

Chapter 5

Historical Background: Insheim during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era

When Franz Wagner first appeared in the historical records in the Pfalz in 1793, life on the west bank of the Rhine had undergone vast and turbulent changes. The French Revolution had sent a shock wave in 1789 that swept across the continent, and most of Europe was soon embroiled in devastating wars during the Napoleonic years.

While I was at the library of the Institute for History and Ethnic Research of the Pfalz (*Institut für Pfälzische Geschichte und Volkskunde*) in Kaiserslautern, I fortuitously discovered a local history book by Albert Fritz which provides us with a detailed portrait of life in Insheim during the French Revolution and Napoleonic period. Of particular interest is a petition, dated 1799, which contains the signatures of all 128 adult male citizens of Insheim. Franz Wagner's signature appears on this document, along with that of several of his in-laws and fellow residents, some of whom emigrated with him to Tsarist Russia a few years later. Since Fritz's study is so directly relevant to the Wagner family history, I have translated portions of it which are presented at the end of this chapter, with a photocopy of the 1799 document.

The French Revolution – A Review of History

On July 14, 1789 a mob stormed the Bastille in Paris, triggering the onset of the French Revolution. Control of the country passed to the French National Assembly, which ushered in sweeping political, economic, religious, and cultural changes during the next two years. Louis XVI was reduced to a constitutional monarch. All "feudal regimes" in France were abolished, the hereditary titles of the nobility were eliminated, and their land holdings were confiscated. The monasteries of the Catholic Church were closed and all church-owned lands were nationalized.

Fearing that this revolutionary turmoil might spread across the Rhine, Prussia and Austria formed a defensive alliance in 1792. In response, the French National Assembly declared war, claiming that the coalition was evidence of a plan to invade and to restore the "old regime." Seizing the initiative, the French National Guard marched into Belgium, which at that time was held by the Austrian Habsburgs. The hastily assembled French army was deluded by the hyperbole and rhetoric of the Revolution and they were ill-equipped for the realities of war. They expected to be welcomed as liberators as they marched across the Belgian border. Morale quickly collapsed at the first signs of resistance from the Austrian army. The French retreated, shouting treason, then turned against their own officers. The Austrian army, joined by the Prussians in

the Rhinelands, confidently pushed them back into France and won a string of victories. These setbacks triggered another period of mob violence in Paris. The palace at Touleries was stormed, forcing King Louis XVI to flee to the National Assembly for protection. After the Austrians and Prussians were turned back at Valmy in September, 1792, the reinvigorated French army renewed the offensive. Launching a dual attack, they conquered Belgium and pushed northward out of Alsace into the Pfalz, seizing territory along the Rhine up to Frankfurt. This attack was launched despite the efforts of *Kurfürst* Karl Theodor to remain neutral, and despite the fact that France was not yet officially at war with the other principalities of the Holy Roman Empire, other than Austria and Prussia.

In the flush of victory, the ambitions of the French Assembly ballooned out of control and they announced that they were going to export the Revolution throughout Europe. France was proclaimed a Republic. Louis XVI was deposed, ending the charade of a constitutional monarchy, then beheaded in January 1793. Within one month of this event, France formally annexed Belgium and expanded the arena of hostilities by declaring war against England and Holland.

Europe was appalled by the excesses of the Revolution and shocked by the unexpected French victories. In 1793 the First Coalition formed against France, comprised of Austria, Prussia, England, Spain, Holland, Portugal, Sardinia, Naples, and various states of the Holy Roman Empire. With these expanded armies, the allies soon pushed the French back out of Belgium and the Rhinelands. As the battle lines shifted back and forth between the armies of the French and the Holy Roman Empire near Landau in 1793, several of the villages suffered major damage and the population fled, if they had not already done so earlier. The French lost about 300 soldiers in the battle near Leimersheim.¹ Documents from this period show that the residents of Leimersheim and nearby villages suffered greatly from having to billet French troops, as well as from the confiscation of their money and food. The citizens of Germersheim complained that 84,999 Guilders (*Gulden*) worth of supplies were requisitioned from them in 1792-93. In addition 1,300 laborers from Germersheim were conscripted to work on the construction of fortifications.²

The French army retreated all the way to Strasbourg, leaving ruined and plundered villages in their wake. However, the allies were too fragmented to take advantage of their newly regained victories and they could not maintain their offensive. The French, fortified by a massive army of 300,000 conscripts, again counter-attacked and retook the west bank of the Rhine. In 1794 they

¹A local history of Leimersheim has been written by Hodapp, "*Geschichte des Ortes Leimersheim und des Weitern Heimattraumes.*" I did not have access to the full study, but I found a typed extract from pp. 145-46 in the files of the *Institut für pfälzische Geschichte und Volkskunde* in Kaiserslautern.

² Blanning, 1983, p. 114, 123

reconquered Belgium, pushed on to take all of the Low Countries, and also struck eastward across the Rhine.

The allied armies of the First Coalition were in disarray in 1795, so they abandoned the entire west bank of the Rhine. Prussia, Spain and Holland made peace with France. Holland was reduced to the "Batavian Republic," a puppet government of the French. Prussia was still preoccupied with the partition of Poland, and thus decided to follow a neutralist course, abandoning all claims to its territories on the west bank of the Rhine. Austria alone had to shoulder the burden of defending the German states. Thus began a protracted, painful, and unchallenged period of military domination and exploitation of the Rhinelands by the French that didn't end until 1814.³

The Rhine Pfalz Under French Occupation

The people of the Pfalz were quickly swept up in the opening act of these dramatic events. By 1792 they again witnessed the spectacle of great armies passing back and forth through their lands, trampling their fields, confiscating their grain, horses, and other supplies. As Applegate puts it, "after the arrival...of the French Revolutionary Armies, local people probably saw their presence only as one more chapter in a depressingly familiar story of invasion and exploitation."⁴ An even grimmer second act soon followed, known as the Reign of Terror.

After the allied armies of the First Coalition were pushed back into the Pfalz and then across the Rhine in 1793, the revolutionary government under Robespierre took a deadly turn and began lashing out at its own citizens, seeking revenge against those who had collaborated. The Committee of Public Safety announced that all "royalists and reactionaries" were to be killed. Revolutionary tribunals were installed to weed out so-called enemies of the state throughout the country. During the Terror, from late 1793 through 1794, about 3,000 executions occurred in Paris, and 14,000 in the provinces. Trivial acts were regarded as treasonous. The victims included not only political protestors, but also many farmers who were accused of crimes such as "food hoarding." Relatives of the condemned were targeted, as well as those who spoke out against the executions. Young girls were beheaded for having danced with Prussian soldiers. One man was executed for shouting *Vive le Roi*. Merchants who sold materials of poor quality were considered to "lack faith" in the revolutionary regime. A shopkeeper was beheaded for selling sour wine. A cobbler was executed for selling the government "two pairs of shoes of poor quality, the soles of which were stuffed with old leather." A candle maker was

³ James J. Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

⁴ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials, the German Idea of Heimat*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Applegate, 1990, p. 22

guillotined for supplying candles made of turpentine and grease instead of wax, which only burned for 21 minutes instead of the prescribed 24 hours. Refusal to accept the *assignats* (revolutionary currency) at face value was considered a counter-revolutionary act punishable by death. Efforts to avoid conscription into the military were treasonous. Parents often sent their sons out of the country, if possible, to America or to French colonies such as Haiti to avoid military service. One such father was executed for this reason when he tried to smuggle his 14-year-old son out of the country. During this frenzied period of mass executions, there were cases of prisoners being executed mistakenly because of clerical errors. Most of the executed were not nobles (they had already fled the country). About 85% of the victims came from the "Third Estate," that is, commoners and peasants.⁵

