



THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

SPIELVOGEL CHAPTER 17

part II

A REVOLUTION IN POLITICS: THE ERA OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON

BACKGROUND TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

- The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution mark the beginnings of the modern history of Europe
- The French Revolution is the major turning point in European political and social history
- The French Revolution marks the beginning of a liberal movement to extend political rights and power to the bourgeoisie who possessed capital
- Bourgeoisie = middle class
- Capital = money and resources used to create wealth
- Most say that the cause of the French Rev. was economic collapse and hungry people - but the statistics show that the fifty years before 1789 were a period of economic growth in France
- A better/more complete explanation of the cause of the F.R. is found by looking at various aspects of French society and its problems in the late 18th century

The French Revolution

"Bourgeois" Phase:

1789-1792

BOURGEOISIE

1. Made up about 8% of the pop.
 - There was some agreement and similarities between the wealthier bourgeoisie and some nobles
2. They numbered about 2.3 million
3. Merchants, industrialists, bankers, and professionals = what would today be called "white collar workers"
 1. Influenced by enlightenment thinking
 2. Wanted social and political reforms
 3. Ended up disagreeing on the scope and extent of social and political changes
4. Middle class resented being excluded from top jobs
5. Middle class resented the social and political privileges of the nobles

*It was the best of times,
it was the worst of times,
it was the age of wisdom,
it was the age of foolishness,
it was the epoch of belief,
it was the epoch of incredulity...*

-- Charles Dickens
A Tale of Two Cities

The French Monarchy: 1775 - 1793



Marie Antoinette & Louis XVI



Marie Antoinette and the Royal Children

Marie Antoinette's "Peasant Cottage"



Marie Antoinette's "Peasant Cottage"



The Necklace Scandal



1,600,000 livres
[\$100 million today]

- Y Cardinal Louis René Édouard de Rohan
- Y The Countess de LaMotte

Let Them Eat Cake!



- Y Marie Antoinette NEVER said that!
- Y "Madame Deficit"
- Y "The Austrian Whore"



- ### OTHER PROBLEMS FACING THE FRENCH MONARCHY
- ❑ Bad harvests in 1787-1788 = food shortages
 - ❑ Beginnings of a manufacturing depression
 - ❑ Rising food prices
 - ❑ Unemployment in the cities
 - ❑ Influence of the Enlightenment = interest and desire for reform and modernization
 - ❑ The French Parlements = regional law courts made up of noble judges - blocked new taxes

BOURGEOISIE

French Professional Class

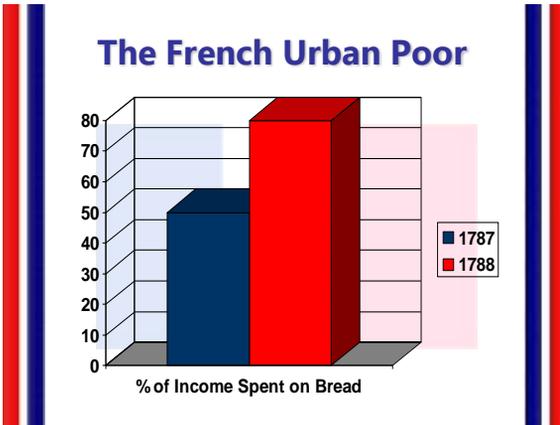
(Merchants, Lawyers, etc.)



Socio-Economic Data, 1789

Land Ownership by Social Category on the Eve of the French Revolution

| | Clergy | Nobility | Bourgeoisie | Peasantry |
|--|--------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Land in France owned by each group | 6-10% | 20-25% | 30% | 40-45% |
| Each group as a percentage of the total population | 2% | 1.5% | 8.4% | 82-87% |



Financial Problems in France, 1789

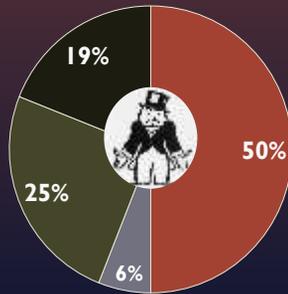
a Urban Commoner's Budget:

- Food 80%
- Rent 25%
- Tithe 10%
- Taxes 35%
- Clothing 20%
- **TOTAL 170%**

a King's Budget:

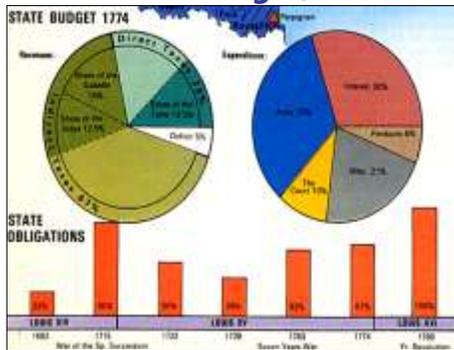
- Interest 50%
- Army 25%
- Versailles 25%
- Coronation 10%
- Loans 25%
- Admin. 25%
- **TOTAL 160%**

Budget Crisis



- Debt
- Versailles
- Military
- Public Works

French Budget, 1774



Where is the tax money?



Lettres de Cachet

- Y The French king could warrant imprisonment or death in a signed letter under his seal.
- Y A carte-blanche warrant.
- Y Cardinal Fleury issued 80,000 during the reign of Louis XV!
- Y Eliminated in 1790.

Ancien Regime Map,



the Old Regime

THREE ESTATES:

- **First** (Clergy)
- **Second** (Nobility)
- **Third** (Everyone Else)
 - 97% of Population



TAX EXEMPT
3%

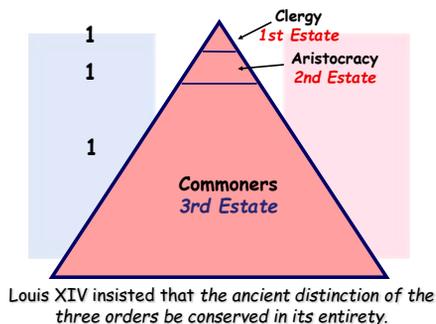
1
2
3

Caricature of the Third Estate carrying the First Estate and the Second Estate on its back.

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE OLD REGIME

- ❑ French society was based on the inequality of rights = the idea of privilege
- ❑ French society was divided into three legal categories known as the three orders or estates
 1. The First Estate = the clergy
 2. The Second Estate = the nobles
 3. The Third Estate = the commoners

The Suggested Voting Pattern: Voting by Estates



THE FIRST ESTATE

- ❑ The clergy - priests and church officials
- ❑ They numbered about 130,000 out of French population of about 27 million
- ❑ The church owned 10% of the land
- ❑ Great differences in wealth and status of clergy - from high nobles to poor commoners

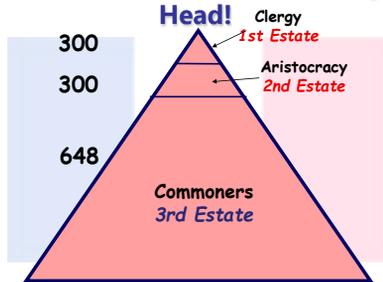
THE SECOND ESTATE

- 
1. The nobles - aristocrats/titled individuals through heredity
 2. They numbered about 350,000
 3. Held the top positions in the government, the military, the law courts, and high church offices
 4. Two types of nobles - A. the nobility of the robe B. the nobility of the sword
 5. The nobles wanted to expand their privileges/compete with the monarch for power
 6. Nobles wanted to maintain their monopoly on high positions in the military, church, and govt.
 7. The law gave them special treatment and privileges - tax exemption most importantly

THE THIRD ESTATE

1. The commoners - the vast majority of the pop.
2. This group included the poorest of the poor and the wealthiest of the wealthy - all w/out titles
3. Peasants were the largest segment of the third estate = 75-80% of the total pop.
4. Skilled artisans, shopkeepers, wage earners in the city = today would be called "the working class"
5. Unskilled workers = the urban poor
6. The working class and urban poor in Paris play a key role in the Revolution
7. The bourgeoisie = the middle class

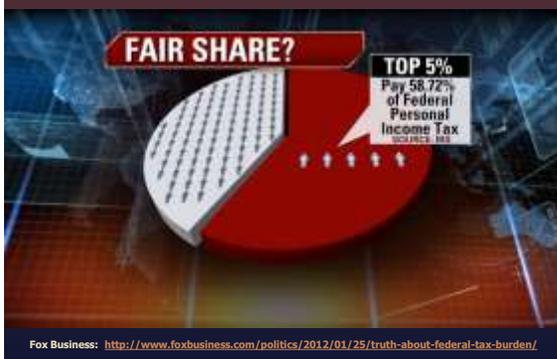
The Number of Representatives in the Estates General: Vote by Head!



