

THE REVOLUTION EATS ITS CHILDREN

The French Revolution powered by the Apocalypse

“I am not of any faction, I will fight them all.”

— Louis de Saint-Just

INTRODUCTION

REVOLUTION

It is year II of the Republican calendar. The Revolution has turned for over five years, bringing with it ever more sweeping changes. First serfdom was abolished, then the monarchy. Now the National Convention pass more and more daring laws every day, boldly and radically changing society and sweeping away the old and useless.

But there is danger. It all stands to be undone by counter-revolutionaries. Royalists, clerics and other traitors, stand ready to tear down what the Revolution has created. True patriots and revolutionaries must stand firm, fight for the *Patrie*, and send the opposition to the guillotine. Terror is the order of the day. It is the noble tool of the Revolution.

A GAME OF GUILLOTINES

Welcome to *The Revolution Eats its Children*. It is a game about revolutionaries locked in a feud of blood for the heart of the revolution they all support. In particular it is inspired by The Reign of Terror of the French Revolution; that is the implied setting.

In the space of a few months, successive factions amongst the revolutionaries were defeated in various power struggles, and sent to the scaffold. This game aims to recreate the same tense atmosphere, and drive the players to violent excess in order to meet their goals. Maybe they are successful—or maybe not.

The game is set in Paris, and the overall political landscape is the same as in history. Previous events are also similar: the storming of the Bastille, the abolishment of the monarchy, the riots, the pioneering legislation about the rights of man, and so on. Still, it is your game and your French Revolution. The characters, issues and events that drive *your* Reign of Terror, is for your game to discover.

POWERED BY THE APOCALYPSE

The Revolution Eats its Children uses the system commonly known as *Powered by the Apocalypse*. It was first developed by Vincent Baker for *Apocalypse World*, and has since then inspired many more games. This game has a debt to all its predecessors, especially *Apocalypse World* itself and *Monsterhearts*. Without them, this game wouldn't be possible.

USING THIS BOOK

This book is divided into two basic sections, one for the player and one for the GM. The player section sets up the basic rules and how to create each players' character. The GM part contains the tools and mechanics the GM uses during play to guide the game.

While the game is fairly similar to most Powered by the Apocalypse games, there are a few key differences spread throughout. Most importantly, the political element of the game demands certain actions from both the player and GM to progress the story. The player characters need to build their relationships with other character, both player and non-player, while also trying to shape the politics of the new Republic. Their standing with the popular and institutional powers of the Revolution are also important factors the game keeps track of.

There are also a few key mechanics for the Game Master to use. Changes in the player characters' standing might trigger game changing scenes in the form of milestones. These important events are pivotal in decided the fate of the characters.

To begin play, simply have each player make a character using the rules in the player section of this book. When all the players have a character, use the Setting the stage-section at the end of the player part of the book, to create the starting conditions for the story.

THE STAGE

At the centre of the story are the characters the players control. They are called player characters, player revolutionaries, or simply PCs.

While the real French Revolution was politically intricate, *The Revolution Eats its Children* have a simplified version of the situation to ensure that the game doesn't get bogged down in boring minuta. Below are the primary elements of this game's revolution.

PARIS

The city of Paris is the centre of the Revolution and the centre of France. From here the country is ruled, and the heart of the Revolution beats the hardest. The player revolutionaries will rarely leave the capital, and it is the events in Paris that will decide their fortune. Paris itself is ruled by the Paris Commune, and it is typically supportive of radical causes and the sans-culottes.

THE SANS-CULOTTES

This is a name for the common person of the poorer classes. Their name is derived from the fact that they were too poor to afford breeches. Because of their great numbers, they can wield great power. Their intervention has so far spurred the Revolution on, and swept away those who have tried to control it for their own means. The market women have been particularly important, mass protesting when the situation for the poor becomes intolerable. They care deeply about the Revolution and are passionate about politics. So far they have largely supported radical causes. Or put differently: radicalism is politics that favor the sans-culottes.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

The National Convention is the government of France, the third such assembly during the Revolution and the first to be Republican. There is a wide range of political outlooks in the Convention, but they are usually divided into the radicals (often called the Mountain) and the moderates. The National Convention itself favoure moderates, but pressure from the sans-culottes and public opinion in Paris constantly push it in a more Radical direction. Already there has been several purges that has sent moderate factions to the guillotine for alleged treason against the Republic.

It is the misfortune of the Convention to be located in Paris, which means the minority Mountain can exert influence by being closer to the more radical political environment in Paris. The sans-culotte has even been known to surround the Convention with weapons, and demand that the delegates vote in their favor.

THE COMMITTEE

To ensure that the state is governed efficiently, the National Convention has established several authoritative committees, foremost among them *The Committee of Public Safety*. In the interest of protecting the Revolution, a lot of executive power is delegated here. In the time of *The Revolution Eats its Children*, the Committee is at the peak of its power. The only restraints on what it can do is the force of public opinion or an organized National Convention.

THE PLAYER REVOLUTIONARIES

Each of the player take the part of a revolutionary. They are bound together by the same radical ideology, but as the story progresses they might choose to abandon some of their ideals in favor of pragmatism. The player revolutionaries also have a few more things in common. They all have a seat within the National Convention and possibly also a seat on an important committee. They are formidable and important figures in the Revolution. Furthermore, they are all tightly aligned with the sans-culottes. They believe in a radical new future, and tirelessly work to safeguard the Revolution and spur it ever forward.

THE FACTIONS

Politics is a communal effort. The player revolutionaries, and most other characters, are grouped into various factions. The game assumes the player characters are united in one faction, and that they are opposed on the left and right by rival factions. The most important person in a rival faction is the faction leader, but there can be other important characters there as well. While the player characters nominally belong to the same faction, competition within the group can still be cut-throat—and deadly.

When a faction is defeated, all its members usually end up together on the scaffold. Not to say that faction allegiances are always clear. They are not formal organizations or parties, but more like friendships and allegiances.

THE PLAYER

THE BASICS

The core mechanics of *The Revolution Eats its Children* is lifted directly from Apocalypse world. If you are familiar with this game, or the games it inspired, the rules of *The Revolution Eats its Children* should be easy to learn. There are a few complications, they are described in the section entitled Politics.

PREPARATIONS

The game requires at least 4 players, one of which will be the Game Master. You'll need the various worksheets provided at the end of this book (not in the playtest): each player should have a character sheet and the Game Master should have a copy of the Revolution Sheet.

Additional paper, pencils, and some 6-sided dice are also required.

ROLEPLAYING

At the heart of Powered by the Apocalypse, and most RPGs in general, is a conversation. The conversation is the dialog between the players and Game Master about what happens in the game: what the player characters do, what the non-player characters do, the transpiring events. The rules are there to provide some structure to the conversation, and spin it in interesting directions.

In *The Revolution Eats its Children*, the rules are also there to create the development of the French Revolution and its various actors. The entire game happens within a framework of continuous revolutionary politics, and this plays a significant part in the lives of the Player Revolutionaries.

SETTING SCENES

It is usually a good idea to frame the ongoing story in string of scenes. In political games there is a temptation to relegate a lot of activity to simple listening of events, but you should resist this temptation. Both the GM and players should try to frame scenes where the characters' attempts to accomplish various goals comes to the front. An important driver should be their causes. To ensure the safety of their position so they aren't purged is another priority.

It is the task of the GM to pace the scenes of the story. The player revolutionaries shouldn't get their way all the time. Slow build up to important and significant scenes is the right approach.

PLAYER MOVES

While roleplaying is at the core of *The Revolution Eats its Children*, it is also a game with rules. These spring from moves. A move is something a character does in a scene that opens up both new opportunities for success, but also danger.

A move is the moment in a game where the GM and player doesn't agree what should happen next. The player obviously wants to see their character succeed, but the GM wants to at least create the possibility of failure.

All player revolutionaries have a set of basic moves they can do. These moves should cover all possible actions that is relevant to the game. Some characters also have special moves, fitting with their role in the game.

The Revolution Eats its Children is also a player facing game, which means only the player rolls the dice. Whenever NPCs act, it is through the GM's narrative. When the player revolutionaries oppose them, they do so with their own moves.

