

MUNIKL'26 National Convention Study Guide

Agenda Item: French Revolution

Table of Contents:

1. **Letter from the Secretary-General**
2. **Letter from the Under Secretary-General**
3. **Letter from the Academic Assistant**
4. **What are Crisis and Semi-Crisis Committees**
5. **Bills, Sample Bill Format, Amendments and Movements**
6. **France Before the Legislative Assembly**
 - a. The Ancien Régime
 - b. Financial Crisis and Social Inequality
 - c. The Estates-General and the Birth of the National Assembly
 - d. The Fall of the Bastille and the Rise of Revolutionary Politics
 - e. The Constitution of 1791 and the Establishment of the Constitutional Monarchy
7. **Formation of the Legislative Assembly (1791)**
 - a. Structure of the Assembly
 - b. Political Clubs and Revolutionary Factions
 - c. The Role of the King in the Constitutional System
8. **Rising Tensions in Revolutionary France**
 - a. Religious Conflict and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy
9. **Foreign Threats and the Road to War**
 - a. European Monarchies and the Fear of Revolution
 - b. The Declaration of War Against Austria (1792)
 - c. Military Difficulties and Internal Instability
10. **Crisis of the Monarchy**
 - a. Growing Distrust Toward Louis XVI
 - b. Political Radicalization in Paris
 - c. Public Pressure and Political Polarization
11. **Early 1792**
 - a. Political Divisions in Paris
 - b. The Role of the National Guard and the Army
 - c. Influence of Popular Movements and Political Clubs
12. **Questions to Ponder**

1)Letter from Secretary General

Dear Delegates, It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the fourth annual session of Izmir K1z High School Model United Nations Conference. I am Ecrin Tügen, and I will be serving as your Secretary General for this conference. I am here to ensure you have an unforgettable experience in the best way possible.

During the conference, you will not only engage in diplomatic discussions, but you will also develop your leadership and communication skills, gain a deeper understanding of international issues, learn about the policies of other countries, practice crisis management, and socialize with delegates from other schools who may become your close friends. Briefly, this conference will offer you far more than you expect.

Of course, a great conference does not come together easily. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my Executive, Organization, and Academic Teams, who have worked constantly and intensively throughout the entire process. I am certain that this conference will be amazing because of their hard work.

MUNIKL'26 has been my biggest dream for years; finally, my dream comes true with your interest and participation. I cannot fully express how grateful I am to all of you for being part of this journey. Wishing you a beneficial, enjoyable and truly unforgettable conference experience.

Warm Regards,

Ecrin Tügen

Secretary General, MUNIKL'26

2)Letter from Under Secretary General

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to MUNIKL'26. Over the next three days, you will be expected to analyze critical developments, respond to evolving situations, and contribute to decisions that may redefine French history. I am pleased to accompany you throughout this process as your Under Secretary-General.

My name is Doruk Munzur Tulga, and I am a 10th-grade student at Bornova Anatolian High School. Having participated in over 30 conferences across various committees, I aim to reflect the experience and skills I have gained by ensuring a dynamic, challenging, and engaging committee environment.

This committee will be conducted as a French National Convention, operating in a semi-crisis format. Delegates will be addressing the French Revolution, a turning point that changed French History.

Throughout the committee, diplomacy, technical knowledge, and crisis awareness will intersect. While structured debate will form the foundation of our sessions, unexpected developments may arise, requiring delegates to think critically, act decisively, and adapt quickly. Delegates who take initiative and engage actively with the agenda will stand out.

Lastly, **I strongly encourage you to read the Study Guide thoroughly.** Given the complexity of relations in the Assembly and the sensitivity of the historical context, a solid understanding of the background will be essential to your performance.

I look forward to meeting all of you and witnessing your active participation throughout the committee.

Sincerely,
Doruk Munzur Tulga
Under Secretary-General

3) Letter From the Academic Assistant

Dear Participants,

It is my utmost pleasure to extend my warmest welcome to all of you to the National Convention and MUNIKL 2026!

Throughout the upcoming 3 days, you will have to adapt to this committee's dynamic environment, manage possible crises, write law proposals for a prosperous France and debate with diplomatic rigor whilst meticulously shaping the fate of France. I urge each of you to have a profound comprehension regarding the events, political clubs and your allocated deputies' beliefs, therefore you have to read this guide really carefully before starting your own research. I am delighted to help you throughout your preparation process as we start.

My name is Yavuz Alp Bilgiç and I'm proudly serving as your Academic Assistant for MUNIKL 2026. I'm currently pursuing my studies at Alev Alatlı Anatolian High School as a sophomore.

As the Academic Staff, we aim to provide a dynamic and even exhausting yet an exhilarating committee environment for each participant. You will have to deal with multiple matters that exactly reflect the political situation and public pressure as well as the intensive work of deputies during that time period.

Last but not least, I encourage you to fully understand the study guide and conduct your own thorough research. In this committee, the study guide will provide a comprehensive overview of historical events, complex relations and aims of political clubs. Nevertheless, you will need more specific information regarding your allocation and your beliefs, which emphasizes the necessity of separate research. Sometimes the more research doesn't mean more success, **but the less research will result in as a failure to engage in the committee.** You have my trust for changing France for the better.

Sincerely,

Yavuz Alp Bilgiç

Academic Assistant

4) What are Crisis and Semi-crisis Committees:

Crisis committees can be different based on the topic; they can be joint crisis committees, crisis cabinets, or half-crisis committees like ours.