The period of terror in Alsace led to *La Grande Fuite* (the Great Flight) of 1793. The infamous Eulogius Schneider was installed as the Public Accuser of the tribunal in Strasbourg. The guillotine was hauled from village to village and the people watched helplessly as their leading citizens were executed. As the slaughter accelerated, the revolutionaries declared their intention to kill all the "cowards and traitors" in Alsace who had supposedly collaborated with the allied armies. The loyalty of the Alsatians was suspect because of their German prior history, language and ethnicity. A representative of the government proposed that one-fourth of the population in Alsace be guillotined and that the remainder be driven out of the country, to be replaced by native French.⁶ This, of course, led to a mass panic and thousands of peasants and city dwellers throughout Alsace fled for safety across the Rhine, following the retreating armies of the Empire.

"Everybody fled, forsaking father, wife, children, and all their belongings. People fled without their clothes, the rich without their money, the mother without the baby to whom she had recently given birth. Entire villages became empty and deserted; the shops had no workers; the plows had no farm hands. All the roads leading to the Rhine were crowded with swarms of wretched, confused, and terror-stricken humanity. The Rhine crossing at Lauterburg was jammed by the mounting flood of refugees. Some women, in despair of reaching the other side, threw themselves with their infants into the river, so as not to fall into the hands of the ferocious Revolutionaries."⁷

⁵ Christopher Hibbert, *The Days of the French Revolution*. New York: William Morrow, 1980, p. 227; Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror During the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935, p. 78

⁶ Joseph Height, *Paradise on the Steppes* Bismarck, N.D.: North Dakota Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1972, p. 26.

⁷ Height 1972, p. 26

At least 40,000 people fled from Alsace during this period, mostly from the northern areas near Weissenbourg and Hagenau. They were labeled as “emigres,” and many of their farms and houses were auctioned off by French officials at ridiculously low prices, sometimes given outright to supporters of the regime and to carpetbaggers who moved in to take advantage of the situation.

To the north in the Pfalz, French armies looted villages throughout the region. On one occasion when the villagers protested, a Jacobine official responded, “everything belongs to us; all that will be left for you are eyes for weeping.”⁸ Although the Pfalz was not yet incorporated into France (other than Landau, and nearby Germersheim) and its citizens could not be considered “treasonous,” an estimated 30,000 people fled across the Rhine for safety to avoid the French soldiers.

Refugees were scattered all the way from Heidelberg to Freiburg in the Black Forest. A partial amnesty was declared in 1795, and in response a flood of refugees attempted to cross the Rhine to reclaim their homes. The local bureaucrats and usurpers didn't wish to return their property, so they arranged to have the boats turned back at most crossing points. For the next few years bands of refugees wandered about, attempting to filter across the river any way possible to their homes. In 1794 about 10,000 people were reported to be waiting across the river from Germersheim to return to the Pfalz, and the number of Alsatians was much larger. A break in this deplorable situation didn't come until 1797 when the Directorate declared a six-month amnesty. In 1799 under the Triumvirate, all refugees were finally allowed to return. They were treated with hostility by the new landowners who had seized their farms. To prevent mass starvation, the government allowed them to enter the fields after the harvest to glean whatever meager grain had been left behind.⁹

During the military occupation the people in the Pfalz had to endure atrocities of many kinds committed by the French soldiers, described in graphic detail by Blanning.¹⁰ French propaganda portrayed its armies as “liberators,” and they expected the German people to pay for this privilege. The military demanded instant levies from the people under their control, and the amounts were often staggering. If the townspeople couldn't pay, the army simply confiscated whatever it wanted. One account from the city of Speyer in 1794 was as follows:

“They broke open and emptied all the municipal funds, they forced the citizens to deliver on the spot requisitions of every kind, they looted, they vandalized a number of private houses, they imposed a levy of 400,000 *Livres* in cash on pain of drastic penalties.

⁸ Height 1972, p. 27

⁹ Height 1972, p. 29

¹⁰ T.C.W. Blanning, *The French Revolution in Germany*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

“However crushing a demand of this kind, we strove to meet it, asking even our poorest citizens to give their all and to forgo all their necessities. We hoped to earn the good-will of the Republic by the most docile observance of its orders.

“Vain hopes! We were cruelly disillusioned by the sight of barbarous episodes, which soon followed...

“[They] arranged for the emptying of all cellars, all granaries, and the seizing of all basic foodstuffs. Far from respecting at least the homes of the poor and the orphaned, they took all they possessed, right down to the bread in their mouths and the straw on their beds. They took all the bells, without exception; even those which sounded the hours were thrown down from the bell-towers. They took by force horses, livestock in general, goods lodged at the customs house, and from the shops: cloth, linen, groceries, leather, bedsteads, tin, copper, brass, tools of every kind, furniture, clothing. The windows of all the churches were broken on the order of the commissars; the interiors were vandalized; the organs dismantled; the lead from the steeples, the slates from the roofs, the wrought-iron work from the windows, doors, and staircases -- it was all torn out and taken away.”¹¹

In addition to the rampant looting by the soldiers, religious practices were also a target of their malicious behavior. The propagandists of the French Revolution were strongly anti-clerical. During the Terror years under Robespierre, a new “Cult of the Supreme Being” was instituted by the state. It was touted as a “Cult of Reason,” a rational belief system intended to replace all other religions, especially Catholicism, which were regarded as relics of Medieval superstition.

Several thousand priests were slaughtered during these years. Many instances of harassment by the French armies were reported in Alsace and the Pfalz. Soldiers disrupted church services and forced organists to play Revolutionary songs. They lit their pipes from the sacred candles, drank the Communion wine, defecated inside the tabernacles, mutilated crucifixes, emptied the *ciboriums*, trampled the Communion wafers beneath their feet, pinned the Hosts on their hats as decorations, or fed them to their horses. Statues of the Virgin Mary were desecrated and sexually profaned. They copulated with prostitutes inside the churches. When the people celebrated religious feast days, they were ridiculed. There are many surviving first-hand descriptions of these times. The following is typical:

