



AtidMUN X 2024



Crisis Study Guide



The French Revolution



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CRISIS DIRECTOR:

Dear delegates,

I'm Maor Rif Rotchas. I'm 17 years old and from Atid High School. MUN has been an incredible journey for me and while each committee and topic has its own charm I have always specifically loved crisis. A little bit about me, I have a dog, her name is Snow and she is the cutest dog you will ever meet. I'm a drummer and have played tennis for over a decade, so yes I do hold a special place in my heart for the tennis court oath.

During our time in the committee you will be tasked with navigating the complex dynamics of arguably the most famous revolution of all time, the french revolution. You have the power to change history and I am so excited to see what you will achieve! So I hope you'll come with your best arguments and spirit, not to mention a baguette ;) if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me.

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CHAIR LETTERS:

Dear delegates,

In this upcoming AtidMUN, we, Mia, Mark, Dima, and Ella, will be your chairs. Ella and Dima will chair the third estate, and Mark and Mia will chair the first and second estates cabinet.

We would like to kindly welcome each and every delegate to this crisis committee, and we extend our sincere gratitude to all delegations participating in this year's AtidMUN.

We are extremely lucky to have every single one of you on our committee, and we look forward to the fun, amusing, and thought-provoking discussions that will take place.

Our committee's topic is the French Revolution. We all know the story, but what if an unpredictable event changed the course of history? How would it have affected France and the world as a whole?

We're not sure, but we're coming to this committee to find out.

We may come to MUN to debate and argue, but we must remember that the most important thing is to have fun and enjoy the conference.

On that note, we, the chairs, wish you all good luck and a fun and enjoyable conference! We can't wait to see you!



INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

How does Crisis Work? First, the Crisis team would like to welcome you to the AtidMUN Committee. Generally, Crisis committees are fundamentally different from your average MUN Committee in a few significant ways. The first difference is how you act. In an ordinary committee, you will find out that the goal is to pass a resolution that reflects your country's policy, which will theoretically go into effect in the future. In a Crisis Committee, all the directives have immediate impact and consequences.

How is this done? Through a backroom, a group of people facilitates the committee's chosen actions (e.g., "Send Nukes to Chile"). They approve of these actions and explain what happened (e.g., "You accidentally nuked Chile, a classic mistake, but now the US has declared war on you.").

Backroom members are responsible for the truth, and the delegates need to speak to the backroom to get to know any information before sending directives. All sent directives are brought to the backroom. Directives are lists that specify a delegate's or a room's actions, which are then taken to the backroom for approval. They are the equivalent of clauses or resolutions, for they entail the room's actions but differ in that they are the means and not the ends. Directives must include details of what the delegates wish to accomplish and answer the "WH Questions." (Who, What, Where, When, Why, and most importantly, HOW?) The second difference is the delegates. While in an ordinary committee, delegates would represent the nation they were assigned, replicating the concept of UN representatives, in Crisis committees, the delegates are appointed to represent real people who lived at the time of the Crisis and acted in the interests of the person they represent. This is possible because Crisis Committees usually address a historical crisis that happened in the past and handled by real government bodies. Then, the



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delegates represent the members of the cabinets of those governmental bodies. So, as a delegate, you represent a real human being who exists in the crisis given, and your objective in the game is to improve your political situation as much as possible. Lastly, for this specific crisis, awards will be given as a whole and not according to the cabinet, as the cabinets will change. **Please note that Crisis committees** do not attempt to recreate historical events. This means that everything that happens after the starting date of the crisis has not happened yet and will not necessarily occur; everything depends on how the Cabinet members act. So please, perform well. Good Luck!



BACKGROUND

THE FRENCH “ANCIENT” REGIME (THE CURRENT REGIME)

The "ancient" regime refers to the political, social, and economic system that existed in France during this period. This period is characterized by a highly stratified society divided into three distinct estates: the clergy (First Estate), the nobility (Second Estate), and the commoners (Third Estate).

The King: Unlike the rest of France, the king does not belong to any estate and is often indecisive. He is weak when opposed and submissive to the requests of the nobility.

First Estate (Clergy): The first estate consists of the members of the Church, including higher clergy such as Archbishops, Cardinals, rich Bishops, and priests, as well as lower clergy such as Parish priests, abbots, monks, and nuns. They hold significant influence.