In crisis committees, the subject can either be historical or fictional. In crisis proceedings, time is stopped at a specific moment in history or a fictional realm, and an alternate reality is established from there. In this reality, real events can be altered based on delegates' choices — for instance, if it's left to the delegates, the Second Punic War can be considered as not won by Rome and thus will not have occurred; later events unfold according to delegates' decisions.

Each delegate in a crisis committee receives an allocation. This is either a country or an individual. Delegates can, through their actions, influence the committee and its fictional universe. They do this via documents called directives. Directives detail actions the assigned character or country would perform. These may be anything from calling military operations to spying — the list is limitless.

General Crisis Committee Information:

Crisis Committee:

A crisis committee consists of one or more cabinets and addresses specific historical events or crises arising from various causes. Through the use of internal mechanisms, it offers delegates the ability to chart their own paths within the committee.

Semi-Crisis Committee:

Like crisis committees, semi-crisis committees are also operated via directives, with the only basic difference being that they also have GA features such as Motions, Points, etc. The end goal of these committees is to

reach an agreement or resolution, whereas directives are introduced to solve arising crises.

Crisis Flow:

The crisis progresses and finds its resolution through two basic mechanics: directives and updates with their outcomes.

Delegates write directives — separately or collectively — to take actions within the limits of their allocation, which they receive before the conference begins.

Directives possess a proper writing format and paper format. Directives are filtered by the dais after delegates write them and, if approved, are passed on to the crisis team via committee observers. The crisis team considers directives based on the provided criteria.

Directives must clearly and fully state the action desired. Otherwise, they are rejected by the crisis team and the action called for is not executed. Once passed, the action is implemented. Acceptance or rejection is reported to the cabinet through reports by crisis staff. Progress reports are as frequent as the filing of directives.

The conditions below are needed to pass a directive:

The action must be within the delegate's authority allocation.

The instruction must be handwritten in a legible format and be understandable.

It must provide a description of the desired action in sufficient detail.

It must adhere to the laid-down directive format.

A directive that fails to satisfy these conditions is rejected and, at the crisis team's discretion, may or may not be returned to the delegate.

Directive Format:

In the top-left corner:

"From" and "To" are written one below the other. It indicates who the sender is and to whom or which organization the directive is supposed to be sent.

In the right-hand corner:

The in-simulation date of the time and the real time at which the directive has been completed are inscribed. This helps the crisis team understand the timeline of events and prioritize accordingly.

In the middle:

The directive type is written. A brief explanation of the desired action is then given, as well as the full text of the directive.

Types of Directives:

There are five directives:

Personal Directive

Joint Directive

Committee Directive

Information Directive

Press Release

"Top Secret Directive" can also be written by marking a personal or joint directive as such.

Personal Directive:

Written individually by a delegate to carry out an action within the authorities of their own allocation.

All directives except top secret must be screened by the dais before moving to the crisis team.

Joint Directive:

Allows multiple delegates (representing their allocations) to sign an action collectively. Everyone must sign at the bottom.

Committee Directive:

Written and signed by all members of the committee. Each allocation's name and signature must be put at the bottom.

Information Directive:

Used to pose questions of the crisis team about the simulation. The question should be something that the delegate's allocation would realistically know, and has not been previously provided.

Press Release:

Allows a delegate to release a public statement during the simulation via their allocation. The body of the statement is enclosed in quotation marks. No prior warning is necessary.

Top Secret Directive:

The only directive that can bypass the dais. It must be folded in half, stamped "TOP SECRET" in capital letters, and handed directly to an observer who will deliver it to the crisis room. These directives are given with special consideration.

How Directives Are Communicated to the Crisis Team:

All directives (except top secret) are read by the dais, then given to observers who deliver them straight to the crisis room. Top secret directives are handed straight from the delegate to the observer.

How the Crisis Team Judges Directives:

The crisis team has the right to approve, reject, or table a directive based on the following:

1. Conformity to format.

2. Readability and comprehensibility.

3. Approval of the dais.

4. Adherence to in-simulation date and time.

5. Sufficient detail to allow answers to the 5Ws and 1H (What, Why, When, How, Where, Who).

6. Adherence to the realism of the simulation.

7. Adherence to available resources.

Criterion 5 takes precedence.

The crisis team informs delegates of available assets and resources prior to the commencement of the simulation. These can change according to committee decisions and are communicated via updates.

Staff checks if the information used in a directive is up to date. Otherwise, staff will use discretion based on the level of detail. If insufficient, the directive may be rejected or applied partially.

Example:

If the committee has 5,000 infantry troops in a region and a directive does not specify how many are to be used, the crisis management team may decide to use all, some, or none. The cabinet has no basis to complain later.

Appealing Updates & Revisions:

Each crisis member represents the crisis team in giving an update. These are based on directive decisions and simulation logic. The crisis team may revise the update in case an update is flawed or a directive is incorrectly judged.

Updates may be appealed by delegates but they must provide explanations. Appeals are made to the crisis team via the in-cabinet crisis staff member.

If accepted, the revision can be rewritten. If denied, the decision is final and cannot be appealed further.

Appeals must be courteous. If the delegate is being discourteous, the crisis staff member may file a complaint. The complaint will be reviewed by the crisis team leader, academic team lead, conference president, or VPs. Sanctions may ensue.

