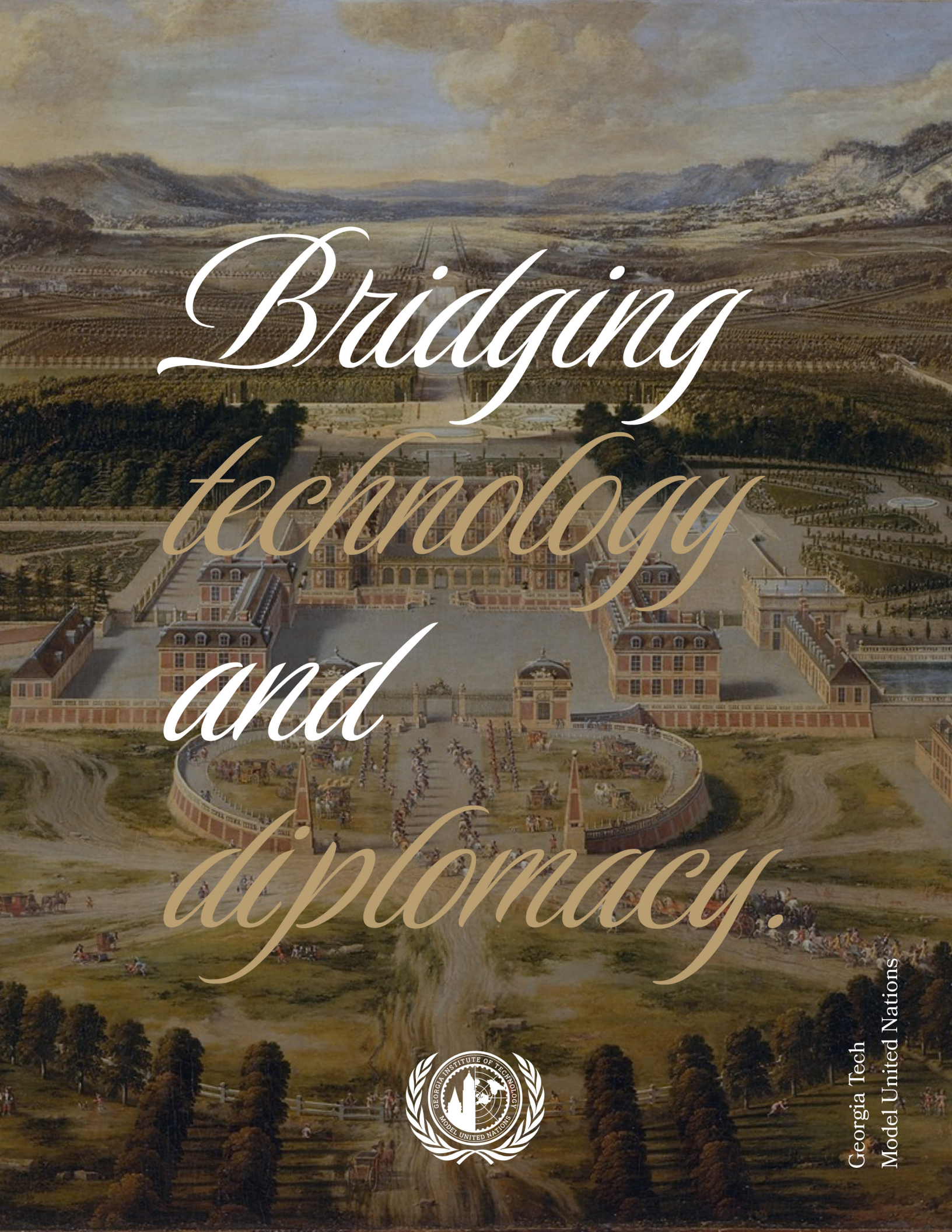


Vive la Révolution!

Crisis Committee · October 5-6, 2026 · www.gtmun.edu

*Committee
The Middle of the
French Revolution, 1794*





Bridging technology and diplomacy.



Georgia Tech
Model United Nations

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#GTMUN2026



Letter from the Secretary General



Esteemed delegates,

My name is Henry Bui, your Secretary General for the 2026 edition of the Georgia Tech Model United Nations Conference, also lovingly known as GTMUN. As your Secretary General, I would like to give you all a warm welcome as you begin your journey this conference cycle.

Every year at GTMUN, we see hundreds of you delegates spend hours speaking about your ideas, deliberating with others about the efficacy of solutions, and collaborating with compatriots to draft extensive resolutions. It is always impressive to see each delegate's ability to tackle these very significant issues affecting the real world today, proposing novel solutions, creatively applying international policy, and synthesizing resolutions that solve these urgent questions comprehensively and on a global scale.

I am especially excited to see everything you all will achieve this October. With over 1,000 delegates attending, this will be the largest GTMUN to date, and with it, we are bringing you 18 diverse committees to further test your abilities. Each committee has been carefully crafted to open unique perspectives and to allow each delegate to apply their skills in possibly new, unique ways. I hope that in the midst of being lost in deep research rabbit holes and hours of debate in each session, you all are satisfactorily challenged and that you all leave with joy and excitement in the work you accomplish.

Outside of the Scheller building where you will debate for two days, you will find that many of the skills you have used will be applicable to other aspects of your professional career: your ability to speak publicly, to improvise and adapt, and to act diplomatically. As a computer science student and teaching assistant, I have found that my experience in Model UN has been some of my most valuable. It has taught me to be confident in what I say, and it has taught me how to work with people with all different kinds of backgrounds and perspectives. One of our core values at Georgia Tech is that we thrive on diversity, and that is something that shines strongly at GTMUN.

As you prepare for committee, I want you to remember the most important thing you should get out of GTMUN—even more important than demonstrating your abilities or honing your skills for your professional career—is having fun. Not every speech has to be perfect, and not every unmoderated caucus has to go your way! Take the opportunity to try eccentric things in your speeches and diplomatic approach, and take the opportunity to meet new people. Do not forget that you are surrounded by many others who have similar goals, aspirations, and interests as you do! You might find a future close friend. Though competing is quite fulfilling (and the prospect of awarding is exciting), it can also be very stressful, so it is critical to find joy in what you are doing.

Once again, we, the GTMUN Secretariat, are excited to see everything you will achieve.

Good luck & have fun,

Henry Bui

Secretary General of GTMUN 2026

Letter from the Crisis Director



Dear delegates,

My name is Sam Mirshak and I am a Public Policy major at Georgia Institute of Technology. I have deeply enjoyed Model United Nations since high school, both through competing at conferences and holding various roles within the club. I'm a huge history buff, avid Star Wars fan, addicted Lego collector, and big nature guy who loves yapping with friends.

