

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

OLD REGIME

- Louis XIV, XV lavish spending
- France: envy of Europe
 - Arts, Fashion, Philosophy
- Absolute Monarchy
- 3 Estates



FIRST AND SECOND ESTATES

- **First Estate: Clergy (0.5% of pop.)**
 - Managed church affairs
 - Collected tithes
 - Owned vast amounts of property (no taxes)
- **Second Estate: Nobility (1.5% of pop.)**
 - Official positions
 - No taxes

THIRD ESTATE

- Third Estate: Commoners (98% of pop.)
 - Included Bourgeoisie as well as peasants, and city workers
 - Bourgeoisie:
 - Small in number but wealthiest most outspoken in Third Estate
 - Merchants, lawyers, manufacturers, storekeepers and artisans
 - Resented the special privileges of the nobility
 - Were forced to pay the majority of taxes

THIRD ESTATE

- Peasants: largest group in Third Estate
 - Burdened by taxes, tithes, and rent
 - No privileges (hunting)
- City Workers:
 - Servants, apprentices, and day labourers
 - Resented noble privileges
 - Hardest hit by inflation

PHILOSOPHY

- Enlightenment:
 - Voltaire: satirized social evils and undermined respect for Church and state.
 - I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it.
 - Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.
 - In general, the art of government consists of taking as much money as possible from one class of citizens to give to another
 - Common sense is not so common

PHILOSOPHY

- Locke: subjects retain rights to life, liberty, and property and were entitled to defend these rights against tyranny.
- Montesquieu: praised England's limited monarchy balanced by Parliament and the courts
- These ideas were spread through debating clubs, salons, and Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.

ECONOMIC CRISIS

- 1700's economy prospered:
 - Population increase
 - Food surpluses
 - Mercantilism helped manufacturing
- Late 1770's economy slows
 - Poor harvests
 - Middle-age regulations still existed (tolls)
 - Guild monopolies over production

ECONOMIC CRISIS

- Largest problem was national debt
- Government had borrowed to fund wars of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI
- Support of American Revolution

ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

- Louis XVI saw need
 - Not determined or able ruler
 - Lacked strength of will to back ministers
- Finance minister: Robert Turgot
 - Able to control government spending and reduce spending at Versailles
 - Removed internal customs
 - Tried to limit power of guilds
 - Unsuccessful in proposing to tax nobles
 - Dismissed by the king

ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

- 1786: Banks refuse to lend more money to the French Treasury
- 1787 and 1788: poor harvest caused food shortage
- Nobles refused any tax reform
- Louis XVI summoned the Estates General for May 1789

FROM ESTATES GENERAL TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Estates General not called since 1614
- Each estate elected its own delegates and drafted *cahiers*
- Third Estate wanted all estates to meet together and each delegate to have one vote (not one vote per estate)
 - King rejected the plan, insisted estates meet separately
- Deputies from Third Estate proclaimed a National Assembly
 - Claimed right to write a constitution
 - Banished from their meeting hall by the king

FROM ESTATES GENERAL TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Deputies of the Third Estate were joined by many of the lower clergy and some reform-minded nobles at a nearby tennis court.
- Tennis Court Oath: promised not to disband until they had wrote a new constitution
- Louis XVI ordered the other two estates to join the Third in the National Assembly