ROLLING DICE

When a player performs a move, they roll 2 six-sided dice, add a stat and any other modifiers. It says on each move what stat to add, for instances is Cunning added when trying to manipulate someone.

Other possible modifiers are usually notes on the move itself, the character's role, or are bonuses from previous rolls. A common result of a roll is to get a +1 forward, which means that the character gets +1 on the next roll or rolls. Some forwards are circumstantial, meaning the +1 applies to the next roll that fit a specific criteria or are ongoing until a criteria is met.

Assessing the roll is simple. Any roll above 7 is a success. Though many moves distinguish between results between 7-9, which is a minor success or success with a cost, and above 10 which is a full success with perhaps even further advantages. 6 and below is a failure.

When a character fails, one possible option is that the character simply doesn't get it wants. A far better option is for the GM to use a GM move. They are discussed on page xx.

STATS

Each character has four stats: Rational, Callous, Audacious and Cunning. Each is rated between -3 and +3. A starting character starts with two at -1 and two at +1, as defined by their role.

Rational, meaning clear thinking, calm, calculating, unfazed, organized and planning ahead.

Callous, meaning hard-hearted, determined, dedicated, strong-willed, emotionally strong.

Audacious, meaning quick to action, gracious, seductive, inspiring, physically capable, exciting.

Cunning, meaning sharp-witted, clever, alert, smart, perceptive, subtle.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

A character marks experience during play, when they have five, they can trade them for an advancement.

There are two ways to mark experience:

- You use a stat that hasn't been circled, when you do, circle it.
- A move tells you to.

The circles on your stats are removed when you attempt to pass legislation in the National Convention. You can only do so when all stats are circled.

What advancements you can get for your revolutionary is stated on your role sheet. The GM and player should try to incorporate the acquisition into the ongoing narrative.

CAUSES AND STANCES

One of the driving forces in *The Revolution Eats its Children* are political **causes**. A cause is a political issue that is currently debated in the Republic. Each player revolutionary starts the game with a cause, and one or two more are added during game setup.

Each cause has two **stances**: **moderate** and **radical**. The moderate position dominates the National Convention, and if given free reign they would enact laws

that ensured a moderate resolution of the cause. The sans-culottes hold the radical stance, and it is pressure from them in Paris that is keeping the Nation Convention from resolving the issue permanently.

During play, the causes will be a frequent topic and catalyst of events, and resolving them by enacting legislature in the National Convention is an overarching goal of the player revolutionaries.

While you can easily make your own causes and stances, there are several pre-made ones starting on page XX.

HEALTH

The Revolution Eats its Children isn't a game where physical fighting requires the tracking of health and damage. Health is handled with a few simple to use conditions, and the GM should impose them in a common sense manner. Most moves where damage is applicable have suggestions for an appropriate level of hurt.

Wounded

A dazing hit that draws blood at most. The character suffers -1 to all rolls until they get a good rest.

Incapacitated

The character is knocked out, and suffers wounds that will take time to heal. The character is knocked out of the current scene, and will only be able to participate in a diminished capacity while the wound heals.

Death

The character is killed and leaves the campaign. Possibly the character still lives, but the degree of physical trauma forces a permanent retirement.

POLITICS

Since *The Revolution Eats its Children* is a game about revolution, politics has a natural place. In this section you will find the rules that create the game's political stage. This is the game's biggest departure from its source games. While the basic rules creates a structure in the game's progress and spins it around, the rules about politics are meant to create goals for the player revolutionaries, and concrete risks in working towards those goals.

REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS

Keep in mind that these aren't the slow, two-faced politics you might be accustomed to. While revolutionary France had its fair share of profiteers and charlatans, many of those who risked their necks were convinced ideologues, desperately seeking a new dawn.

The politics of *The Revolution Eats its Children* are about radical change. The hopes of bringing about a new, strong republic under the motto *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*. The player characters will do anything to achieve this. As Saint-Just put it: *A nation regenerates itself only upon heaps of corpses*.

STANDINGS

The Revolution Eats its Children creates its political backdrop by tracking of the sans-culottes and the National Convention opinions of the Player Revolutionaries. Each of the players' characters have a standing rating between -3 (terrible) and +3 (excellent) with the National Convention and sans-culottes.

If a relationship falls below -2, a player revolutionary should be careful. The Convention and the sans-culottes can be powerful when roused, and the GM have ways to make the character pay if these two groups aren't appeased.

ENTANGLEMENTS

It is hard to know who is friend or foe in games of high politics. Usually someone is both. During a game characters will rub against each other, their fates intertwining in unexpected ways. Sometimes your long time ally is the one who sends you to the sword, and other time it is the harshest of enemies who saves you from it.

During play, characters get Entanglements towards each other. Having an Entanglement to another character means you have some sort of leverage or power over them. You can involve them in your power plays, and if you make concessions towards them, it is often on your terms.

A player that has an Entanglement towards an NPC or other player revolutionary can use that to their advantage. If an NPC has an Entanglement against a player revolutionary, they must be careful, since the GM now has ways to use that as leverage against them. You can read more about NPC entanglements in the GM section on page xx.

You can spend an Entanglement on another PC to:

- Add 1 to your roll against them (choose after rolling)
- Subtract 1 from their roll against you (choose after rolling).
- Offer them an experience point to do what you want.
- Force a remain dignified roll in order to carry out a certain action.
- Force them to vote your way in legislation
- Adopt your stance on a cause (costs two)
- Pay for moves (varies, see the move)

You can spend an Entanglement on an NPC to:

- Add 1 to your roll against them (choose after rolling).
- Add 3 to your manipulate or distress roll against them (choose after rolling).
- Cause them to falter, hesitate, or freeze up momentarily.
- Pay for moves (varies, see the move)

BASIC MOVES

Below are the games basic moves, the things all characters can do. They are meant to encompass every possible action the GM might want the players to roll for.

MANIPULATE A CHARACTER

When you want to manipulate someone, tell them what you want them to do, and what you can do in return. Roll+Cunning.

For NPC:

On a 10+, a promise of something in return is enough. You may break your promise later, but if you do, they get an Entanglement against you.

On a 7-9: You need to offer something right now.

For PC:

On a 10+, both of the effects below.

On a 7-9, choose 1:

- *if they do it, they mark experience*
- *if they refuse, they must roll to remain dignified*

What they do then is up to the player of the character.

This move covers all attempts to make a character do what you want. You can't manipulate someone with nothing though, there needs to be given something in return. A gift, the promise of help, or the threat of something bad.

No one knows who visited Pauline Léon and Théophile Leclerc when they were in prison, but when they were released they left politics forever. At the trial of Louis XVI, someone had to be very persuasive towards Philippe d'Orléans, or Philippe Equality as he was calling himself at the time, to vote in favour of the execution of his own cousin. Especially after he said he wouldn't.

DISTRESS SOMEONE

You harass, insult or interrupt someone, which makes them unable to continue what they were doing. Roll+Callous.

On a 10+: They must stop what they are doing, and you get an Entanglement against them.

On a 7-9: They must stop what they're doing, and they get an Entanglement against you.

Politics can be vicious. By taking an opponent out of a situation, by shouting them down or more subtly silencing them, you ensure that the stage is open for you.

When the National Convention finally turned on Robespierre he was unable to counter their accusations, and lost his voice. Saint-Just did better. He held his head high, until it was cut off. When he led the Revolutionary Tribunal, Fouquier-Tinville could press the accused with such provocative questions, that they became wholly unable to defend themselves. Not that it would have mattered much for most of them.

SWAY A CROWD

Begin by deciding the general attitude of the crowd. Are they a moderate establishment crowd, aligned to the National Convention or are they radical and of the sans-culottes? You state your stance on a cause you have, and make an eloquent speech, describing why you hold your opinion, and what you expect from the audience. Roll+Audacious. What you can achieve depends on the crowd, and if they agree with your stance.