Concerning Writing Directives:

Pre-writing directives before the committee starts is not permitted. One may discuss and plan, but not pre-written directives.

From the start of the first session till the end, writing directives — in or out of the session — is totally acceptable.

Nobody is allowed to write or submit a directive on behalf of someone who is not a member of the committee. Upon detection, the participant will be disqualified and penalized.

Updates:

Updates are given by the crisis team at their discretion or in response to directives. They provide the committee with information on time jumps, outcomes of actions, etc.

Update frequency depends on the workload of the crisis team and the number of directives.

Powers of the Crisis Team Within the Committee:

A member of the crisis staff has the same power as a committee chair. In the absence of a dais in a cabinet, the crisis staff can assume its functions.

They can remove any delegate from the session at their discretion.

They also decide how updates are delivered — through roleplay, written announcements, or the board — as they choose.

5) Bills, Sample Bill Format, Amendments and Movements

Bills

In the legislative bodies, law proposals are made within the bills, a bill can be written and can be proposed at any time. We can think of a bill as a proposal for a legislative requirement, hence bills must contain enough detail to satisfy the reader and the members of parliament. Despite the major differences between any document we got accustomed to, bills have a really simple format and flexible conditions will be provided which will be explained in the procedure workshop.

The members of parliament will introduce the bills via “Movement to Introduce the Draft Bill” as we mentioned, a bill can be introduced at any time and the introduction movement has to pass with a simple majority. The proposer of the movement will approach the floor and read the whole Draft Bill out loud to introduce, after a bill is read, the presiding officer will choose 2 in favour and 2 against speakers from those who are raising their placards to deliver a speech on the floor regarding whether they in favour of this bill or they are opposing the bill. After that the presiding officer will provide 5 minutes of time to write amendments; if present, amendments will be passed with the simple majority. After the amendment process, members will vote upon the draft bill via roll-call voting, which, again, needs a simple majority to pass (%50+1)

Bill Sample

A Bill From
The National Constituent Assembly

Date:

Title of the Bill

Signatories:

Third Estate's Proposal

Section 1: Explanation of terminology, what specific terms do we have to know to fully comprehend this bill's aim?

Section 2: What is the act going to do? Who or where will be affected by this act? Who is going to be involved or impacted?

Section 3: Where? Will it affect the whole of France or just a specific part of the country?

Section 4: How will you fund and enforce your act, who is going to administer and enforce this act?

Section 5: Penalties. (if any) what will happen to the related individuals or organizations in case of non-compliance?

Section 6: Enactment Date, when will the law be enacted/go into effect?

Amendments

After a bill is read, the chairboard will give 5 minutes of time to write an amendment, after 5 minutes, the chairboard will ask if there are any amendments. The proposing member must read it out loud by approaching the floor. After an amendment is read, placard voting will be implemented to reach a simple majority regarding the amendment as long as the amendment contains contextual changes instead of correcting grammar or spelling errors. Amendments can be written on paper and handed to the chairboard via admins before introducing it. Additionally, the academic team does not encourage you to write amendments to correct spelling or grammar errors as it'll be handled by the chairboard

There are three types of amendments

- Strike (Remove) a Clause
- Changing a Clause
- Adding a Clause

Amendments can be written on the paper with the following format

An Amendment

From:

Date:

Changing a Clause

Section 1: Original clause will be written here

Section 2: Amended version will be written here

Movements

Different from the General Assembly Committees, we will be using movements instead of motions. Movements will function the same as the motions but they will have a difference in the phrasing aspect. Every movement has to pass with a simple majority.

Essential Movements

- Movement to Disband the House
- Movement for the House to Consider a Leave
- Movement for the House to Evaluate a Subtopic
- Movement to Terminate the Ongoing Subtopic
- Movement to Summon (Member's Name) to a Question Period
- Movement to Introduce the Draft Bill

6) France Before National Assembly

Ancien Regime

The “Ancien Régime” or the former regime was France's old political and social system that the French Revolution had overturned. This was accomplished through the abolition in 1790 of the feudal system of the French Nobility and in 1792 through the execution of King Louis XVI and the declaration of a republic. Nowadays, the Ancien Régime is a metaphor for a system that is no longer prevailing.

The administrative and social structures of the Ancien Régime in France evolved across years of state-building, legislative acts and internal conflicts.

B. Financial Crisis and Social Inequality

The later years of Louis XV saw some economic setbacks. While the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763, led to an increase in the royal debt and the loss of nearly all of France's North American possessions, it was not until 1775 that the French economy began to truly enter a state of crisis. An extended reduction in agricultural prices over the previous twelve years, with dramatic crashes in 1777 and 1786 further complicated climatic events, adding to the matter such as the disastrous winters of 1785-1789. The agricultural and climatic problems of the 1770s and 1780s led to a large increase in poverty. In some cities in the north, historians have estimated the poor as reaching upwards %20 of the urban population. Displacement and criminality, mainly theft, also increased and the growth of groups of mendicants and bandits became a problem. Overall about one-third of the French population lived in poverty which is equivalent to approximately 8 million people. In 1778, Louis supported the American Revolution which resulted in the necessity of increased taxes.

Additionally, during the financial overwhelming commoners were giving tax to almost everything while clergy and nobility lived in peace. Increased taxes and bread shortages as well as the financial crisis led to the convention of the Estates General which resulted in the birth of the Tennis Court Oath.