Second Estate (Nobility): The second estate was the nobility, which consisted of sword nobility, whose nobility title had been passed through many generations, and Robe nobility, who paid for the nobility title. Aside from the title, the main benefit of being in the second estate was the ability to enjoy privileges such as tax exemptions and high social status. The nobility lived in luxury, often disconnected from the struggles of the lower classes.

Third Estate (Commoners): The Third Estate represented the vast majority of the population, approximately 92 percent. The Third Estate included peasants, who were mostly Vassals and Serfs, alongside the city dwellers, who, although were “higher third estate,” were still considered commoners.



The Third Estate paid most of the taxes and had little political power despite their critical role in the economy.

TAXATION SYSTEM

The taxation system in France could be more efficient and a leading contributor to the economic divide between the estates.

Direct taxes were levied on income or property and collected by royal officials. The most notable was the *taille*, a land tax calculated based on the property value and income. Since this was done at random, the sum could change dramatically from year to year. Additionally, the *taille* was simple to avoid, especially for city dwellers; thus, peasants and rural landowners bore the majority of the burden.

Indirect taxes were applied to goods and services and collected by 'tax farmers.' These included the *gabelle* (a salt tax). Indirect taxes were regressive, disproportionately affecting the poor, who had to pay the same rates as the wealthy for essential goods.

The Third Estate was obligated to pay tithes, church taxes, and state taxes. Peasants and landowners had to pay the Church a tithe, around 10% of their yearly revenue or harvest. This levy paid for the upkeep of church buildings and the First Estate clergy. Even though the tithe was meant to be used for charitable purposes, a large portion benefited the top clergy, which increased the discontent of the



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ordinary people, who already suffered from high state taxes. Still, the Church itself was free from most state taxes.

Both types of taxes fell mainly on the Third Estate, fueling their resentment toward the privileged First and Second Estates, who were largely exempt from direct taxation.



France's Economic Crisis

Both short-term crises and long-term structural problems caused France's economic distress. The nation had fought expensive conflicts, such as the American Revolutionary War and the Seven Years' War, which left the state heavily indebted. The monarchy took on a great deal of debt to pay for these wars, which made it increasingly difficult to discharge the loan. France's tax structure was unfair and ineffective at the same time. The clergy and nobles, who made up the wealthiest groups, were mainly excluded from paying taxes, which put additional strain on the Third Estate, which was already having difficulties. Furthermore, the condition of the ordinary people was made worse by the 1780s' poor harvests, which resulted in food shortages and skyrocketing bread costs. In addition to the monarchy's extravagant expenditures and an inability to reform the tax system due to opposition from the privileged estates, France's financial crisis spiraled out of control, setting the stage for revolutionary upheaval.

The economic crisis in France had caused extreme poverty and famine. This led to widespread hunger, riots, and increased resentment toward the ruling elite. The crisis also deepened the inequality between the estates,

Additionally, the growing national debt forced King Louis to summon the Estates-General in 1789 for the first time in over 150 years to reform the tax system and raise revenue.

ESTATES GENERAL

On May 5th, 1789, the political and financial situation grew so bleak that King Louis found himself summoning the estates general, an assembly where each of the three estates in French society—the



clergy (First Estate), nobility (Second Estate), and commoners (Third Estate) sent representatives to discuss and advise the king on significant issues, such as undertaking reforms in the country or levying new taxes. Approximately 1,200 delegates were chosen, half constituting the Third Estate, while 300 delegates represented the first and Second Estate. Nobles were exempt from the requirement to run for office in the Second Estate, and many won seats in the Third Estate instead. There were perhaps 400 nobles in all among the three Estates.

However, Like many aspects of French governance, the Estates-General appeared more appealing in theory than in practice, as the process for selecting representatives and the voting system were profoundly flawed and unequal, contributing to the divide between the classes. Despite being the largest and most economically important group, the Third Estate was disadvantaged in the Estates-General. Each estate had only one collective vote, regardless of population size. This meant that the First and Second Estates, though much smaller in numbers, could easily outvote the Third Estate, representing most of the population. This system of voting by estate rather than by head sparked outrage among the Third Estate, leading them to demand more equal representation. Their frustration ultimately led to the formation of the National Assembly in 1789.