10+: You sway the audience in the way you hoped. Pick the appropriate entry below:

- If the speech was to radical sans-culottes and your stance was radical, increase your standing with them by one. They are now inflamed about the cause and follow your lead.*
- If the speech was to moderate sans-culottes and your stance was radical, the sans-culottes stance on the cause returns to radical. They are now upset about the cause, and disperse.*
- If the speech was to radical sans-culottes and your stance was moderate, you persuade the crowd to calm down and disperse.*
- If the speech was to National Convention or its supporters and your stance was radical, you persuade the crowd to disperse or stop them from opposing you.*
- If the speech was to National Convention or its supporters and your stance was moderate, they follow your lead.*

7-9: As above, but you reduce your standing with the National Convention if your speech was radical, or the sans-culottes if it was moderate. In addition, the audience also needs additional assurance, pick one below:

- You must make a concession in the speech*

- *You must distance yourself from someone in the speech*
- *You must offer the crowd something immediately*
- *You must admit to something in the speech*

There is nothing as potent to a politician than a supportive crowd. And nothing as dangerous as a hostile one. This move lets a character either rally a crowd behind them, or talk a crowd down from opposing them.

At his trial, Danton spoke so eloquently in his defence, that he might have gone free. In response, the Convention passed an emergency law that barred him to address the court, sealing his fate. At the onset of the Revolution, Desmoulins inflamed the crowd with his passionate speech; their fury didn't subside before they had taken the Bastille.

REMAIN DIGNIFIED

When acting under duress or pressure. Roll+Callous

10+: You keep your faculties intact and +1 Forward

7-9: As above, but no +1 Forward. Also choose one below.

- *Hard crash later*
- *Someone learns one of your fears*
- *Someone becomes disappointed in you*

In dangerous and pressured situations, it is hard to remain calm. This move is for when the character is in dangerous and stressful situations, a success meaning they remain calm and composed.

Of course it is easy to remain dignified when things are going your way, but on the scaffolding the only thing left to lose is dignity. Madame Roland spared her most famous quote for the last; Desmoulins went mad.

TAKE PHYSICAL ACTION

This move sums up all types of physical actions. From feats of strength and agility to outright violence.

Roll+Audacity. 10+: You accomplish what you wanted to. This includes killing an opponent if you are in a fight.

7-9: as above, though you are limited to only incapacitating an opponent. You also suffer -1 Forward until you get a good, long rest.

If you kill someone and the act becomes known, you suffer a reduction in standing in either the sans-culottes or National Convention, if the victim was aligned with any of them. If the victim was merely incapacitated, you both get an Entanglement against each other.

The Revolution Eats its Children isn't about characters who brawl in the street, sneak around at night or give chase down the avenue. Nevertheless, sometimes they do these things. This move is used for all the physical actions a character might take, for that reason the outcomes of a successful roll are very wide.

If for no other reason, this move can come in handy if the characters want to ensure their own death at a last stand. Not ending up like Augustin Robespierre, failing to die properly after throwing himself from a window. If you have greater ambitions, Charlotte Corday did assassinate Marat with a knife.

READ A SITUATION

In a tense or dramatic situation, you can try to understand more of what is going on. Roll+Rational. If you are successful, you may ask the GM questions.

On a 10+: Ask 3 questions.

On a 7-9: Ask 1 question.

- *how can I resolve this situation without unnecessary drama?*
- *what should I be on the lookout for?*
- *who's pulling the strings of the situation?*
- *what can I offer that will resolve the situation?*
- *what isn't being said?*
- *what will benefit the Revolution the most*

While fortune favors the bold, but diligence is the mother of good luck. To read a situation you'll know more about a situation and how to best approach it. For the Game Master it is a good tool to introduce new things to the story and narrow down the scope of an ongoing story.

Hanriot, a man of actions more than politics, assessed the situation during the Thermidorian Reaction terribly wrong. The troops he brought to liberate his allies arrested him instead when they saw the illegitimacy of his command. Tallien did much better, at the fateful moment in the Convention, he saw when the movement was right to denounce Robespierre, and whom he could count on for support.

READ A PERSON

When you are in a tense or dramatic encounter with someone. You can try to understand them. Roll+Cunning. If you are successful, you may ask the GM questions.

On a 10+: Ask 3 questions.

On a 7-9: Ask 1 question.

- *is your character telling the truth?*
- *what's your character's agenda?*
- *what does your character intend to do?*
- *what does your character wish I'd do?*
- *how could I get your character to ___?*

Similarly to reading a situation, reading a person fleshes out a character. Simply by using this move a player will increase the significance of the character. Of course, when the players use it on each other they increase the dramatic tension.

If he had understood people better, Hébert might have seen what his political opponents were planning and not have pushed his luck too far. The same could have been said about Marat, who would have seen that Charlotte Corday didn't visit him to merely talk, but to kill. A far more successful attempt was at the trial of Carrier, when Phélippe saw through his lies, and exposed his bloody excess in Nantes.

MUSTER RESOURCES

Describe what plans you have made or have made, and how they benefit you in the current situation. Roll+Rational.

On a 10+: Your plan works as intended.

- *If your plan advanced a radical agenda, increase your standing with the sans-culottes by one*
- *If your plan advanced a moderate agenda, increase your standing with the National Convention by one*

On a 7-9: As above, but don't increase your standing. Also, pick one below:

- *There is a price to pay*
- *Something minor went wrong*
- *Something was left out*

As the chiefs of the Republic, the characters wield awesome powers. Of course, they can only do so with the authority and legitimacy of the Republic. If they want to muster their forces for personal gain, they must do so with their personal

influence. While they could send a national army into Belgium, only their most loyal supporters are willing to attack a french rival directly. Of course, if the death of the rival is for the best of the Revolution, that's another matter.

The muster resources move can also be made retroactively. It is appropriate for a player that the character already have prepared for something, and thus have an ace up their sleeve so to speak. So for instance, if a character is taken prisoner, a muster resources move could be appropriate to see if they have prepared for this eventuality, and have someone ready to rescue them.

Mericourt was a master organizer, and was pivotal in the effort of creating armed detachments of female soldiers. Even more awe-inspiring, at the height of his power, Robespierre had most of Paris join him in celebrating his republican deity: The Supreme Being.

POLITICAL MOVES

The player revolutionaries are essentially politicians. Their stance on various political causes, and a desire to see them resolved for the good of the Republic, is what drives the game. Below are two political moves that enables the Player Revolutionaries to influence the state of the Republic and their own politics.

Making these moves is not done lightly, they should be important event as a conclusion after a string of build-up scenes.

ENACT LEGISLATION

When a character has used all their stats once and circled them, a cause can be brought to conclusion with legislation in the National Convention. The player picks cause and stance, then marks experience twice and removed all circles.

Before you roll. All other player characters must vote in favor or against the legislature. If they support it, they get an Entanglement against you. You roll with -1 for each rejecting player character.

*If the stance is moderate: Roll+Rational.
If the stance is radical: Roll+Audacious.*

On a 10+: The cause is resolved in the stance you wanted. You increase your standing by one in the sans-culottes if your stance was radical, and by one with the National Convention if it was moderate.

Every character who supported it mark experience. All characters who had the stance in the cause that was legislated, mark experience.

On a 7-9: As above, but also the following.

If radical: loss standing in the National Convention for every prior resolved radical issue. You can reduce this amount by giving Entanglements to characters who has a moderate stance on the cause.

If moderate: loss standing with the sans-culottes for every prior resolved moderate issue. You can reduce this amount by giving Entanglements to characters who has a radical stance on the cause.

If the move passes, cross the cause out on the Revolution sheet and indicate in which stance it was resolved.

There are many instances of bold legislators putting forth new laws for the benefit of the Revolution. Barère wrote the law that raised the people's army, and later drove the Reign of Terror to its apex. Gilbert Romme succeeded in making the Republic adopt the new Revolutionary calendar. Robespierre abolished slavery.

CHANGE OR TAKE STANCE

Change your stance on an issue you have or take an entirely new stance on a cause. Roll+Cunning if stance is moderate. Roll+Callous if it is Radical.

On a 10+: You take or change a stance, and get an Entanglement against a character with the new stance. Mark experience.

On 7-9: You take or change a stance, but someone with the opposite stance gets an Entanglement against you.

Changing political landscapes, or simply a change of heart, might cause a revolutionary to change their stance on a cause. This is harder than it sounds, since your shift mustn't endanger the support you enjoy amongst your followers and allies.