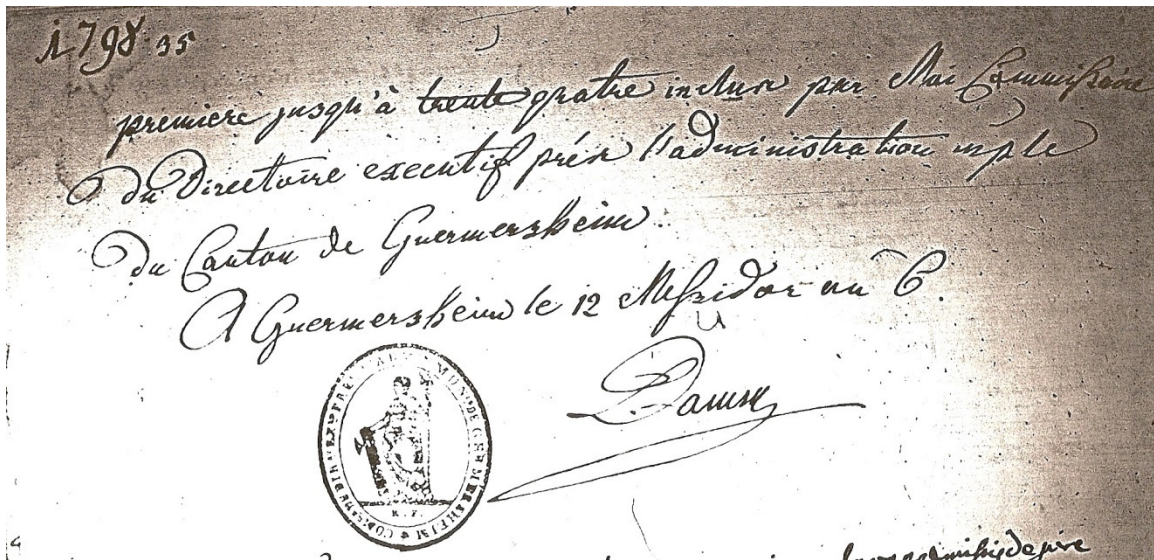
“On the 12th of March 1794 a donkey was led through the streets in a kind of procession; on its head was placed a mitre bearing the motto: 'The ass is mightier than the Pope.' Dressed up in priestly vestments, the French waved

¹¹ Cited in Blanning, 1983, p. 117.

incense over the rear quarters of the donkey (also clad in clerical robes), while shouting the most hair-raising blasphemies and abuse of the clergy. They even pretended -- oh, what a disgusting crime! -- to stuff the consecrated host into the donkey's anus. While this was going on, they kept up a frightful wailing from their hymn-books. First the procession went through the town, then out of the town through the *Kuhtor* [cattle gate] to the Rhine, where the donkey and his mitre were thrown into the river."¹²

In 1797 religious ceremonies inside churches were finally tolerated, but all processions and pilgrimages outside the church building were prohibited. Civil marriage was compulsory. All births, deaths, and marriages were officially recorded in the town halls by civil servants, rather than by priests. A new calendar was introduced, which omitted religious holidays and divided the week into ten-day periods (*decades*). Sundays were replaced by secular days of rest, which occurred on the tenth day rather than on the seventh, stirring considerable resentment among the people.

Chateaubriand, whose mother was killed during the Reign of Terror, gave this description when he returned to France in 1800. He found "...only abandoned churches, whose dead had been thrown out, bell-towers without bells, cemeteries without crosses, statues of saints without heads, stoned in their niches."¹³



**French Administrative Stamp, Canton de Guermersheim
Church book of Leimersheim in the Pfalz, 1798¹⁴**

¹² Blanning 1983, p. 222

¹³ Cited in Ruth Scurr, "Bloodstained Ghosts," *The Nation*, Nov. 24, 2008, p. 30.

¹⁴ Leimersheim, microfilm 0367703.

Napoleon's Grand Design for Europe

The early excesses of the Revolution and the Terror in 1793-94 finally ceased in 1795 and some semblance of order was reinstated under the Directorate. In 1799 the Triumvirate, headed by Napoleon, came to power. He proclaimed that the Revolution was officially over, Revolutionary laws were abolished, and a new constitution was drafted. In the occupied territories on the west bank of the Rhine, however, the years of grinding exploitation did not cease.

The French National Assembly regarded the Rhine as the "natural boundary" of France to the east and it had no intention of ever abdicating control of this region. In 1797 Napoleon's armies defeated the Austrians near Vienna. At the Treaty of Campo Formio, on October 17, 1797, the Austrian Habsburgs ceded control of all the Rhinelands to France, which proceeded to annex the entire west bank of the Rhine. Four new administrative units (*departements*) were created, the southernmost one being *Mont-Tonnerre (Donnersberg)*, which included most of the Pfalz and the areas around Mainz. French legal reforms were instituted and a new set of rights was proclaimed for the residents. An independent judiciary system was established in each town. Existing civil and criminal law codes were abolished, along with the old aristocracy, the town constitutions, and the guilds. The Catholic Church lost its property and its privileges. In 1804 the estates of the Church and of the former aristocracy were auctioned off to the highest bidders.

For 20 years, from 1794 until 1814, the French occupied the Pfalz and annexed it as part of France. Throughout most of this period they also dominated the other German states of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1804, with great pomp and splendor, Napoleon was crowned King of France and proclaimed the new Charlemagne, Emperor of the conquered territories. A medallion was struck to commemorate this event, one of a series of medallions struck to mark each of Napoleon's victories. He toyed with the idea of formally assuming the title of Holy Roman Emperor, but settled instead for the abdication of this title by Franz II in 1806. Thus, the final chapter of the Holy Roman Empire, an institution that had survived for over one thousand years, was brought to a close.



Medallion Commemorating Napoleon “Emperor and King”

Viewed in this light, it should be no surprise that the great majority of Germans did not greet the incoming march of the French armies with enthusiasm. Rather than feeling oppressed by the “old regime,” as some historians have asserted, the great majority of the German people under French domination yearned for the reinstatement of the old order. At first, Jacobin political clubs had been formed in some German towns in the Rhinelands, most notably in Mainz, Koblenz, Cologne and Aachen.¹⁵ These were spearheaded by “a very small number of enthusiastic German reformers,” intellectuals who were initially dazzled by the mystique of the Revolution. But once the realities of French military hegemony became apparent, their disillusionment quickly matched that of the common people and they too became a focal point for nationalist resistance.

Landau was somewhat of an exception at that time. This city, located in the heart of the Pfalz, had been occupied and formally annexed by the French in the late 17th century. The French wanted to hold it as a strategic island, near the doorstep of the Alsatian border. Louis XIV had commissioned his architects to quickly redesign the city, and to fortify it with elaborate walls and moats. Over time many French had settled in Landau. They thought of themselves as citizens of France rather than of the Holy Roman Empire. When the Revolution occurred in 1789, many of those citizens enthusiastically joined the local Jacobin club.

¹⁵ Karl H. Wegert, “Patrimonial Rule, Popular Self-Interest, and Jacobinism in Germany, 1763-1800,” *Journal of Modern History*, 53 (September, 1981), p. 460.

In 1793 the French ordered that new elections be held for municipal governments throughout the west bank of the Rhine, as preparation for a national convention to be held in Mainz. In order to participate in the elections male citizens had to swear an oath of loyalty to Jacobin principles of “freedom and equality.” To the utter dismay of the French, most of the citizens refused.

“Browbeating, threats of heavy taxation and of village burnings did little to motivate Mainz citizens or Palatinate townsmen to accept the proffered ideals. In the countryside the people occasionally tried to bribe the soldiers sent in to administer the oath, as in Edesheim where this strategy cost the town 20 *Louis d’or* daily. In Winnweiler the electoral commissioner was captured and his escort of 40 *Chasseurs* sent fleeing to choruses of ‘Long live the Emperor, to Hell with the French!’ A petition submitted to the French by Speyer citizens in which they emphasized that they were quite content to retain their present constitution and their ‘popularly elected authority’ summarized the prevailing sentiment nicely.”¹⁶

Another reason for popular resistance to the French throughout the occupied territories was that beneath the smoke-screen of “liberation” the true nature of the conquest had become quite apparent. The National Assembly decreed that France would forcibly liberate all of Europe and the masses would pay for this privilege by supporting the occupation armies. The Jacobins regarded this as a “modest price for liberty.”¹⁷ This rhetoric was a thin disguise for a massive campaign of expropriation and wholesale exploitation of the people. During the occupation years the French rationalized the deprivations imposed on the people by claiming that these were only temporary demands of the wars. This was a moot point, however, since the wars continued to accelerate under Napoleon.