As an aforementioned history buff, I love historical accuracy as much as the next person, but the reason I enjoy Crisis committees so much is because I believe that they give you the best way to showcase your creative talents and storytelling abilities. I encourage each of you to be ambitious and dream big with your crisis arcs, pushing the bounds of reality a little while remaining within the time period of the French Revolution. Your backroom arcs are very important and the way to succeed on the college circuit, but as a former public speaker I also really value speaking and negotiating as much as storytelling so I would keep that in mind when preparing for this committee. The reason I love Model UN is because of the people in it, so I will do my best to bring joy and whimsy to committee and I look forward to seeing all your creativity and good vibes soon! As a final note for your preparations, the history of the French Revolution is much more deep and complex than can be contained in this background guide so I recommend doing your own research and reading up on the history. If you have any questions feel free to email me!

Vive la Revolution-ly,

Samuel Mirshak



What is *Crisis*?

A crisis committee is a non-traditional Model UN committee. This means the debate is done the same way as a regular MUN committee (points, motions, voting) but with special mechanics like crisis notes and directives. This means a crisis committee is faster moving than a regular General Assembly-style committee, and the topics will be a little bit more outlandish. Generally, you will be assigned a character instead of a country. Your goal, in addition to solving whatever the committee's problem is, will also be gaining personal power. This could be something historical, something realistic, or a completely fantasy topic. Your committee's background guide will have more information about what exactly your topic is.

How to Crisis

A *Crisis Arc*

A crisis arc is your goal in committee. It's the personal goal you're working towards and something your character wants to achieve to gain power and disrupt committee. For example, let's say your character is the Secretary of State in a committee about a presidential cabinet. Your arc could be driven towards taking over the world, and you will do that through something called crisis notes that will be elaborated on later. When you're thinking of what to do in a crisis arc, don't be afraid to go wild and be creative. Chances are, whatever you're thinking of isn't big enough. Let your ideas run wild – chances are things won't work out the way you plan them to, so thinking big like this gives you space to improvise and change. A crisis committee is split into two parts - the frontroom (where traditional debate happens and decisions are made) and the backroom (where you work to scheme and achieve personal goals).

The *Backroom*

The backroom is where you will work towards achieving your crisis arc. You will write notes to your backroom (made up of people staffing the committee and responding to your notes), and those will make step by step progress to achieving your goals. At GTMUN, we work off of a two-pad system. This means you will have two notepads, each written on one at a time:

One pad (called pad A) will have one large, overarching goal on it. You will act like you are writing to someone your character has a relationship with, and backrooms will respond to you as that someone.

With the Secretary of State example earlier, this might be an office staffer who can get things done for you, say send emails or bribe another government official.

One pad (called pad B) will help you work to your larger goal from pad A, but is addressed to a separate person your character has a relationship with, and is doing separate activities to continue to create issues within committee.

With the Secretary of State example earlier, this could be a foreign dignitary whose contact you can use to corrupt a military or accomplish other related goals.

Each pad is only addressed to one person. For all of committee, your pad A will only be written to your office staffer and your pad B will only be written to the foreign dignitary going by the example above. The roles of your pads are interchangeable, but you should try and have one pad that is focused on your ultimate goal, and another pad that is focused on gathering resources and causing chaos within committee. Try and include a TL;DR (too long, didn't read) summary at the end of your note to make it clear to backrooms what you are asking for and what you are trying to achieve in a note. This should be about 3 to 4 bullet points maximum.

Note Cycles

Notes will be written and responded to in a cycle. When committee starts, you will write a note on pad A, setting up your arc and the goals you are working towards. Then, after about 45 minutes (more or less, depending on your committee), backrooms will come in and collect your notepad. You will then write a note on pad B, coming up with and setting up new goals. Backrooms will later come in and collect this notepad, and you will trade back and forth with them for the duration of committee. Every note cycle or so (a collection and return of crisis notes) backrooms will deliver something called a crisis update. The frequency of updates will vary per committee. These updates will bring up new issues for the committee to solve, and will include information from actions people have taken in their backroom arcs, as well as decisions that have been made in the frontroom. For example, let's reference back to the Secretary of State example. Say on one notepad, you've been writing to a foreign dignitary to start a war. Your notes will include things like troop movements and resource mobilization, and eventually a war will be declared. That declaration of war might be something that is included in a crisis update, because it is a large, chaotic event that affects committee and is something that concerns members of the body at large.

The Frontroom

The frontroom is the traditional, MUN-style part of a crisis committee. Here, you will have things like moderated and unmoderated caucuses, voting, and formal debate. You will talk about things that have been brought up in the crisis updates and background guide, and collaborate with other delegates in committee to solve those problems. Action will be taken through things called directives.

Directives

A directive is the crisis equivalent to writing a resolution. However, directives are often smaller and less detailed, and will often only deal with one or two specific issues. These issues will come from crisis updates and topics mentioned in the background guide. Issues will be debated on and discussed, people will start writing things, and directives will eventually be submitted to the chair and voted on. Voting on a directive generally solves the issue at hand, however backrooms may use the solution generated by a directive to cause another problem. Directives are structured less formally than resolutions, often having a fun and creative title and bullet points listing out the action items of the directive.

Further Reading and Useful Tips

Here are a couple of tips on how to be successful in committee:

- Be specific and detailed in your note-writing. Use things like specific numbers and thought-out details when asking to achieve your goals
- Be very clear with your writing
- Be creative! Let loose! Have fun!

