

# AOS 2 – CONSEQUENCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

## KEY KNOWLEDGE 1:

- the **challenges the new regime faced** in attempting to consolidate its power, including power of the Church and nobility, hostility of foreign powers and the Papacy, the scale of the reforms envisaged by the Revolution, economic challenges, the outbreak and course of war, internal divisions over the aims of the Revolution, the abolition of absolute monarchy and privileged corporations, the introduction of popular sovereignty and representative government, changes to laws and taxes, the abolition of feudalism, the abolition of slavery and reforms to the Church

## POWER OF THE CHURCH

- During the old regime:
  - Pillar of power: ownership of land, generous tax exemptions, benefit of the tithe (commanded enormous wealth)
  - Enjoyed a monopoly over the spiritual and social lives of vast majority of people
- Role of the liberal clergy:
  - Upper clergy: resisted revolutionary reforms
  - Many clergymen:
    - sympathetic to reforms
    - criticised the considerable inequalities
    - liberal clergy some of the first to join Third Estate when it declared itself the National Assembly; willingly participated in reforming France
- Decree Nationalising Church Property (2<sup>nd</sup> November 1789)
  - To solve nation's financial problems by confiscating and then selling church land
  - Most clergy accepted this radical change – as civil servants, they were paid better
- Abolition of Monastic Orders (February 1790)
  - National Assembly passed this decree to make monastic vows illegal and close down nunneries and monasteries
  - Not much opposition: philosophes like Voltaire created opinion that monastic clergy were 'unnatural' and parasitic.
- Civil Constitution of the Clergy (proclaimed 12<sup>th</sup> July 1790)
  - Fair salaries for clergy banned
  - Church organisation was rationalised
    - 83 bishops for each department (reduced from 180)
    - Authority transferred from Pope to the nation
    - Everybody from bishop to priest were elected by citizens; Protestants and Jews could vote
  - French bishops (May 1790) protested they wouldn't support reforms unless the church were consulted
    - National Assembly refused: if it was the nation, it has the right to reforms unilaterally, with its sovereignty coming from the people
  - Intended to be a reorganisation of church not spiritual matters
  - King accepted reforms (26<sup>th</sup> December 1790)

- Assembly demanded vote on reforms: 30 bishops voted against the CCC – branded unpatriotic
- Clerical Oath (27<sup>th</sup> November 1790)
  - National Assembly demanded a decree of a clerical oath of loyalty
  - To swear to remain faithful to the nation, to the law, to the King and to maintain the CCC (telling people to choose revolution over their religion)
  - Only 2 priests and 109 bishops took the oath
  - 50% of priests refused to take the oath – jumped to 60% when Pope condemned the reforms (13<sup>th</sup> April 1791) – labelled 'refractories'

### Significance:

- Created the first substantial group of enemies
- Catalyst for counter-revolution and a chain of consequences
  - Flight to Varennes
  - Caused division in society
  - Civil war
- Helped to endanger and radicalise the revolution affecting the consolidation of the new society
- Louis felt like he had betrayed his responsibility of defender of the Catholic Church by accepting reforms
  - Prime catalyst for his rejection of the revolution

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- "Those opposed to the new church policy were forced to declare themselves against the whole revolution" – *William Doyle*
- "The French revolution had many turning points; but the oath of the clergy was, if not the greatest, unquestionably one of them." - *William Doyle*
- "Popular counter-revolutionary feeling was stirred first of all by changes planned for the Church" – *Jocelyn Hunt*
- ... "The Civil Constitution was not simply another piece of institutional legislation. It was the beginning of a holy war.' - *Simon Schama*
- "The religious element was immediately transformed into a political problem." - *Francois Furet*

## POWER OF THE NOBILITY:

- Conservative nobles wished to cling to the existing social hierarchy
- Liberal nobles supported patriot ideals of 1780s, championed reforming deputies of the third estate and in some cases led revolutionary developments.
- As revolution became more radical, 150000 nobles fled France
- National Constituent Assembly tried to stop emigration by forbidding French citizens to leave the country unless they had a passport (12 June 1791)
- Legislative Assembly enacted stricter measures – any nobles who refused to return to France by 1 May 1792 would have their properties sequestered by the state and sold.
- Any person who conspired against the new regime would suffer the death penalty

### Significance:

- *Ironically the existence of noble conspiracy helped the formation of the new society.*
  1. *Gave Jacobin government a strong rationale for implementing the harsh defensive measures of the Terror*
  2. *Credible threat of noble comeback served to win over any bourgeois, workers and peasants who were uncertain of the revolution and inspire them to defend the new order.*



## SCALE OF REFORMS:

### 1. Political reform

- Constitutional monarchy (no autocratic authoritarianism of the old regime )
- Louis now had suspensive veto power – he could delay the passing of legislation but could not stop them from being passed as he previously could.
- 1<sup>st</sup> October 1789: the Assembly had published the Fundamental Principles of Government. This stated:
  - All sovereignty (power) comes from the Nation
  - King must rule within the laws passed by the Nation
  - Power of legislation belonged solely to the National Assembly
  - Judiciary was now independent

### 2. Legal reform

- One system of justice, administered equally to all people by trained lawyers. Every French citizen could expect the same treatment as everyone else, no matter their social standing.
- Also abolished letters de cachet
- March 1792: introduction of the guillotine
- Process of arresting a person was strictly regulated anybody arrested has to appear before a court within 24 or be released
- Buying of high office was abolished (venality)
- Trials were heard in public and judged by a jury
- Justice of the Peace appointed in each canton (a division or an area of France)
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### 3. Economic reform

- To provide revenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, Assembly passed the Decree confiscating Church property
- October 1790 - Internal tariffs abolished, national market was created with a uniform set of weights and measures
- 4 June 1791 - Trade Unions, employers organizations, collective bargaining, picketing and strikes abolished (Le Chapelier Law)
- Introduction of Assignats (changing currency)
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### 4. Social reform

- Abolished the social structure (three estates)
- Clergy/nobility no longer enjoyed legal, fiscal or honorific privilege
- Created a new fluid society in which social distinctions were based solely on merit and social utility.

