The true citizen of the world [Weltbürger] is the faithful son of his people’ (28 February 1811). Through the conceptual couple *Kosmopolit/Weltbürger* we can see two competing variants of conceptualizing cosmopolitanism, one embracing French hegemony

(and thus the 'foreign' form of the word), the other prioritizing German patriotism and to meet the French revolutionary challenge to the idea of a federal German nation. As Georg Schmidt has argued, universalizing a plural understanding of Germanness was a strategy to counter national marginalization (Schmidt 2016).

This nationalization of cosmopolitanism marked some similarities with the British discourse; German patriotism around 1810 was conceived as cosmopolitan insofar as it targeted French 'universal despotism'. In that sense, it was a political principle beyond borders (*Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 1 January 1814; *Erlanger Real-Zeitung*, 14 June 1814). Only Napoleon-friendly papers from the Confederation of the Rhine or the Kingdom of Westphalia praised the Emperor's continental system as the historical completion of European unification (*National-Zeitung der Deutschen*, 22 September 1808; *Le moniteur westphalien* supplement, 25 December 1811; Coignard 2017: 119). With Napoleon's defeat, cosmopolitanism was once again clearly negative. Patriotic calls for national unity replaced the category of the 'world' with the 'nation', and, in contrast to its earlier German usages, cosmopolitanism became associated with hegemony and Bonapartism (*Deutsche Blätter*, 21 March 1814; 31 May 1815; 1 January 1815; *Allgemeiner Anzeiger der Deutschen*, 3 October 1814; *Berlinische Nachrichten von Staats- und gelehrten Sachen*, 24 August 1815).

Conclusion

Using Reinhart Koselleck's conceptual historical 'veto of the sources', which 'forbids us to dare or admit interpretations that evidence from the sources simply unmasks as ... inadmissible' (Koselleck 1977: 45–46), we have demonstrated that revolutionary world discourse was far more contested than many accounts of the revolutionaries' early 'cosmopolitanism' suggest. The revolutionary assemblies debated cosmopolitanism by and large as a negative concept. Since 1789 categories such as 'cosmopolitan', 'fraternity', 'humanity', 'universe', or 'the world' marked lines of inclusion and exclusion from a revolutionary community that centred on France and Frenchmen (and excluded groups such as women, émigrés, aristocrats, priests, Jews, people of colour or enslaved people). Towards the outer world, this community was open only as long as 'outsiders' acknowledged the principles of the Revolution or cooperated with revolutionary France for their

own emancipatory interests like in the Batavian Republic. Revolutionary world discourse left little room for pluralism; thus, it made an easy transition from liberation, emancipation and regeneration to war, enmity and extermination. These findings give rise to questions on the evolution of revolutionary world discourse between the French Revolution of 1789 and the emergence of Marxist discourse on world revolution and universal revolutionary emancipation beyond borders, which culminated in 1917 (see Chapter 4).

Contrasting French revolutionary discourses with British and German counter-discourses has revealed how relative the concepts were. Condemning French universality and fraternity as no more than new names for universal domination, the British gradually re-conceptualized their role as the defenders of the right kind of law of nations. The law of nations still overshadowed the emerging concept of 'international' as an institutional framework was still lacking, and only emerged as an outcome of the conflicts considered here. Therefore, the consolidation of the concept of international, the political threshold of the Congress of Vienna, the institutionalization of the congress system as international security cooperation and the operational modes of the Concert of Europe all merit further investigation on a conceptual level (see de Graaf, de Haan and Vick 2019: 2; see Chapter 3).

The British also mobilized the category of Europe and by implication the entire 'civilized' world against the French concept of universal popular sovereignty and liberation and against French warfare and expansion. British cosmopolitan and universalist discourse was presented as an alternative but, similar to French attempts to hegemony, it assumed that Britain was the leader and model for a better world. British parliamentarians believed that Britain had a particular responsibility to ensure that the law of nations was observed consistently; this constitutes a starting point for later Anglophone contributions to rethinking the international order. By contrast, in German discourse we observe the opposite tendency to turn national: at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the 'true' cosmopolitan was portrayed as a patriot.

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