

**THE FOUR WARS OF
THE FRENCH
REVOLUTION**

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The Four Wars of the French Revolution by David Urquhart

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DAVID URQUHART

**THE FOUR WARS OF
THE FRENCH
REVOLUTION**

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THE FOUR WARS

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FRENCH REVOLUTION.

EXAMINED JUDICIALLY
 IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY WOULD HAVE
 BEEN IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE
 SUPPRESSION OF THE FUNCTIONS
 OF THE
 PRIVY COUNCIL
 BY THE 4TH OF ANNE, CAP. 8.



By DAVID URQUHART, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "ENGLAND AND RUSSIA" (1835), "NAVAL POWER SUPPRESSED
 BY THE MARITIME STATES" (1874), &c.

[Translated from the French.]



"It would be a war made by the English Ministry against the
 French Republic."—*M. Chauvelin to Lord Greenvile, December, 1792.*

LONDON: "DIPLOMATIC REVIEW" OFFICE, 22, EAST
 TEMPLE CHAMBERS, WHITEFRIARS STREET, E.C.
 1874.

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TO THE CATHOLICS OF FRANCE.

MONTREUX, Festival of the Annunciation, 1874.

THE Chief of the Catholic Church has declared that the abuse of military power is one of the causes of existing evils, which is equivalent to saying that it is necessary to restrain this power.

The number of those who, in France, not only bear the name of Catholics, but profess obedience to the Holy See and reverence the person who occupies it, is very considerable. A small number amongst them would suffice to carry out the wishes of the Pope, if they accepted the duty and applied themselves to the task of comprehending how military power has become what it is at the present day: *unlimited*; as also the origin and the consequences of such a state of things, and the remedies of which it is susceptible.

In a letter which I lately addressed to a French *Review*, I showed how the Crimean War originated, and what consequences have resulted from it; among which we must reckon the fall of the temporal Power of the Pope. It is very evident that if Catholics had foreseen this result, and, further, if they had known that that war was planned with this object, it could never have been made. It is not less evident that a war cannot be planned beforehand with an object totally different from its avowed and ostensible motive except in so far as the military power is in the hands of the executive, without being subjected to any sort of control, either in virtue of the law, or on the part of the nation, either by its knowledge of affairs or by its sentiment of justice.

In my present work I confine myself to wars which belong

to a former epoch. I demonstrate how they have been rendered possible, and consequently how they could have been prevented. I connect them with the abrogation in England of the functions of the Privy Council, especially in matters regarding peace and war. For, according to the Constitution, this body served as a judicial barrier to the Executive Power in so far as the Royal Prerogative could only be exercised on a decision taken by the Privy Council, which was independent of every political party, as also of the arbitrary will of the Crown, its members being appointed for life.

It is also necessary to observe that the abrogation of these functions by an Act of Parliament in the reign of Queen ANNE, was voted for the purpose of placing an unlimited power in the hands of the Executive in matters connected with military action and relations with foreign Powers.

There can be no doubt that the case is such as I have presented it. Nor can there be any doubt that if this unlimited power had not been possessed by the Government in England the state of the world would not have been what it is at the present day. There is no longer peace, either internally or externally; because all the regulations which originally existed as a bridle to restrain the unlimited power of the sword have been suppressed.

The remedy consists in re-establishing them. Until some persons shall occupy themselves in learning by what means the re-establishment of these laws can be arrived at, a single step will not have been made to replace on true bases Society which is falling into ruin.

The peril is so much the more extreme that it involves each individual at the same time as the nation, and that it implicates him in sin. In fact, according to the Canon Law, the shedding of blood without just cause, constitutes murder. Now at the present epoch the nations of Christendom rush into wars without taking any steps to assure themselves that their cause is just, or even what that cause is. The idea of taking such steps no longer even exists.

I had intended to continue the examination, not only of the wars, but also of the diplomatic operations in which England and France have taken part from the Congress of Vienna to the Crimean War. A prolonged illness has prevented me from carrying this plan into execution. I publish to-day what has been written for several months, although

the work may be incomplete, and although I may not have been able myself to prepare it for the press, because I feel that there is not a moment to lose.