THE TENNIS COURT OATH

Whether it was ordered by the king, armed guards locked the meeting hall and didn't let the 3rd estate in. This act only divided the third estate, as they interpreted this as a hostile act and immediately found another room to convene in - the royal tennis court. There, they vowed to disband once they had drafted a new constitution for France. They signed the tennis court oath, which stated that:



The National Assembly, considering that it has been summoned to establish the constitution of the kingdom, to effect the regeneration of public order, and to maintain the true principles of monarchy, that nothing can prevent it from continuing its deliberations in whatever place it may be forced to establish itself; and, finally, that wheresoever its members are assembled, there is the National Assembly... It decrees that all members of this Assembly shall immediately take a solemn oath not to separate and to reassemble wherever circumstances require until the constitution of the kingdom is established and consolidated upon firm foundations and that, the said oath was taken, all members and each one individually shall ratify this steadfast resolution by signature.

The National Assembly was formed and greatly influenced by the Jacobin Club, a radical group within the Third Estate advocating for more extreme reforms. One of the primary reasons for establishing the National Assembly was the voting method, which favored the estates voting by order rather than by head, allowing the smaller First and Second Estates to outvote the more populous Third Estate easily. Additionally, the Third Estate was dissatisfied with the representative authorization process, where each estate selected its representatives, leading to a fragmented approach to governance. They sought to unite the estates into a single body, reflecting their desire for a more equitable and representative political system that could effectively address the ordinary people's grievances and challenge the monarchy's authority.



CURRENT SITUATION:

The Tennis Court oath changes everything. Up until now, it was obvious who was in control of France—the ancien régime. But now it isn't as apparent. On the one hand, the National Assembly has declared itself the only legitimate legislative power in the country. On the other hand, the Estates' General and the ancient régime still have influence and consider themselves France's only legitimate rulers.

THE THIRD ESTATE

The Third Estate's main goal throughout this committee is to establish legitimacy and expand its authority within its borders. This can be achieved by completing two main objectives: To overrule the king and the other estates by negotiation, legislation, or war. The second is to draft a constitution that will establish rules and regulations favored by the people moving forward.

To establish legitimacy in France, the National Assembly has three optional courses of action; the first one is to merge forces with delegates of the other estates. This solution is peaceful, but it might force the assembly to compromise and could be very hard to do. The second course of action is to acquire the approval of the king. This route will allow the assembly to persuade the other estates without compromising as much as in the first. The third and final course of action, which can be used along with the different courses, is to leverage the people of the third estate, which are about 92% of the French population. By taking this route, the assembly will take an offensive line against the other estates, which can lead to many unwanted results. Still, on the other hand, it will allow it to achieve



legitimacy without compromising on anything. These three methods could be combined into a final solution, allowing the assembly to establish its legitimacy.

Writing a constitution is one of the National Assembly's highest priorities, as it might determine the future of France. When writing the constitution, many dilemmas arise, especially in a nation amidst an economic crisis. The question of which taxes to add or remove is dominant, as the current taxation system is flawed to its roots. Another major decision the committee will face is the state and church relations. Until now, the church was a very influential factor within the state, but as the third estate wishes to eradicate the distinction between the estates, they must decide how the church will be affected. Since many third estate members are religious, this will be a tough decision. Another decision that is to be made by the assembly is of the roles of the ruling powers in the new regime. Thus far, the estates' general and the king were the most prominent figures. But as things turn on their heads, the assembly must decide the role of these powers and the role of the National Assembly itself.

THE CLERGY AND THE NOBILITY

In response to the rise of the National Assembly, the clergy and nobility face critical decisions as they navigate the shifting political landscape. During this period, their main goal was safeguarding their traditional privileges and maintaining their authority within France. This can be achieved by focussing on two main objectives: The first is to protect the monarchy and the existing social hierarchy from the growing power of the Third Estate, either through collaboration, influence, or strategic maneuvering. The second, preserve the privileges of the nobility and the Catholic Church in a rapidly changing political environment, ensuring they retain their influence over the king and the people.