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- 'In 1790, the French Revolution had achieved its goal. It had defeated despotism and it had defeated privilege. This rupture was also definitive. A return to the Old Regime was simply out of the question.' - DMG Sutherland

- '[The Assignats] would be the Revolution's great financial instrument.' - Francois Furet

© The Student Revolution 2017 provided itself with a tremendous political instrument. But Assignats, to

involve both bourgeois and peasants in its future, by the same act through which it ran the risk of ultimately alienating a large part of the Catholic population'. - Francois Furet

## ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

- Great financial crisis to be dealt with
- Introduced government bonds for 400 million pounds then repay the loan plus the interest from the sale of church lands
  - Workable until the bonds began to be used like paper money
  - Government began printing far more Assignats than they had in assets
  - Their value plummeted rapidly to 51% of their original price by early 1793
- Patriots committed to economic liberalism and free trade
  - Decree Providing for a Uniform Tariff (31 October 1791) – created vigorous national market
  - Le Chapelier Law (14<sup>th</sup> June 1791) abolished right of labour movement to organise and to take strike action
  - D'Allarde law (April 1790) abolished guilds.
- Measures of economic regulation
  - First Law of the Maximum – put a cap on the prices of basic foods
  - Death penalty for hoarding grain (26<sup>th</sup> July 1793)
  - General Law of Maximum (29<sup>th</sup> September 1793)
  - Law of the Minimum – wage-fixing in Paris
  - Jacobins won the radical Parisian revolutionary movement over to their cause but in doing so compromised their core values of economic liberalism.



## INTERNATIONAL WAR

- Idea of revolutionary war was first proposed by groups that formed around Brissot and his supporters in the Legislative Assembly
- The aim was to carry revolutionary freedoms to other peoples and to unify the revolution
- Idea was cynically supported by Louis and Marie Antoinette who believed the French armies would be beaten:
  - Louis thought if they were beaten it would restore the monarchy in hope that émigré forces would invade France and expel the revolutionaries
  - He expected his authority to be restored due to the French military being weak and therefore able to be defeated
  - Ultimately Louis thought it would be a hopeless war that would crush the revolution and restore the monarchy
  - Declared war on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1792
- War was initially disastrous:
  - France's army was weak by loss of officers and nobles who had fled the country
  - French troops were fleeing the battlefield and a combined force of Austrian and Prussian mercenaries gathered along the Rhine and prepared to invade France
- Brunswick Manifesto (25<sup>th</sup> July 1792)
  - Duke of Brunswick threatened to put city of Paris to military punishment and total destruction if harm shall come to the royal family
  - Crystallised alarm and fear amongst Parisians, directing more ill-feeling towards the royal family as they questioned Louis' loyalties
- 10<sup>th</sup> August 1792: the municipal government of Paris planned a demonstration against the King demanding the deposition of the King and a second revolution
  - Demonstrates a shift in power from middle class National Assembly to the militant crowd
- General Dumouriez led 30,000 Frenchmen to engage the invaders at Valmy (20<sup>th</sup> September 1792) and outmanoeuvred Brunswick's coalition force, saving the revolution.

- Dumouriez hailed a hero and new National Convention moved to abolish the monarchy

## INTERNAL POLITICAL DIVISIONS

### CIVIL WAR: REVOLT IN THE VENDEE (1793)

- Rural area of four departments was intensely opposed to:
  - CCC – 90 of priests refused the oath
  - Peasants already angry because they were paying more tax on their land than they had before the revolution

### Historians Interpretations:

- 'The war revitalized the popular revolution; after the call for citizens to volunteer to fight at a time of worsening inflation, the political and social demands of working people became insistent and harder to deny.' - Peter McPhee
- Republic sent representatives on Mission to crush rebellion – result was a murderous conflict
- 'The course of war was destined to end only with the Revolution itself.' - William Doyle
- From that date on, initiation of war in Paris and more generally urban popular riots would find a new catalyst: the sans-culottes. Thus, putting further pressure on the Convention
- For Peter McPhee, fear was the most significant motivating force of the revolution.
  - Jacobins increased links with radical sans-culottes

- Disappointment over sale of church land: could only be afforded by wealthy bourgeois and wealthy peasants
- Anger about Law of Conscription (February 1793) which escalated into a rural revolt
- 20000-40000 rebels in hilly countryside – captured towns
- Committee of Public Safety have order to crush rebellion completely by scorched earth policy - meaning burning houses, crops, forests and equipment so rebels could not grow

### Significance:

- Louis was in a fatal position – war with Austria helped to radicalise the revolution and not crushed it like he had hoped
- All forces turned against the monarchy
- Popular movement proved to be more militant than imagined
- Complete change in balance of power
- Precipitated overthrow of the monarchy

food (August 1793)

### THE FEDERALIST REVOLT (APRIL – OCTOBER 1793)

- Demonstrates division amongst revolutionaries
- The Federalists disapproved of the radical direct democracy of the working class movement in Paris
- Supported Girondins for an end to violence



### Significance:

- Fuelled the extremism of the Jacobins and the determination to use Terror to safeguard the revolution
  - Expanding rebellion also drove moderate deputies of the Plain to the left to support the Jacobins and to agree to their demands of emergency measures.
  - Revolt forced the Jacobins to turn more to the Paris sections and the radical sans-culottes movement for support
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- However they still supported the revolution and believed in representative democracy
  - Disapproved excessive radicalism particularly the use of emergency measures to crush opposition and to silence criticism and dissent.
  - Causes of the revolt:
    1. Economic
      - War of the First Coalition led British to blockade French ports which were great areas for trade
      - Hence ruining their businesses
    2. Political
      - Rejected radicalism of sans-culottes
      - Motivated to ensure National Assembly could not be invaded or threatened by the radical sans-culottes
      - Many ejected from power by Jacobin government – saw an opportunity to reclaim their traditional influence over politics
  - Immense opposition to the Jacobins
    - In Lyons, Jacobin local government was overthrown (30<sup>th</sup> May 1793)
    - Planned to raise an army of 10000 to march on Paris and protect the Convention and crush the popular movement – main plan never executed
    - Mainly psychological threats, not military

