

Vendémiaire uprising →  
2/3 decree + economic conditions

The new 1/3 of the Five Hundred were mainly Royalist but they were unable to influence the choice of directors.

The directors were chosen from most prominent Regicides to guarantee against a Royalist restoration.

\* The directors wanted to provide stable and liberal government that would maintain the gains of the Revolution.

Yet..... Problems were huge.

+ No end of war in sight + had to be paid for.

+ Treasury was empty, taxes unpaid + value of assignat had plummeted.

The Directory was not expected to last more than a few months.

However.. The Directory survived longer than any other Revolutionary Regimes.

Many factors led to this

\* Directory was committed to restoring law and order.

\* Key opponents had been discredited  
Few wanted a return to the Monarchy or Jacobin Terror.

\* Royalists were divided.

\* Apathy after 6 years of war & Revolution

\* The army supported the Directory - they wanted the war to continue. The put Directory in place... but could lead to downfall.

## The Rise and fall of the Directory

### The Babeuf Plot 1796

First challenge came from Gracchus Babeuf - a Radical Paupheteer + editor of Tribun du Peuple.

- He didn't like the Constitution of 1793

- He felt it gave power to the wealthy.

- He believed the aim of society was the 'Common happiness' - the Revolution should secure equal enjoyment for all.

- Ban public ownership of property + est Communal management of property. - much more radical ideas than those of year II

Many historians agree Babeuf was the first Communist.

- March 1796 - Babeuf organised a plan to overthrow the Directory.

- His Conspiracy of Equals - was a popular uprising but would not occur spontaneously so would have to be led by a small group of dedicated Revolutionaries.

- They would win support of Police + Army to gain strength - take over - set up a dictatorship + make fundamental changes to the organisation of society.

- He received no support from Sans Culottes.

- Arrested in May 1796 + executed.

- Influential in later events but not so much in the FR.

# Coup d'etat of fructidor 1797

- 1797 Elections showed popular shift to monarchists.
- People were tired of war + religious conflict at home + found idea of Constitutional monarchy attractive.
- Of 216 ex-members of the Convention up for re-election - only 11 were returned
- Monarchists won 180 of 260 seats.
- Brought number in Councils to 330.
- Directory losing support from richer bourgeoisie.

- \* All monarchists needed to do was wait for next elections when more seats were up for re-election.
- If voting was similar to 1797 they would win a majority.
- They would then be in a position to restore monarchy legally.
- \* Royalists showed their strength when they appointed 3 of their supporters to influential positions

  1. President of the Five Hundred
  2. President of the Ancients
  3. A director - Barthelemy - sympathetic

Carnot - Director was also becoming more conservative.

- Of the remaining directors 2 were committed Republicans. They were determined to prevent a restoration of the monarchy - and sought help from the Army.
- \* Bonaparte sent troops to Paris to support Republican Directors.

## Rise and fall of the Directory

On evening of 3-4 Sept 1797 (Fructidor yr V) troops ordered to seize all strong points in Paris + surround Council Chambers. Carnot & Barthelemy were arrested with 53 Deputies.

- Remaining deputies felt intimidated and agreed to approve 2 decrees demanded by remaining deputies.

  1. Cancel elections in 49 departments - Remove 177 deputies without replacement

- Northern areas + Paris had no representation.

2. The Deportation to Penal Settlements of Carnot, Barthelemy and 53 deputies - plus leading Royalists.

- The Directors cancelled local elections and made appointments themselves.
- \* The Coup spelled the end of Parliamentary Government + of the Constitution of Year III. The executive scored a victory over the legislature.
- Revival of Monarchy had been dealt a serious blow
- The Directory could now govern without hostile battles with the Councils.

**TERROR** - After fructidor the Directory took action against Emigres + Refractory Priests. Emigres were given 2 wks to leave or face execution. Clergy forced to sign a vote rejecting support for the monarchy - 1400 were deported.

## Financial Reform

- Financial problems were largely inherited and assignats were worthless.