In the document which inaugurated the Revolution of 1791, amongst those propositions which announce the revolt of man against his Creator, I find at Article 16, this remarkable Declaration:—

“Every society in which *the separation of powers* is not determined, has no Constitution.”

This truth, which was declared in words, was not realised in act. The judicial power as regards its higher functions was not then separated, and has never been since separated in France, either from the Legislative Power, or from the Executive Power. In all the thirteen Constitutions which have been elaborated from 1791 to 1870, on every occasion that the right of peace and war, or the land and naval forces have been treated of, it has been to place the exercise of the one and the command of the others in the hands of the Executive Power—King, Consul, Emperor, or President—or in those of the legislative body.

France has therefore remained “without a Constitution” from the date of the Revolution until the present time.

The Revolutionists of 1791 *believed* that they had accomplished the separation between the federal power and the legislative or executive power by the 1st Article in Chapter V. of the *Constituent National Assembly*, which said:—“The judicial power can in no case be exercised by the legislative body or the King.”

According to the same Constitution (Chap. III. Art. 2), the right of declaring war belonged to the legislative body. “War can only be decided on by a decree of the legislative body.”

The legislators, then, of to-day do no more than follow the errors of the Revolution, if they cannot understand that a Declaration of War ought to be a *judicial act*.

It is clear, therefore, that in order to combat Revolution, as many wish to do, the arguments fall short if they do not spring from this fundamental basis; to omit it or to neglect it is to leave the enemy master of the situation.

I should add that what has impelled me to undertake this work, is the appeal which has been made on me to draw up a project of law for the establishment of a Tribunal for War in France. It appears that the idea of such an undertaking

has been dropped with the attempt to re-establish the monarchy. If it be so, the misfortune is great, and great is the deception.

France is to-day weak, and much more so in consequence of her internal struggles than of her external defeats. I see only one way for a cessation of these struggles, which unhappily not only exist, between "the party of disorder," and "the party of order," but which render the latter, although in the majority, powerless before the minority. A neutral ground has to be discovered on which all opinions might unite. I mean an object for which men might work together. Where is it to be found if not in the project for establishing an institution which is equally necessary under all forms of Government; which is of pre-eminent interest for the country; and which has nothing in common with the ideas and sentiments which divide into separate camps so many honest men?

There is in France one man who has already worked to reunite upright men in one common object, and I am proud to call him my friend. I speak of M. LE PLAY. I address myself, then, more particularly to him and to his friends, conjuring them to add to the other objects of the "Reunion of social Peace," that of presenting, and inducing the National Assembly to accept, a Law establishing for France a Court whose function shall be to resolve every question of Peace and War.

The Four Wars of the French Revolution.

(Translated from the French.*)

INTRODUCTION.

IN a brief addressed by His Holiness, PIUS IX., to M. LUCIEN BRUN and several of his colleagues in the National Assembly, there is the following passage:—

“THE ORIGIN OF THE PRESENT EVILS HAS FOR ITS CAUSE THE PERVERSE EMPLOYMENT OF POWER AND ARMIES.”

Having read these words of the Pope, I hastened to procure the address which had called them forth. I found in it nothing I had sought. In presence of a fact so remarkable I could draw no other conclusion but this; that the Pope had seized the occasion of an address from political persons, who were at the same time Catholics, to make an appeal through them to his flock, and to engage them to combat what he indicated as “the origin of present evils.”

The successor of ST. PETER, the man who occupies his chair, could not speak of power and armies without having meditated on the means of preventing their abuse, and without having discovered it.

These words are not addressed either to a Consistory of Cardinals or to a Council of Prelates, but to laymen and politicians. I can only conclude from this, that the means found by the Pope has relation to legislative measures.

I was not long in my search for this explanation. I had been put on the track by former words of the Pope, which had likewise been pronounced by him without invitation on the part of those who listened to him, when he said:—

“Let us throw the nets on another side; let us throw them to the right—let us throw them on the side of justice.”

The Pope indicated a thing that had to be done, and this thing was

* “Les Quatre Guerres de la Révolution. Examinées Judiciairement pour démontrer qu’elles auraient été impossibles sans la Suppression des Fonctions du Conseil Privé par l’Acte du Parlement de 1705.” Par M. Urquhart. Paris: Librairie Générale, 72, Boulevard Haussmann.