

SUMMARIES

“REVOLUTIONS IN THE POLITICAL AND THE MORAL WORLD ARE AS NECESSARY AS THUNDER AND LIGHTNING IN NATURE”

Supporters of the French Revolution Among the Clergy in Southern Moravia

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This case study deals with three priests from southern Moravia, against whom the authorities investigated in the early 19th century because of the sympathy they demonstrated for the French revolution and their alleged subversive and even contra-religious opinions in general. This case, special in that it is exceptionally well documented with the documents being preserved intact, is a contribution to the problem of the reception of the French revolution throughout Bohemia and Moravia, and at the same time it represents a probe into the intellectual life of the junior clergy, whose members had been trained in the Josephinian “Seminary General”. The present study seeks to show with what kind of developments these junior priests, having been trained in a spirit of Enlightenment (they used to read Immanuel Kant and Jean Jacques Rousseau), took offence within the church and in contemporary, post-Josephinian society, and what fascinated them about the French revolution. It is a kind of intimate play which allows to trace, on a higher level, the difficult and changing relationship between the state and the church. It also sheds some light on several other phenomena which were characteristic of the period in question, such as the tensions between subordinate and higher ranks of the clergy, the new role of the priests as enlightened teachers of the population, or even new approaches and procedures then being applied by the police.