Birth of the National Assembly

The Tennis Court Oath was the birth of the National Assembly in France which was taken on 20th June 1789 by the members of 3rd Estate in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles. This action became a pivotal event in the French Revolution. Let's look at the background of their separation from the Estates General. (Society was separated into 3 estates in that time. Clergy, Nobility and Commoners)

The Estates General of 1789 made up of representatives of three estates which had not been convened since 1614, met on 5 May 1789 had been called to address the country's fiscal and agricultural crisis, but they had become bogged down in issues of representation of their own estate because

of the vote inequality. In the Estates General, every estate would count as 1 vote, and since the third estate was approximately more than 95% of the population and only had 1 vote, they were getting vetoed every single time by the clergy and nobility. On June 17, Third Estate began to call themselves “The National Assembly” led by Jean Sylvain and Honore Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau, who took significant roles in the early stages of the Revolution.

On the morning of June 20, the deputies were shocked to discover that the door of the *Salle des Menus-Plaisair* was locked and guarded by soldiers. They immediately feared the worst and were anxious that an attack was imminent from King Louis XVI, so upon the suggestion of one of their members, Josep-Ignace Guillotin, the deputies congregated in a nearby indoor tennis court near the Palace of Versailles. 576 out of 577 members from the Third Estate took the oath; Joseph Martin Dauch did not join.



Fall of the Bastilles and the Rise of Revolutionary Politics

On the morning of 14th July, Paris was in a state of alarm. The partisans of the Third Estate in France, had earlier stormed Hotel des Invalides without meeting significant opposition, they intended to gather the weapons held there (approximately 30.000 muskets without powder or shot). The commandant at the Invalides had in the previous few days taken the precaution of transferring 250 barrels of gunpowder to the Bastille for safer storage.

At this point, Bastille was nearly empty, housing only 7 prisoners. The crowd gathered outside the fortress around mid-morning calling for the pulling back of the seemingly threatening cannon from the walls and towers and the release of the arms and gunpowder stored inside. Two representatives from the Hotel de Ville were invited into the fortress and negotiations began and dragged on while the crowd grew and became impatient. Around 1.30 P.M. The crowd surged into the undefended outer courtyard; after hours of fighting and 94 deaths, the insurgents were able to enter the Bastille. The governor and a few members of the Bastille were killed after surrendering.

Result:

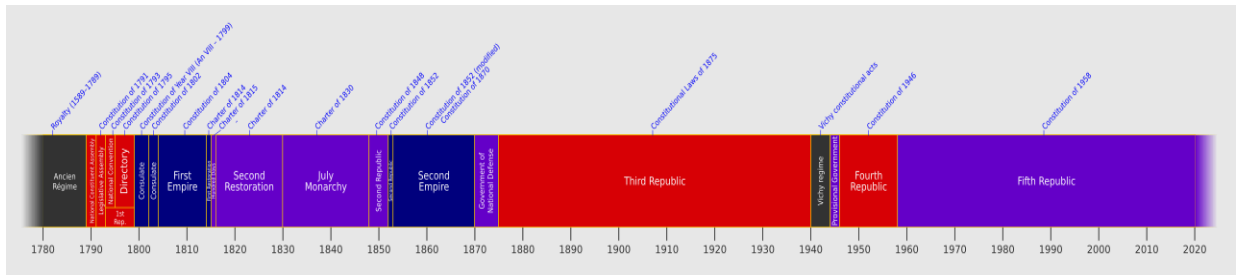
- Bastille Captured
- Prisoners of the Bastille freed
- Governor de Launay executed
- French Revolution begins

The Constitution of 1791 and the Establishment of the Constitutional Monarchy

The French Constitution of 1791 was the first written constitution in France created after the collapse of the absolute monarchy and the Ancien Régime. Following the Tennis Court Oath, the National Assembly began the process of drafting a constitution as its primary objective. A twelve-member constitutional committee convened on 14th July 1789 (coincidentally, the day of the Storming of

the Bastille). The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, adopted on 26 August, eventually became the preamble of the constitution, which was adopted on 3rd September 1791. Many proposals for redefining the French State were floated, particularly in the days after the remarkable sessions of 4-5 August 1789 and the abolition of feudalism. After very long negotiations, the constitution was reluctantly accepted by King Louis XVI in September 1791. It abolished many institutions that were injurious to liberty and equality of rights. The National Assembly believed in a sovereign nation and in equal representation, which can be seen in the constitutional separation of powers. Ultimately, the National Assembly was the legislative body and the king and royal ministers were the executive branch. Judiciary was independent from the other 2 branches

Timeline of French Constitutions



7) Formation of the Legislative Assembly (1791)

a. Structure of the Assembly (1789)

Following the storming of Bastille, the National Assembly became the effective government of France, in the words of historian François Mignet:

- The assembly had acquired the entire power; the corporations depended on it; the national guards obeyed it... the royal power, though existing of right, was in a measure suspended, since it was not obeyed, and the assembly had to supply its action by its own

Some of the leading figures were: The conservatives, later known as “the Right” Jacques Antoine Marie Cazales (spokesman for aristocracy) Jean Sifrein Maury (representative of church) The monarchiens, also called the Democratic Royalists, were allied with Jacques Necker inclined toward arranging France along lines of 2 Legislative bodies similar to the British constitution. The Left, also called the National Party, was relatively united in support of revolution and democracy, representing mainly the interests of common people. In the early period its most notable leaders included, Honore Mirabeau, the Marquis Lafayette and Jean Sylvain Bailly.

b. **Political Clubs and Revolutionary Factions**

In the convention of the Assembly in 1792, there were 3 political groups different from those in 1789. The Plain (Independents), the Mountain and the Girondins.