Many changed their stance on universal suffrage, as it was voted out of the 1795 constitution, after having been put there in 1793. Thomas Paine was one of the few who remained true to the lofty ideal. Gobel also performed a shocking reversal, turning from catholic bishop to leading atheist.

STAND ACCUSED

If your relationship with the sans-culottes or the National Convention deteriorates too far, you might end standing accused in front of a tribunal or court, your head in the balance.

If your accused by the National Convention, Roll+Cunning, and reduce the roll by one for each Radical Stance you have. If your accused by the sans-culottes, Roll+Callous and reduce the roll by one for each Moderate Stance.

On a 10+: You defend yourself adequately, and are let go. Your standing with the faction is increased by one.

on 7-9: You are released with a warning. Pick one:

- *You must implicate someone else. Another PC you have an Entanglement against reduces its standing with the faction by one.*

- *You must denounce the opposition. If you are at a sans-culottes tribunal, reduce your standing with the National Convention by one, or vice versa.*
- *Make amends. You lose all Entanglements you have against other characters.*

On 6-: You are dragged away to be guillotined in the case of the National Convention, or to be lynched by the mob. If you somehow manage to escape, your only option is to flee the revolution for good.

An important part of *The Revolution Eats its Children* is how the PCs' relationships with the dominant institutions of the sans-culottes and National Convention develops. In the GM section are a system for tracking this relationship, as well as several milestone events. The most severe milestone puts the player character on trail for their life.

THE REVOLUTIONARIES

To create your revolutionary, pick one of the eight roles in this chapter.

The eight roles are:

- Demagogue - A speaker of renown who wields words as a weapon
- Journalist - An opinion- maker with an influential journal
- Outsider - A political outsider. Unwanted, but still with political clout.
- People's Hero - A person of the people, a champion of the workers
- Jurist - A legal authority whose power is in the laws they author
- Conspirateur (Unfinished)
- Ideologue (Unfinished)
- Factionalist (Unfinished)

Each role gives a suggestion for name, appearance and the character's most notable deed so far. Pick one of the suggestions, or make one yourself.

Next are the character's moves. Most roles get all the basic moves. In addition they receive or pick some role specific moves. Finally, each role also get two special moves. One for when they or someone else enacts legislation in the National Convention, the other for when the character dies or is retired.

A note on diversity

Compared to the monarchy that preceded it, the assemblies of the French Revolution were immensely diverse. Compared with the ideals of inclusive government, it was nothing but. Women were not allowed to be elected and the poor were barred from voting. Not to say that the Revolution didn't break new ground. Some of the French colonies sent people of color to represent them in the Convention, and the Revolution both fostered and claimed many influential women.

In your game you can do as you like. It is not unthinkable that the National Convention could become open to women or that a colored person from the colonies could lead a prominent faction.

If you want to keep it a little bit closer to history, the role of the Outsider is meant to encompass a character from a disenfranchised background who nevertheless rises to prominence, though still on the outside of the establishment.

DEMAGOGUE

The Revolution is foremost a war of words. For those who can present their case eloquently, there is no limit. You have made it your career to speak. You know which words sway the crowd, and you can speak with conviction and dedication. Even when there is none in your heart.

NAME

First name: Xavier, Alain, Valérie, Suzanne

Last name: Garchery, Pascale, Cordier

LOOK

Wears hats and scarfs with a classical design, reminiscent of ancient Greece; tailor-made outfits of the finest materials, made to look like it is of the sans-culottes; worn and non-descript clothes, but a visage that is always fierce and eager.

CLAIM TO FAME

Your flaming oratory created the biggest mass protest in Paris history; In the Convention you demanded that Terror be made the order of the day; a collection of your speeches is found in almost every home of means.

CAUSE

Pick a cause from the list on page XX, or make one yourself. If you ever are without a cause, you may voluntarily retire.

STATS

Rational -1 Callous -1 Audacity +1 Cunning +1

DEMAGOGUE MOVES

You get these two:

Orator

Whenever you succeed at public speaking, mark experience.

Energetic speaker

When you succeed in Public Speaking you take +1 Forward as long as the crowd is assembled.

And pick one below:

Educated

You increase Rational by one.

Persecutor

You hold a seat on the Revolutionary Tribunal, and have some power of arrest and execution. When you have three Entanglements against someone, you can have them arrested and possibly executed. For NPCs, this is automatic. For PCs, you can activate the second or third event of the National Convention milestone event track, as long as the character has passed the first.

Beautiful speeches

All rolls inside the National Convention are at +1, except when you try to enact legislation.

Words of Power

If you have the opportunity to address a crowd or audience when you muster resources, you can roll Audacious instead of Rational.

Verbal counterattack

As long as you can come up with good responses, you can use Cunning when you roll to remain dignified.

SPECIAL MOVES

LEGISLATION MOVE

When a player revolutionary tries to pass legislation, you may seize the moment and hold a rousing speech. The other character gets +1 on the roll, but you take one of their two experience marks.

END MOVE

Your last words in politics will either damn or exalt someone. Increase or decrease one of the other player revolutionaries standing with either the National Convention or sans-culottes by one.

ADVANCEMENT

Increase a stat (all stats must be increased once before it can be increased again)

Pick a new Demagogue Move

Pick a move from a different role (can be done once for every two Demagogue moves picked).

CONSPIRATEUR

Revolution is dirty work. While the enemies of the Revolution are still alive, someone must lay in waiting to murder them. You are such a hero. With lies and secret plans you lay a most devious trap for the all enemies of free people. Only you know the true extent of your web.

NAME

First name: Ravachol, Eustache, Rosalie , Violette

Last name: Tuncq, Maubert, Renaudin

LOOK

Wears a habit similar to a clerics, but with a secular design; simple clothes with strongly colored stripes and frills; beautiful clothes embroidered with complicated patterns.

CLAIM TO FAME

In the early stages of the Revolution you found the King's secret hiding place; you miraculously managed to provide bread to Paris during a famine; You keep a beautiful garden around your house, open to everyone.

CAUSE

Pick a cause from the list on page XX, or make one yourself. If you ever are without a cause, you may voluntarily retire.

STATS

Rational +1 Callous -1 Audacity -1 Cunning +1

CONSPIRATEUR MOVES

You get:

Spider

During an encounter with an NPC who is at least neutral to you, you may roll to see if they are involved in your conspiratorial web.

Roll+Cunning. On a 10+: They wholeheartedly support your conspiracy, and you can't count on their support

On a 7-9 they are part of your conspiracy, but their commitment is somehow flawed, choose one:

- They have revealed their part in the conspiracy to someone.
- You have some sort of leverage against them, which prevents them from leaving the conspiracy, though they want to.
- They think they know better than you.

And pick two below:

Rumormonger

You can create a rumor and cause it to spread in revolutionary circles.

Roll+Cunning. On a 10+ you are successful. The rumor is spread, and people may believe it if it isn't too outlandish and other events confirm it.

On 7-9 the rumor takes on a life of its own, and changes as it spreads. Choose one:

- The GM picks a character other than you that the rumor now implicates in something bad.
- A fantastical element is added to the story, making fewer believe it.
- The rumor names you as the origin.

Dark secrets

You can threaten someone by whispering to them of dirty secrets you know about them, or if you don't have any, those you can make others believe. You use Cunning when you Distress someone.

Sordid background

When you succeed at reading a person, you can also ask the following questions:

- What awful thing did I do for you in the past?
- What ridiculous thing do you secretly believe?

Heart of stone

You increase your Callous by one.

Web of allies

You can give an NPC an Entanglement against you to get a +1 one on either a Pass Legislation or Muster Resources move.

Below reproach

For every Entanglement someone has against you, you get +1 to distress them.

SPECIAL MOVES

LEGISLATION MOVE

Player characters that have either an Entanglement against you or you have an Entanglement against, must vote in support of your legislation.

END MOVE

Your web of conspiracies is beneficial to your allies after you have passed. For every Entanglement a PC or NPC has against you, you can give another PC an Entanglement against that character.

ADVANCEMENT

Increase a stat (all stats must be increased once before it can be increased again)

Pick a new Conspirateur Move

Pick a move from a different role (can be done once for every two Conspirateur moves picked).