The clergy and nobility have several courses of action available to achieve these goals. The first option is to undermine the National Assembly's legitimacy by challenging its authority, capitalizing on internal divisions, or delaying its progress through political maneuvering. This approach could limit the Assembly's power without confrontation. By taking this method, the clergymen and nobles might risk escalating the situation, leading to a more significant conflict and even violence. The second course of action is to influence the king, known to be indecisive and submissive, to ensure that he remains aligned with the interests of the nobility and the Church. By advising the king and emphasizing the need to protect the monarchy, they can use royal authority to counterbalance the National Assembly's influence. The third option is to collaborate with the National Assembly, engaging in negotiations to secure compromises that would protect certain privileges of the clergy and nobility. While this approach may require compromises, it offers the potential for a more peaceful resolution. Another strategy is to establish influence among the people, particularly the rural and religious populations, to use popular support as a tool of leverage. By positioning themselves as protectors of tradition and stability, the clergy and nobility can build loyalty among the populace and pressure the Assembly from below.

Additionally, it is possible to leverage existing disagreements and conflicts within the Third Estate itself. By supporting moderate factions or encouraging divisions, the clergy and nobility may weaken the Assembly's unified front, reducing its ability to push through radical reforms. A further challenge is dealing with clergymen and nobles who have begun to "mingle" with the National Assembly and show sympathy for its cause. Managing this internal dissent will be crucial to maintaining unity and preventing further erosion of their authority.



CHARACTER MATRIX

Nobility and Clergy

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord: Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, known as the Prince of Benevento and later the Prince of Talleyrand, was a secularized French clergyman, statesman, and prominent diplomat. After studying theology, he became the Agent-General of the Clergy in 1780 and was appointed Bishop of Autun in 1789. Throughout his career, he held key roles in various French governments, often serving as foreign minister or in other high-ranking diplomatic positions.

Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette: A French noble and military officer, Lafayette strongly supported constitutional monarchy. Having gained fame for his role in America, he now led the National Guard in France. A nobleman and military officer, he championed constitutional monarchy and strongly advocated liberty and human rights. He helped draft the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen but struggled to balance revolutionary ideals with order.

Louis Philippe II, Duke of Orléans: A French prince of the blood, prominent noble, and cousin to the king. The Duke of Orléans (Philippe Égalité) distanced himself from the monarchy and aligned with the Jacobins. Despite his royal blood, he favored republican ideas and strongly advocated for eliminating the monarchy, leading to a complex role in the revolutionary period.



Jean-Sifrein Maury: A conservative clergyman, Maury is a staunch defender of the monarchy and the Catholic Church. He fiercely opposed revolutionary changes, particularly the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which aimed to bring the Church under state control. Maury's eloquent speeches in the National Assembly made him a leading voice for royalists during this tumultuous period.

Adrien Duport: A lawyer and moderate revolutionary, Duport was crucial in the early efforts to reform France's judicial system. As a constitutional monarchist, he sought to balance revolutionary changes with preserving a limited monarchy. His cautious approach makes him a central figure in maintaining stability while pursuing reforms.

Antoine-Éléonor-Léon Leclerc de Juigné: The **Archbishop of Paris**, Juigné is a conservative church leader who supported the monarchy and opposed many of the revolutionary changes, particularly those affecting the Church. His loyalty to the Ancien Régime places him at odds with the revolutionary forces, making him a significant figure among royalist and clerical factions.

César Guillaume de La Luzerne: A bishop and royalist, La Luzerne sought to mediate between the monarchy and revolutionary forces. He attempted to protect the Church's interests and played a critical diplomatic role during the early stages of the revolution. His influence waned as the situation



became more radical, but his efforts to broker peace left a lasting mark.

Antoine Balthazar Joachim d'André: A moderate politician and clergyman, d'André supported constitutional reforms but opposed radicalism. He aimed to protect the church's interests while advocating for gradual changes. As the revolution progressed, he became increasingly marginalized, fleeing the country when the political climate grew more violent.

Henri Grégoire: Known as the Abbé Grégoire, he was a revolutionary priest who strongly supported civil rights, including the abolition of slavery and the reform of the Catholic Church. Grégoire was an outspoken advocate for nationalizing church property and sought to align the church with revolutionary ideals. His progressive views made him a key figure among the reformers.