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- Federalist uprisings 'were almost always militarily insignificant' – JM Roberts
- JM Roberts – Girondin resistance hardened Jacobin belief that Paris was the true guardian of the revolution and that their government was right to allow the direct democracy of the people.
- The federalist manifestos proclaimed their loyalty to the indivisibility of the nation and, in most places, to the Republic.' - DMG Sutherland
- Federalism was popular because it seemed to be a way of stopping a cabal of uncontrollable fanatics.'(Jacobins) - DMG Sutherland



## ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

### Summary

- Those who believed in the principle of natural rights also believed in the abolition of slavery
- Men who drafted the DORMAC did not seek to abolish slavery however, as they relied heavily on slave labour which provided a large proportion of France's economic wealth
- Hence, slaves had to fight for their own freedom and in doing so created a second 'black French revolution' – far more violent and bloody than the one on French soil.
- August 1791: army of 100000 slaves of African descent rose in rebellion, slaughtering white plantation owners and their supporters.
- Leger Sonthanax offered freedom to slaves who helped defend it from the Spanish (June 1793)
  - Later announced all slavery was abolished on Saint Dominique (August 1793)
  - National convention approved decision (January 1794)

### Expansion notes

Significance of the abolition of slavery:

1. Saint Dominique
  - France's economy enormously enriched by this island colony, producing 217.5 million pounds in one year (1789)
  - 3000 plantations that produced valuable luxury goods
  - However, a negative of this wealth was the planters were required by law to sell their good only to France and required to buy all imports of manufacture hoods and slaves from France only. They could not seek better prices from around the world.
  - This system was known as the 'Exclusive' – it meant exploiting island planters, as many planters were resentful of the system and were falling into debt. Hence, these

white wealthy supporters tried to exploit revolutionary change to prevent bankruptcy.

## 2. Problem of universalist humanism

- French economy could not afford to abolish slavery as the whole French economy was prosperous because of slaves and plantations
- French realised they didn't have to hire working people into plantations of luxury goods – they could buy African slaves to do the strenuous, many hours of physically hard work.
- 450000 slaves on Saint Dominique

## 3. Brutality and terror towards slaves

- Masters felt they had to terrorise and brutalise their slaves to avoid rebellion and keep economic activity going

### Groups:

#### 1. Society of Friends of the Blacks

- Enlightened, ambitious, led by Brissot, included Lafayette, Mirabeau and Sieyes
- Were for the anti-slavery movement/abolition of slavery

#### 2. Lobby Groups

- For example, Massaic club and other lobby groups would use threats of violence, the spreading of rumours and a powerful scare campaign against the abolitionists in fear of France's economic suffering

#### 3. Colonial Committee

- Plantation owners of France lobbied the King and royal courts for reform to the political and economic restrictions applied to Saint Dominique

- When National Assembly was formed, it refused to allow the Society of the Friends of the Blacks to speak in Parliament and allowed the Colonial Committee (March 1790) to pass laws making it illegal to advocate and end slavery
- Constituent Assembly granted self-governing of Saint Dominique (September 1789) called the Colonial Assembly

### Opposition:

- Groups such as the Free People of Colour and American Colonists protested for the abolition of slavery
- Free People of Colour staged first uprising in Saint Dominique (March 1790) but were crushed. Vincent Oge later inspired a larger rebellion but again was defeated and he was executed by breaking on the wheel. (October 1790)
- Free People of Colour granted civil rights (May 1791)
- Also given full rights regardless of parentage (April 1792)

### Great slave revolt (August 1791)

- Meanwhile, momentous revolutionary principles of liberty and equality electrified public opinion in Saint Dominique, especially amongst slaves.
- Used voodoo magic to communicate secretly with other slaves and planned a detailed and well-thought rebellion
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> August (1791), 100000 slaves near Le Cap began slaughtering royal officials, white plantation owners and Free People of Colour.

- Constituent Assembly failed to come to an agreement to stop rebellion

#### Impact of war with Spain and Britain (1793)

- Slavery took a new turn when France went to war with its enemies Britain and Spain: both wanted to seize France's rich colonies in the Caribbean area
- National Convention sent fleet of ships, commanded by the Commissioner Victor Hugues
- Victor cunningly sent messages to the slaves to join him and fight for their liberty: called the 'Robespierre of the islands' as he cleared away British but then made a fortune by robbing every ship he came across
- Made the decision to free the slaves due to the pressure of war (made by French officials)
- Offer made by Commissioner Leger Sonthanax (June 1793) in order for them to help defend Saint Dominique from Spanish attack.
- National Assembly confirmed this decision (February 1794) to help defeat British and Spanish

#### KEY KNOWLEDGE 2:

- the **changes and continuities** in political, social, cultural and economic conditions that influenced leaders to compromise their revolutionary ideals, including the use of capital punishment and the policy of 'terror until peace' in 1793–94



### **CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND THE TERROR (1793-94)**

Terror was the legal use of violence by government to overcome its enemies in a time of crisis.