The Plain: Also known as the Marsh, was the majority of independent deputies in the National Convention during the French Revolution. They were the most numerous group (around 400 deputies) of the National Convention; they sat between the Girondins and the Montagnards. Coming mostly from liberal and republican bourgeoisie, the Plain was attached to the political conquests of 1789 and to the work of the French Revolution and wanted the union of all republicans. In practice, this group was very heterogeneous as it included noblemen and clerics.

The Girondins: The Girondins were active in the Legislative Assembly and the National Convention. Together with the Montagnards, they initially were part of the Jacobin Movement. They campaigned for the end of the monarchy. Girondins were a group of loosely affiliated individuals rather than an organized political party. They were never a formal organization or political party.

The Montagnards: Also known as The Mountain and its members are called Montagnards. They sat on the highest benches in the National Convention. The Mountain was a left-leaning radical group and opposed the more right-leaning Girondins. The Mountain was composed mainly of the members of the middle class but represented constituencies of Paris. The Mountain operated on the belief that what was best for Paris was the best for the whole of France.

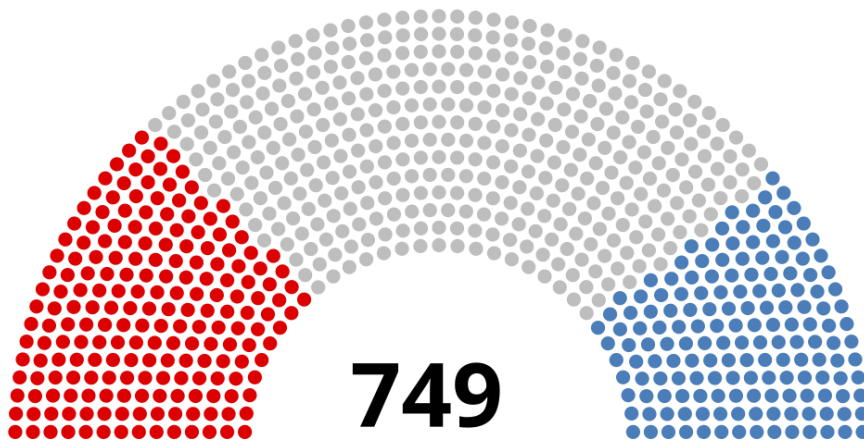
Jacobins: The Jacobin Club was heterogeneous and included both Mountain and Girondins in the early 1790s. The Girondins were more prominent in leading France when they declared a war on Austria and Prussia which will be further detailed in the following sections of the study guide.

Thermidorians: A group of Montagnards who conspired against Robespierre's regime and staged a coup d'état on July 27 1794 known as the Thermidorian Reaction.

Hebertists: Radical left wing of the Mountain primarily composed of Cordeliers, were outspoken atheists, anti-Christians and republicans.

Cordeliers: A Radical leftist club that split from the Jacobins in the spring of 1790.

Royalists: The term was given to the wide range of supporters of the Ancien Régime.



This picture indicates the reserved seats during the National Convention as follows:

The Plain

The Mountain

The Girondins

c. The Role of the King in the Constitutional System

In a constitutional system, the King or the monarch acts as a non-partisan Head of State, embodying national unity and continuity while exercising powers limited by the constitution or the convention. As a constitutional monarch, the King typically

performs ceremonial duties, grants Royal Assent to legislation and appoints the Prime Minister, largely acting on the advice of elected ministers.

- Symbol of Continuity and Stability: Unlike elected politicians, the monarch provides a permanent, non-partisan figurehead that serves as a focus for national identity
- Legislative Role (Royal Assent): The King must grant Royal Assent for bills passed by Parliament to become law.
- He chooses his ministers, but they cannot be members of the Legislative Assembly. This created a sharp separation of powers.
- Veto was the King's most significant power, nevertheless the king couldn't stop a law forever but he could only delay it.

8) Rising Tensions in Revolutionary France

a. Religious Conflict and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy

Religion became one of the most divisive and destabilizing issues in Revolutionary France. While the early stages of the Revolution aimed to establish political and economic reforms, interference in religious institutions created deep social fractures that further intensified tensions across the country.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, passed on July 12, 1790, sought to bring the Catholic Church in France under state control. According to this law, clergy members were to be elected by citizens and paid by the state, effectively transforming them into public officials. Additionally, the authority of the Pope over the French Church was significantly reduced, which marked a radical shift from traditional religious structures.

This reform was not merely administrative; it directly challenged the spiritual authority of the Church. As a result, clergy were required to swear an oath of loyalty to the Constitution. This oath created a sharp division within the clergy itself. Those who accepted the oath became known as “constitutional clergy,” while those who refused — often referred to as “refractory” or “non-juring clergy” — remained loyal to the Pope and traditional Church authority.