Trade and commerce suffered greatly during these years. Rather than benefiting economically from the forced integration of the continent under Napoleon, Europe was reduced to a passive market for the export of French manufactured goods. Trade embargos against England continued during the Directorate in 1795. Napoleon expanded the concept in 1806 to include all of Europe under the “Continental System,” which has been described as little more than a “vast experiment in colonialism.”¹⁸ It was a grandiose scheme to transform Europe into a hermetically sealed market, with France replacing

¹⁶ Wegert, 1981, p. 461. Wegert also notes that in Mainz, only about 375 out of an eligible population of 10,000 swore the oath.

¹⁷ Wegert, 1981, p. 462.

¹⁸ Paul W. Schroeder, “Napoleon’s Foreign Policy: A Criminal Enterprise,” *Journal of Military History*, vol. 54, 1990, p. 149.

England as dominator of all trade and commerce. Napoleon stated the aims of his policies very clearly:

“My fundamental principle is, France first and foremost (*la France avant tout*). You must never lose sight of the fact that if English trade triumphs on the seas it is because the English are the strongest there. It is reasonable, therefore, that as France is the strongest on land, French trade should also triumph there.”¹⁹

After the west bank was annexed in 1797 the protective market barrier surrounding the borders of France was extended to the Rhine, and all commercial contacts with communities on the east bank of the river were cut off. This disruption of the centuries-old trade routes in the Rhine valley quickly led to a collapse of the market for cattle, grain and other food products in the Pfalz, along with all outlets for manufactured goods. In addition, all down-river trade with the Netherlands was strictly controlled to cut off their markets with England. The economy was brought to a virtual stand-still.

The cities were hit especially hard since their economies were focused on the production of exports, such as textiles and luxury goods. The rural villages also suffered, although perhaps not as severely as the cities since they could still function at a reduced subsistence level. In 1800, in Frankenthal, just south of Worms in the Pfalz, farmers had to be restrained by military force from trading their potato crop with communities on the east bank of the Rhine. They had already plowed under their onion crop due to the prohibition of trade across the river, and the potato crop was their last hope to avoid being reduced to complete poverty. In 1802 both the cattle and the grain markets collapsed in the Pfalz, with two-thirds of the harvest left unsold due to the loss of outlets. By 1804 commercial traffic on the Moselle River was reduced to only 10% of the volume that had existed under the old regime. As late as 1810 the French governor of the Pfalz was complaining that the trade with the interior of France was “zero.”²⁰ The poor condition of the roads and the lack of waterways added impossibly high transportation costs to the sale of Rhenish products in the interior. There was also little demand since alternative sources were available for agricultural products in France. The only remaining major outlet for the once thriving *Pfälzer* communities was to meet the needs of the military, but this outlet was exploitative since the military conscripted what it required and paid for it at low rates.

The economy on the west bank was also undermined by the nearly worthless paper currency (*assignats*) issued in great quantity by the National Assembly, which the people were forced to accept at par as payment for

¹⁹ Eli Heckscher, *The Continental System, An Economic Interpretation*. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964, p. 297

²⁰ Blanning, 1983, p. 141

expropriated goods and supplies. This was essentially a form of legalized looting. *Assignats* were initially worth only 8% of their face value and they were in use until 1795, when they had shrunk to 1/1000 in value. Then, in an effort to stabilize the currency, a new form of paper currency was introduced that year known as *mandats territoriaux*. These also depreciated so rapidly that when they were finally withdrawn they were worth only 1% of face value. The people would accept only metal coins in their daily transactions with each other. Even beggars, it was reported, refused to accept paper currency.²¹ Although the occupying armies paid for the supplies they requisitioned with paper notes, the populace had to pay their taxes in hard currency (coinage) or in-kind (such as grain or supplies). In this fashion the wealth was eventually siphoned off into the Republic's coffers. After persistent protest, the people were allowed to pay their tax levies partly in currency and partly in-kind. The currency remained unstable until 1803, when Napoleon introduced the *franc*.

Often the villagers protested that they didn't have enough money or supplies to meet the amounts demanded. If a village fell into arrears, 50 French troops would be billeted there and the families had to support them until the debt was paid. The practice of billeting soldiers in private homes was common in the Rhinelands. French officers often brought their wives and families,²² with a complete entourage of servants, all of whom had to be supported by the host villages. During the 1790s the Rhinelands had to support an occupying force that, together with its dependents, totaled at least a quarter of a million people.²³ Throughout the lengthy period of military campaigns, the Rhinelands were the major supplier of the French armies, more so than any other area under French jurisdiction. Since the army was irregularly paid by Paris, soldiers frequently resorted to looting to take what they needed.

Still another form of exploitation occurred during the Napoleonic years, one that proved to be beyond endurance for many families -- the conscription of their young men. Under Napoleon the military campaigns in the east escalated, and his appetite for new troops was insatiable. In 1805 he waged war with Austria (the War of the Third Coalition), in 1806-1807 he was at war with Prussia and Russia, again in 1809 with Austria, and in 1812 he began a fruitless invasion of Russia that soon involved all the countries in Europe, culminating in Napoleon's downfall in 1814.

The armies that the French confronted consisted of professional soldiers who were highly trained and well disciplined. In order to defeat these battle-tested opponents, the French resorted to sheer numbers and they raised vast

²¹ Christopher J. Herold, *The Horizon Book of the Age of Napoleon*. New York: American Heritage, 1963.

²² This accounts for the French baptismal records that begin to appear in the parish church books of the Pfalz during those years.

²³ Sheehan 1989, p. 55

armies. They began the process of mass conscription in France in 1793, which was initially limited to men between the ages of 18 and 25. On the eve of war with Austria in 1796, a systematic military draft was instituted, with conscripts being chosen by random lot to fill an annual quota. All unmarried men from the ages of 18 to 40 were eligible, excluding widowers with children. Men from 20 to 21 years provided the basic contingent of conscripts. The other age groupings served when necessary to meet military requirements. In total, more than 2.6 million men were inducted between 1800 and 1813.

The conquered peoples were not exempt. They had to pay part of the burden of their own "liberation" by providing young men to slake this unquenchable thirst for manpower. Each *departement* in France (including the new *departements* in the Rhinelands and Belgium), was levied a quota of soldiers that had to be selected from their ranks and equipped at the expense of the local communities. These soldiers were merged directly into the French regiments and they constituted about one-fourth of the French army.²⁴ There is disagreement on the size of Napoleon's *Grand Armee* that marched against Russia in 1812. The low estimate is about 430,000 men and the high is as many as 610,000. Most sources round it off at one-half million soldiers. Only about one-third of the army was French.²⁵ Another one-third were Germans, with contingents of roughly equal size being contributed by Prussia, Austria, and the Confederation of the Rhine. The French forces had dwindled to about 100,000 men by September, 1812, when they reached Moscow. After enduring a vicious winter and constant guerrilla attacks, the *Grande Armee* struggled back out of Russia with only 10,000 men. Of the 15,800 Württembergers under Napoleon's command, less than 10 percent ever returned home.