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JOURNALIST

The pen is mightier than the sword, every revolutionary knows this. Nothing can sway an opinion like the written word, and you are the master of the art. A combination of publisher and author, your journal is read in the clubs and homes across the country. Often sans-culottes meet in cafés so the literate among them can read your broadsheets aloud to the rest. Obviously, you know what sells, and what opinions are advantageous to have.

NAME

First name: Nicholas, Henri, Pauline, Claire

Last name: Ney, Marat, Roland

LOOK

A skin disease makes you look ugly and disfigured; only the best clothes money can buy, and perfume to match; simple and practical clothes, suitable for physical activity.

CLAIM TO FAME

Publishes the journal *The People's Voice*; wrote a widely circulated text about the King's execution; exposed the corruption of the last minister of finance

CAUSE

Pick a cause from the list on page XX, or make one yourself. If you ever are without a cause, you may voluntarily retire.

STATS

Rational -1 Callous +1 Audacious -1 Cunning +1

JOURNALIST MOVES

You get this one:

Publish Journal

Whenever there is downtime in play or between session, you may find time to publish an edition of your journal.

Pick a cause you hold. Your journal denounces the opposite stance.

Roll+Audacious. On a 10+: You get an Entanglement against everyone holding the

stance you denounce, and you increase your standing in either the National Convention or the sans-culottes if they hold your stance.

On a 7-9 As above, but you also reduce your standing with the other group, and choose one:

- Someone is angry and want revenge
- Someone wants to take you to court
- A committee sensors the journal
- You are praised by a foreign dignitary

And pick one below:

Famous

Your writing hasn't just made you influential, but famous as well. Your face is well known around Paris, for good and bad. When distressing or manipulating someone who doesn't know you, you add or subtract your standing with the sans-culottes to the roll. In addition, you can hardly go outside without someone wanting to discuss your work with you.

Satirist

You can write scathing and ridiculing essays, poking fun of the powerful. When a PC's standing drops below 0 in either the National Convention or sans-culottes, or an NPC is distressed by someone else than you, take an Entanglement against them.

Rich

Your journal has made you rich, and you can afford the occasional bribe. When you roll 10+ on a Manipulate NPC roll, you may get your way by bribing them. If you do, you get an Entanglement against them.

Connected

You have ears all over Paris, and now all the dark secrets people are trying to hide. When you succeed at a Read Person roll, you can also ask

- What is the secret the person has been trying to hide?
- What horrible falsehood would people believe about the person?

Opportunist

When the sans-culotte changes their stance on a cause, you can change with them.

SPECIAL MOVES

LEGISLATION MOVE

Whenever a cause is resolved, mark experience, if you spread the news in your journal.

END MOVE

When your character either dies or retires you may turn over your journal to them. The next time they advance, they may take Publish Journal.

ADVANCEMENT

Increase a stat (all stats must be increased once before it can be increased again)

Pick a new Demagogue Move

Pick a move from a different role (can be done once for every two Demagogue moves picked).

PEOPLE'S HERO

The Revolution has always been carried by the people. They marched on Versailles, they lay siege to the Bastille, and they have forced the National Convention to action more than once. You have risen from the sans-culotte, and made such an impact during these events, that the educated establishment can't ignore you.

NAME

First name: Jules, Victor, Olympe, Benoîte

Last name: Murat, Lepic, Miot

LOOK

Unwashed and wild, with the occasional spot of unwashed blood; wears the clothes of a gentleman, but of the poorest quality; the clothes and bearing of a career military

CLAIM TO FAME

Led the poor of Paris to take and occupy the National Convention; Calmed a bread riot that was about to engulf all of Paris; Heroically led a detachment of volunteer soldiers against a foreign army.

CAUSE

Pick a cause from the list on page XX, or make one yourself. If you ever are without a cause, you may voluntarily retire.

STATS

Rational -1 Callous +1 Audacious +1 Cunning -1

PEOPLE'S HERO MOVES

Pick 3

No stranger to violence

When your standing reaches +3 with the sans-culottes, you can entice them to riot and attack a political rival. For NPCs, this immediately means they are assaulted by the sans-culottes, their head carried around on pikes unless they are extremely lucky and flee the city for good. For PCs, you can activate the next event on the sans-culottes milestone event track.

Intimidate

When you succeed at reading a person, you can also ask the following questions:

- How can I best intimidate you?
- What would you do to appease the sans-culottes?

Thug

Whenever you hurt someone, mark experience.

No subtlety

When you fail at either read person or manipulate person, you mark experience.

Noble defender

When you read a situation, you can also ask: how can I resolve this situation to the best of the sans-culottes. You get +1 Forward for the rest of the session, whenever you take a move to achieve this goal.

Will of the people

You are automatically successful in remaining dignified if you are surrounded by a majority of people who are of the sans-culottes.

Daring

Increase your Audacity by one.

SPECIAL MOVES

LEGISLATION MOVE

You can entice the Military Guard in Paris to threaten the National Convention. After a successful move to enact moderate legislation, you can nullify it. Reduce your standing with the National Convention by one and increase your's with the sans-culottes by the same amount.

END MOVE

If your standing with the sans-culotte is +2 or higher, they seize the Nation Convention in anger. They are forced to immediately legislate in favor of the radicals, resolving a cause in that stance.

ADVANCEMENT

Increase a stat (all stats must be increased once before it can be increased again)
Pick a new People's Hero Move

Pick a move from a different role (can be done once for every two People's Hero moves picked).

JURIST

Some might consider you boring or pedantic, but you know where true power lies. It is not in the rioting crowds, weapons or flaming oratori. True power is only found in the law; it is the legislator who commands the future. Long after everyone alive has perished, a just law will continue to ensure a people's prosperity. You know that outside of the laws, everything is sterile and dead. And no place is more alive than the National Convention.

NAME

First name: Louis, Pierre, Jeanne, Julie

Last name: Le Bas, Phillipon, Couthon

LOOK

Black waistcoat and pants, always neat and clean; only the finest suits and whigs; hands and voice are always trembling, fingers stained with ink

CLAIM TO FAME

Wrote large parts of the current constitution; is the nation's foremost law scholar; writes philosophical texts widely circulated in France and abroad

CAUSE

Pick a cause from the list on page XX, or make one yourself. If you ever are without a cause, you may voluntarily retire.

STATS

Rational +1 Callous +1 Audacious -1 Cunning -1

JURIST MOVES

You get this one:

Lawmaker

Whenever you are in the National Convention, you can read the political climate. Roll+Rational. On a 10+ ask 3, on 7-9 ask 1:

- What could convince the Convention to pass radical legislation?
- Who currently has the most authority in the Convention?
- How can I increase my prominence in the Convention?
- What am I missing about the political situation?

- Who has the most vulnerable position in the Convention

And pick one of these:

By the book

If someone tries to muster resources, you can denounce their efforts to work outside the law. You get an entanglement against them, and if they fail you mark experience.

Prosecutor

When your standing reaches +3 with the Nation Convention, you can reduce it to 0 to make them enact laws that sentences a political rival. For NPCs, this means they are immediately carted away to execution. For PCs, you can activate the next event on the National Convention milestone event track.

President of the Convention

Whenever someone tries to enact legislations in the National Convention, you get a entanglement against them.

Lawmaker

Whenever you have some downtime, you can work on the text for future legislation. Roll+Rational. On a 10+ you can ask 2, on 7-9 you can ask 1 question:

- Who must I convince to make it pass the Convention?
- How can I get the sans-culottes to rally behind it?
- What modifications can I do to make it easier to pass in the Convention?
- Who can I vilify as an enemy of this legislation?
- Do I have an unexpected ally in this legislation?

Fiendish

Increase your Cunning by one.

SPECIAL MOVES

LEGISLATION MOVE

All reductions in standing you suffer when you enact legislation are reduced by one.

END MOVE

After you are gone, your political will is published creating a massive public support of your ideas. Everyone who can must immediately adopt your stance on a cause.

ADVANCEMENT

Increase a stat (all stats must be increased once before it can be increased again)

Pick a new Jurist Move

Pick a move from a different role (can be done once for every two Jurist moves picked).

