How many revolutions?
Where are we in the semester?

Introductory Week

“Setting the Stage”—Old Regime France

Detailed Chronology, 1787-1795

Thematic Issues:
- Rights and Citizenship
- Liberty, Equality, Property
- Violence
NATIONAL (Constituent) ASSEMBLY constitutional monarchy
June 20, 1789 Tennis Court Oath
July 14, 1789 Storming of the Bastille

LEGISLATIVE (National) ASSEMBLY constitutional monarchy
Aug. 10, 1792 monarchy abolished

NATIONAL CONVENTION single chamber “Representatives of the People”
Sept. 22, 1792 Republic declared
Sept. 5, 1793 Paris sections march on Convention;
October 1793 “republican calendar” introduced
July 27, 1794 fall of Robespierre
(Termidor 9, year 2)
April-May 1795 Convention represses popular uprisings in Paris
(Germinal-Prairial, year 3)
October 1795 Royalist uprising in Paris repressed by Barras & Bonaparte
(Vendémiaire, year 4)

The Terror

DIRECTORY 5 man executive; 2 house legislative (Council of 500;
April 1796 Bonaparte named Commander of Italian Army Council of Ancients)
Spring 1797 major victory of the Right in elections
Sept. 1797 fructidor (year 5) coup annuls elections;
Spring 1798 Bonaparte invades Egypt
Nov. 9-10, 1799 18th of Brumaire; claiming to protect the Councils from a Jacobin uprising,
Bonaparte stages military coup (planned with Sieyes and Talleyrand)
How to Explain “The Terror”: Social History

Unstable alliance between: “bourgeois” members of the Convention who want political power (the Montagnards: Robespierre, St. Just, Couthon, etc.)

and working Parisians (sans-culottes) who want lower prices

Jacques Louis David, “design for the uniform of a Representative of the People” (1794/Year 2)

anonymous, “a sans-culottes”
In the most general terms, the [National Assembly in its constitutional debates of 1789] opted for the language of political will, rather than of social reason; of unity, rather than difference; of civic virtue, rather than commerce; of absolute sovereignty, rather than of government limited by the rights of man—which is to say that, in the long run, it was opting for the Terror.

But maybe it doesn’t make sense to think of “the Terror” as a distinct period.

What is a revolution?
   a process
   a turning full circle
   an event?
How many revolutions?
   from many to one

Other revolutions, counter revolutions
   emigration
   “federalism” in Lyon
   the West

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…*
The plan is to divide France into some number of départements; some think there should be 70, others say 80, others want 120, 125, 203, etc. etc. Each department will be an administrative center, with a legal court and even a diocese, and will be the unit of election for the National Assembly. That is, if a rival plan isn’t chosen, which would allow each municipality to send directly its own representative.

Thomas Lindet, writing to municipal officials in his hometown, November 6, 1789.
Revolution as on-going process, not a single event
REVOLUTION
In politics, revolution signifies a grand change or turn in government. In which sense, the [word] “revolution” is used, [primarily], for the great turn of affairs in England in 1688, when King James II abdicated the throne, and the prince and princess of Orange were declared king and queen of England.

The revolution of a planet, or a comet, around the sun is nothing but its course from any point of its orbit until its return to the same.
See ASTRONOMY.

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* (first edition, 1771)
Prudhomme and the revolutions of Paris

“Only excessive misery and the progress of enlightenment can bring about a revolution in a people that has already grown old in the degradation of servitude.”


The Revolutions of Paris, Dedicated to the Nation and to the District of the Little Augustins
“The great only look great because we are on our knees” (1789).

from many revolutions to one
One Revolution (not many) means:
  disagreements become threats

  more revolution, or counter revolution?

  one element of political success =
  being able to make a coherent story

Other Revolutions, counter revolutions
  emigration

  “federalism”—in Lyon, Marseilles, Toulon

  the Vendée and the West

Game of the French Revolution (1791?)

from many revolutions to one
Social breakdown of emigration based on sample of 97,545 (14.6% women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobility</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Estate</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“upper middle”</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workers</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peasants</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Laws defining emigration and its punishment**

- **9 July 1791**: émigrés “invited” to return; those that don’t are to pay triple taxes
- **9 Nov. 1791**: death penalty for those who conspire against France or take up arms against France (*law vetoed by Louis XVI*)
- **9 Feb. 1792**: émigré property sequestered
- **17 July 1792**: émigré property to be sold as *biens nationaux*
- **24 Nov. 1792**: returned émigrés ordered to leave France within a week
- **28 March 1793**: émigrés declared “legally dead”
- **4 brumaire IV (26 Oct. 1795)**: political amnesty law does *not* include émigrés
- **9 frimaire VI (29 Nov. 1797)**: all ex-nobles to be considered “foreign” and banned from political office holding

Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Self Portrait in Rome*, 1790

Counter-revolution and civil war: emigration
“Federalism” and the French Revolution

“federalists” = label given by the Convention to uprisings in many urban areas politically, means the opposite of what it means in US context

red=armed opposition to Convention
orange=support for armed opposition
green=unauthorized formation of commissions; new electoral assemblies, etc.
light green=public statements (oral or printed) disapproving the purge of the Girondins from the Convention

Counter-revolution and civil war: “federalism”
Revolution in Lyon

second largest city; silk weaving, wholesale trade

severe crisis in luxury trades → massive unemployment

“popular” clubs versus urban elite

March 1793 “girondin” mayor and city council replaced by radicals

June 1793 radicals overthrown (opposition to heavy taxation of the richest property owners) -- radicals guillotined

August-October 1793 besieged

Counter-revolution and civil war: “federalism”
So, if we think in terms of many competing revolutions instead of a good Revolution and a bad Terror, what happens?

don’t have to explain how the good “turned” bad

have to expand the category of who or what is “revolutionary”

see that being able to define and claim “the Revolution” was central to political success
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3. Map adapted from www.hist-geo.co.uk
6. Louis-Marie Prudhomme, The Revolutions of Paris, Dedicated to the Nation and to the District of the Little Augustins (1789); photo from gallica.bnf.fr
8. Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Self Portrait in Rome (1790); oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cms., Uffizi Gallery (Florence, Italy); Image from wikimedia.org
10. The Siege of Lyon; gallica.bnf.fr