The Directory introduced a (1796) new paper currency - MANDATS TERRITORIAUX. They also lost value. By July 96 they were worthless. - less than 5% of nominal value.

Feb 97 - Ceased to be legal tender.

Monetary Crisis affected Gov, renters and workers - Rapid decline in Purchasing Power.

- Metal coins only legal tender but in short supply.

1789 - 2.5 Bn Coins in Circulation

1797 - 1 bn Coins in Circulation.

- Result = Deflation - Prices were lowered to stimulate demand.

1795 - 7 = Inflation - unpopular with workers

1797 = Deflation - unpopular with businessmen.

## National Debt

After Fouchier - Ramel - Finance Minister made significant reforms.

Sept 1797: 2/3 National Debt renounced with a one of payment to debt holders. - debt turned into credit to buy national land.

\* Reduced annual interest from 240 mill francs to 80 million. (1/4 of expenditure) - Bonds became worthless.

## The Rise and fall of the Directory

The Debtors could not use the bonds + were unhappy but...

Bankruptcy of the two-thirds helped to stabilise French finance

Ramel also wanted to increase Revenue.

- 1798 - Est 4 forms of direct taxation
- A tax on trading licences
- A land tax
- A tax on removable property
- A tax on doors + windows

\* These were among lasting achievements of the Directory.

Ramel introduced Central Collection of taxes.

- As there was a continued deficit because of the war - some indirect taxes were revived + very unpopular.

- Plunder from foreign states occupied by French Army also increased Treasury.

\* Impact of Policies was positive. After Peace with Austria in 1797 - Ramel was able to balance the budget for first time since start of the Revolution.

## War 1794 - 9

From June 1794 - Series of battles were successful until all members of first coalition (except Britain) were knocked out of the war.

- Summer 1794 - Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) occupied.
- Winter 1794 - United Provinces invaded
- Invasion of Rhineland + into Spain
- Russia intervened in Poland

Treaty of Basel April  
Russia promised to hand 1795  
territory in Rhineland to France.

### Batavian Republic

Revolt in United Provinces led to  
a Dutch Peace with France +  
forced to join France as an  
ally.

France hoped the Dutch Navy  
would tip balance with Britain.

July 1795 - Spain made peace.

- Only Britain and Austria remained.

1796 - main french aim -  
Defeat Austria.

140,000 troops planned to invade.

- Control of the Italian Campaign  
was given to Napoleon.

- He had few troops + no experience  
+ turned Italy into major battle  
ground.

- Within a month Napoleon had  
defeated North Italy - Piedmont.

- He moved through the  
Alps defeating Austrians.

- 1797 - he captured Vienna.  
- Napoleon signed an armistice  
with Austria - but did not  
consult the Directory. (149 PG)

- Directory were furious +  
had no choice to accept what  
Napoleon had done.

- As Royalists had won the  
elections they knew they might

## Rise and fall of the Directory

Peace of Campo Formio Oct 1797

- Confirmed Napoleons terms.

Britain now all alone -

- France wanted to invade but  
needed Control of the Seas.

- French wanted to support the  
Irish Nationalists to overthrow  
Britain.

- Plans dashed by 2 Brit victories  
in 1797. - 2 fleets destroyed  
(Spanish + Dutch) - War continued.

Peace in Europe - seemed  
impossible as France  
Foreign Policy became  
aggressive + tried to secure  
gains. - Creation of  
Satellite states under french  
influence.

- Helvic Republic Jan 1798

- 3 small Republics in Italy

- Batavian Republic 1795

- 1798 - Rhine (left bank)  
handed to France.

\* 1798 - High Point of  
Republics F. Power.

- France had gained domination  
in Western, Central + Southern  
Europe.

- With these highs of External  
Strength - Internal weakness  
would see the directory  
collapse in 18 months.

Napoleon headed to Egypt  
to attack British interests  
but was defeated Aug 1798  
- Second Coalition

- Russia, Britain, Austria (1799)  
- Turkey, Portugal + Naples  
- started well but led to a series

need  
him +  
the  
Army.