#### Creation of Revolutionary Government:

- March 1793: all elements of crisis (war, economic disruption, civil war and radicalism) came together and prompted the practices of government
- Theory of revolutionary government:
  - Enormous challenge of war with Europe
  - Revolts against the revolution in large provincial cities such as Lyons and Marseille
  - Tough emergency measures needed

#### Need for control of the Convention:

- National Convention formed in September 1792 as France's third attempt at national legislature, following the invasion of the Tuileries and suspension of monarchy.
  - Active and passive citizens had been abolished.
  - Factional struggled between Girondins and Montagnards



- Girondins = moderate republicans, distrusted radicalism and thought the Commune and sans-culottes exerted too much political influence. Supported abolition of slavery and women's movement
  - Montagnards = generally more radical in their ideology
  - Plain = not wedded to a particular ideology, generally moderate, as revolution radicalised they sided with Montagnards.
  - Constant bickering about views
- Convention automatically split into a venomous confrontation between the Jacobins and Girondins
  - Catalyst for this split was the execution of Louis XVI: found him guilty, but many Girondins feared this decision had been judged by radical Paris and not the nation as a whole. However, their defeat in a referendum 'appel au peuple' meant Girondins were undermined. It was denounced as a plot to save the King's life.
  - In April 1793, Girondins fought back Parisian radicalism, orchestrating arrest of Marat and established Commission of Twelve to investigate members of Paris Commune and their alleged attempts to undermine the Convention (arrested many radicals). Hence, they faced great opposition.
  - June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1793: 20000 Parisians and contingent of radical National Guardsmen gathered outside the Convention and demanded the expulsion of the Girondin faction.
  - Convention voted to expel the Girondins – declared an enemy of the revolution.
  - Helped radicalise Montagnards and Jacobins even more.

#### Law of Revolutionary Government:

- Robespierre insisted that "the provincial government of France is revolutionary until the peace"
- DORMAC gave legal basis for suspension of Constitution of 1793 and creation of emergency executive government, allowing unregulated arrest, trial and execution of suspected opponents of the revolution.

#### Committees:

1. Committee of Public Safety (est. 25<sup>th</sup> March 1793) – to coordinate war effort.
2. Committees of Surveillance (est. 21<sup>st</sup> March 1793) – kept an eye on foreigners and other suspects. Became instruments of local oppression. Took revolutionary violence to psychopathic levels.
3. Revolutionary Tribunal (est. 10 March 1793) – to deal with the deteriorating military situation. Believed war was going badly due to traitors in the army.

#### Laws:

- Jacobins realised they had to suspend the earlier principles of liberty to defeat the war
  - Introduction of revolutionary government and terror started this, but was followed by many other laws, all outraging the principles of the DORMAC:
1. **Law of Suspects** (17 September 1793) – allowed arrest of anyone who seemed suspicious

2. **Law for Military Trail of Armed Rebels** (19 March 1793) – arrest, trial and execution of armed rebels within 24 hours
3. **Law of Frimaire** (4 December 1793) – codified, rationalised and amended earlier laws to destroy enemies and win the war. Therefore, it created a unified legal and bureaucratic system for the use of Terror to overcome resistance and thus, consolidate the new society.
4. **Law of 22 Prairial** (10 June 1794) – extreme forms of Terror, removing precautions to protect personal freedom and could arrest people of very vague crimes. No legal advice allowed by accused, could convict without evidence, simply on moral certainty that they seemed guilty.

## MILITARY TERROR

- Girondins overthrown (explained above)
- by 31 May to 2nd June Robespierre and Jacobins had sufficient support to
- Representative on a Mission: of Convention and arrest of 30 Girondin deputies.
- 82 deputies sent to provinces to let people know why emergency measures were in place and to encourage recruitment of 300000 new soldiers
- however, it became an enormous power and used it to check generals and officers were doing their utmost for victory
- Terror was the only way the revolution survived the total war effort
- using Terror for anyone who disagreed with them, not just enemies
- Hebertists (March 1794) eliminated, Indulgents (April 1794) eliminated. executed

### Significance:

- Emergency measures designed in 5th September 1793, Paris elections, invaded the Convention demanding a (successful in saving the revolution)
- Economic Terror was crucial in winning over the sans-culottes who willingly fought armies that saved France
- However, it also contributed to the development of the revolution because it was a process that became a murderous tyranny and ran out of control
- Terror itself became a counter-revolutionary act

- Motive for terror didn't come alone from the Convention: came largely from popular movement, in particular the sans-culottes
- they complained they had no food and no republic
- Law of the Maximum (price-fixing) and a creation of 'revolutionary armies' to requisition grain from the peasants in the countryside
- Law of Maximum (29 September 1793)
  - prices could not rise a certain point
  - Jacobins supported them as a way to win over support of the working people

### KEY KNOWLEDGE 3:

- the **contribution of significant individuals** that changed society, including Louis XVI, Georges Danton, Jean-Paul Marat, Maximilien Robespierre and Marquis de Lafayette
  - 'it was resistance that made the revolution become violent' – William Doyle
  - Marxist (Lefebvre and Soboul) argue that the revolutionary government had to respond to opposition to save the revolution itself
  - Furet believes the revolutionaries were intolerant to the point of being paranoid
  - Lewis believes the revolutionaries resorted to violence and coercion only when the revolution was threatened by force of counter-revolution