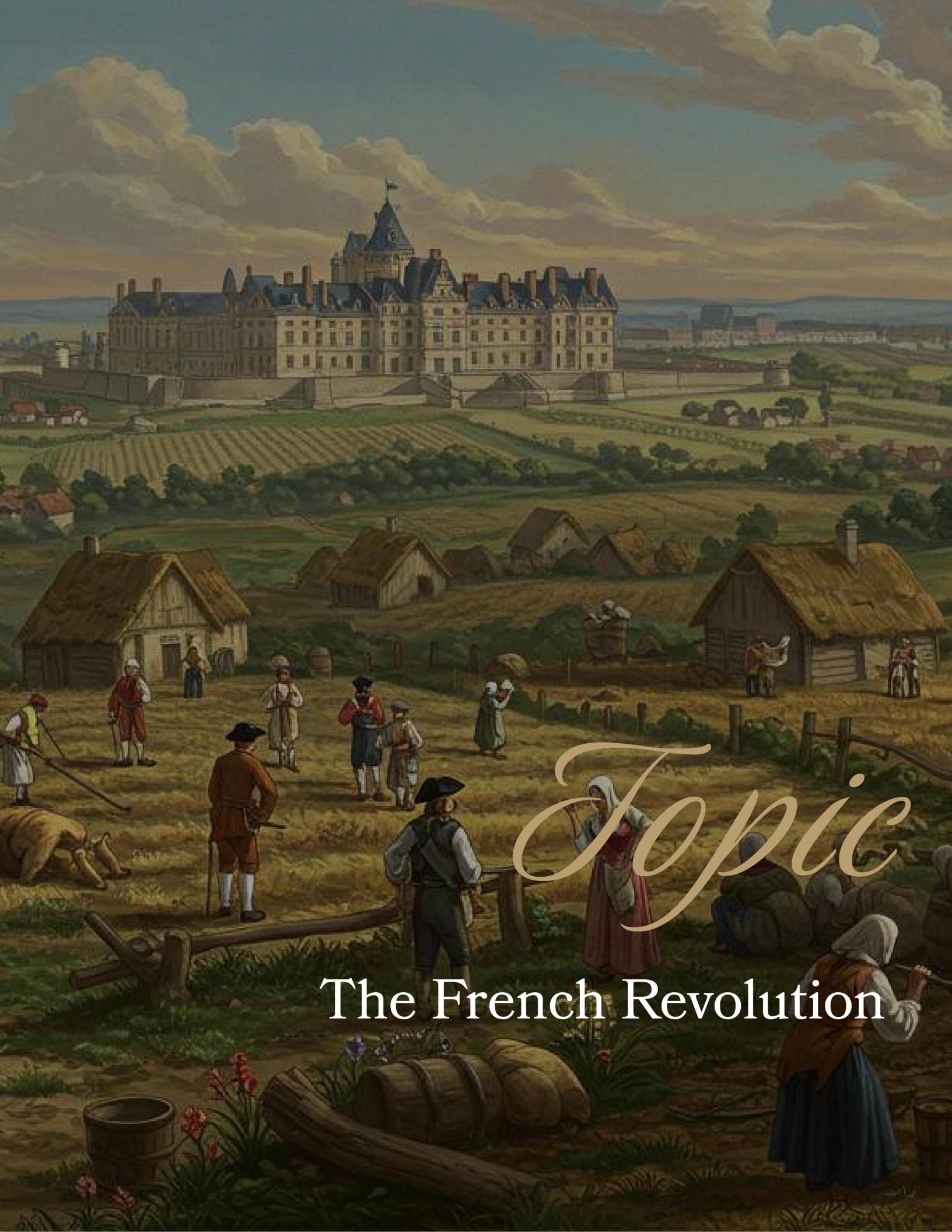
Here are a couple of useful resources on planning out your arc and performing in committee:

- <https://bestdelegate.com/how-to-survive-your-first-crisis-committee/>
- <https://bestdelegate.com/crisis-tips-how-to-incorporate-your-backroom-arcs-into-the-front-room/>
- <https://bestdelegate.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-crisis-committees/>



Disclaimer

Model United Nations provides an opportunity for delegates to engage diplomatically with topics of global importance and explore possibilities for conflict resolution in a meaningful way. Many of the topics at hand may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter. We ask delegates to be respectful and professional when engaging with their committee and communicating with fellow delegates and GTMUN Conference staff. The content warning below is meant to warn you of potentially controversial topics that are present in the content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of the committee (e.g. debate, speeches, directives), so that you can prepare yourself before reading this background guide and participating in the committee. At GTMUN, we take equity violations very seriously and require delegates to fully comply with our equity guidelines. Failure to do so will result in an immediate disqualification from awards, and you may be asked to leave the conference. Please remain respectful in committee, and avoid overgeneralizations as well as take into account individual differences and contexts during your speeches. If you have any questions regarding our equity guidelines, we encourage you to contact one of our staff members. If, because of this committee's content warning, you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to our staff via email at gtmunconference@gmail.com.



Topic

The French Revolution

Committee Mechanic Clarity: Executions

While the French Revolution was a very violent time, a large part of the reason the Directory was formed was as a counter response to the excessive executions of Robespierre and the Jacobins. As a result, while the committee members may choose to pass directives calling for the execution of backroom characters or other members of committee, a super majority (two-thirds) of committee must vote in favor of an execution for it to take place. Additionally, executions may have severe backroom consequences (potential revenge killings, loss of faith of the people, etc.) that should be considered before sentencing someone to the guillotine.

To ensure that directives are not roadblocked and discarded as a whole due to a clause in the directive about executing someone requiring a two-thirds vote, any clause calling to execute someone will automatically be considered “Dividing the Question” so that the execution is still held to the two-thirds majority while the rest of the directive is held to the normal simple majority requirement. This is done to avoid flooding the page cap with directives only calling for executions. Additionally, in the interest of time, only one execution may be called for per directive.

Key Terms

<i>Estates General</i>	the old democratic making body of France, where each social class met as an ‘Estate’ and each of the three ‘Estates’ received a singular vote on whether or not to pass bills. Could only be called upon recommendation by the Parlements and with the approval of the King. The King was in charge of procedural matters.
<i>Sans-coulettes</i>	a term used to describe radical French peasants who supported the idea of direct democracy and were mostly urban laborers
<i>Parlements</i>	regional decision making bodies that made judicial and administrative decisions
<i>Notables</i>	a group of elite policy makers, church officials, and clergy (typically members of the high aristocracy) chosen by the King to give advice but with no formal powers
<i>Clergy</i>	broad term used to refer to ordained church ministers, typically Catholic

Basic Timeline

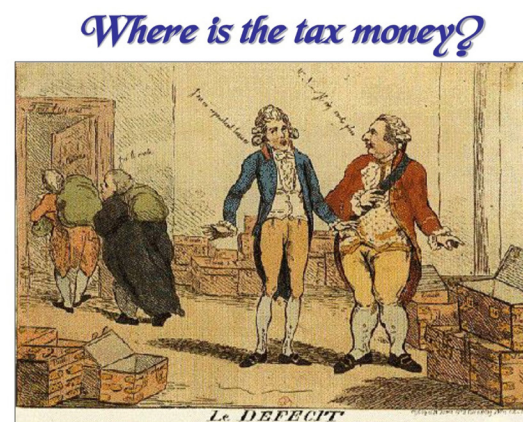
- **1788:** The Parlements call upon the Estates-General to meet and solve France's financial problems, partly stemming from its participation in the Seven Years' War in North America.
- **1789, May 5th:** Estates-General meets.
- **1789, May 17th:** Following collapsing negotiations in the Estates-General, the Third Estate declares itself the "National Assembly" with full power.
- **1789, June 27th:** King Louis the XVI unofficially acknowledges the authority of the "National Assembly."
- **1789, July 14th (*Storm of the Bastille*):** French people start rioting and storm Bastille fort due to rumors the King will use the military to disband the National Assembly.
- **1789, August 4th:** The National Assembly establishes the August Decrees, abolishing feudalism and asserting equality of all before the law.
- **1789, October 5th (*Women's March on Versailles*):** Increasing political unrest due to worsening living conditions prompt a mob to travel to Versailles to demand better living conditions from the king and to demand the king live in Paris.
- **1791, June 21st (*Flight to Varennes*):** King Louis XVI is caught attempting to flee to Austria to raise an army to retake France. The National Assembly begins raising an army to go to war with Austria.
- **1791, July 17th (*Champ de Mars massacre*):** The National Guard opens fire at a group of radical revolutionaries petitioning for the deposition of the king.
- **1792, August 1st:** The commander of the allied forces of Austria and Prussia issues the Brunswick Manifesto, further enraging French citizens.
- **1792, August 10th:** Parisian citizens storm the king's palace in Paris and vote to abolish the monarchy.
- **1792, September 21st:** The new government declares itself as the French First Republic.
- **1793, January 17th:** King Louis XVI is executed for treason.
- **1793, February–March:** The First Coalition, consisting of most major European noble governments, declares war against the French First Republic.

