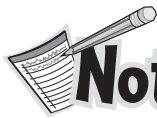


Radical Revolution and Reaction

Big Idea

Political groups controlled the revolution, which many people in France and abroad opposed. As you read, create a diagram like the one below listing actions taken by the National Convention.

Actions taken by the National Convention
1.
2.
3.
4.



Notes

Read to Learn

The Move to Radicalism *(page 586)*

Drawing Conclusions

Why did some people want the king to be executed?

In August, 1792 the sans-culottes attacked the palace, and the royal family had to seek protection from the Legislative Assembly. The Paris Commune forced the Assembly to call a National Convention to draft a new constitution.

The National Convention began to serve as the ruling body of France. It abolished the monarchy and established the French Republic. Political clubs, such as the Girondins and the Jacobins, formed **factions**—groups that oppose each other. Girondins favored keeping the king alive, while Jacobins wanted him executed to keep him from serving as a rallying point for the republic's opponents. In early 1793, the Convention condemned Louis XVI to death, and he was beheaded on January 21.

A coalition of Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Britain, and the Dutch Republic took up arms against France. Disputes between political factions blocked the writing of a constitution. The Convention gave broad powers to the Committee of Public Safety, which came to be dominated by Maximilien Robespierre.

The Reign of Terror (page 589)**Determining Cause and Effect**

Why did the Convention try to de-Christianize France?

For about a year during 1793 and 1794, the Committee of Public Safety took control of the government. It adopted practices that became known as the Reign of Terror. Almost 40,000 people were killed. Revolutionary armies were set up to bring rebellious cities under control.

The Committee of Public Safety held that the violence was only temporary. They took steps to shape what Robespierre called the Republic of Virtue. A law aimed at primary education for all was passed, but not widely implemented. Another law abolished slavery in the French colonies. The Committee tried to control the high prices of essential goods such as food, fuel, and clothing, but with little success.

The National Convention tried to de-Christianize France, because it believed the religion encouraged superstition rather than reason. Churches and cathedrals were closed or given new purposes. Priests were encouraged to marry. Robespierre came to realize that most French people were still Catholic and would not accept de-Christianization.

A Nation in Arms (page 591)**Formulating Questions**

What are some questions that could be asked about France's raising of such a huge army, and about that army's victories?

As foreign troops gathered on France's borders, the Committee of Public Safety raised the largest army ever seen in Europe. It pushed the invaders back across the Rhine and even conquered the Austrian Netherlands. By summer of 1794, France had largely defeated its foreign enemies. There was less need for the Reign of Terror, but still it continued. But in July, Robespierre himself was guillotined. In August, the release of prisoners began.

The Directory (page 593)

Determining Cause and Effect

After the Reign of Terror ended, how did the National Convention change?

With the Terror over, the National Convention moved in a more conservative direction. A new constitution was created. It set up two legislative houses. A lower house drafted laws. An upper house accepted or rejected proposed laws. However, members of both houses were chosen by **electors**. Only those who owned or rented property worth a certain amount could be an elector. Only 30,000 people in the whole nation qualified to be an elector.

The executive power was held by a committee of five called the Directory. The Directory lasted only five years, and was known for its corruption. Eventually, the military gained power. Then one successful and popular general, Napoleon Bonaparte, toppled the Directory in a **coup d'état**—a sudden overthrow of a government.

Section Wrap-up

Answer these questions to check your understanding of the entire section.

1. What steps did the National Convention take to try to de-Christianize France?

2. Why was the government of the Directory unpopular?

Expository Writing

Explain why the Reign of Terror took place.
