

CHRONOLOGY OF THE REVOLUTION IN LYON

TOPIC

ROOM 18: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



Tricolour cockade, the cockade of the Lyon army during the siege of Lyon in 1793, fabric, 1793, Inv. 513

The period of support (1789-1792)

14 March 1789:

General Assembly of the three orders in the Cordeliers church

In anticipation of the Estates General at Versailles in May 1789, a General Assembly composed of 300 clergymen, 317 noblemen and 350 delegates from the city and the surrounding area met at the Cordeliers church. It decided that each order would elect its own deputies and prepare a list of grievances. The third estate's list included a demand for the abolition of the "octroi" taxes*, whose value had been increasing since the beginning of the 18th c.

30 June - 5 July 1789:

July riots

The failure of the debates at Versailles, the proclamation of the "National Assembly" by the third estate (17 June) and the Tennis Court Oath (20 June) led the king once again to invite the three new orders to debate. The Lyon Consulate celebrated this decision with illuminations and a Te Deum, which triggered several days of clashes between the bourgeois and the people, who would have preferred to celebrate their demands being met! Faced with the population deciding to import goods without paying the "octroi", the military commander Imbert-Colomès (1729-1808) banned all public gatherings and created a company of bourgeois volunteers to restore order, the "muscadins" (dandies).

August 1789:

The taking of the castle of Pierre Scize

The Lyon bourgeoisie wanted to create a distraction from its repression of the riots and to join the third estate. Impressed by the unifying effect of the storming of the Bastille on 14 July, they tried to organise a capture of the château of Pierre Scize in August 1789. But the people were not fooled, and watched the event as spectators, feeling control slip through their fingers (Inv. 364 - Restoration of Pierre Ancise to the citizens).

7 February 1790:

Plundering of the Arsenal

Imbert-Colomès ordered the *muscadins* to relieve the National Guard at the Arsenal, but the Guard, as representatives of the people, objected, took up arms and won the day, plundering the Arsenal. Colomès fled and tried to make Lyon the capital of royalist France, a place where emigrants could seek refuge. The population immediately denounced this royalist conspiracy.



Plundering of the Lyon arsenal, 7 February 1790, lithograph, Berthault, 18th c., Inv. 55.80.4

30 June 1790:

Festival of the Federation

As a prelude to the celebration of the Federation organised in Paris for the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, Lyon organised its own festival on 30 June in Les Brotteaux. A mass, political speeches and a popular celebration in honour of the triumph of the Revolution took place, centred around a rock and a statue of Liberty.

19 September 1792:

Revolutionary women's petition

Women demanded a fixed price for essential commodities, occupying the streets and managing to enforce the price they were claiming without the National Guard having to intervene.

READ:

zoom sheet
Revolutionary pike
and petition from
the female citizens
of Lyon

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The period of rupture (1793)

February-May 1793: municipal instability: Chaliers* against Rolands*

On the night of 4 to 5 February, the city council, dominated by the Chaliers, authorised home arrests and presented 300 people before a revolutionary tribunal, despite the opposition of the Roland Mayor Antoine Nivière-Chol, who resigned. A new Roland mayor, Jean-Emmanuel Gilibert, was elected on 27 February but resigned on 9 March.

Antoine-Marie Bertrand, a Chalier, became mayor and adopted strong measures: a guillotine set up in the town (Inv. 524), a tax on bread, a committee of public safety, a revolutionary tribunal and an army of “*sans-culottes*” (working class people), etc.

But in May, the Rolands took power in the revolutionary committees of surveillance. On the night of the 29th, the Rolands arrested supporters of Chalier (Inv. 52.307 - Bust), who was guillotined on 16 July.

In Lyon, this liberal revolt against the centralising power of the Jacobins coincided with the Montagnards taking power in the Convention in Paris, ousting the Girondins. This is when the rupture between Paris and Lyon began.

Summer 1793: Anti-Jacobinism in Lyon

Faced with the Jacobin coup, several municipalities were outraged. Lyon took the lead in the federalist movement, which did not recognise central authority. But the Republic had to be united and indivisible. The Convention could not tolerate this rebellion. General Kellermann ordered representatives of the Army of the Alps to restore the laws of the Republic in Lyon...

9 October 1793: The siege of Lyon (Inv. 379)

Via Couthon, the Convention ordered the bombardment of Lyon which, under the orders of Louis-François Perrin de Précý (1742-1820) (Inv. 1322.22), was encircled little by little in September (Inv. SN 14 - Siege bread). On 29 September, the fort of Sainte-Foy fell, followed by Saint-Irénée and Saint-Just. The civil authorities surrendered on 9 October 1793 at midday. The Convention decided to destroy the city walls and decreed that, as punishment for having fought for freedom, “Lyon will lose its name, and will be called “*Ville-Affranchie*” (liberated city).

glossary

octroi: tax levied by the municipality when goods - including basic necessities - were brought into its territory, leading to an increase in sale prices.

Chalier (or “Mathevon”): refers to a Jacobin movement led by Joseph Chalier of Lyon.

Roland: from the name of Jean-Marie Roland de la Platière, refers to a Girondin movement favouring economic liberalism and federalism.

1793-1794

“*Commune-affranchie*” (Inv. g 40.402 - Map of the *Commune-affranchie* area)

Defeated, the counter-revolutionary city was struck from the list of cities of the Republic. Couthon and then Collot d’Herbois were sent to Lyon as emissaries of the Convention to judge and subdue the city.

Several jurisdictions were put in place: a military commission, a commission of popular justice, a temporary revolutionary commission, the “Tribunal of the Seven” etc. On 4 December 1793, 60 condemned prisoners were executed in Les Brotteaux: the “*mitrillades*” or shootings.

The façades of Bellecour were destroyed as the vengeance of the nation.



Shooting of Lyon citizens at Les Brotteaux, 4 December 1793, drawing, Jean-Paul Flandrin, engraving, Paul Constant Soyer, 1845, Inv. N 1945.16



Demolition of two beautiful façades in the Place Bellecour, Couthon and the crowd before the façade, detail, engraving, anonymous, late 18th c., Inv. N 3832

The time of internal struggle (1794-1799)

October 1794 - 1799 Anti-Jacobin vengeance

The city was renamed Lyon once again in October 1794. When Robespierre fell, the counter-revolutionary fightback began. Even the mayor, Salamond, advocated violence, calling for the people of Lyon to become “the terrorists of terrorists”. Revolutionary symbols were destroyed, while the “*Mathevons*”* were driven from the city. The bloody massacre known as Saint Barthélémy des Mathevons took place in various prisons in the city on 4 May 1795. On 24 June, a report by Marie Joseph Chénier, sitting on the Convention, decreed that Lyon was once again outside the law, blaming the Jesuits for the violence and concluding that local authorities had been complicit.

Clashes between Mathevons and royalists continued until 1799, with Lyon the site of many royalist plots, all foiled.

In 1799, Bonaparte returned from the Egyptian campaign and stopped in Lyon, where he was greeted as a hero.