No doubt Franz Wagner and his family shared many of the same burdens as the other *Pfälzers* after the collapse of the old regime: the idealistic harangues and fervent threats by the Jacobins during the Revolutionary years, the tax levies, the requisitioning of supplies, the conscription of labor, the billeting of troops, and the imminent terror of military campaigns. Franz was spared at least one danger -- conscription into the French military. He was already in his middle years (46 years old in 1800) and he was married, which made him exempt from the draft. Indeed, for this reason there was an explosion of marriages throughout France and in the occupied territories during those years. Franz's two sons were too young to be at immediate risk, but by 1808 Ferdinand was 14 years old, nearing the age of 18 when he would have been subject to the draft.

²⁴ Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978, p. 135

²⁵ Herold, 1963, p. 168

Insheim under the French

In this section I will present selections from a chapter on the history of Insheim, written by Albert Fritz,²⁶ which gives us a detailed portrait of events faced by Franz Wagner and his compatriots during those years. Of particular interest is the petition from the citizens of Insheim in 1799, which was also signed by Franz Wagner:

In August 1791 a publication of the Landau *clubisten* (advocates for the French Republic) was circulating in the southern Pfalz, with the title: "A call by the free French to the oppressed Germans." It referred to the *Pfälzern* as "blinded slaves of their lords" and it encouraged them to tear off the chains of their servitude.²⁷ On May 31, 1792 the *Kurpfalz* regime sent a note to the Prince-Bishop [*Fürstbischof*] in Speyer, stating that large crowds of armed *Sansculottes*²⁸ were going around in the localities of Kirrweiler, Edesheim, Roschbach and Diedesfeld, spreading many dangerous notions to the subjects about the new constitution. Only a few dissatisfied people were picking up these ideas. The general opinion was that the ragged fighters for French Republicanism might be more oppressive than the officials of the *Kurpfalz*. The pamphlets bitterly criticized the 50-year "moderate" regime of Karl Theodor. One of them stated, "Should we celebrate that we have been allowed to toil for 50 years with sweat on our faces to feed the pigs and rabbits of his Excellency? Or should we celebrate because we are often dragged away from our pressing chores to perform feudal labor duties [*in der Frohnde*] to build huge houses for District Clerks and Higher Officials and to construct smooth and costly roads leading to their totally stolen estates? Or because he surrendered our bitterly acquired property to a horde of noble and ignoble thieves, official servants, maid-servants and project-planners?"²⁹

It should be no surprise that the events in Paris aroused [some of] the residents south of the Queich River to activity.³⁰ Various communities

²⁶ The original title in German: *Insheim – Ortsgeschichte, Entwicklung eines südpfälzischen Dorfes von der vorgeschichte bis zur Gegenwart*, by Albert Fritz, *Gemeindeverwaltung* 6741 Insheim b. Landau/Pfalz, 1982. Unfortunately I do not have a copy of Fritz's bibliography so I translated the citations in his footnotes literally.

²⁷ F. X. Remling: *Die Rheinpfalz in der Frnzsenzeit von 1792 bis 1798*, vol. I, p. 25 and 26.

²⁸ [Translator comment:] *Sansculottes* means "men without breeches," a reference to their commoner class; they were the most violent of the revolutionaries.

²⁹ Häuser Vol. II, p. 982.

³⁰ [Translator's comment:] the Queich river flows east out of the mountains into the lowlands of the Pfalz, where it passes through Landau and joins the Rhine at Gernersheim. Historically, the Lauter river, about 25 kilometers to the south, has formed the political boundary (although not an ethnic boundary) between Alsace (France) and the Pfalz (Germany).

participated in an uprising in Bergzabern. On Dec. 14, 1792 they submitted a formal petition to the French National Assembly to annex Bergzabern, along with 32 localities in the South Pfalz. Among these communities were included Ilbesheim, Mörzheim, Wollmesheim, Niederhochstadt and Esseingen. Insheim remained against the annexation, as well as Göcklingen, Birkweiler and others, which remained true to their *Kurpfalz* overlords. Although the National Assembly granted the request for annexation on March 28, 1793, it didn't come about until 1795.³¹

B. The Battles by Insheim 1793

Austria and Prussia had already been in a state of war with France since April 20, 1792. The German Empire³² declared war on March 22, 1793, after passively watching the fighting for 11 months. The *Kurpfalz* remained neutral. The smaller principalities in the Pfalz were left defenseless against their overpowering French neighbor and they were also forced into neutrality. The Pfalz once again had become a battleground.

At the beginning of August 1792 German troops crossed the Rhine and pushed victoriously to Landau. On August 6 the fortress was requested to surrender. One month later the French launched a strong counter-attack. A few days later, on Sept. 30, they stormed Speyer and Worms. On October 21, 1792 Mainz fell into the hands of the French. They now controlled the entire left bank of the Rhine, all the way to Bingen. On March 18, 1793 the German Rhineland was declared an "independent" state, justified by the grounds of "freedom and equality," but nonetheless dependent in every way on France. At that point Germany decided to launch a powerful counter-attack. On March 26 and 27, 1793 the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II crossed the Rhine at Bacharach with a powerful army. On April 3 Imperial troops under Field Marshal Count [*Graf*] Wurmser drove the French out of Bellheim, Hördt, Kuhardt, Rülzheim and Jockgrim. On April 8 they stood before Landau and again requested the fortress to surrender. The French declined. On May 6, heavy fighting took place by Herxheim when French troops attacked from the Bienwald. The French under General Custine were victorious and drove the Germans back to Rülzheim. Herxheim's streets lay full of dead and wounded. After the battle the French withdrew to the Bienwald and Rohrbach-Billigheim. On May 15 there was a cavalry battle in Erlenbach.³³

³¹ Ney: Landau, p. 7 and 8.

³² We must distinguish between the individual component states and the [Holy Roman] Empire. A component state like Austria, Prussia, etc. could declare war, but the Empire itself could do so only after a decision by the Imperial Assembly.

³³ Remling vol. I, p. 329.



Fortress Landau in 1793

This map, which dates from 1793, shows Landau, with its walls and fortifications. Note that the directions are rotated (south is on the left side of the map). Insheim is southeast of Landau. Rohrbach is not shown in this map.

On May 13 the National Assembly named General Custine the supreme commander of the French northern army. Before he assumed his new command, he wanted to win another shining military victory on the Queich line. On May 16, Custine set forth with 28 battalions of infantry and 8 cavalry regiments from Weissenburg to Insheim. The next morning he attacked the positions of the Imperial forces, from Herxheim to Offenbach, and drove them toward Ottersheim and Knittelsheim. The Imperial forces defended themselves bravely. After several hours of battle, the Republican forces had to withdraw. A French assault from the fortress of Landau through Nussdorf was likewise unsuccessful, as was the engagement at Bellheim that same day. These events did not enhance

the fame of Custine in the army on the Rhine.³⁴ His successor, General Houchard in Paris, accused him of being a traitor. On August 30, Custine was condemned to death by a Revolutionary court and he was guillotined the next morning. Things didn't go better for his accuser, Houchard. He was even less successful than Custine and not long afterward he too trod his way to the scaffold.