## LOUIS XVI



- King of France from May 1774 until his execution in January 1793
- Was responsible for an act of rejection that both made the constitutional Monarchy impossible and propelled the French Revolution into a more radical and dangerous course.
- Although he appeared to originally accept the revolutionary by wearing the cockade and making compromises to **accept the National Assembly and National Guard**, he was **reluctant to accept the DORMAC and August Decrees**, raising **alarm in Paris** as early as the October Days of 1789
- **Flight to Varennes** was a key contributing factor to the revolution. There are many theories as to why Louis did this:
  - Could never accept a constitutional monarchy (brought up to believe in absolutism)
  - Could never accept the treatment of the Catholic Church (reform of the Church which caused such division across the nation disturbed him profoundly).
  - Feared for the safety of his family (frightened by violent crowd when he and his family left for Paris for their annual holiday)
  - Pressured by Marie Antoinette and her supporters (to protect her and the family, she was ferociously against the revolution and influenced Louis' thoughts)
  - Ministers and Generals urged him that it was possible to make a dash north towards Belgium (there they could gather troops to crush the revolution)
  - No longer had the support of Mirabeau (greater supporter had recently died leaving him without 'inside information')
- The Flight to Varennes had many implications on the revolution:
  - His betrayal turned the whole **popular movement against him** and split the revolution in two (national Assembly still wanted a constitutional monarchy, radical clubs were calling for the King's resignation)
  - Meant the **existing system was impossible to maintain** (constitutional monarchy doesn't work without a monarch)
  - Created a hostile, **suspicious crowd**
  - Caused an **outburst of savage anti-royal cartoons**, as well as crowd action to destroy the symbols of the monarchy
  - Forced the **National Assembly to publish lies** about the episode – only angered popular movements and radicalised revolution further (hid King's treason – said they were kidnapped)
  - Created **popular demands to execute the King**
  - Caused violent protest (Champs de Mars Massacre)**



## JEAN-PAUL MARAT



- Believed in popular violence, executions and having a **dictatorship**
- Doctor by profession but turned to journalism of the most radical type when the revolution broke out
- **Attracted to the radical popularistic Cordeliers Club and founded his own journal:** Writer and editor of his own newspaper *L'ami du peuple* (to express his own radical opinions) – played a major role in exaggerating the threat of the hidden enemies and recommending a solution in revolutionary violence and exemplary punishment
- Vocal supporter of the coalition of the **Jacobins club and the Cordeliers in the Convention** (he 'Mountain')
- **Constitution of 1791 outraged him** – although he tended towards the sans-culottes' idea of a direct democracy he believed the people could express their political will by popular involvement in clubs and when necessary, insurrection.
- **Joined Robespierre** in opposing the declaration of war
- **Called for the King's execution** after his flight to Varennes
- Called for the deputies who caused the Champs de Mars massacre to be held responsible (17 June 1791)
- Rejected the calls for War with Austria
- **Encouraged the September Massacres**
- Influenced the **fall of the Girondins**
- Executed by Charlotte Corday on 13 July 1793 as he lay in the bath

## GEORGES DANTON



- a skilled lawyer and a powerful public speaker, Danton abandoned law and became involved in both the **Cordeliers Club and the Paris Commune**
- Joined the radical Cordeliers Club in 1790
- This club was very radical – opened their doors up to working-class people and women.
- One of the **most vocal** in the club – demanded a new National Assembly, criticised Lafayette for protecting the King and openly accused him of helping the King escape and demanded the King's deposition.
- Helped to topple the monarchy in his involvement in the insurrection on 10 August 1792 – although he wasn't directly involved in the attack, as a leader of the Cordeliers Club he hosted the Marseillais troops and as an official of the Insurrectionary Commune he provided support for the uprising. Used legal credentials to legitimise and make public support the insurrection in Paris. He sent a circular of network of courts, claiming the insurrection had been necessary to deal with the royal plot and that law and order would still be maintained. – called upon judges to show support for the revolutionary government and reassure the nervous provinces that the new regime would continue to act lawfully.
- Danton's speeches contributed to the **August 10th 1792 insurrection and the September Massacres**, after which he was elected to the **National Convention**.
- Wanted to save the nation at a point of extreme military crisis – when the fall of the last fortress at Verdun occurred, Danton went to the National Assembly and said it was good the enemy had approached them so they had the chance to crush them to death.
- Danton supported the establishment of both the Revolutionary Tribunals and the **Committee of Public Safety** – but over time his views moderated and he came to oppose the excessive violence of the Terror.
- Concerned by Danton's moderate politics and the threat he posed to their power, Robespierre and the Jacobins orchestrated his arrest, trial and execution in April 1794.



## MAXIMILIEN DE ROBESPIERRE

- Lawyer by practice and had a very strong reputation as a champion of ordinary working people in his legal activities before the revolution
- Nicknamed '**The Incorruptible**' because of his principles on integrity and virtue
- Founding member of the **Jacobin club**
- Elected to the **Convention** in 1792 and became one its most eloquent and Dominant speakers
- Elected to the **Committee of Public Safety** during the Terror although he was hesitant to accept the position
- Ironically, Robespierre's very success in guiding the revolution through its greatest crisis was the cause of his own downfall.
- Robespierre had believed that France could survive only if it allied with the **sans-culottes** and this forced him to make radical economic (Maximum) policies with radical enforcements (death penalty)
- Robespierre's constant paranoia at the 'enemies' that lurked at the doors of the Convention brought about his eventual downfall
- 26 July 1794 - Robespierre **attacks the deputies of the Convention**, hinting that there was a widespread conspiracy against liberty but refusing to name anyone
- 27 July 1794 - Deputies start attacking Robespierre, not allowing him to speak and arrest him – **Thermidor Rebellion**



## MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

- Provided a number of significant strategies to help consolidate the new society in the early stages of its creation
- Lafayette's popularity derived on the basis of the '**American Spirit**' – he was involved in the American War of Independence and publicised his role in its victory. He returned to France with a reputation of a genuine freedom fighter in a successful and peaceful revolution.
- July 15<sup>th</sup> 1789: became **Commander of the National Guard** (a bourgeois militia to protect private property and defend revolution. It derived from the fear of popular crowd action, if which this fear was created from the Reveillon Riots on 23 April 1789 and confirmed in the Bastille days 14 July 1789)
- Took a lead role in the development of the **DORMAC**
- Instrumental in gathering like-minded constitutional monarchists – found the **Feuillants Club** to defend the option of the constitution.
- Created the red, white and blue **cockade** in a suggestion to represent the unity of the monarch with his people.
- Lost his support after the **Champ De Mars Massacre** and later during the war where he spoke out against the sans-culottes and was later declared a traitor on 10 August



#### KEY KNOWLEDGE 4:

- the diverse revolutionary **experiences of social groups and their responses** to the challenges and changes to the conditions of everyday life, including bourgeoisie, parish priests and other clergy, urban workers in Paris, urban and rural women, peasants, the nobility and émigrés.