- **1793, April 6th:** The Committee of Public Safety is established.
- **1793, September 17th:** The Committee passes the “Law of Suspects,” which gave the committee sweeping authority to arrest enemies of the government, beginning the “Reign of Terror.”
- **1794, June 10th:** The Law of 22 Prairial is passed, accelerating the rate of execution.
- **1794, July 28th:** Robespierre is executed, ending the Reign of Terror.
- **1795, August–November:** A new constitution is signed and ratified, establishing the French Directory.

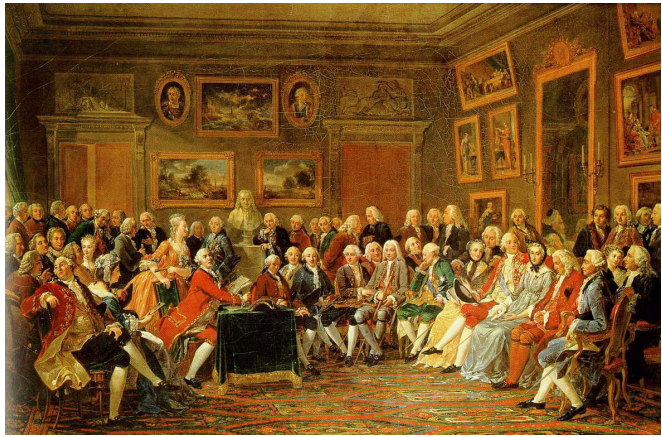
Introduction to the French Revolution

The story of the French Revolution, one of the most defining moments in European history, begins long before the bloody guillotines of Robespierre. Under the weak rule of King Louis XVI, a variety of different political, economic, and social factors eroded support for the monarchy before the crisis at the Estates General led to full revolution. Politically, the monarchy had become out of touch with the people, and the bureaucracy had become decentralized and ineffective. Economically, varying taxation rates from region to region and the use of tax farmers—third parties that collected all the “rent” of an area and then sent a fixed amount to the government—meant that tax policy was inconsistent and did not increase when the economy did better. Bad taxation policy also resulted in social issues as, due to tax exemptions for clergy and nobility, the majority of the tax burden fell on the sans-coulettes. This led to class tensions and fostered a growing resentment among the lower classes towards the church and nobility. Though reform could have been possible, the local parlements held much of the authority over how taxes were collected, meaning that King Louis XVI’s limited efforts to fix the system were unsuccessful.

While the government and taxation system initially continued to function, a perfect storm of pressures would expose the fragilities of the monarchical system, leading to a growing demand for change among the French people. An economic recession in 1785 began to put strain on the French government as the ineffectual taxation system meant France could not pay off its growing debt incurred supporting its day-to-day businesses and from funding various wars, such as the Seven Years’ War and American Revolution. The variety of different tax methods in pre-Revolution France, ranging from direct taxes taken by royal tax officials to oppressive taxes collected by the tax farmers, increased frustration within the general populace. The tax farmers were notoriously corrupt, acting as armed officials of the king who could demand taxes at any time and often collected more taxes than necessary to increase profits—even forcing people to buy goods like salt and taxing them for doing so. In addition to frustrations over the inconsistent and extortive taxation, the spread of Enlightenment thinking by French philosophers such as Montesquieu, Descartes, and Diderot nurtured a growing sense of class consciousness



Le Deficit political cartoon



French philosophers

and put pressure on the king for reform.

King Louis XVI and his various finance ministers began to make reforms to the taxation system aimed at modernizing the system and reducing inconsistencies; however, they met stiff resistance both from the Notables and the aforementioned parlements, who argued that new changes to the tax code could only be made at a meeting of the Estates General.

The Turning Point: The Estates General

The Estates General was a decision making body composed of three “Estates” that represented the social classes of France at the time. The First Estate, the clergy, consisted of all service members of the Roman Catholic church and owned almost 10% of all land in France at the time. The Second Estate, the nobility, owned land and made their primary income by renting it to the peasantry represented by the Third Estate. Finally, the Third Estate, the commoners, largely consisted of those with a background in law or public administration and represented the lower middle classes and peasantry.

When the Estates last met in 1614, each Estate acted as separate bodies which received one vote. The Parlement of Paris decided in September 1788 that the upcoming Estates General should continue to meet and vote in the same way. The ruling in 1788 proved to be disastrous because the Third Estate would protest the unproportional representation since they received an equal vote despite being significantly larger in population than the other two Estates. This spurred the formation of political clubs such as the radical Jacobins who would spearhead the movement arguing for proportional representation in the Estates General.

This was especially important to the Third Estate and the Jacobins as the equal votes meant that in the past, the much smaller First and Second Estate



Depiction of the Three Estates

would join to vote in favor of tax reforms that benefited them or left the lower classes in worse positions, further enraging the Third Estate and sans-coulettes. Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, who influenced many lower class citizens, wrote pamphlets declaring that the Third Estate alone represented the people of France and should make the decision on voting.

