

For or against the French revolution ?

❶ English satirical cartoon by Isaac Cruikshank, January 1, 1793. It mocks Edmund Burke, the famous MP, who had fiercely attacked the French revolution in his *Reflections on the revolution in France*, published in 1790.



Context : one year after the fall of Robespierre (1794). As France and England were at war, Wollstonecraft had to go to Norway on her way to London.

1. An educated man

3. The Norwegians supported the FR, just like Wollstonecraft from 1789 to 1792. The FR had friends abroad.

❷ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letter from Norway*, written in 1795, published in 1796. Wollstonecraft had been in France from December 1792 to April 1795.

2. The Danish newspapers were on the side of England : they blamed France for her "atrocities."

Here I met with **an intelligent literary man**, who was anxious to gather information from me relative to the past and present situation of France. The newspapers printed at Copenhagen, as well as those in England, give the most exaggerated accounts of their **atrocities** and distresses [...] Still **the Norwegians [...]** wish well to **the Republican cause**¹, and follow with the most lively interest the successes of the French arms². So determined were they, in fact, **to excuse everything disgracing the struggle of freedom**, by admitting **the tyrant's plea**³, necessity, that I could hardly persuade them that **Robespierre was a monster**.

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, explain why the English were divided about the French revolution.

¹The Republican cause : the cause of the French Republic.

²By then, the French revolutionary armies were winning the war.

³Plea : justification or vindication. "The tyrant" refers to Robespierre.

5. Robespierre.

6. Wollstonecraft had **changed her mind**. She no longer approved of massacres perpetrated in the name of freedom.

4. They were ready to forgive anything to the FR, because her cause was the cause of freedom.