## BOURGEOISIE

### Benefits:

- **PROPERTY:** bourgeoisie owned some sort of private property; hence the revolution protected their economic interests by proclaiming that their property could not be taken from the individual, enshrined in all three Constitutions. Sale of church and noble lands meant wealthy bourgeoisie could buy lands and properties formally locked up in privileged ownership.
- **MERIT OVER BIRTH:** Revolution immediately proclaimed equality of opportunity, banning practice of reserving senior appointments to nobles. Mostly benefitted bourgeoisie who were educated and aspirational.
- **FREE TRADE:** Revolution benefitted bourgeois manufacturers and traders, such as the system of weights and measures.
- **EMPLOYER OVER EMPLOYEE:** Revolution developed Le Chapelier Law (June 1791) which forbade labour organisations, such as trade unions and strikes
- **CONSTITUTION OF 1795:** placed political power firmly in the hands of men who owned substantial property, notably wealthy bourgeoisie. Revolution began in 1789 as an essentially bourgeois revolution and ended in 1795 as an intensely bourgeois regime.

### Losses:

- **WAR ON MERCHANT TRADERS:** First Coalition and abolition of slavery (1794) harmed interests of traders and mercantile bourgeoisie, who found their businesses decimated by the closure of France's ports.

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- Jean-Pierre Hirsch claims that the bourgeoisie gained massively from the revolution
- Tim Blanning points out that the social and economic policies of the national Assemblies were favourable to the bourgeoisie
- Peter McPhee says that weights and measures was the beginning of a series of conditions which assisted the French economy to grow and develop into a properly capitalist phase of production.

## CLERGY

### Losses:

- **CCC:** touch organisation of Church only, not spiritual matters. However, Constituent Assembly thought they could make changes without consulting Catholic Church or the Pope. They were wrong – 30 bishops protested by not supporting reforms unless consultation was made.
- **MONASTERIES CLOSED:** Brutal and disorientating experience for 40000 nuns.
- **BECAME ENEMIES:** labelled 'refractories' when National Assembly demanded a clerical oath of loyalty. 50% refused, which jumped to 60% when the Pope condemned reforms.
- **PRIESTS TARGET OF VIOLENCE:** 220 clergy murdered in September Massacres and 1000 executed during the Terror
- **LEFT FRANCE:** 25000 clergy left France through emigration or deportation by revolutionary government (constituted 16% of estate)
- **FINANCIAL:** lost the tithe, abolished without compensation
- **FISCAL:** could not calculate its own tax
- **SOCIAL:** less influence over education and social welfare
- **RELIGIOUS:** no longer enjoyed a religious monopoly, forced to tolerate Protestants and Jews. Lost its privileged position as an ally of the monarchy.

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- Jocelyn Hunt: 'popular counter-revolutionary feeling was stirred first of all by changes planned for the Church
- William Doyle: 'those opposed to the new church policy were forced to declare themselves against the whole revolution
- McPhee: church would never again enjoy the massive power it had held in France prior to 1789.

## URBAN WORKERS

### Benefits:

- Achieved abolition of indirect taxes (1789) and government regulation of food prices in 1793; however these reforms were rolled back by Jacobins after the emergency had passed and firmly denied by men of 1795.

### Losses:

- **LE CHAPELIER LAW:** permitted working people to fight and die in their armies but would not give them the right to organise for their own economic interests.
- **FOOD SHORTAGES:** many brought close to starvation by 1795. Food prices had risen to 750% of their level in 1790. Brutally repressed when fighting for better wages – 4000 sans-culottes arrested after first uprising (Germinal) and 10000 exiled from France in the second (Prairial)
- Made enormous contributions yet deprived of the benefits they expected to be theirs.

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- Peter McPhee: 'urban working people had sacrificed most and gained least'

## URBAN AND RURAL WOMEN

### Benefits:

- Learnt language of politics.
- Constant and significant presence in every major political action by revolutionary crowd: 20000 marched to Versailles in October Days to demand King's return to Paris
- Initially inspired by material issues, such as price of bread, as they were keeping the fragile economy of the household running.
- Women created their own version of female popular sovereignty
- Introduced to language of politics by being admitted in Cordeliers Club and taking the initiative to form clubs of both sexes, such as the Fraternal Society of Patriots of Both Sexes (1790-91). This precipitated the formation of women's clubs.
- Olympe de Gouges provocatively rewrote the DORMAC as the Declaration of the Rights of Woman (1791).
- Pauline Leon participated in Champs de Mars massacre and fought in Second revolution (10 August 1792), demanded women have their own National Guard Unit and bear weapons to defend Paris from the rapidly advancing Austrians.
- Education for girls
- Law on Divorce allowed men and women to file for separation and women no longer had to accept forced marriages.

### Losses:

- Closure of women's clubs (30 October 1793) by Jacobins. Saw women as a serious threat, excluded them from political participation.
- Never achieved the full rights of citizens.

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- Gwynne Lewis: 'There can be absolutely no doubt that... men had become thoroughly frightened by the potential for a women's revolution within the Revolution.'
- Alan Forrest: gains made by women were variable

## PEASANTS

### Benefits:

- **ABOLITION OF FEUDAL DUES:** peasants previously had paid between 20-25% of their income or produce to the lord and they were now free of this burden. Also freed of compulsory days of labour on the king's roads. Regained 8-10% of their income that they usually paid as tithe which had been abolished.
- **REDISTRIBUTION OF LAND:** addressed grievances of land hunger. 50% had not owned land to make a living and had been forced into expensive, exploitative sharecropping agreements with landlords. Early sales of church lands and noble lands helped peasants acquire the land they needed. 33-41% rise in land ownership for peasants. Not a complete transformation but provided significant benefits to peasants.