The Estates General of 1789 and Beginning of the Revolution

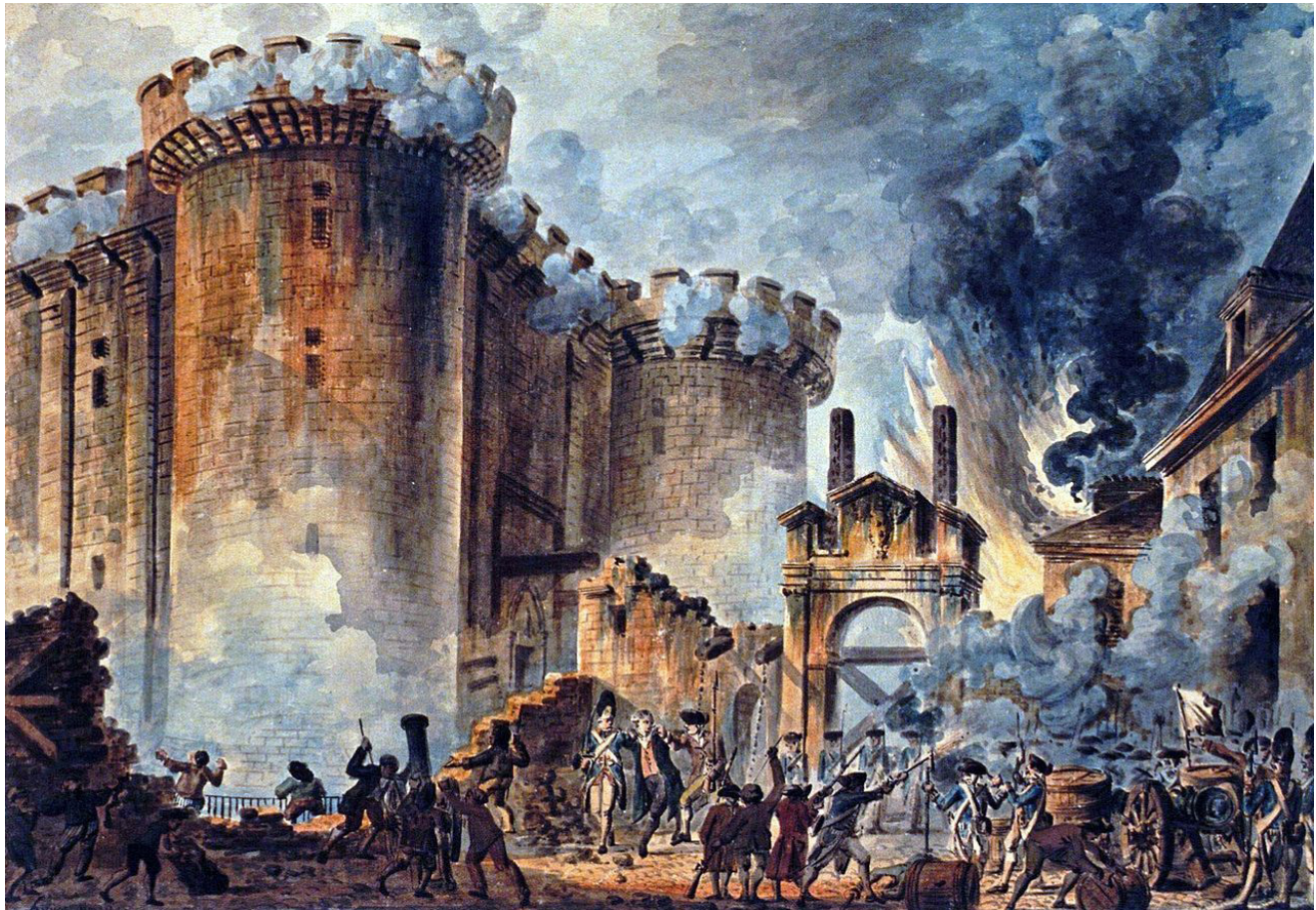
The Estates General met on the 5th of May, 1789 at Versailles. At this meeting, the Third Estate voted to invite the other Estates to verify the head counts and agree to vote proportionally. Negotiations quickly failed, and by the 17th of May, the Third Estate declared itself the sole authority over taxation under the new name of the “National Assembly” and that the current taxation system was illegal. Two days later, almost a third of the First Estate joined the Third Estate due to priests being upset that they did not share in the benefits received from their land, which was mostly taken by bishops and other higher clergymen. This prompted King Louis XVI to adjourn the meeting of Estates General while he personally worked on a reform package to present to them.

The members of the National Assembly then took the “Tennis Court Oath,” so called because they had to meet on a tennis court due to the King closing all the other meeting places. There, they swore to stay in Versailles until a new constitution had been agreed upon. King Louis XVI attempted to convince the National Assembly to return to voting by Estate, but his request fell on deaf ears, with his guards refusing to break up the riots. The king was forced to concede and called for the First and Second Estate to join the Third in the National Assembly by June 27th, making voting proportional to the populace.



Tennis Court Oath

On July 12th, news spread to the common people that the king had fired chief minister Jacques Necker, who was sympathetic to the Third Estates' causes, and that the king planned to call in the Swiss Guard to break up the National Assembly. In response, crowds of protestors broke out throughout Paris. By July 14th, a mob of protestors had stormed the Bastille fort in Paris, burned down buildings, and paraded



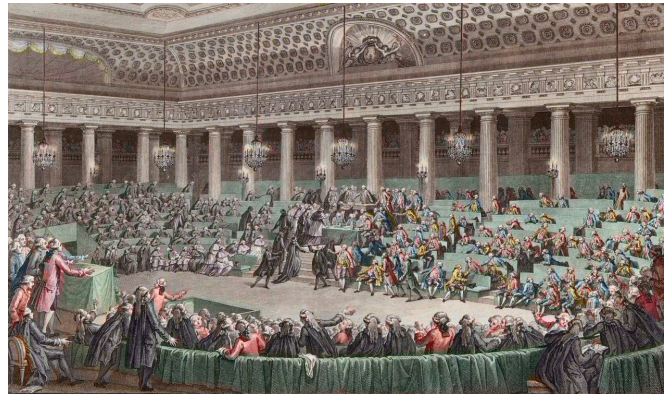
Storming of the Bastille

around with heads on pikes. This invasion of the fort became a potent symbol for the French Revolution and marked the beginning of many radical changes which would spiral into the Reign of Terror.

Though the violence would wane on July 17th after King Louis XVI conceded to the protestors' demands, the National Assembly's lack of progress in reforming the constitution led to further incidents of violence throughout the nation by July 22nd. In Paris, mobs publicly executed nobility and stole their property. Along the countryside, peasants began forming militias and revolting. Fearing for their lives amidst the chaos, French nobility fled to the nearby countries of Austria and Prussia, where some began to raise armies in the hope of restoring the monarchy. In response to the violence and flight of the nobility, the National Assembly establish the August Decrees, a set of radical proclamations which included abolishing the parlements and feudalism, stripping the special privileges of the clergy and nobility, confiscating all church property, and asserting equality of all before the law.