OUTSIDER

Equality. It was meant to apply to everyone, but the laws have still found ways to order people. Some are more worthy of participation than others, some are kept outside; because of their class, gender, race, or something else. You have found your way to the inside, but everyone knows you don't belong. Unlike many of them, you aren't there by chance. Only with supreme talent and dedication have you won your position, and once here, your unique perspective is your strongest asset.

NAME

First name: Cortez, Karl, Paul, Fatima, Sophia, Josyane

Last name: L'Étranger, Arhab, Fraternité

LOOK

Foreign garb, totally alien to France; dressed in clothes that are red, white and blue, more french than the french; an odd mix of men' and women's fashion

CLAIM TO FAME

Only woman in the Commission; famous Revolutionary from a different country; an unrelenting stance on equal rights for everyone

CAUSE

Pick a cause from the list on page XX, or make one yourself. If you ever are without a cause, you may voluntarily retire.

STATS

Rational +1 Callous -1 Audacious -1 Cunning +1

OUTSIDER MOVES

You get this one:

Easily ignored

Whenever you fail a move, you can remove an Entanglement someone had against you.

And pick two below:

Always separate

When you fail in either to sway a crowd or manipulate, you mark experience.

Unique Perspective

When you change a stance either voluntarily or forced, you can find an ideological reason why also another cause should have a shift in stance. The second shift doesn't have to be in the same direction as the first.

Different customs

You roll to remain dignified with Rational instead of Callous.

Not trusted

Your standing is no longer a prerequisite for milestone events. Whenever you lose standing, you mark experience.

Marginalized Allies

You are the voice of a part of the sans-culottes that is especially vulnerable and disenfranchised. They can come to your help in the most unusual ways.

Roll+Cunning. On a 10+ they come to your rescue. On 7-9, they come to your rescue, but it has repercussions for your allies.

SPECIAL MOVES

LEGISLATION MOVE

Your status as an outsider means many also expect a little less of you, so when you do act it catches everyone by surprise. When you pass legislation in the National Convention, you decide if a player character gets to vote or not.

END MOVE

When your character either dies or retires everyone will start to understand better what you brought, and they're lesser now that you are gone. All player revolutionaries mark experience.

ADVANCEMENT

Increase a stat (all stats must be increased once before it can be increased again)

Pick a new Outsider Move

Pick a move from a different role (can be done once for every two Outsider moves picked).

SETTING THE STAGE

After the players have made their revolutionaries, it is time to make the rest of the French political scene. You have already begun, as each character has as their cause one of major political issues of your revolution.

Take Revolution sheet to make notes on, go through the following steps:

1. Factions
2. Places
3. Troubles

When you go through the questions in the sections below, go around the table so everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

FRACTIONS

The player characters constitute a faction. You should give them a proper name, perhaps after the leader of the group. In history the group following Danton were called Dantonists, and those following Hébert were Hébertists. Other possible names are the *Exagérés* (the excessive), the *Enragés* (the angry), the Jacobins (named after the Jacobin club), or simply the Radicals.

Create a moderate faction to oppose the player characters. Create a leader for it, with name and background. The faction should have a name. As above it could be named after the leader. Other historic names includes the Girondists (named after the district of Gironde), the Indulgents (the forgiving), the Feuillants (named after the Feuillants club), or the Moderates.

Create a radical faction to oppose the player characters. This is similar to the process above. Create the faction leader, and name the group. In addition, you pick or make a cause for the leader.

If you have four or more player characters **create another moderate faction**. You do this exactly the same way as when you created the first moderate faction.

CAUSES

Causes are an important driver in the game, they represent what the politicians in the Revolution care about. Each of the player characters have one, begin by writing them down on the sheet. In addition, the rival radical faction leader also contribute a cause.

Each cause has two stances, a radical and a moderate. The National Convention and all the moderate faction leaders favor a moderate stance. This will never change during the game, but it can still be helpful to write down that they support the moderate position on the sheet. The sans-culottes have a radical stance on all the issues, this should be indicated on the sheet. Their stance is malleable though, and can change during play

TROUBLES

The Republic is currently besieged by problems on all fronts. To create some tension, you should write down some of them on the sheet.

Create or pick one trouble fitting each category.

- What created an uproar in the National Convention recently?
 - It was besieged by the sans-culottes
 - Unelected members took the floor and demanded to speak
 - Someone fought a duel to the death after a heated debate
- What happened last week the sans-culottes are angry about?
 - The price of bread doubled
 - The extravagant lifestyle of a rich count
 - Land reforms are progressing too slow
- Why was the last group of traitors to the Revolution sent to the scaffold?
 - Creating a conspiracy with the English.
 - Tried to manipulate the markets in their favor
 - Created laws unpopular with the sans-culottes
- What is the most significant external threat?
 - The English navy in the canal
 - The Spanish army is pillaging the south
 - The Habsburg army is close to Verdun

PLACES

Finally, create three places that is important meeting places for revolutionaries or places where politics are being discussed. There is a section later called locations, which can provide some suggestions and ideas.

CAUSES

Political power is vested in the National Convention. While the politicians here are revolutionaries, there is still a majority of moderates. The Convention would

like to settle many of the important issues being discussed, but is prevented by the strength of the radical sans-culottes.

All issues have a moderate and a radical position. At the start of the game the moderate view is held by the Convention, and the radical stance is held by the sans-culottes and player revolutionaries.

De-christianization

Moderate: France must be purged of its catholic past. To replace it we need a Republican religion directed at the eternal Supreme Being.

Radical: The Revolution needs no deity. Let the temples be dedicated to reason and emblazon all graveyard gates with the words: *Death is an eternal sleep*.

Free market

Moderate: The economy needs trade, and the best way to get people goods, is a free market.

Radical: The state needs to regulate wages and prices to ensure that everyone gets a fair share.

Universal suffrage

Moderate: Everyone isn't ready to participate in the political process. Women and the poor don't have essential faculties to vote in elections.

Radical: Everyone has an equal right to engage in governance. Those who has the right to mount the scaffold, should also have the right to mount the speaker's platform.

Purging of the remaining nobility

Moderate: The rule of law is still in effect. Someone can't be judged solely on a title they previously held.

Radical: The nobility longs to resurrect the monarchy. They will not rest until they stop the Revolution. They should be purged for the safety of the Republic.

Universal state education

Moderate: All children should get a basic education at the Republic's expense, so they may become good citizens as adults.

Radicals: Children should be taken from their parents and be reared and educated by the Republic.

Liberation of oppressed peoples

Moderate: France is surrounded by oppressed people, but we must be careful to not make too many enemies amongst our royalist neighbours.

Radical: The people wants to be free of kings and tyrants. We should attack or neighbours and free its peoples by arms.

Form a people's army

Moderate: We have a strong professional army, we should continue to support it with what they need.

Radical: A revolutionary republic needs a revolutionary army. If we rely too much on a professional army, we are at the mercy of generals. We should arm the citizens, so we all can march to war should to shoulder.

Slavery

Moderate: Freedom should be a right, but there are practicalities. Slavery is abolished in France, but the colonies are so dependent on slave labour, that abolishing it everywhere would be disastrous.

Radical: There can be no exceptions to the right of people. There can be no division between the free and slaves. Slavery must be abolished in all French colonies, no matter the cost.

GAME MASTER

PRINCIPLES

Here are some guiding thoughts to keep in mind when running *The Revolution Eats its Children*.

- **Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité**
- **Radicals rule the day**
- **The Revolution is in danger**
- **The Guillotine never rests**
- **By the book**
- **Factions of people**
- **Great power and small problems**
- **A slower pace**
- **A government, after all**

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité

The dream of freedom, equality and fraternity for all people is a guiding principle in the Revolution. While the Republic fails again and again to live up to this ideal, it still burns hot in the heart of many people. If the characters ever wonder why they do anything, this is the hope in the distance.

Radicals rule the day

The monarchy has been swept away, as well as the aristocracy and clergy. The old guard is gone, or have remade themselves into revolutionaries. The political scene is dominated completely by those who are willing to radically change France in the hopes of achieving their lofty goals. They might scheme, plot and conspire like most politicians, but their ultimate agenda is bold and daring. The PCs shouldn't be afraid to find radical and extreme solutions to political problems. This is after all the time and place where the government conscripted its entire population in *Levée en masse*.