The impact of this division extended far beyond the Church. In many rural areas, the population remained deeply religious and supportive of the non-juring clergy. This led to widespread resentment toward the revolutionary government, which was increasingly

seen as hostile to religion. In contrast, urban centers, particularly Paris, were more supportive of the reforms, further widening the gap between different regions of France.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy ultimately transformed a political revolution into a social and cultural conflict. It fueled counter-revolutionary sentiment, weakened national unity, and contributed to the growing polarization between revolutionary and conservative elements within society. This religious divide would later play a significant role in uprisings and internal conflicts, most notably in regions such as the Vendée.

9) Foreign Threats and the Road to War

a. European Monarchies and the Fear of Revolution

As the French Revolution progressed, its impact was not confined to the borders of France. The radical political and social changes unfolding in Paris began to alarm the monarchies of Europe, which viewed the Revolution not only as an internal crisis but as a direct threat to the established order of the continent.

European monarchies such as Austria and Prussia were particularly concerned about the spread of revolutionary ideas, including popular sovereignty, equality before the law, and the challenge to absolute monarchy. These principles directly undermined the legitimacy of hereditary rule, upon which most European states were founded. As news of reforms, uprisings, and the weakening of royal authority in France spread, fears of similar movements emerging within their own territories intensified.

The situation was further complicated by dynastic ties. King Louis XVI was married to Marie Antoinette, a member of the Austrian Habsburg dynasty. This connection heightened Austria's interest in the developments in France, as the safety and status of the royal family became a matter of international concern. The perceived humiliation and eventual loss of authority of the French monarchy were therefore not only symbolic, but also politically sensitive for foreign powers.

In August 1791, Austria and Prussia issued the Declaration of Pillnitz, expressing their support for the restoration of the French monarchy and warning that they would intervene if harm came to the royal family. Although the declaration was vague and largely symbolic, it had significant consequences within France. Revolutionary leaders

interpreted it as a direct threat, reinforcing the belief that foreign powers were conspiring against the Revolution.

This growing sense of external danger contributed to increasing paranoia and radicalization within France. Many revolutionaries began to argue that war was not only inevitable, but necessary to defend the Revolution and expose internal enemies. Thus, the fear of foreign intervention and the ideological clash between revolutionary France and conservative Europe played a crucial role in pushing the country toward war.

b. The Declaration of War Against Austria (1792)

By early 1792, tensions between France and the monarchies of Europe had reached a critical level. However, the decision to declare war was not solely a response to external threats; it was also deeply influenced by internal political calculations and divisions within France itself. Rather than serving as a unifying solution, the move toward war would ultimately intensify the instability already present within the country.

The push for war was primarily led by the Girondins, who argued that a conflict with Austria would consolidate the Revolution and expose internal enemies. They believed that war could strengthen national unity and force clarity regarding the loyalty of the monarchy. However, this position was not universally accepted. Critics, including members of more cautious factions and figures such as Maximilien Robespierre, warned that France was not prepared for a large-scale conflict and that war could deepen existing divisions.

Despite these concerns, on April 20, 1792, France declared war on Austria, marking the beginning of a broader European conflict. This decision was taken at a time when the state was already facing economic hardship, political fragmentation, and social unrest. As a result, the declaration of war introduced additional strain on an already fragile system.

The early stages of the war quickly revealed the risks that had been overlooked. The French army, weakened by the emigration of experienced officers and internal distrust, struggled to perform effectively. Military failures not only undermined confidence in the government but also heightened suspicion within the country. Rather than creating unity, the war intensified accusations of treason, particularly toward the monarchy and political opponents.

Furthermore, the decision to engage in war shifted attention away from urgent domestic issues. Economic difficulties, food shortages, and political instability were not resolved but instead exacerbated by the demands of warfare. In this context, war became less of a solution and more of a catalyst for further crisis.

In conclusion, the declaration of war against Austria can be seen not only as a response to foreign pressure but also as a controversial and risky decision shaped by internal political ambitions. Instead of stabilizing France, it contributed significantly to the escalation of disorder, mistrust, and radicalization within the country.

c. Military Difficulties and Internal Instability

Following the declaration of war against Austria in April 1792, France was quickly confronted with the harsh realities of military unpreparedness and internal fragility. What had been envisioned by some as a unifying and strengthening effort instead exposed the deep structural weaknesses of the revolutionary state.

The French army, once a key institution of the monarchy, had been severely weakened in the early years of the Revolution. A significant number of experienced officers, many of whom belonged to the nobility, had emigrated, leaving behind an inexperienced command structure. This lack of leadership, combined with poor discipline and inadequate training among the troops, led to a series of early defeats on the battlefield.

Additionally, distrust within the ranks further undermined military effectiveness. Revolutionary soldiers often suspected their commanders of disloyalty, while officers questioned the reliability of newly recruited troops. This mutual suspicion created an environment where coordination and cohesion were extremely difficult to maintain. In some cases, panic and confusion during engagements led to desertions and breakdowns in command.

At the same time, these military setbacks had serious consequences on the home front. News of defeats fueled public anxiety and intensified fears of foreign invasion. As the situation worsened, many began to believe that internal enemies were actively sabotaging the war effort. Suspicion increasingly fell upon the monarchy, particularly King Louis XVI, who was accused of secretly supporting France's enemies.

Economic pressures further aggravated the crisis. War expenditures strained an already fragile economy, while shortages of food and rising prices increased discontent among

the population. Urban unrest, especially in Paris, grew more frequent, with the sans-culottes demanding stronger action against perceived enemies of the Revolution.