As the National Assembly continued to debate the constitution and considering how much power the king should have under the newly forming constitutional monarchy, political unrest began to grow in Paris due to rising food prices and

a worsening economy. On October 5th, the pressures became too great, sparking crowds of women to seize weapons from Paris's city hall and march to Versailles to demand food and other necessities from the king and the assembly. As they moved to Versailles, they were joined by allies en route, which included 15,000 allies in the French National Guard; the march also grew more political, soon demanding



The National Assembly

the king and the assembly move to Paris to be closer to the people. In Versailles, the crowd besieged the palace, violently attacking palace guards, and inciting death threats towards the queen. To ensure the safety of his family, the king heeded to the protestors' demands and reluctantly followed the crowd to Paris. Though the king and his family were welcomed in Paris and allowed to live in his own Parisian palace (the Tuileries Palace), the march demonstrated that the king no longer had absolute power over his people.

Over the next two years, the National Assembly was able to implement important reforms (most notably standardizing the judicial system) but became increasingly divided into different factions: reactionaries who wished to return to aristocratic France, monarchiens who were interested in establishing a constitutional monarchy, and radicals who wanted to continue pushing the revolution and democracy. Tensions came to a head on June 21st, 1791, when King Louis XVI was caught attempting to flee to Austria to meet with a loyal army raised by the nobility. Furious and scared, the citizens of France and, in turn, the National Assembly began preparing for war with Austria or other nations and demanded that the king sign an oath of loyalty to France and accept the constitution. Many radical revolutionaries believed that merely signing an oath of loyalty was not enough to prove the king's intentions and gathered at the Champ de Mars on July 17th to petition for the king's deposition. When the National Guard was unsuccessful in dispersing the crowd, they decided to open fire, leading to dozens of civilian deaths.

The National Assembly further shut down radical ideology by shuttering the radical political clubs as the kings of Austria and Prussia declared their support for King Louis XVI. News of these proclamations of support from the other kings prompted even more preparation for war and rallied support behind the French government. At the same time, the National Assembly became even more divided between different factions, further dividing the conservative constitutional monarchists targeting the end of the revolution and the leftists—usually known as Brissotins—who pushed for an entirely new republic to replace the king and current



The Declaration of the First Republic

constitution. Warmongers among the public and in the National Assembly itself began pushing for a war with Austria and Prussia as an attempt to rally support behind the government and defeat supposed foes of the Revolution.

The partnership between King Louis XVI and the

revolutionary government stayed contentious through late 1791 and early 1792. Though he agreed to sign the constitution of the new French constitutional monarchy, some were still worried he was still working with the nobility. On August 1st, 1792, news of the Brunswick Manifesto would reach Paris. The manifesto, issued by the commander of the allied forces of Austria and Prussia, stated that if the royal family of France were harmed, so too would French civilians. This manifesto, which exposed the king's continued collaboration with nobility, enraged French citizens, prompting a militia to storm the Tuileries Palace and the Assembly to vote to suspend the monarchy on August 10th.

Following the French army's first major victory against Prussia in late September, the new government declared itself the First Republic, establishing a new governmental structure consisting of one legislature of elected representatives with no executive power. Immediately after its formation, the First Republic began deliberations over the fate of King Louis XVI. By January 1793, they ruled that he was a traitor and executed him for his crimes on January 17th. This further outraged the monarchies of Europe, and by February, the First Republic had declared war on Britain and the Dutch Republic. By March, revolutionary France was at war with the entire First Coalition, consisting of Austria, Prussia, Britain, the Dutch Republic, Spain, Portugal, the Papal States, Naples, and French Royalist forces (so all of Europe, except the Swiss and Russia). To deploy enough manpower to fight the coalition, the Republic relied on mass conscription. This was so deeply unpopular that riots broke out in major cities and mass defections took place. The chaos led to the creation of the



Beheading the King

Committee of Public Safety in April 1793, an executive body focused on protecting the republic against political enemies. The vast overarching powers granted to the committee would serve as the building blocks for the Reign of Terror.

The Reign of Terror

As the different political clubs continued to jockey for power, the moderate Girondons (who currently controlled the government) faced significant challenges to their power, only barely averting a coup from rival radical clubs on May 31, 1793. Two days later, a crowd of 80,000 people surrounded the meeting place of the First Republic, demanding relief from economic hardship and political reform. Members of the Girondons were arrested, and a new constitution was quickly drawn up in a mere eight days, only to be suspended indefinitely after a Girondinist assassinated the radical leader Marat. These events gave the Committee of Public Safety the excuse they needed to seize power with disastrous consequences for the nation of France. Shortly after taking over, the Committee set price controls on goods with the death penalty as punishment for those caught hoarding goods. By September, “revolutionary groups” had been established to enforce these new laws and the Committee passed the “Law of Suspects” which gave sweeping authority to the revolutionary groups to arrest those suspected of unpatriotic behavior. Both measures combined created the now infamous “Reign of Terror,” where close to 300,000 people were arrested by the revolutionaries with 17,000 to 50,000 people being executed for supposed unpatriotic activities. Paris began to starve as farmers were reluctant to sell their food at the price-controlled levels. Though

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Victims of Reign of Terror getting carted

France was constantly in a state of upheaval, the military shockingly began to win victories against the First Coalition thanks to the drafts giving the French numerical superiority and the leadership of brilliant young French generals, including a Napoleon Bonaparte. The army was also able to quell rebellions on the homefront, asserting the Republican government’s control over France.

Meanwhile, the different political clubs within France started turning on each other, and in a series of farcical trials, leaders of various political clubs found themselves facing the guillotine for

actions deemed “unpatriotic” by their fellow revolutionaries. Robespierre, the leader of the prominent radical club, the Jacobins, spearheaded the purges and used them as an opportunity to target his political rivals in other clubs. On June 10th, 1794, the Law of 22 Prairial was passed, suspending the right of enemies of the state to defend themselves and greatly increased the rate of execution. Robespierre began to come under fire for the excessive executions and began losing public favor, especially after throwing a lavish party amid the ever present economic downturn. As inflation grew rampant and Robespierre continued to grow deeply unpopular, members of the Committee of Public Safety began to turn on him. By July 27th, the assembly authorized a warrant for his arrest, and Robespierre and his followers were executed for their crimes the following day. Though Robespierre’s executions largely marked the end of the Reign of Terror, revenge killings still took place in Paris and across France against Jacobins, Republican officials supporting Robespierre, and Protestants. Through 1794 and early 1795, food shortages, major depreciation of the French currency, and the continued burden of fighting the war on the homefront motivated another rebellion that was quickly suppressed by the military. The leaders of the First Republic realized that the current system of governance was not sustainable, and a committee was formed again to create another constitution for France.



Victims of Reign of Terror getting carted

The Directory and Committee Situation

The French Directory sought to fix the problems of the governments that preceded it by establishing a bicameral legislature. The lower house, the Council of 500, would draft all legislation, while the upper house, the Council of Ancients, would review and approve proposed legislation. Executive power would be given to a five-man council, known as the Directors, selected jointly by the two houses.