The Revolution is in danger

France is surrounded by conservative monarchies. Even worse, the old aristocrats are plotting to retake power at the first opportunity. The Revolution is under threat on all sides, and only audacity and vigilance will ensure that it doesn't fail. Whenever the player characters become complacent, introduce an outsider threat or rumors of a conspiracy. Or better yet, rumors that the PCs are implicated in one.

The Guillotine never rests

The most decisive political tool in France: the Guillotine. People from every class is sent to the falling sword, having been declared enemies of the Republic and Revolution. There is some degree of justice to the process, but what constitutes treason is terrible vague. For a politician, it can simply be being too moderate or forgiving. Everyone knows that if you play the game of Revolution, and fail, the scaffold awaits. This is a danger the players should be mindful of. If they ignore it, fire a shot across the bow. If they ignore the warning, don't hesitate to have a player character executed.

By the book

Despite the turbulent nature of a Revolution, it is still very legalistic. Most prominent politicians are still educated people of letters, and believe in justice and the rule of law. Even the most heinous excess must go through the proper channels and be voted upon. It is another contention between the Convention and the sans-culottes, since the latter is prone to make its own justice. When the PCs overstep their bounds, have someone remind them that there still exists the rule of law.

Factions of people

As politicians, the player characters would deal with hundreds of people: members of the National Convention, committees, various bureaucrats, club members and members of the public. The intimacy that is typical for a PbtA game is hard to do under these conditions. Many characters must simply remain nameless. Instead you should focus on the other faction leaders. The other named characters will be important because they support a faction or the PCs. Important independent characters should be kept to a minimum.

Great power and small problems

The principle characters in *The Revolution Eats its Children* are important figures in revolutionary France. Some wield considerable power as representatives of the convention or in committee. They can raise armies, move them around, or direct the government's bureaucracy to enact policies that has great effect on the people. Still, they are in a precarious situation where political enemies can topple them at any time. Ironically it can be easier for them to have the Army of the North attack Belgium than to have a hundred people come to their defence when the mob threatens to burn down their house.

A slower pace

Many PbtA games have relentless drive pushing the players constantly towards action. The question of *what do you do?* from the GM, always moves events forward. This works less well in *The Revolution Eats its Children*. Some events have a larger scale and consequences that isn't always immediately clear. In many

cases the GM will perform a move, and the sensible thing for the PCs to do is to take a step back, let the matter lay, and concentrate on other affairs.

A government, after all

While the conflict between various groups of Revolutionaries is the focus of this game, the characters are also the primary actors in a functioning government. Revolutionary France remains intact, quelling internal revolts and fighting external wars. It can be a nice change of pace to let the characters deal with such matters for a few scenes, as they in that capacity can throw about the full strength of the French Republic. In such a situation enemies can become allies, and victory is victory for everyone.

GM MOVES

While the NPCs don't make moves themselves, the GM has access to their own set of moves. They are used in response to players failing their moves, or when the story players look to the GM to propel the story forward.

Below are the GM's moves. At any time during the story, but especially after the players fail to perform a move, you should deploy one of them. Don't call out its name, just follow the instructions below and incorporate it in the ongoing story.

All moves aren't created equal, some are far worse for the player revolutionaries than others. The most heinous moves alters the politics of the revolution and have mechanical effects (marked with *). One even have a prerequisite meaning they it be used unless the character has placed itself at risk. You might find some of the moves unfair, but that is the way of a revolution.

The GM's moves have a wide variety of scopes. Some are direct and immediate, while others indicate changes in the revolution's political scene. Regardless of the a scope, "what do you do?", is the obvious next question to ask the players.

- Threaten the Revolution
- Give an Entanglement*
- Milestone event*
- Foreshadow malice
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask
- Become wounded
- Turn their move back on them
- Reduced standing*
- Change political landscape*
- Give political ultimatum*
- Introduce a new Faction*
- Disentangle*

Threaten the Revolution

Should be a go to move. Something has happened that threatens to unravel the Revolution.

"The speech in the Convention is received fairly, but not as good as you'd hope. When you travel home afterwards, you hear the first rumours of terrible news: the Habsburg army has taken Verdun. What do you do?"

“Your legislation about fixing prices fails, and now the situation becomes even more desperate. Some merchants in Marseille has bought a huge batch of soap that was meant for Paris, and the price of soap triples overnight. The people is furious. What do you do?”

Give an Entanglement

An NPC gets an Entanglement against the player character.

“The crowd isn’t soothed by your words, and for a moment you think they might lynch you. Luckily Chabot is there to calm them. Normally he is your political opponent, but this time he saves you. You owe him now, what do you do?”

“You spend hours trying to budge Bastin. It leaves you exhausted and drained, and it is hard not to be impressed by her conviction. She has shaken you, and she knows it. What do you do?”

Milestone event

There are six milestone events. They track the possible deterioration of relationships between a character and the sans-culottes or National Convention. They are placed in two tracks of three.

A milestone event can only be activated on one if the character has a standing of -2 or less with the group.

The first two events on each milestone can only occur once. The third can happen several times, if the character survives the ordeal.

The sans-culottes event track

1. Harassed: The character is attacked on the street by a rowdy street mob, and must flee for their life.
2. Arson: The character’s home and other properties are attacked, looted and burnt to the ground.
3. Accused : The character is hunted by the sans-culottes and dragged in front of the Revolutionary Tribunal. They must resolve the Stand Accused move, and risk execution

The National Convention event track

1. Denounced: Someone denounces the character and their work from the lectern of the National Convention.
2. Arrested: The National Convention orders the character’s arrest. It will be hard to get any work done before that is sorted.

3. Guillotined: The National Convention orders the character's arrest, and they are sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal orders the character's execution. They must resolve the Stand Accused move, and risk execution

"The sans-culottes hear about your botched legislation, and now they are yelling at you wherever you go. All-talk-Tabbot becomes your new nickname among the lower classes. What do you do?"

"After you were arrested last night when your conflict with d'Lille came to ahead, and now you fail miserably in your escape attempt. The Tribunal sees no other option, you are carted out to Revolution Square and executed the next day. Make your character's end move and make a new revolutionary."

Tell them the possible consequences and ask

Politics require compromise. In this move the player character's are given a choice, and must suffer some cost if they want things to go their way.

"Your legislation about a people's Army creates a heated debate in the Convention. One of the opposing deputies creates total silence when he asks you the pointed question: if you are so eager for a People's army, how about you make your own home into a military barracks? If you agree, your dedication might just push the law through. What do you do?"

"Your hopes of a new Revolutionary library in Paris are dashed when the majority of books from America are held in British customs. A few well placed bribes may sort it out, but you would need to divert the funds from either the army or Paris' sanitation. What do you do?"

Become wounded

A simple move that somehow harms the character. The GM can choose to either wound or incapacitate the character.

"The crowd doesn't like what you have to say, and soon the stones are flying. You get hit in the head, all further rolls until you recover is at -1. What do you do?"

"You pull Gerard into the alley, but before you manage to stab him, he pushes you down an open manhole. You fall into the sewer, and everything goes black. Where do you wake up?"

Turn their move back on them

The players obviously wanted something with their move. You can turn it around and give it to someone else.

“You study Lafayette hard, wondering what he is thinking. Suddenly he looks right at you and says: I know what you and Voltan are planning, you won’t get away with it. What do you do?”

“You continue to press LeClerc at the bar, hoping he will make a fool of himself. Instead he launches into a furious defence. As the trial stands now, he might be acquitted. What do you do?”

Reduced standing

A simple move that reduces the character’s standing in either the National Convention or sans-culottes by one.

“There is a great uproar when the Convention hears that you threatened a colleague with execution. Some even say you are the one who should be put under the sword. Your standing goes from 1 to 0. What do you do?”

“Your legislation is passed, but it does nothing to alleviate the economic suffering of the common people. Instead the price of bread triples. The sans-culottes who once loved you so, becomes much cooler. Your standing goes from 2 to 1. What do you do?”

Change political landscape

The most powerful political force is the sans-culottes. Their whims are fickle though. This move takes the sans-culotte from a radical stance on a cause to a moderate one. Remember that the National Convention never changes their stance.