Ultimately, the combination of military failures and internal instability contributed to a rapid escalation of political tensions. Rather than stabilizing the revolutionary government, the war deepened divisions, accelerated radicalization, and set the stage for the dramatic events that would soon follow, including the fall of the monarchy.

10) Crisis in the Monarchy

a. Growing Distrust Toward Louis XVI

Growing distrust towards Louis XVI stemmed from his indecisive leadership, economic mismanagement, and perceived betrayal of the Revolution, ultimately making him a target for his people. Key triggers included the financial crisis, his failed 1791 escape, and suspected collaboration with foreign enemies.

Key Factors:

Financial Crisis and Inaction: The country faced bankruptcy due to overspending and funding the American Revolution. Louis XVI failed to implement financial reforms and failed to tax the nobility, losing the confidence of the Third Estate.

The Royal Family's Unpopularity: Queen Marie Antoinette was disliked for her extravagant spending and foreign origin, enhancing revolutionary fervor.

Failed Reform Attempts: Louis' inability to manage the Estates General in 1789 or stick to decisions meant he lost support from moderate factions.

Flight to Varennes (1791): This failed attempt to escape Paris in June 1791 was a point that revealed to the public that the King was a traitor and did not support the new revolutionary government.

Suspicion of Treason: The King's opposition to the Civil Constitution of Clergy and his suspected, then proven, dealings with foreign powers (Prussia in particular) to regain absolute power turned public sentiment against him entirely.

b. Political Radicalization in Paris:

Political radicalization in Paris in 1792 was driven by the escalation of the French Revolutionary Wars, economic hardship, and distrust of the monarchy, culminating in the abolition of the monarchy, the August 10 Insurrection, and the September Massacres. The radical Jacobins and Montagnards seized power from moderate Girondins, leading to the creation of the National Convention.

- **August 10 Insurrection:** Radicals, led by the Paris Commune and supported by the Jacobins, attacked the Tuileries Palace, resulting in the imprisonment of King Louis XVI and the end of the constitutional monarchy.
- **September Massacres:** Following military defeats, fear of foreign invasion (Prussians), and rumors of domestic treason, radicals executed roughly 1,300 inmates in Parisian prisons.
- **Rise of the Convention:** The National Convention was elected, leading to the formal declaration of a Republic in September 1792.
- **Key Actors:** Leaders like Robespierre, Danton, and Marat gained significant influence by championing the demands of the Parisian working class (sans-culottes).
- **The War Influence:** The onset of war with Austria and Prussia fueled hysteria and increased the necessity of radical action in the eyes of many Parisians.
-

c. Public Pressure and Political Polarization:

In 1792, Paris was driven by intense public pressure from food shortages, war and the sans-culottes (radical urban populace), leading to severe political polarization between moderate Girondins and radical Jacobins. This pressure culminated in the August 10th insurrection, overthrowing the monarchy, followed by the September massacres, shifting power to the radical Commune.

Key Aspects

- **The Radical Shift:** Rising discontent against the King's perceived treason and the threat from foreign armies led to the "Second Revolution" on August 10, 1792, where extremists attacked the royal residence and arrested the King.
- **The September Massacres:** As fear of external enemies grew, radical activists (often aligned with the Paris Commune) gained massive influence, leading to the brutal prison massacres.
- **Factionalism:** The National Convention, established in September 1792, was highly polarized. The "Mountain" (radical Jacobins) broke away from the more moderate deputies, creating a "culture of calumny".
- **Role of Public Pressure:** Radicalized Parisians (sans-culottes) pressured the government through riots, armed protests, and the fear of violence, forcing leaders toward more extreme, republican measures.
- **The Rise of the Republic:** The monarchy was officially abolished on September 21, 1792, with the First Republic declared the following day, largely as a response to this intense public demand for change.

11) Early 1792

a. Political Divisions in Paris

By early 1792, Paris had become the political center of Revolutionary France, but also a focal point of deep and growing divisions. Rather than fostering unity, the developments following the Revolution had led to the emergence of competing political factions, each with differing visions for the future of France. These divisions not only weakened effective governance but also contributed to an increasingly unstable political environment.

At the heart of these divisions were ideological disagreements regarding the extent and direction of the Revolution. More moderate elements, including constitutional

monarchists and certain members of the Girondins, sought to preserve a degree of political order while maintaining the framework of the 1791 Constitution. These groups were generally cautious about rapid radical change and were concerned about the consequences of mass political mobilization and unrest.

In contrast, more radical factions, particularly those associated with the Jacobin Club and the Montagnards, increasingly advocated for more drastic measures. They called for the abolition of the monarchy, broader political participation, and harsher actions against perceived enemies of the Revolution. Their influence was especially strong in Paris, where political activism was closely tied to the pressures of the urban population.

The role of the Parisian populace, particularly the sans-culottes, further intensified these divisions. Their demands for economic relief, political inclusion, and immediate action against suspected counter-revolutionaries placed significant pressure on the Assembly. This often forced political leaders to adopt more extreme positions, not necessarily out of conviction, but in response to the volatile atmosphere in the capital.