Another larger artillery battle developed on May 30 at Böchingen. General Beauharnais³⁵ had meanwhile taken over the supreme command of the Revolutionary troops. With the support of the Landau garrison he wanted to overwhelm the allied Germans at the Queich. The attackers assembled on the hills between Insheim and Herxheim, about 2,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry, with many cannons. After a powerful barrage, which lasted from 8:00 to 11:00 on June 28, the French tried to break through the lines of the allies. The Imperial troops were able to beat back the attack. At the same time another group moved through Rülxheim and Hördt to Germersheim. They likewise couldn't force a breakthrough. On the next day the Republicans tried once again to launch a great attack. They assaulted Germersheim on the Rhine. The attack stalled in the face of intense fire from the coalition troops. A second assault was carried out through Billigheim-Rohrbach on the positions east of Insheim. It brought only the same negative results. On July 3 the French tried once again to reach their goal by launching a great attack on the Queich line. The purpose of this action was to break through the German positions on the Queich and to push to the northeast in order to reinforce the surrounded fortress of Mainz. That morning General Beauharnais appeared on the hills between Insheim and Herxheim with the largest part of his army, which had been reinforced to 60,000 men. In the afternoon another group moved forward through Jockgrim, Hördt and Rülzheim. While the French had to yield to the cannon fire at Rülzheim, they entrenched themselves between Insheim and Herxheim. A third strong division positioned itself between Arzheim and Ilbesheim. All the farmers of the surrounding villages had to carry out entrenching work for the French. In the following days there were only small skirmishes, on July 6 by Dammheim and Nussdorf and on the 9th by Ottersheim. New bloody battles followed on July 21 and 22 by Gleisweiler, Böchingen and in the Modenbach valley, then by Bornheim, Essingen and Niederhochstadt. They would have lasted even longer if the fortress Mainz hadn't surrendered to the Germans on July 22.³⁶

The fall of Mainz spurred on the German defenders of the Queich line to conquer fortress Landau. The army of the elderly Field Marshal Wurmser included 32,000 men. Already on July 27 they had pushed the entire line from the Rhine to the mountains. After bloody battles near Germersheim, Ottersheim

³⁴ Remling vol. 1, p. 330-334

³⁵ Beauharnais was likewise executed in 1794. His widow Josefine became the first wife of Napoleon.

³⁶ Remling vol. II, p. 41 and Ney p. 9.

and Herxheim they advanced to the hills by Insheim. Another division took Offenbach, Bornheim and Dammheim after a five-hour battle, and forced the French to withdraw to Landau. In early August the fortress was surrounded on all sides by the allies. On August 18 and 19 Prussian troops arrived to strengthen the siege army. On August 21 and 22 the French tried to break out to Mörlheim and Insheim, but they were likewise unsuccessful, as also a few days later against Insheim and Mörzheim. On September 12, at 11:30, the French attacked toward Insheim with 12,500 men and six cannons. It turned into a lively battle, in which two Pfalz-Bavarian battalions took part. About 3:00 the enemy moved back to Landau, and two hours later launched a new attack against Mörzheim with even more soldiers and 10 cannons. But here too they were turned back by the allies and forced to retreat to the fortress.³⁷

After the victory of the Germans at Pirmasens on Sept. 14, 1793 and the storming of the strongly fortified Lauter line on October 13, the French had to withdraw in flight to Hagenau. The reports of these withdrawals reinforced efforts to liberate [French] occupied Landau.

Landau ou la Mort (Landau or death) stated the proclamation of the French National Assembly to the army. The forces were strengthened to 90,000 men and placed under the young General Hoche. In Alsace they gained some advantages and on the second day of Christmas 1793 they stormed the Weissenburg line. With that, the German troops were forced to completely withdraw from the Pfalz. The siege of Landau was raised on the evening of December 28-29.³⁸

How things went for the Insheimers in the terrible year 1793 can be inferred from the following inquiry. It was reported to the Catholic clerical administration in Heidelberg:³⁹

“From all the reports that have been forwarded during this Spring, from the objective (local) courts at Offenbach and Impflingen, taking into account the legally authenticated estimates of damages suffered in this war to the crops in the fields and to our dwellings, as well as in other ways, it is evident that we Insheimer tenant farmers here in the Provost [*Probstei*] properties of Hördt, Klingenmünster, Selz, Klingenmünster and of the *Hofstift*, have suffered extraordinary damages, without exception. We wish to say that all of our grain, spelt, barley and the first clover was so thoroughly destroyed by the French during their withdrawal from Mainz on Easter, and by the numerous attacks of the German army, and by the various battles with the outer skirmishers, especially by their marching and maneuverings forward and backward on May 17, and by the crossings with their cannons, that everything at that point

³⁷ Remling vol. I, p. 374 and Ney p. 10.

³⁸ Ney p. 11 and Remling I, p. 345.

³⁹ LA. Speyer, Best. A 14 Nr. 608 I, fol. 21 ff, the *Schätzungsprotokolle* in the same Fasc. Fol. 10 ff. The text is slightly modified.

resembled hard pavement or roadways more than fields, which normally should have yielded crops this year. At first glance there were still some scattered stalks standing here and there, which over time might have recovered, but these remnants were finished off by the frequent marching and constant surveillance riders of the French. Then, at the time of the harvest of the summer crop (on July 27), the Imperial forces moved into our vicinity, camped right in the middle of the most beautiful crop fields and placed terribly many watch-posts and pickets (field entrenchments) around, and the relief patrols made a new trail each time from the base camp. Since this camp was often tested (attacked) by the French, the camp, the watch-posts and pickets had to be rebuilt twice, and each time that it was modified they moved around in the crop fields. The marks from this are still visible years later. The first clover was mowed under by the cavalry when they rode through the fields, and the horses ate the oats off the stalks. Whoever was able to do so, counted himself lucky if on a few mornings he was able to steal a load and bring it home. No more stalks were standing out in the fields at the time of the barley and oat harvest.

“Corn (maize), poppy seeds, fruit and garden crops were prematurely eaten by the Croats.⁴⁰ Often we hoped that these crops might still offer a little something, but there wasn’t anything left. Understandably, nobody could be seen out looking for potatoes and beets, since he would be viewed as a spy by the soldiers and sent home carrying a back full of blows. It was inadvisable for anyone to forbid soldiers from stealing. And whatever remained of these crops, the Imperial forces, the *Raizen* (Serbs) and Prussians took for themselves. From the little bit that we harvested we had to deliver 40 *Zentner*⁴¹ and 20 *Malter* of oats to Landau in exchange for *Asignats* (paper money). We are still owed a considerable amount for this. Then there are 35 head of cattle and 11 oxen [that were taken], of which we received back only 23 cows and 11 oxen from the municipality (city authorities) of Landau, but only as completely worn out cripples. We are still owed 12 cows, and as a result our losses continue to grow. Then, during the French *Retirade* (withdrawal) to Weissenburg, they took 24 of our best horses, and if we wanted these back we had to pay 48 *Franks* expenses. The harnesses of these horses were almost totally lost.

“Finally, we must mention the damage to our vineyard, from which we were not able to retain a single grape, but which we can still hopefully count among our wealth if we can revive it in 3-4 years, since the stalks are trodden together by the horses and the men, torn out, and the poles are burnt. And then

⁴⁰ The Croats and Serbs belonged to the Imperial Free-Corps, also called “Red Capes.” Among them were many from the border villages near Turkey. It was a custom with them to cut the heads off their enemies. They were the terror not only of the French, but also of the south Pfälzers.