FROM ESTATES GENERAL TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

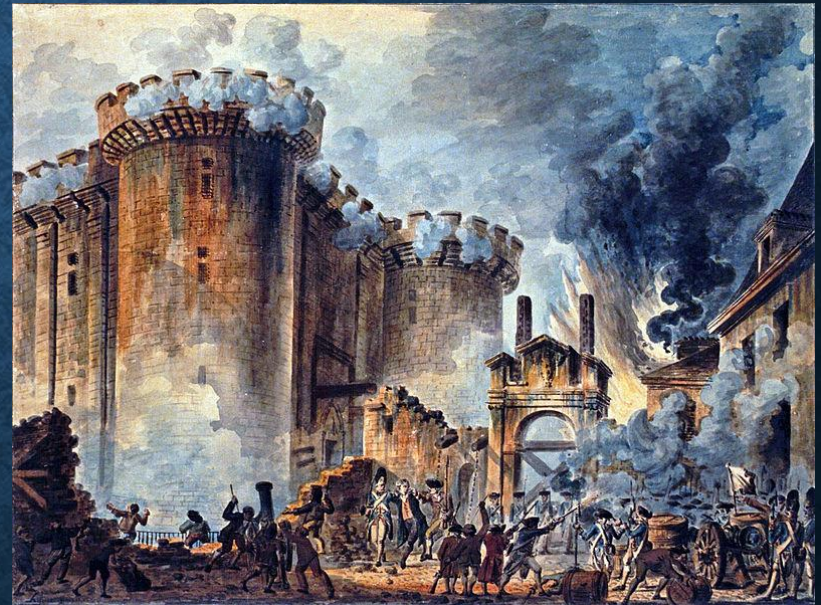
- Deep divisions in National Assembly:
 - Among estates
 - Within each estate
 - Limited Monarchy?
 - Radicals: abolish nobility, equal rights for all

POPULAR UPRISINGS

- People of Paris and peasants in the countryside had expected quick relief from taxes and poverty after the Estates General
- Instead still faced inflation, unemployment and food shortages
- Reports of troops massing at Versailles and the possible dissolving of the Assembly

POPULAR UPRISINGS

- July 14, 1789: Storming of the Bastille (injustice and inequality of the Old Regime)
- “Great Fear”
 - Peasants thought bandits were going village to village destroying crop and homes
 - Took up arms in defense
 - No bandits, turn on landlords: raided grain storehouses, destroyed tax records, swore never to pay feudal dues again



REFORMS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- August 4, 1789: National Assembly meets and many deputies rose in support of reform:
 - Abolished most feudal customs
 - Ended serfdom and tax-exempt privileges of the nobles
 - Made all males eligible for government and church positions

REFORMS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- By the end of August, the National Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man:
 - Democratic principles would be basis of French government
 - Equality for all citizens under the law
 - Freedom of speech, press, end to arbitrary arrests
 - Protection of personal property
- Still needed a constitution
- Angry Paris crowds continued to riot



MARCH ON VERSAILLES

- October 1789: Paris crowd led by women marched to palace
 - Suspected King and Queen of plotting against the National Assembly
 - Angry about high food prices
- Convinced King to come to Paris
- Forced King to wear Tricolor not white
- National Assembly also moved to Paris
- Under watchful eye of revolutionaries

RELIGIOUS REFORMS

- National Assembly declared freedom of worship
- Abolished special privileges of the catholic Church
- 1790: Civil Constitution of the Clergy
 - Government control over church
 - Sold church lands
 - Catholic supporters then condemned the revolution

CONSTITUTION OF 1791

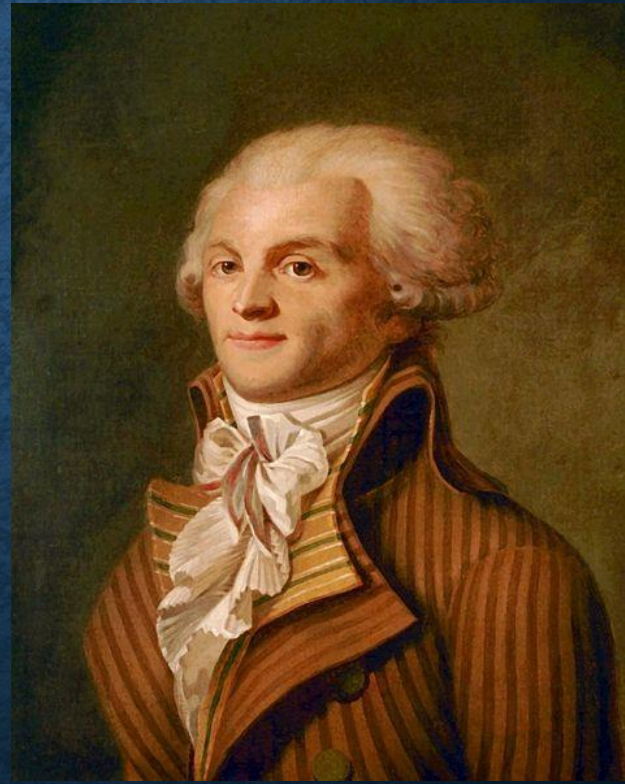
- Made France a limited monarchy
- System of separation of powers
- King was head of executive (veto power)
- Unicameral Legislature made laws (override veto)
- New system of courts
- Guaranteed equal rights
- Erased old distinctions

