

Chapter 21 Terms (Part One):

Jacobins:

When: 1791-1795

Where: Paris, France, Austria, and Prussia

Who: Robespierre, Danton, Brisot, and Marat (associated with Mountain but not a member)

What: Named after their political club, the Jacobins were a large portion of the legislators of the Legislative Assembly elected in 1791. They were often well-educated and wealthy members of the bourgeoisie and usually were very liberal republicans that held a strong dislike for the monarchy and Louis XVI, eventually leading to his execution by the radical Mountain. (The Girondists, on the other hand, had been content with the Constitutional Monarchy.) The Jacobins were divided into the moderate Girondists and the radical Mountain, but both groups advocated the “war against tyranny”, even diplomatically, leading to France being cornered into war with most of Europe. However, as much as their political agendas aligned, the Brissotins were suspicious of the Mountain launching a dictatorship; and the Mountain suspected that the Girondists could turn to conservatism— even royalism— to stay in power. The rising sans-culottes (lower-class) joined the Mountain following the September Massacres that had shamed the Girondists, eventually leading to the arrests of many Brissotins, leaving the Mountain with majority. Once there, they erected the Committee of Public Safety, led by Robespierre, leading to the Reign of Terror. The remaining Jacobins would influence the National Convention for the remainder of the French Revolution.

Why: The Jacobins were responsible for the radical twist on the Revolution, the wars on both Austria and Prussia, the condoning of violence as reflected through the Reign of Terror, and for their split political ideas.

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Girondists:

When: 1791-1793

Where: Paris, France

Who: Brissot (member), Robespierre, and Danton

What: The more moderate members of the Jacobins, the Girondists were intellectual members of the bourgeoisie that were part of both the Legislative Assembly (1791) and the National Convention (1792). They advocated a constitutional monarchy and war against other opposing monarchies. The Brissotins’ platform did not include the execution of Louis XVI, and their radical adversaries, the Mountain, disagreed on when too far was too far. The September Massacres (killing of many prisoners that is commonly known as the First Terror) suited to blotch the credibility of the Girondists as they were declared to have responded too moderately and eventually gave the Mountain the upper-hand as 31 Brissotins were arrested by the National Convention (due to pressure of both the Mountain and Sans-Culottes).

Why: The Girondists represented the political split in the French Revolution’s ideology and reflected that not every person in France was radical.

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