⁴¹ [Translator’s note:] one *Zentner* was equivalent to about 100 pounds. A *Malter* was a measure for grain, but it varied in different principalities. In the Pfalz it was equivalent to about 12 bushels. In Hessen it was equivalent to 128 liters.

the losses of house provisions: it is easy to understand how little meat, bread and other provisions remains when friendly troops came storming into a house on hot summer days, languishing from hunger and thirst; and the French had even less pity for us, since we didn't follow their nonsensical ideas about freedom and we didn't erect a liberty tree⁴² and swear our allegiance to their nation. They took our stores of meat and bread at bare saber point, from even the most secret of hiding places, and in this we were also not spared by the Germans, who surpassed, so to say, even the former. After this there was the constant quartering of troops through the entire summer, when we had to support 300-400 men, and even now we experience this burden, which is so oppressive since we must purchase everything for their provisions. Then there were the overwhelming burdens for conscripted labor that we had to perform the entire summer, almost daily work on the roads, and in addition we were forced daily to take 8 to 10 loads of wood and water to the picketers. When the Prussians were here, none of our horses had time to eat their food because of the constant wood hauling.

"Finally, we also want to note the emotional damages that we had to endure, since we had to butcher most of our cattle and couldn't fatten any for ourselves. Because of this we were forced to purchase our meat all year long, whereas in other years we could count on earning something from it.

"From these above detailed damages, a highly praiseworthy Catholic Religious Administration will note that the tenant farmers here, without exception, cannot afford to pay the slightest rent to the collector, and on the contrary, that because of all this we deserve a total remission, and also a small sum as suitable compensation for our damages, so that we will not be forced to sacrifice the entire remainder of our acquisitions brought about through long years of toil and sweat. This way we could recover from the great expenditures that we had to struggle with throughout the year

"We beseech you, therefore, that we may receive the requested small sum in compensation, in addition to the total remission, both in money and crops, of the amounts that are due, and we await in confident expectation of a gracious hearing of our obedient request soon, in humblest and abiding deepest respect.

"Insheim, the 11 November 1793.

Johs. Greibühl *als Beständer* (leaseholder)

Franz Merker *als Beständer*

Heinrich Buckel *als Beständer*

Joh. Beckenhaut *als Beständer*"

While the German troops were withdrawing in the last days of 1793, most of the officials of the Bishopric and the *Kurfürst* also fled over the Rhine, as well

⁴² [Trans. Comment:] the so-called "liberty tree" was a symbol of the French Revolution, villagers were obliged to plant these in their town squares.

as the pastors of both denominations. The Catholic pastor, Josef Ziegler, returned to his parish in Insheim in August 1796. The Reformed pastor, Leonhard Friedrich Gumbert, remained on the right side of the Rhine. After the fall of Robespierre and the renewed toleration of the churches, he resigned in favor of his son, Ludwig, who took over the parish at Impflingen-Insheim in 1795. The mayors of all the surrounding villages had fled; only the mayor of Insheim, Johannes Greibühl, who at that time was already 70 years old, remained in his community, where he died six years later.⁴³ His continuity was clinched not only by his age, but also by the fact that he had many years experience in his dealings with the French and had mastered their language. This was very important since the devastations of the previous years were surpassed by the horrors that ensued from the French reoccupation of the Pfalz.

The noise of war had no sooner been silenced, when it was followed by the systematic looting of the districts occupied by the French. The Paris terrorist regime ordered a so-called "confiscation committee" to completely "empty" the occupied districts. The churches were looted everywhere, the bells were hurled out of the towers, and the silver utensils of the churches were made off with. All houses of those who fled across the Rhine were pillaged. Anything that the French needed was taken from the peaceful citizens who remained behind. At the beginning of 1794, 3,000 wagons were required to haul away the booty from Speyer alone. In order to discover any valuables that may have been buried in cellars and gardens, the *Sansculottes* poured water onto the ground and wherever it soaked in the fastest, they dug it up. Pleas for consideration were met with scorn: "we will leave you with nothing but eyes to cry with. You should be happy that we at least leave you with your plundered houses and don't burn them to the ground," was the type of speech given by the plunderers. In addition to this, many localities had war contributions imposed on them, which had to be paid in cash. In Insheim it was 2,000 *Franks*, according to an (unproven) story that was passed down. Hostages were seized and imprisoned in Landau or in Alsace until the barely affordable sums were paid. Meanwhile the "victors" were not powerful enough to keep the "emptying" under control. A Landau citizen with falsified papers extorted *Assignats* and also 34,000 *Franks* in hard cash from the surrounding villages. Another Landauer by the name of Bergert swindled the winegrowers into opening the cellars and selling the wine at the canteens.⁴⁴

There is a copy-book in the city archive of Edenkoben with 167 copies of letters of the Canton administration from 1798 to 1800, part in German and part

⁴³ Catholic *Pfarrgedenkbuch* of Insheim and the Protestant parish archive of Impflingen, according to Remling vol. II, footnote p. 14 and 15.

⁴⁴ Ney, p. 14 and 15. [Trans. Note:] presumably this means to sell the wine to the soldiers.

in French.⁴⁵ They best replay the difficulties that the new administration had to oversee. A few are reproduced here that had direct consequences for Insheim.⁴⁶ As was customary, the district business began with an enlightening proclamation on the first page:

“Proclamation to the residents of the Canton of Edenkoben.

The French regime, in the spirit of the great and noble principles of the Republican Constitution, has the fervent desire that the conquered lands, whose territories are proclaimed to be eternally united with the Republic, should be allowed, as soon as possible, to participate in all the advantages of this Constitution. In order to be allowed to participate, the residents themselves must first solemnly and firmly express their common desire for the final unification with the great Nation. In the event that this doesn't happen, the regime can only, with the best of will, regard and treat the blessed slopes of the Rhine, the Maas and the Mosel, as conquered lands....

Many villages and thousands of individuals have, to be sure, already expressed this wish enthusiastically and fervently, but in order for the regime to make it happen, to judge whether this wish is the common will of the people, it is necessary that the individuals vote together to bring about this important result. I cannot believe, citizens, that you must be convinced to wish your own happiness. Therefore I command you without any further pompous preaching, to cast your vote. How can you hesitate, even for a moment, about whether you would rather step into full citizenship rights, or be ruled as residents of a conquered land? As enfranchised French citizen you will have the future rights to elect your own public authorities and judges. ...You will especially receive the invaluable right to select worthy men from your own laps, those whom you honor and love, to be your representatives at legal assemblies, and in that way receive the guarantee that the laws will be the expression of your common will, etc. etc.

Patriots, the time for doubt is past, you have nothing more to fear! Abolish fear and prejudice, which stand in the way of your happiness and rob you of the fruits which can ripen only in the full enjoyment of all human rights etc. etc.

Remember, citizens, that you are voting here for your own happiness and for that of your descendants, who centuries forthwith will bless the hands that have signed here, etc. etc.

⁴⁵ Stadtarchiv Edenkob, Kopialbuch CI.

⁴⁶ [Trans. Comments:] We might recall here the earlier comments in this chapter, about how in 1793 the French had ordered new elections for municipal governments throughout the west bank of the Rhine, as preparation for a national convention to be held in Mainz. In order to participate in the elections, male citizens had to swear an oath of loyalty to Jacobin principles of “freedom and equality.” To the utter dismay of the French, most Rhinelanders refused.