### Losses:

- Poorer peasants and sharecroppers continued to struggle.

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- Peter McPhee: 'were amongst the direct and most substantial beneficiaries of the revolution'

## NOBILITY AND EMIGRES

### Benefits:



- **POLITICALLY:** 60 members of Society of Thirty (most nobles) made common cause with Third Estate in calling for a constitutional monarchy.
- **ECONOMICALLY:** advocated reform of feudal system and renounced some of their own dues and privileges (August Decrees)

#### Losses:

- **POLITICALLY:** lost corporate status
- **SOCIALLY:** lost profound respect and prestige
- **ECONOMICALLY:** lost the benefit of thousands of pounds worth of feudal dues. Generated 16000 pounds before revolution, now only 4700 pounds. Lost generous tax exemptions (5% to 12%)
- **LEGALLY:** lost their right to special courts. Now same courts, laws, judges as rest of the nation.
- **HONORIFIC TERMS:** lost right to proclaim noble titles, demand respectful terms of address and display the noble coat of arms
- **EMIGRATION:** 16,500 became émigrés. Revolution did not force them out of France, but either faced threats or felt uncomfortable with the new order of things. Many lost property.
- **PSYCHOLOGICALLY:** nobles scarred – cut off from religions, homes and families.

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#### Historians Interpretations:

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- William Doyle: 'nobles were the first, and the greatest, losers from the revolution.'
- William Doyle: 'an impressive willingness' to sacrifice some of their own interests to be involved in the discussion of the regeneration of the nation.
- Peter McPhee: became part of an open society with broader social elite.

#### OTHER EVENTS:

##### CHAMPS DE MARS MASSACRE:

- 17<sup>th</sup> July 1791
- 50000 flowed into Champs de Mars
- The catalyst for the massacre was the flee the Varennes, as to many Parisians this exposed the King as untrustworthy and made constitutional monarchy unworkable
- Radicals in political clubs called for abolition of monarchy
- Leading this republican spirit was Cordeliers Club and Jacobin Club
- National Guard opened fire (led by Bailly and Lafayette) on a revolutionary crowd signing a petition demanding that the King be deposed and create a republic
- City already tense with high prices, falling wages and strikes
- 50 killed and dozens more wounded
- For the first time, revolutionaries fired on fellow revolutionaries, not on the forces of the old regime



- Revealed that there was no longer a revolution – there was two, and they were in conflict (both want different changes – second more radical response to the people)
- In short term, moderate revolution won. More radical clubs closed.
- Shattered reputations of moderates like Lafayette and Bailly, sparked a rise in political radicalism and helped seal the fate of the King
- Marat, Danton and Desmoulins forced into hiding
- Violence caused enduring split in Jacobin Club
- Caused many Parisians to lose faith in the Assembly and the Commune

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- 'For the first time, it was the result of open political conflict [Champ de Mars] within the Parisian Third Estate which had acted so decisively in 1789. The king's flight and the Assembly's response had divided the country.' - Peter McPhee
- It was a fragile victory [Champ de Mars] because it was so unstable. Because Louis XVI continued to play a double game, the arrangement was bound to collapse.' - DMG Sutherland

### CONSTITUTION OF 1791:

- Built on ideas from DORMAC and Enlightenment
- Eg. Freedom of speech/press, freedom of worship, gov. responsibility for welfare and education (taking on a role that was once the role of the Church), access to employment based on talent and merit, equitable sentencing

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- 'The essence of the constitution was to keep the executive weak... despotism must have no opportunity ever to revive in France.' - William Doyle

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

- No more National Assembly – this was the new French Parliament and opened 1<sup>st</sup> October 1791
- Deputies predominantly bourgeoisie – had held local offices established by reforms of National Assembly
- Focus on protecting public order, enforcing reforms of the revolution and safeguarding rights of property

### THE SECOND FRENCH REVOLUTION (1791-1794)





## Who were the sans-culottes?

- Drive second French revolution, prepared to use violence (as they're fearful, at their wits end, have knowledge that it gets them attention and will be heard (as shown through storming of the bastille))
- Literally those without knee breeches', so called because the long trousers workers wore distinguished them from the wealthy, who wore elegant knee breeches or culottes
- Sans-culottes were neither middle class nor working class (mixture)
- Promoted anti-noble, egalitarian and populist policies (popular ideas)
- They could mobilise their communities for action when necessary
- Visuals:
  - Trousers
  - Cockade on hat (supporter of revolution)
  - Smoking pipe (nobility wouldn't do this – rich would take snuff)
  - Red, blue and white colours in clothing and flags
  - Shoes: clogs (jabot)

## Attack on Tuileries Palace (20<sup>th</sup> June 1792)

- Date marked the anniversaries of the Tennis Court Oath and Flight to Varennes
- Armed crowd stormed the Tuileries, condemning the King as 'Monsieur Veto' and demanding he pass all decree
- A group carrying weapons and a small artillery piece gained access to the King's quarters and one man bearing an axe approached the King. Louis XVI managed to quell the invaders by listening to their demands and politely promising to consider them. He then donned a red liberty bonnet and toasted the health of the nation. In another room, the queen and her children were also surrounded by a hostile mob
- These outrages against the king and his family, as well as Louis' polite and courageous response, won the royals a measure of sympathy and respect – but this was not to last
- Louis at this point – naïve (silly to use veto as he knew people would get angry, just trying to keep his power, sympathy in that he and his family are in danger)

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- Declaration of war and overthrow of the monarchy radicalized the Revolution.' - Peter McPhee
- 'Power lay not with the Assembly but with the new Paris Commune.' - William Doyle