Jean de Dieu-Raymond de Cucé de Boisgelin: An archbishop and conservative politician, Boisgelin was a leading opponent of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and other revolutionary reforms that threatened the traditional power of the Church. He advocated for maintaining the Church's independence from the state and became a significant voice for conservative and royalist factions.



The Third Estate

Antoine Barnave: A lawyer and politician, Barnave is an influential member of the Third Estate and a leading voice in the National Assembly. As a moderate, he advocates for a constitutional monarchy and seeks to reconcile revolutionary reforms with preserving order.

Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès: A clergyman known for his famous pamphlet "What is the Third Estate?" Sieyès argued that the Third Estate represented the true will of the nation and was instrumental in the formation of the National Assembly. Sieyès played a crucial role in shaping the early revolutionary government and remained influential throughout the revolution, particularly for his ideas on democratic representation.

Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Count of Mirabeau: A charismatic orator and nobleman, Mirabeau was one of the most influential figures in the early French Revolution. Although he came from the Second Estate, he supported the demands of the Third Estate and became a leader in the National Assembly, advocating for a constitutional monarchy. Known for his pragmatism, Mirabeau sought to mediate between the monarchy and revolutionary forces, trying to stabilize France through political compromise.



Jean Joseph Mounier: A moderate politician and lawyer, Mounier is a key figure in the early revolution and one of the architects of the Tennis Court Oath. He strongly supports a constitutional monarchy and plays a central role in drafting the initial framework for a new constitution. However, as the revolution became more radical, Mounier distanced himself from the increasingly violent course of events.

Jean Sylvain Bailly: An astronomer and politician, Bailly was elected president of the National Assembly and presided over the Tennis Court Oath. Working to balance the demands for reform with the need for order. Bailly's moderate stance eventually led to his fall from favor as the revolution became more radical.

Maximilien Robespierre: A lawyer and politician, Robespierre emerged as one of the most radical leaders of the revolution. Initially a member of the Third Estate, he became a leading figure in the Jacobins and was known for his uncompromising dedication to revolutionary ideals.

Nicolas Bergasse: A lawyer and philosopher, Bergasse was an early revolutionary who advocated for legal and constitutional reforms. He is a member of the National Assembly and supports moderate changes, but as the revolution grew more radical, he became disillusioned and distanced himself from its more extreme elements.



Armand-Gaston Camus: A lawyer and archivist, Camus plays a significant role in the revolution as a member of the Third Estate. He supports revolutionary reforms, particularly those concerning the legal system and the administration of justice. Camus was a proponent of the nationalization of church property and became involved in the legislative work of the early revolution.

François Nicolas Léonard Buzot: A lawyer and politician, Buzot was a prominent member of the Girondins, a moderate republican faction in the revolution. He supported the abolition of the monarchy and advocated for a federalist system of government, which sought to decentralize power in France.

Jean Baptiste Treilhard: A lawyer and revolutionary politician, Treilhard is a member of the Third Estate and served in the National Assembly. He worked on legal reforms and drafted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which sought to bring the Catholic Church under state control. Treilhard's contributions to the legislative work of the revolution made him a significant figure in shaping the new government.



RECOMMENDED READING

- [The Estates General and Taxation in Revolutionary France](#)
- [Taxation and the Three Estates: The Roots of Revolution](#)
- [The Tennis Court Oath and the Call for Tax Reform](#)
- [The Role of the Clergy and Nobility in Taxation](#)
- [The French Revolution - OverSimplified \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Tennis Court Oath - Wikipedia](#)
- [The Tennis Court Oath - Revolutions | Podcast on Spotify](#)



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[The French Revolution Digital Archive](#) (Stanford University and Bibliothèque nationale de France).

[Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution](#) (Center for History and New Media, George Mason University).

[Bibliography of the French Revolution - Wikipedia](#) - A detailed bibliography that includes primary sources, surveys, and reference works related to the French Revolution.

[Research Guides: France: Women in the Revolution: Print Bibliography & Primary Sources](#) - This guide provides a bibliography focused on women's roles during the French Revolution, with links to primary sources.

[The French Revolution - Oxford Bibliographies](#) - An annotated bibliography that includes key texts and analyses regarding the French Revolution.

[Select Bibliography - 1789: The French Revolution Begins](#) - A select bibliography from Cambridge University Press that lists significant works related to the beginning of the French Revolution



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