Hosemann, *Commissaire du Directoire executif das le Canton d'Edenkoben.*"

Probably all the grown men in Insheim acquiesced with the proclamation of Commissar Hosemann, since the resulting document that was transmitted to the regime in Paris carried 128 signatures. The signature list consists of six folio pages and today it is located in the French national archive in Paris. The archive cordially provided us with a photocopy, which is as follows:

"The Community of Insheim

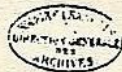
The list of names of the eligible citizens who voted for approval of the Constitution with the Great Republic:

Schneiderfritz Agent, J. Guth Adjunct, Lucas Jly, Andreas Berger, Sebastian Kuhn X his hand mark, Lebolt Schefner, Joseph Karch, Peter Buckel, Johannes Maledon, Michel Heck H hand mark, Jacob Renner, Andreas Mayer, Michael Meyer, Johannes Klor, Heinrich Weber X his mark, Christoph Feth, Jö Rieder, Phil. H. Rieder, Gabriel Karch, Simon Orth, Georg Stauch, Andreas Wirth, Jacob Hust, Michael Schäfer alt, Georg Stauch der alt, Atam Stauch, Nicklaus Frey, Michal Schäfer, George Mich. Rothhaas, Gerg Hust, Frantz König, Friedrich Schaurer, Jacob Schofer, Georg Schaurer, Jacob Berger, Jacob Fischer, Johs. Dieringer d. a., Phili. Jacob Heck, Hannes Diringer, Adam Mercker, Pether Würth, Johannes Waltz, Jacob Mercker, Martin Schultz, Henrich Busch, Georg Jung, Andreas Metz, Adam Metz, Johann Valentin Hust, Georg Jacob Hust, Balzer Schaurer, Heinrich Schuman, Conrad Wahl, Georg Heck, Johannes Heck, Michel X Hust, Peter Hust, Jacob Stauch, Peter Kehrt, Georg Jacob Meyer, Friedrich Renner, Jacob Bellinger, Georg Michael Bollinger, Jacob Beckenhaut, Gorg Bellinger, Geörg Böllinger, Friedrich Wüst, Friedrich Schäfer, Valdin Hust, Philipp Lorentz, jung, Adam Jlich, Gottfried Feth, Johannes Medardt, Christoph Böllinger, Mi. Fritz, Jacob Buss, Martin Böllinger, Jost Schäfer, Johannes Hust mi. [mittel?], Thomas Mercker, Jacob Rothhass, Johannes Rothass, Peter Hust, Johannes Hust d. ju. [the younger], Michel Bellinger, Georg Jacob Traut, Görg Knoll, Peter Dieringer, Thomas Fischer, Johannes Hust der alt, Adam Kortz, Adam Bellem, Johannes Greibühl, Albrecht Greibühl, Andreas Steidel,

Gemeinde Insheim

Weswegen dasjenige, was durch den Bürger & alle für die Consti-
tutions-Kommission mit der Grafschaft Nassau.

Wiederholt angeht
J. Adolph Rehnert
Lucas Heij.



Andreas Berger
Sebastian Krieger
Ludwig Krieger
Herr Heij

Joseph Herr
Joseph Heij
Krieger Heij
Jacob Heij

Andreas Heij
Christoph Heij

Joseph Heij
Johann Heij

Joseph Heij
Christoph Heij
Heij Heij
Gebrüder Heij
Simon Heij

Joseph Heij
Christoph Heij
Heij Heij

Joseph Heij
Joseph Heij
Joseph Heij

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Joseph Heij
Joseph Heij

Gemeinde Insheim Petition 1799 (Franz Wagner indicated by arrow)

(signatures continued) Nicklaus Hust, Johannes Heck, Joh. Adam Heck, Baldur Schäfer, Philipp Jacob Stahr, Heinrich Martin, Jacob Schaurer der alt, Jacob Schaurer, Peter Schäfer, Gerg Böllinger, Daniel Hertzog, Jacob Amon, Michael Meier, Georg Schaurer, G. Jacob Disque, Adam Bollinger, Jacob Schäfer, Jacob Kehrt, Thomas Hehl, Petter Hust, Johann Jacob Bauer, Georg Eichorn, Hannes Dreiling, Jacob Rösch, Georg Dörzapf, Joseph Wirth, Christian X Dreyling, **Franz Wagner**, Johann Hoffmann, Bastian Kirstaler, Georg Peter Kehrt, Valentin Wirth X hand mark, J. Rudolph Orth."

(Nr. 14). On 24 *Floreal 6* (5/13/1798) the processions on Corpus Christi day, as well as public religious processions in general, were forbidden. The ordinance was based on: 1) community order and peace was destroyed by the processions, 2) it would be sufficient if "everyone in the grip of the Temples of God worship could freely and unhindered bring their tributes of prayers and adoration to their Creator," 3) by law, religious sodalities and processions should be forbidden. The pastor should be made responsible for violations of the law."

(Nr. 30). "It is announced that after twice 24 hours from the present proclamation have elapsed, a law will be strictly enforced such that anyone who hides emigrants, priests or other suspicious persons in his house and who has not reported them in the legally established time, and likewise anyone who is found on the streets or in any public place without visible and reliable papers, testimonials or otherwise valid identification documents, will be taken and delivered to the punitive hands of the prison, to be punished there in accordance with the present laws."

(Nr. 46). On 23 *Frimaire* (12/13/1798) the following admonishment was sent to the community of Insheim:

"One-half year has already elapsed, citizens, despite both written and verbal admonishment, before any of the church books, the baptismal-, marriage- and death registries in your community, were finally delivered to the Secretariat of the Municipal Authority here. Until now you have given no compliance to these requirements, etc. ...If only you had carried out the regulations before now, which should not require the zeal and unnecessary exhortations of a public official, then you already would have long been in accordance with the will of the higher authorities."

In conclusion, it was threatened that if the books were not forwarded, a messenger would be sent to retrieve them, for which the community would have to pay a fee of one Frank. There were two reasons for the entry about the church books: when the general military draft was introduced there was no official registry other than the church books for the conscription of recruits; furthermore, the books were necessary for managing the civil bureau registries [*Standesamtsregistern*], which were introduced at that time. The gaps in the records of the Insheim registry in the beginning times testify that these novelties were only slowly carried out. Immediately after the church books were

delivered, Pastor Gumbart established three new books for the Insheim Protestants, one each for baptisms, marriages and burials. On the first page the pastor wrote that Insheim at that time was a “conquered land,” and the old church books had to be turned over at the command of the French regime.⁴⁷

More difficulties awaited the “new French” citizens in the general military duty, from which they had been spared until that point. At first the burden wasn’t especially heavy since out of the 4.6 million residents of the *Departement* of Donnersberg only 300 men were drafted in 1802. This number rose to about 770 in 1806, to over 2,000 in 1809 and then to 6,000 conscripts in 1813. In the South Pfalz they were called *Kaaskrii*. Until 1808 the number of 20 year-olds exceeded the number of conscripts, so it was possible for the sons of widows or brothers of soldiers who were already serving to be exempt. Married men were likewise not taken. Consequently, in Insheim the number of so-called “married youth” became quite high.⁴⁸

(Here ends the extracts from Fritz’s history of Insheim)

⁴⁷ Prot. *Landeskirchenarchiv* Speyer: Insheimer Kirchenbücher Nr. 6, 7 and 8.

⁴⁸ Compare *Insheimer Standesakten* of 1799-1814 and Springer p. 323-24.