Due to property qualifications being required to vote in the primaries for members of the houses, the Directory ended up being markedly more conservative than both of the revolutionary governments that preceded it. From the start, the Directory was challenged by radical actors both within and outside its ranks that felt the more conservative and royalist influence in the government betrayed the ideals of the Revolution that so many had died to preserve. Internal divisions often resulted



The First Directors

in legislative deadlocks that required the directors to call upon the military to use the threat of force to get legislation moving, indirectly ceding more power to the military (and a certain Napoleon Bonaparte).

The power structure of the Directory itself is part of what caused these issues and necessitated the use of the military. At any stage of legislation, a bill could be deadlocked with the other house or

the Directors powerless to move progress along. Drafting a law in the lower house could result in deadlock, as could debate in the upper house, as could execution by the Directors. While the Directors had executive powers given to them, they were unable to speed along the legislative process and had to rely on other forms of soft power to get the work of the government done (such as involving the military). Historically, the inaction of the Directory and repeated reliance on the military led to the French First Republic's collapse.

This committee will take place at the beginning of the Directory period of France's revolutionary history. Delegates will participate within the Directory and may choose to work within the system, try to amend its problems, or entirely reform France's government structure. With the growing pressures of economic downturn, famine, internal unrest, governmental division, and more power being ceded to the military, how will the members of the Directory, government officials, military leaders, and religious figures work to support the French Republic and promote its success? Or will they try to tear it down from the inside out in favor of a new governance?

Questions to Consider

What are your character's motivations and powers, and how will that affect if they work to support or undermine the Directory and how they would do so?

How can the committee members address the underlying economic issues caused by the constant turmoil of war and revolution?

Can coalitions and mutual understandings be worked out between the radical revolutionaries and the conservative royalists, or will conflict between the factions lead to more internal division?

With continuing unrest and periodic rebellions, how can the Directory maintain control over France and maintain the faith of the people?

How will the different religious elements in France influence the people and win over their favor?

Will you use the risky route of publicly executing your enemies or subtle background maneuvering to gain power and avoid the chopping block yourself?

Character Dossier

Directors

1. Paul François Jean Nicolas, Vicomte de Barras

Paul Francois Jean Nicolas, Vicomte de Barras was one of the five Directors of the Directory and its informal leader. Despite his background as a member of a minor noble family, he had been committed to the Revolution from the beginning and even secured an early promotion for the young Napoleon Bonaparte. His role in organizing the downfall of the notorious radical Ropesbierre, however, has aligned him against the most radical members of the Revolution and he strives to maintain the Revolutionary ideals while creating a government free of its often radical impulses. Concerned with little else but the amassing, holding, and wielding of power, Paul Barras will stop at nothing to ensure his own personal success.

2. Louis Marie de La Révellière-Lépeaux

The second Director of the Directory, Louis Marie de La Révellière-Lépeaux was a committed revolutionary who often sided with radical forces. He strongly advocated for the execution of King Louis XVI after he fled to Varennes and was strongly opposed to any kind of seemingly “undemocratic power,” notably including a strong bias against the Catholic Church with its leaders chosen not by the laypeople but the monarchy and Pope of Rome. He was in favor of replacing Christianity with the newly established Theophilanthropy (promoted as well by Jean-Baptiste Chemin-Dupontès) and generally favored policies that would see the French Revolution carried out to its extremes. His radical stance may have alienated him from more conservative figures during the Revolution but gave him ties to organizations and influence among young idealists in the Directory he could potentially leverage to enact his goals.

3. Jean-François Rewbell

For a Revolutionary, Jean-François Rewbell had remarkably middle of the road beliefs. Voting in favor of executing the king along with the majority of other revolutionaries, he nevertheless strongly opposed Robespierre and his extreme Jacobin followers for the violence and instability they had brought to the Revolution. Rewbell’s rare moderation endeared him to foreign nations and enabled him to employ his skills at foreign relations. These skills could be utilized alongside his role as a Director to help him maintain his vision of a moderate government for France (with an emphasis on individual liberties despite a disdain for the Catholic Church).

4. *Étienne-François Le Tourneur*

What the fourth Director Étienne-François Le Tourneur lacked in political experience, he made up for with an acute understanding of the military and naval affairs of France. As a former captain of engineers in the French military, he understood the important role the military played in supporting the government and that this continued support would be necessary if the Directory wanted to remain in power. His role as a government official that could be trusted to give accurate reports on the state of the military through his network of former connections and knowledge from his prior service is a powerful tool that can help ensure the Directory maintains control over the military and consequently the nation. Due to the current wars with Austria, Britain, and other continental powers, he often favored moderate policies that would stabilize the nation at home and help the men fighting on the front lines.

5. *Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot*

Already famous as “The Organizer of Victory” for his logistical improvements that led to the first French victories in the Revolutionary wars, Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot had swiftly advanced from an army captain at the beginning of the Revolution to a member of the previous government before the Directory (the Convention). As a leader on the commission of military affairs, he staunchly advocated for French army reform in structure and organization and became appalled with the extremism of Robespierre in the government. Upon the fall of Robespierre and due to his popularity, he became the fifth Director of the Directory where he would continue to serve as an excellent organizer of men and material and have a wide transportation network with associated assets at his disposal to further his goals.

Government Officials

6. *Pierre Daunou*

While the Directors often stole the spotlight, the Council of 500 that actually created legislation beneath it was just as—if not more—important, lending legislative power to its president Pierre Daunou. A prominent anti-Royalist, despite his outspoken criticism of the monarchy he was considered moderate enough to lead the creation of the constitution for the Directory. Intimately familiar with the structure of the Directory and its workings, which he could use to his advantage, Daunou’s main goal was to keep the Directory in place as a government and prevent any monarchists or other dictatorial powers from regaining any power in French society.

7. *Philippe-Antoine Merlin de Douai*

Philippe-Antoine Merlin de Douai was mostly a moderate figure in the French Revolution, which made him the perfect candidate for Minister of Justice and Police of the Directory to uphold the law and prevent one extreme or the other from gaining power. As the police chief, Douai was committed to preventing the excesses caused by Robespierre and his radical Jacobin club from recurring and supported the Directory as a way to maintain the peace. If the Directory ever began to lean to one side or the other, Douai could attempt to use his power with the police forces to “encourage” members of the delegation to adhere to his vision for moderation. Following the French Revolution, however, the police force of France was a mere shadow of its former self and Douai would have his work cut out before him to modernize and retrain the force.

8. *Pierre Benezech*

A noted politician and Royalist allied with the Clichy Club, Pierre Benezech held a variety of roles within the nascent Directory government. In charge of the agriculture, commerce, arts, and education committees, Benezech could subtly influence various individual policies of the government that may seem small individually but make a huge difference cumulatively. Not entirely committed to this new government, Benezech publicly supported the Directory while privately could potentially champion legislation that would undermine the government from the inside and lead to a return of the monarchy to power.

