

The period following Louis' execution become known as **The Reign of Terror** in France. Between 1793 and 1794, thousands of people suspected of anti-revolutionary activities or of helping France's enemies were sent to the **guillotine**. In January 1793, Louis was executed and by February, it became clear that the war was going badly for France. In August the **Jacobins** declare that "Terror is the order of the day" and later that summer, many areas of France began to rebel against the new radical Jacobin government. The Convention took measures to establish a **Committee of Public Safety**, which consisted of twelve members, in order to ensure the survival of the revolution during crisis. A fear of traitors had grown in France following the revolution and war, which led to the revolutionary tribunals and due to a change in law, allowed for the swift trials of citizens.

The **Jacobins** controlled the Committee of Public Safety. The leading figure in the Committee was **Maximilien Robespierre**, who led tribunals to convict people without hearing evidence. The Convention had passed the Law of Suspects in September 1793, which allowed people to be put in prison without a trial.

THE TERROR CONTINUES...

There were many incidents of horror during the Terror. In Paris, thousands watched the executions. Women took their knitting with them and bets were made on the order of prisoners being executed. People eventually grew sick of all the killing and by mid-1794, the Terror died out. As the Austrian threat decreased, so did the need for emergency government. People began looking for someone to blame for the Reign of Terror, the leading Jacobin-Robespierre found himself at the center of the blame, despite following the wishes of the Convention and was arrested. In July 1794, Robespierre faced the same fate as thousands of other French citizens, death by the guillotine.

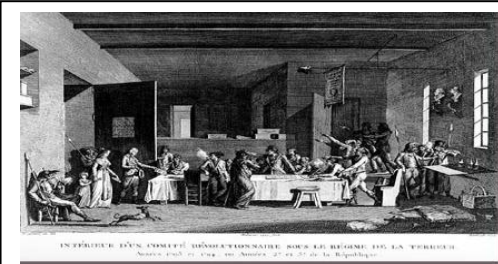
"Suspects shall be locked up... The proof necessary to convict enemies... can be any kind of evidence... If proof already exists there need be not further witnesses... The penalty for all offences under the law of revolutionary tribunal is death."

-Excerpt from law of Committee of Public Safety on how to deal with suspects brought to tribunals.

"The Committee shall talk in secret; it shall be responsible for watching over the word of the government under the critical circumstances it is authorized to take measures to defend the revolution against internal and external enemies."

-Decree by Convention, April 1793 on the Committee of Public Safety

Revolutionary Tribunals



Robespierre's Execution



"One's duty is to punish traitors, to help the need, respect the weak, defend the oppressed, do good to one's neighbour and behave justly."

"Terror is nothing but quick and hard justice."

"In a revolution the state is at war, it does not have to follow all the laws."

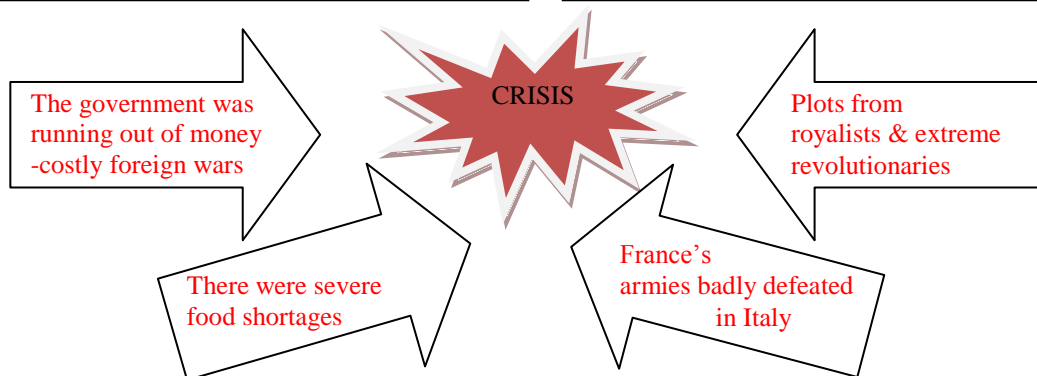
-Maximilien Robespierre

Steven Otfinoski, **Triumph and Terror: The French Revolution, 1993**

[In March 1793] the revolutionary Tribunal (a court of justice) was established to try all crimes against the state. Tribunal members would not be elected by the people, but appointed by the **National Convention** (the revolutionary government) and their power would be absolute. Watch committees were set up in every neighborhood to ferret out and expel any foreigners suspected of counterrevolutionary activities. On April 6, 1793 [the National Convention established] the Committee of Public safety... The purpose was to “protect the public safety” from enemies both in and outside of France. The Committee soon employed a shadowy network of informers and spies to achieve these ends. No one was safe from suspicion. A careless word of criticism spoken against the government could put one in prison or worse.

After the Terror ended in 1794, the constitution was changed again. The **Jacobins** and the **Sans-Culottes** were forced out of power and politicians tried to find a moderate form of government French citizens would support. It was decided that Five Directors would see that laws were carried out. However, the new government, the **Directory** had serious challenges to deal with and by 1798, France was overcome by crisis.

As thing progressively worsened for the Directory, one of its government leaders began to look for a potential general who could control France. The choice fell on Napoleon Bonaparte—one of the country’s most successful military generals demonstrating his military genius in campaigns throughout Europe and Africa. With his popularity and support of the people, Napoleon was successful in seizing power by November 11, 1799.



The end of the French Revolution...Napoleon's coup d'état