The Tax Burden in America Today



The Tax Burden in America Today



IMMEDIATE/SHORT TERM CAUSE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

- ❑ The financial collapse of the French government
- ❑ Overspending - costly wars and royal extravagance
- ❑ Borrowing and increasing interest on the government debt - half the govt revenues went to pay interest
- ❑ Need to raise taxes
- ❑ In 1785 Charles de Calonne attempted to reform the govt and finances
- ❑ The nobles resisted Calonne's efforts and he failed
- ❑ Nobles said all the nation had to agree to tax increases/financial reforms
- ❑ The only mechanism that represented all the people was the French parliamentary body called the Estates-General...but it had not met since 1614...



Charles de Calonne - attempted to Reform govt and financed = failed

THE UNEXPECTED REVOLUTION

- ❑ The Estates-General was called to solve the financial crisis
- ❑ The monarchy did not want the E.-G. to make major reforms of the government
- ❑ Delegates to the E.-G. did not expect to make revolutionary changes
- ❑ The meeting of the E.-G. unexpectedly starts the revolution

THE ESTATES-GENERAL

- ❑ Consisted of reps from each of the three orders - clergy, nobles, commoners
- ❑ Elections were held to choose reps - third estate was given twice as many reps
- ❑ Reps of the 3rd estate = 2/3 lawyers and 1/3 from towns
- ❑ Reps of the nobility = 90% reform/enlightenment types
- ❑ Cahiers de doléances = statements of local grievances drafted during the elections
- ❑ Reform minded reps wanted a regular constitutional govt that would abolish tax privileges
- ❑ The Estates-General opened at Versailles in May 1789

- ❑ Voting by order or by head = should each rep have one vote or does each order have one vote???
- 1. Traditionally each order voted separately
- 2. If they kept the tradition of voting by social order then the 3rd estate would always be out voted 2 to 1 by the 1st and 2nd estates
- ❑ The conflict/dispute over voting caused immediate problems deadlock



Convening the Estates General May, 1789



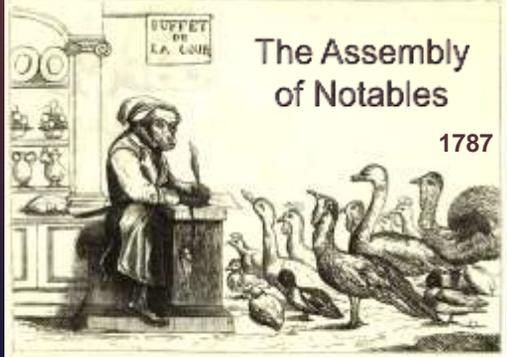
Last time it was called into session was 1614!



The Assembly of Notables

1787

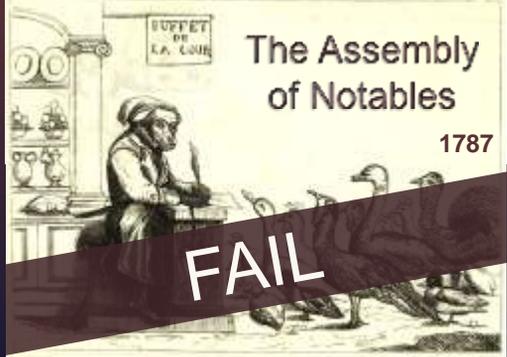
In 1787, Louis called an "Assembly of Notables," hoping to get representatives from the nobility and the Church to agree to be taxed.



The Assembly of Notables

1787

AMEMBLY OF THE NOTABLES AT PARIS, FEBRUARY 24, 1787.
 "Dear objects of my care, I have assembled you to ascertain with what ease you want to be taxed."
 "But we don't want to be taxed at all."
 "You are departing from the question."