“You return to Paris after a few quiet weeks in the country to terrible news. The moderates have aligned themselves with some influential street orators, and now the people are suddenly against the invasion of monarchist Spain. What do you do?”

“Your purging of the indulgents in the Convention has had some repercussions in the public opinion. The sans-culottes are lenient towards the old aristocracy and want them rehabilitated rather than expunged.”

Give political ultimatum*

This move works combined with one of the other GM moves. In many ways it is similar to telling the players about consequences and making them choose. This move has a more tangible game effect though.

The player is given the choice to either become more moderate, or suffer another GM move instead. You offer the player a new moderate stance, or a shift in an

currently held cause from a radical stance to a moderate one, and what move happens if they fail.

“Your speech at the club didn’t go over so well. Afterwards you are cornered by a great many of your club peers. They want you to change your support of a people’s army, to a professional one. If you don’t, Pierre de Morgan will speak against you at the next meeting and get an Entanglement against you. What do you do?”

“The situation is spiraling out of control, and there are too many variables for you to keep track of. One thing is clear though: the Convention seems to be taking steps to purge itself of atheists, and you should moderate your position before you get denounced.”

Introduce a new Faction

The faction leaders are the pivotal characters who are the PCs main antagonists during play. There will be one on the radical side, and one or two moderate ones. If the PCs defeats a faction leader and its faction, the GM can take a move to introduce a new one. On the coattails of the PCs’ failure is the perfect timing.

“The lavish party you throw in your garden is a great success at first. The sans-culottes were pleased with an evening of festivities open for everyone. Then Madame Villinous writes in her journal that you should have worked harder to get the people free bread every day, and not just when you felt like it. Many seem to agree, and now there is a demand that she should be put on the Commission. What do you do?”

Forward Recollection

Negate Resource

Disentangle*

Sometimes a politician just wants to take the heat out. By disentangling from the player revolutionary, an NPC creates some distance, possibly averting a dangerous situation. An NPC drops an entanglement it has against the PC, and the PC drops one against the NPC.

“After you were discovered trying to steal Fourier’s papers at the club, you thought he would try to get you expelled. Instead he starts to avoid you. He leaves when you arrive, and never speaks to you when you meet at Convention or Committee meetings. What do you do?”

“After you lost your temper at the sentencing of Calmette, you notice that many are laughing behind your back. Your relationship with Calmette’s cousin seems to have normalized though. He is always very courteous, though he keeps his distance. What do you do?”

NPC ENTANGLEMENTS

Non-player characters can have Entanglements against player revolutionaries. When they use them it is similar to GM moves.

If a NPC has Entanglements against a PC it means the NPC has some sort of leverage or influence over the character. They might be friends or rivals, or both, but the NPC has some degree of control over the character.

All uses of Entanglements costs 1 Entanglement except the two mentioned specifically below.

Force stance (costs 2)

The player revolutionary must switch his stance on an issue. A moderate NPC can force the moderate stance, while a radical NPC force a radical one.

-1 to roll

The player rolls with -1.

Come out of nowhere

The NPC suddenly appears on the scene, at the surprise of everyone.

Denounce (costs 3)

A moderate NPC can move the PCs one step up on the National Convention milestone event track. This move can only be used if the PC has a 1 or less in standing with the National Convention.

Smear

A radical NPC can move the PCs one step up on the sans-culottes milestone event track. This move can only be used if the PC has a 1 or less in standing with the sans-culottes.

Enact Moderate Legislation (1 per player character)

The player revolutionaries aren't the only ones who can move the National Convention. Cross out the cause on the worksheet and indicate that it has been resolved moderately.

LOCATIONS

Below is a list of locations. They are suitable venues for revolutionary activities.

The National Convention

Nominally, the Convention is the premier authority in the French Republic. There are over 700 seats, and the elected representatives vote on laws and run the Republic. Right now the Convention is dominated by loud radicals. The moderates are still there, but are keeping mostly quiet. Actual executive power is handed to the Committees, which means that in times of crises, the Convention is relegated to a bystander. Still, debates can be fierce, and a politician who loses the support of the Convention can quickly find itself in a dangerous situation. This is the place for principled speeches, coalition building, and the enactment of laws.

The Committee

To make sure the Republic can respond quickly to threats, a series of Committees govern its daily activities. They supervise the bureaucracy and take all the important discussions. A committee often finds a workable division of labour, different members finding their place and take the tasks they are most suitable for. There can still be friction though, both inside a committee or between, especially on divisive issues. A Committee also answers to the Convention, and disagreement can quickly spill over there, especially if the Committee's work have met with failure.

The Club

An important part of political life are the clubs, foremost of them is the Jacobin club. Their power comes from organization, having branch clubs across the country. To the radical politicians, the Jacobin Club is an important meeting place. Here they can come for support and to discuss their ideas. This also means that conflicts between factions also play out here. To get a rival thrown out of the club is an important first step in purging them completely. In addition to the Jacobin, the Cordeliers Club is also a prominent radical club. The Cordeliers have a low membership fee and no criteria for membership, which means it has a more diverse membership.

The Salon

If you are interested in a quiet and less stressful atmosphere, the intellectual discussions of a salon might be what you are after. Intellectuals and artists meet in private homes to discuss topics of interest. The mood is informal and the salon usually have a theme, like areas of learning or different types of art. There are many political salons, but they are usually meetings of people with similar views

and goals. There is something upper-class about the entire concept, which means many radicals expect such salons to be filled with counter-revolutionaries.

The Streets

Paris is a busy town, and the sans-culottes rule the streets. Frequent riots and demonstrations can make the streets dangerous, and the people aren't afraid to take matters into their own hands if they see someone they suspect is a traitor to the Revolution. Similarly, someone with support among the people can travel through Paris and be celebrated at every corner. If you want to rouse the people to action. This is where you must start.

Revolution Square

In the middle of Revolution Square stands the Guillotine. Few proper politicians ever go here, though they don't hesitate to send others here. While the machine in the centre works, the crowd can be both rowdy and cruel. No one has ever swayed them and won their pity. Closest to the scaffold sits the *Tricoteuses*, the knitting-women of the Revolution. Barred from any other political outlet, seeing its enemies executed is the only thing left to them.

Hôtel de Ville

An extension of the radicals in the National Convention is Paris City Hall. Here they can usually count on full support, and the Commune of Paris is always ready to protect the radical parts of the Revolution. Looking for public support or action, a radical politician can most easily get it organized from Hôtel de Ville.

EPILOGUE

You can play *The Revolution Eats its Children* however you like, but there are two themes that guided me while I was writing it. The first is that no matter how powerful you are, in unstable politics the tides can always turn and topple you. The second theme is the internal one: when goals cease to matter you can always justify your means.

It has been said that the French Revolution was the American Revolution on steroids. This is not an unfair comparison. While the American Revolution left a lasting Republic with a pantheon of Founders, the French one skid back into monarchy, its leaders dead and disgraced. It is telling that one of the most uncompromising radicals in the American Revolution, Thomas Paine, was nearly executed for being a moderate when he joined the French one. The slogan of Join or Die by Franklin, was bloody reality to Saint-Just.

The Revolution Eats its Children is not about the entirety of the French Revolution, but rather its frantic end. It is about the time when the factions rose and fell in the National Convention, and the Reign of Terror was the strongest. If you want to look for real world inspirations for this game, there are several. Brissot, Hébert, Danton and Robespierre all climbed to the pinnacle of power, and got dashed on the way down.

No such fate is more illustrative than Robespierre's. It perfectly exemplifies how the game's first theme could play out. On June 8th he created his own civic religion, laying the foundation for a new Republican godhead. In raw power, few things can rival that. In July 27th his excess was denounced in the National Convention. After a short-lived attempt to fight back he was arrested during the night and executed the following day.

For the game's second theme, Robespierre stands out again. The man who was known as the Incorruptible and early in the Revolution frequently was the sole voice in the defence of grand liberal principles, is now mostly remembered for his bloody purges of political enemies. He who had spoken eloquently about freeing slaves and liberty for all people, ended up defending the virtues of state excess.

At the same time, there was some sort of truth in what he said. After he was removed from power, and the terror ended, the Revolution withered away. In its place came a monarchy to rival the one it had removed.