Royalists

9. *Bathilde d'Orleans*

Fallen from grace during the Revolution, the French princess Bathilde d'Orleans was still beloved by several groups among the general French population. As a member of the French monarchy, she had been imprisoned during the Reign of Terror but was eventually released after the fall of Robespierre and the Thermidorean reaction. She quickly returned to the palace and was able to use her reputation as the “Citizen-ness Truth” (due to giving away most of her wealth to the Revolution before imprisonment) to rebuild her social status. Her high regard among the French population, leftover wealth from before the Revolution, and royal connections give her powerful tools to try and reassert the role of the monarchy in French society (and perhaps retake the government itself).

10. *Germaine de Staël*

Germaine de Staël bucked the trend of male dominated discussion in the time period of the French Revolution. Her literary works, philosophy, and deft skill at politics made her one of the most influential figures of the time, and she applied these talents to the defense of the monarchy. Her aristocratic connections gave her access to both money and valuable connections that she could employ in support of her goal of returning some form of the monarchy to power.

11. *François Antoine de Boissy d'Anglas*

François Antoine de Boissy d'Anglas was an interesting character, as despite his revolutionary actions and opposition to the monarchy he quickly became associated with many Royalist policies. His initial revolutionary fever had been tempered when he witnessed the extremes of Robespierre's revolutionary government, and consequently when he helped to create the constitution for the Directory he attempted to take a more moderate approach to the monarchy. He supported pro-Royalist policies, such as freedom of the press, clergy, and exiled members of the French monarchy. Despite his role as a member in the lower house of the Directory and in writing its very constitution, Boissy d'Anglas even began to criticize the Directory itself. Using his influence within the Directory and connections to Royalist members, he could either attempt to support the Directory or take it down from the inside depending on the policies its leaders choose to pursue.

Revolutionaries

12. *Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès*

Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès was a popular man with the French people, and a staunch opponent of the Directory. He believed that it did not go far enough in carrying out the ideals of the French Revolution, and he favored the replacement of the Directory with a government that would have stronger leadership and take more radical actions to protect those ideals. Using his skills as a notable diplomat and connections with revolutionary militias, Sieyès could be a powerful force advocating peacefully—or forcefully—for a return to extreme revolution.

13. *Joseph Fouché*

Joseph Fouché was the poster child of extreme revolution. Advocating for death of all the monarchy, fiercely anti-religious, and leading executions of any supposed “enemies” of the Revolution during the Reign of Terror, Joseph Fouché would find compromise on the Revolution difficult and support any

attempts to bring down the monarchy. Surviving the reaction that wiped out Robespierre by aligning himself with the forces that would eventually take him down, Fouche was able to remain in the good graces of the Directory for the moment but his ties to prominent leftist militia could help him get back to his extreme revolutionary principles.

14. *François-Noël “Gracchus” Babeuf*

François-Noël “Gracchus” Babeuf was a popular figure among the French lower classes that fueled the French Revolution due to his support for full democracy. This and other radical policies he supported, such as abolition of property rights, led him to consider the Directory an imperfect result of the Revolution and put him in the same line of thought as the infamous Robespierre. His control over the newspapers that can sway public opinion and ties to radical militias could serve as dangerous tools if he were to attempt to take matters of governance into his own hands, or at the very least could influence the public into seeing things his way.

Military Leaders

15. *Barthélemy Catherine Joubert*

Barthélemy Catherine Joubert was a sharp young commander and rising force in the French Revolutionary armies. While far from the political center of power in Paris fighting on the frontlines at Austria, the Directory would only be able to remain in power as long as its military supported it and Joubert had recently been promoted and personally entrusted with command by Napoleon Bonaparte. This command gave him significant control of the military, which could be used to further his goals, and while he had few political goals himself he did owe the military and Napoleon a debt for his fast advancement.

16. *Lazare Hoche*

Lazare Hoche was a notable and successful general during the early years of the French Revolutionary Wars. Unlike many of his peers, however, his success came against his fellow country when he led armies to crush the pro-Royalist resistance forces in northwestern France. This experience and his personal opinions prejudiced him against Royalists politically, and unlike many military leaders who might have preferred a takeover by a dictatorial force he supported the Revolution almost (but not quite) to its extremes. Consequently, his control of the army could be used to enforce his shared vision of Revolution under the monarchy and potentially act as a counterbalance to Royalist tendencies in the military.

17. *Amédée Willot*

Amédée Willot was a typical general in that he tended to support Royalists and strong leadership, but atypical in the fact that he was one of the few generals in charge of the army in Spain. His support of Royalists also exceeded typical conventions, as he was a member of the Clichy club and involved politically. Willot could use this unique blend of political, military, and geographic power (via his connection to prominent politicians and the army in Spain) to support Royalist policies back in his home country of France.

Religious Leaders

18. *Henri Grégoire*

A former French bishop of the Catholic church, Henri Grégoire took an oath of loyalty to the new government to avoid exile or execution. He was consequently elected to the Council of Five Hundred, and despite the Catholic Church not recognizing those who swore oaths of loyalty to the Directory Grégoire still advocated for religious freedom and a return of the Catholic church. His popularity among the peasantry as a religious leader who still represented the Catholic faith shared by many among the lower class in France could be used as a powerful tool in the Directory that relied on the people for its power to push for the reinclusion of Catholicism.

19. *Jean-Baptiste Chemin-Dupontès*

Jean-Baptiste Chemin-Dupontès long despised Catholicism, and the French Revolution gave him the perfect opportunity to promote his preferred religion of Theophilanthropy. A new religion created by himself, it was based on philosophical teachings by famous philosophers such as Kant and Rousseau and represented a lingering belief in science and reason as all powerful from the Enlightenment. Aided by official state recognition, Chemin-Dupontès would ally himself with the Directory and attempt to start a symbiotic relationship where his faith would help support the Directory in exchange for materials and services of the Directory, but he would have to contend with deeply rooted Catholic tradition.

20. *Nicolas François de Neufchâteau*

Nicolas François de Neufchâteau was perhaps one of the most interesting figures during the French Revolution. An accomplished statesman in the government preceding the Directory, and then in the Directory itself, his main legislative focus would be the founding and promoting of the Decadary cult. Intended to replace Christianity, the Decadary Cult was a state-

sponsored religious organization that was highly patriotic and focused on the new French calendar of ten days a week. In order to promote his cult, Neufchâteau could rely on his expert statesmanship to gain materials and further direct support for the Decadary Cult which also necessarily allied him and his efforts with the goals of the Directory.

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