## September Massacres (rise of radical revolutionaries – less concerned for moderate revolution/sympathy for King)

- (After overthrow of Louis, after recognising they no longer want a constitutional monarchy)
- Series of murderous riots that broke out in Paris (September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1792) – continued for several days

- Target of initial riots were city's prisons which housed suspected counter revolutionaries such as royalist soldiers, members of Swiss Guard, clergymen, nobles
- Riots precipitated by Austro-Prussian invasion of France and their victory at Verdun, which appeared to open a path for the coalition forces to march on Paris
- Violence of early September saw between 1,100 and 1,400 people murdered (murdered by sans-culottes). Prompted outrage in Britain and among moderate revolutionaries. Also fuelled a new wave of émigrés
- Politically they were endorsed by radical Jacobins like Robespierre who justified them as a legitimate revolutionary act, an expression of the will of the people (anarchical, dangerous, sharp turn down, letting society do as they please, no rules)

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- '[September Massacres]' was the final proof for non-jurying clergy that the Revolution had become godless and anarchic.' - Peter McPhee
- 'By the autumn of 1792, the second revolution was now armed, democratic and republican.' - Peter McPhee
- 'The central truth of the Revolution.' - Simon Schama



## ROBESPIERRE AND THE THERMIDORIAN REACTION (END OF REVOLUTION 1794-1975)

### Downfall of Robespierre

- 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1794, Robespierre took to the floor of the Convention and denounced a plot against him and threatening unnamed deputies. He made a long and rambling speech, demanding another purge by Terror because he believed there were still traitors to be destroyed.
- Deputies unexpectedly accused Robespierre of instituting a dictatorship
- He refused saying they were in the Convention, CPS and CGS – effectively threatening everybody
- 28<sup>th</sup> July, Convention's troops captured Robespierre and supporters – executed the same day.
- Period after fall of the Jacobins is called the Thermidorian Reaction (meaning heat) – campaign to destroy the Jacobins' control of politics and the society they had created – Terror didn't stop immediately, it claimed victims such as the Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville

### Thermidorian Reaction

- Removal of Robespierre released a wave of responses against the Terror and the radical revolution. Immediate changes to the committee resulted in a reduction of people sent to the guillotine (only 40 in Paris over rest of the year)



- 11 August – CPS was stripped of power of control of government
- 24 August – Paris Commune was abolished and replaced with an executive responsible for the administration of the city reporting to the Convention
- Over next years, thousands of prisoners who had been arrested under Law of Suspects were released from prison
- 18<sup>th</sup> September – Convention decided to cease supporting any religion and separation of Church and State in France became a reality
- 12 November – Convention ordered the closing of the Jacobin club in Paris and symbols of radicalism were destroyed
- Political changes introduced were accompanied by dismantling a number of the revolution's social and economic policies
- August and December 1794 – Assignats rapidly lost all value due to inflation as bread prices rose
- Food prices soared – supplies of grain ran short during exceptionally harsh winter
- April 1795 – prices were 750% about 1790 levels
- Popular movement responded with protests and demonstrations, however they had no influential leaders and despite the insurrections turning violent, they were the last days of action
- Finally, death of child King Louis XVII in June 1795 dashed any hopes of a new Constitutional Monarchy

### **The Gilded Youth – Jeunesse doree**

- These were recently released prisoners, petty bureaucrats, sons of the well to do who patrolled the streets taking revenge into their own hands
- Fashion reflected changes with flashy displays of wealth with elegant clothes that emphasised status – completely abandoning the idea of dressing like a sans-culottes
- Harassed those who had supported the Terror and disrupted political meetings – White Terror (outside Paris, a similar counter terror movement emerged)
- Vigilante justice was motivated by revenge for the brutal treatment received by victims of the Terror, characterised by anarchy. Justice was dispensed by lynching's and abductions
- Term 'Monsieur' returned to replace the revolutionary 'citizen'
- Wore hair in the 'victims style' – well powdered and braided at the back of the head in contrast to the style of the patriots – short hair and no powder
- Young men claimed they wanted revenge for their relatives who died on the scaffold

### **Constitution of 1795**

- Convention elected in 1792 – continued to govern until 1795
- New constitution was prepared enclosing ideas of DORMAC
- Citizens 22 rights were balanced by 9 duties. Fully voting were restricted to male taxpayers
- Deputies to the national legislature were restricted to landowners
- Parliament was to be bicameral, composed of two chambers
- Requirement of 2 thirds for new councils to be elected from outgoing members of the Convention – dissatisfaction hence resulting in last counter-revolutionary action
- October 5<sup>th</sup> 1795 an armed insurrection occurred and was put down by regular army under command of Napoleon Bonaparte
- Suppression of this insurrection marked the last mass rebellion of the revolutionary period

- Boissy d'Anglas and men of 1795 asserted a very democratic arrangement. Anyone who paid direct tax or served in war could vote (electorate significantly larger than the active citizens of 1791).
- Dismantled institutions that allowed sans-culottes to assert political power (ie. Paris Revolutionary Commune was replaced with municipal body, 48 sections of Paris closed, Jacobin club shut down)
- Fraternity was abolished
- Germinal (April 1795) and Prairial (May 1795) that demanded a return to radical Constitution of 1793 and a reduction of bread prices were significantly repressed.
- Implemented separation of powers

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### Historians Interpretations:

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- 'The constitution (of 1795) marks the end of the Revolution.' - Peter McPhee
- Necessary adjustment to the revolution – 1792-93 had pushed the revolution out of its original aims.
- 1795 represents a political 'reaction' to previous radicalization, but also as 'the permanent political gains of the revolution'. – D.Wright
- David Guerin suggests it was a resumption of power of the propertied classes.
- William Doyle asks if the revolution was really worth it in strictly material terms and concludes for most ordinary French subjects it cannot have been.