RESPONSES

- Radical revolutionaries wanted a republic
- Nobles felt constitution went too far
- Émigrés: French nobles who fled during the revolution encouraged other European rulers to oppose the revolutionaries
- King and Queen (Marie Antoinette) attempt to flee, but are caught and forced to accept new constitution

RESPONSES

- New legislative assembly divided:
 - Right side: moderates
 - Left side: radicals
- Radicals also divided:
 - Most radical were the Jacobins:
 - Wanted democracy and universal suffrage (male)
 - Led by Maximilien Robespierre



FRANCE AT WAR

- Émigrés urged Prussia and Austria to invade France and restore Louis XVI to full power
- Revolutionaries thought war would unite the country
- France declared war against Austria in April 1792
 - War would start badly for France:
 - Many officers were nobles who left
 - Democratic minded regiments voted on fighting

FRANCE AT WAR

- By August 1792, Austrian and Prussian troops were advancing on Paris
- “Brunswick Declaration” (Prussian Commander/Duke) : if Paris did not surrender they would burn the city and put its leaders to the “tortures which they have deserved”
- French rallied under slogan “Liberté, égalité, fraternité”
- La [Marseillaise](#)

2ND REVOLUTION?

- Defeated Prussians at Battle of Valmy, forced invaders out
- Despite victories, war caused high prices and desperate food shortages
- August 1792:Radicals took over Paris city government and set up a provisional administration
- Attacked palace, killed many guards of the king
- Imprisoned royal family and called for a national convention to write a new constitution

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

- New delegates were elected in a far more radical atmosphere
- Met in October:
 - First act was to abolish monarchy and make France a republic
 - What to do with king? Jacobins: tried for treason, moderates: imprisoned till end of war

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

- November: Convention found trunk with letters from king plotting with émigrés to crush revolution
- Convention tried and convicted King Louis XVI of treason
- By a majority of one vote, the delegates sentenced him to death
- Jan. 21, 1793: guillotine



ATTACKS ON THE REVOLUTION

- Other European countries feared the revolution
- March 1793: Great Britain, Dutch Netherlands, and Spain joined Prussia and Austria in war against France
- War caused starvation and economic hardship in France
- Some felt the revolution went too far (uprisings)

THE REIGN OF TERROR

- National Convention created a Committee of Public Safety
 - Almost dictatorial power
 - Waged brutal campaign against 'enemies' of France
 - Led by Robespierre "Republic of Virtue" in which "our country assures the welfare of each individual and where each individual enjoys with pride the prosperity and the glory of our country."
 - Honest and dedicated to ideals but violent, inflexible and ruthless against enemies of the state
- Reign of Terror lasted from July 1793 to July 1794

THE REIGN OF TERROR

- The Committee of Public Safety created a Law of Suspects to arrest people they believed were working against the revolution
- 20,000 to 40,000 men women, and children were condemned to the guillotine including Marie Antoinette
- Ruthlessness had its effect and revolts subsided.

THE REIGN OF TERROR

- Instituted national draft law (conscription) to protect France from invasion
- Set limits on prices and wages and rationed food
- Spring of 1794: French forces victorious on the battlefield against coalition
- People questioned constant executions
- Arrested Robespierre and had him executed in July 1794; end of Reign of Terror

IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION ON DAILY LIFE

- French life transformed: monarchy gone, king dead
- More democratic
- National Convention abolished feudal custom and ended slavery
- Confiscated lands of émigrés
- Fashion became simple, arts were patriotic, metric system established, public school system
- End of the revolution (1794) and had it failed?