The Assembly of Notables

1787

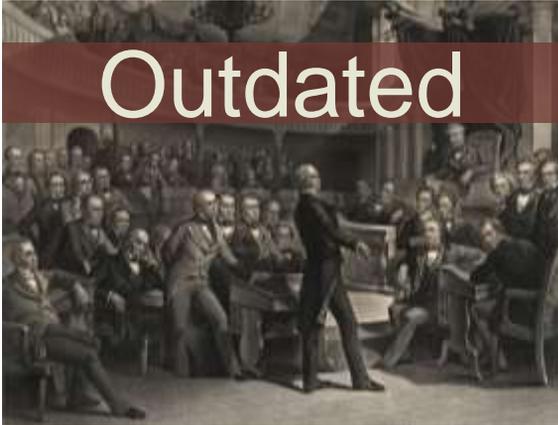
FAIL

AMEMBLY OF THE NOTABLES AT PARIS, FEBRUARY 24, 1787.
 "Dear objects of my care, I have assembled you to ascertain with what ease you want to be taxed."
 "But we don't want to be taxed at all."
 "You are departing from the question."

The Estates General

The French king's advisory body
 - Not convened since 1614





Each *estate* cast **one vote** as a group.

| | | |
|------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The Clergy | The Nobility | Everyone Else |

AGREEMENT = VICTORY

| | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1 | 2 |
| The Clergy | The Nobility |



"The Third Estate Awakens"

Y The commons finally presented their credentials not as delegates of the Third Estate, but as "representatives of the nation."



Y They proclaimed themselves the "National Assembly" of France.

What is the Third Estate? - this was a pamphlet written by Abbe Sieyes who said that the 3rd estate is everything, it represents the nation and cannot be politically ignored anymore



Emmanuel Joseph Sieyes
1748-1836

What is The Third Estate?



What is the Third Estate?
Everything.
What has it been until now in the political order?
Nothing.
What does it ask to become?
Something.



Reform Proposals

#1: "Doubling" the Third

| | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 3 |
| The Clergy | The Nobility | Everyone Else |

Reform Proposals

#2: Vote By Head

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 |
| 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 |
| 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 |
| | | 3 3 3 |
| | | 3 3 3 |

Reform Proposals

#2: Vote By Head

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 1 2 2 | 1 3 3 3 |
| 1 1 2 2 | 1 3 3 3 |
| 1 1 2 2 | 2 3 3 3 |
| | 2 3 3 3 |
| | 2 3 3 3 |

In a *single* assembly, individual nobles and priests could vote with the Third Estate delegates.

Indecision

"Doubling" the Third   **Vote by Head** 

TWICE AS MANY ANGRY DELEGATES





The Tennis Court Oath



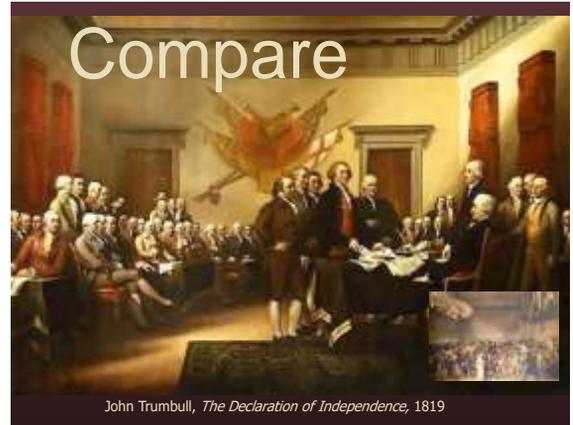
The National Assembly pledged not to adjourn until they had adopted a constitution for France.

Photo Credit: Amara U

"The Tennis Court Oath" by Jacques Louis David



June 20, 1789



CAPITULATION



Okay, fine. Whatever.

CAPITULATION

Louis finally recognized the National Assembly as a lawmaking body and directed the remaining First and Second Estate to join the Assembly...