As a result, Paris in early 1792 was characterized by a fragile and polarized political climate. Cooperation between factions became increasingly difficult, while suspicion and hostility grew on all sides. This fragmentation of political authority would play a crucial role in the events that followed, contributing to the erosion of stability and the escalation of the revolutionary crisis.

b. The Role of the National Guard and the Army

In early 1792, the role of the armed forces in France became increasingly complex and politically significant. Both the National Guard and the regular army were no longer merely instruments of national defense, but had become deeply entangled in the political divisions that characterized the Revolution. This politicization of the military contributed to instability and raised serious concerns regarding loyalty, discipline, and effective command.

The National Guard, originally established to maintain order and protect the achievements of the early Revolution, was largely composed of middle-class citizens. In its initial stages, it functioned as a stabilizing force, particularly under the leadership of figures such as Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette. However, as political tensions intensified, the National Guard itself became divided. Different units increasingly aligned

with varying political factions, reducing its reliability as a neutral force for maintaining public order.

At the same time, the regular French army faced its own set of challenges. The Revolution had led to the emigration of many experienced officers, particularly from the nobility, resulting in a significant loss of leadership and military expertise. This created a weakened command structure, where inexperienced officers were often unable to effectively control or organize their troops. Combined with poor training and declining discipline, this severely limited the army's operational effectiveness.

Distrust also became a defining feature within the military. Soldiers frequently suspected their commanders of counter-revolutionary sympathies, while officers questioned the loyalty and reliability of their troops. This mutual suspicion undermined cohesion and made coordinated military action increasingly difficult, especially during a time when France was already engaged in external conflict.

Furthermore, the involvement of armed forces in internal political matters blurred the line between maintaining order and participating in political struggle. In Paris, elements of the National Guard were at times influenced by popular movements, contributing to the pressure placed on political institutions. Rather than acting as a stabilizing force, segments of the military began to reflect and amplify the divisions present within society.

Overall, by early 1792, both the National Guard and the army had become unreliable pillars of state authority. Their weakened structure, internal divisions, and politicization not only diminished France's military capacity but also contributed to the broader crisis of governance and control.

c. Influence of Popular Movements and Political Clubs

By early 1792, popular movements and political clubs had become some of the most influential forces shaping political life in Paris. While these groups initially emerged as platforms for political discussion and civic participation, they gradually evolved into powerful actors capable of directing public opinion and exerting significant pressure on formal political institutions.

Political clubs, most notably the Jacobin Club and the Cordeliers Club, played a central role in mobilizing the population and framing revolutionary discourse. These organizations provided spaces where political ideas were debated, but they also became centers for the spread of increasingly radical viewpoints. Over time, their influence

extended beyond discussion, as they actively shaped political agendas and encouraged direct action.

At the same time, popular movements began to exert direct pressure on the Legislative Assembly and other governing bodies. These groups were motivated by economic hardship, including rising food prices and shortages, as well as fears of internal and external threats. However, their methods often involved mass demonstrations, public intimidation, and at times the threat or use of violence, which contributed to an atmosphere of instability.

The relationship between political clubs and the popular movement further intensified this dynamic. Clubs frequently acted as intermediaries, channeling public discontent into organized political action. In doing so, they were able to amplify demands and push for more extreme measures, including the removal of perceived enemies of the Revolution and the restructuring of political authority.

As a result, formal political processes were increasingly overshadowed by external pressure. Decisions were no longer made solely through structured debate within legislative bodies, but were heavily influenced by the volatile mood of the streets. This weakened institutional authority and made it more difficult to maintain consistent and stable governance.

Ultimately, the growing influence of popular movements and political clubs contributed significantly to the radicalization of the Revolution. Rather than fostering balanced political participation, these forces often accelerated polarization, undermined moderation, and played a key role in the escalation of the crisis in 1792.

12) Questions to Ponder

- To what extent can the actions of radical political groups be justified in a time of national crisis? At what point do such actions begin to undermine stability rather than protect the Revolution?
- How should the National Convention balance public demands with the need to maintain order and effective governance?
- Is the increasing influence of political clubs, such as the Jacobin Club, beneficial or harmful to the decision-making process of the state?
- In what ways has the weakening of central authority contributed to the escalation of unrest in Paris?
- Should the use of violence by the populace ever be considered a legitimate political tool? What are the long-term consequences of normalizing such actions?
- How has the erosion of trust in Louis XVI affected the stability of France? Can a functioning system exist without a trusted central authority?
- To what extent are foreign threats a genuine danger, and to what extent are they being used to justify internal political actions?
- How should the Convention respond to divisions within the military, particularly between different factions of the National Guard and the regular army?
- Is it possible to preserve the gains of the Revolution without resorting to radical or extreme measures?
- How can the Convention address economic hardship and public discontent without encouraging further instability?
- What measures can be taken to prevent political polarization from escalating into violence?
- To what extent should individual freedoms be limited in order to preserve national unity and security?
- Are the current political divisions temporary, or do they represent a deeper structural problem within Revolutionary France?

Bibliography

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancien_r%C3%A9gime

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storming_of_the_Bastille

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Constitution_of_1791

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Convention

[Civil Constitution of the Clergy -](#)

[Whhttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_groups_in_the_French_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_groups_in_the_French_Revolution)
[ikipedia](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causes_of_the_French_Revolution

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Louis-XVI>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-worldhistory/chapter/22-4-4-louis-xvi-and-marie-antoinettes-attempts-to-escape/>

<https://oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/87916/>

<https://www.britannica.com/place/France/Political-tensions>