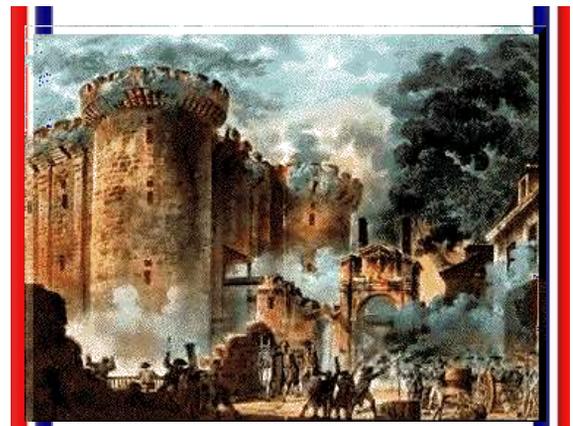


THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- ❑ The king/government fails to assume leadership/take control of the E-G when it opens and the 3rd estate pushes for voting by individual reps and refuses to cooperate
- ❑ June 17, 1789 = third estate declares itself a "National Assembly"
- ❑ June 20, 1789 = king locks out the third estate/they move to an indoor tennis court/ issue the Tennis Court Oath
- ❑ The Tennis Court Oath = the third estate calling themselves the National Assembly declare that they will not disband until France has a constitution
- ❑ The king turns against the 3rd estate and sides with the 1st estate, threatens to dissolve the E-G, calls out the army to surround Versailles, then does nothing

Europe on the Eve of the

the





THE INTERVENTION OF THE COMMON PEOPLE – THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE

- ❑ The King's calling out the army outrages and inflames people - in Paris the people begin to form mobs and organize themselves
- ❑ Leaders of the people in Paris begin to form a citizens army and go searching for arms and ammunition
- ❑ July 14, 1789 - the storming/fall of the Bastille
- ❑ Bastille = royal armory and prison
- ❑ The Storming of the Bastille marks the end of royal authority in Paris - royal troops in Paris are no longer reliable
- ❑ The city of Paris forms a citizens army = the National Guard
- ❑ The Marquis de Lafayette is appointed commander of the new citizens militia
- ❑ The Tricolor - red, blue and white three bar flag is designed to be the new flag of the Nat Guard and then becomes the flag of revolutionary France
- ❑ Royal authority collapses in the cities - the people form "popular committees" and national guards in cities

Storming the Bastille, July 14, 1789

Y A rumor that the king was planning a military coup against the National Assembly.



- Y 18 died.
- Y 73 wounded.
- Y 7 guards killed.
- Y It held 7 prisoners [5 ordinary criminals & 2 madmen].

Crane Brinton: The Course that Revolutions Seem to Take

1. Impossible demands made of government which, if granted, would mean its end.
2. Unsuccessful government attempts to suppress revolutionaries.
3. Revolutionaries gain power and seem united.
4. Once in power, revolutionaries begin to quarrel among themselves, and unity begins to dissolve.
5. The moderates gain the leadership but fail to satisfy those who insist on further changes.

Crane Brinton: The Course that Revolutions Seem to Take

6. Power is gained by progressively more radical groups until finally a lunatic fringe gains almost complete control.
7. A strong man emerges and assumes great power.
8. The extremists try to create a "heaven-on-earth" by introducing their whole program and by punishing all of their opponents.
9. A period of terror [extreme violence] occurs.
10. Moderate groups regain power. THE REVOLUTION IS OVER!

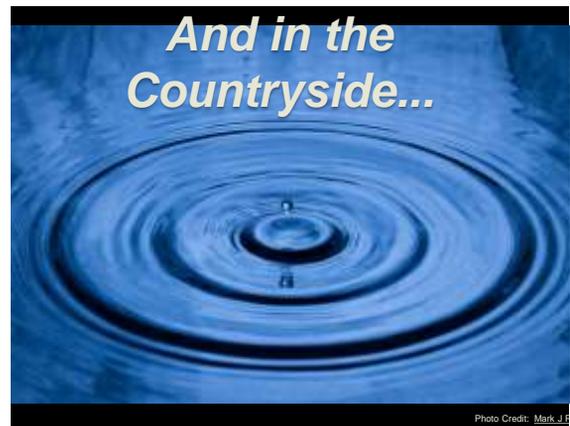


Photo Credit: Mark J.

The Great Fear: Peasant Revolt

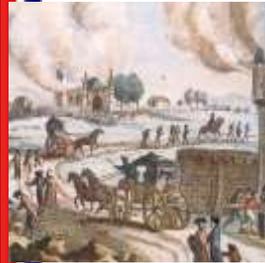


Y Rumors that the feudal aristocracy [the *aristos*] were sending hired brigands to attack peasants and pillage their land.





THE GREAT FEAR



Collapse of royal authority in the countryside/rural areas = peasant revolutions in the countryside

Peasants refuse to obey the old traditional rules and fees
Attack and challenge the local power and privileges of the nobles

The Great Fear - summer of 1789/anarchy and uprisings in the countryside



The Path of the "Great Fear"

Night Session of August 4, 1789

Y Before the night was over:

- The feudal regime in France had been abolished.
- All Frenchmen were, at least in principle, subject to the same laws and the same taxes and eligible for the same offices.

Equality & Meritocracy!

Decrees of August 4th

Abolished the "feudal system"

- feudal dues
- nobles' hunting rights
- tax exemptions

[Link to Document](#)



National Constituent Assembly

1789 - 1791

Liberté!

Egalité!

Fraternité!

August Decrees

August 4-11, 1789

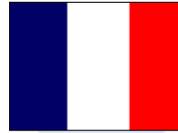
(A renunciation of aristocratic privileges!)

BUT

- Y Feudal dues were not renounced outright [this had been too strong a threat to the principle of private property!]
- Y Peasants would compensate their landlords through a series of direct payments for obligations from which they had supposedly been freed.
 - Therefore, the National Assembly made revolutionary gestures, but remained essentially moderate.

Their Goal → Safeguard the right of private property!!

The Tricolor (1789)



The WHITE of the Bourbons + the RED & BLUE of Paris.

Citizen!



The Tricolor is the



The "Liberty Cap": *Bonne*



Revolutionary Symbols



Cockade



La Republic



Liberté

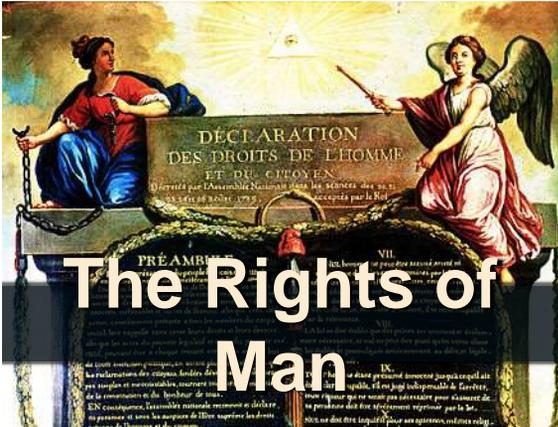


Revolutionary Clock



Revolutionary Playing





The Rights of Man

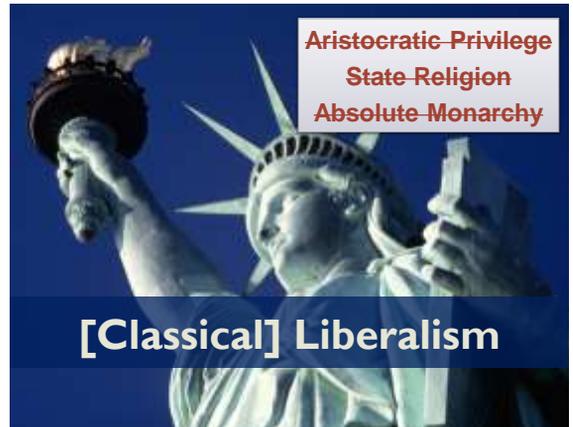


[Classical] Liberalism



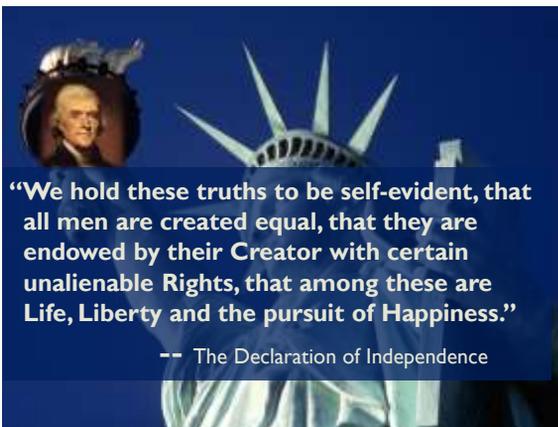
Limited Government
Economic Liberty
Political Liberty

[Classical] Liberalism



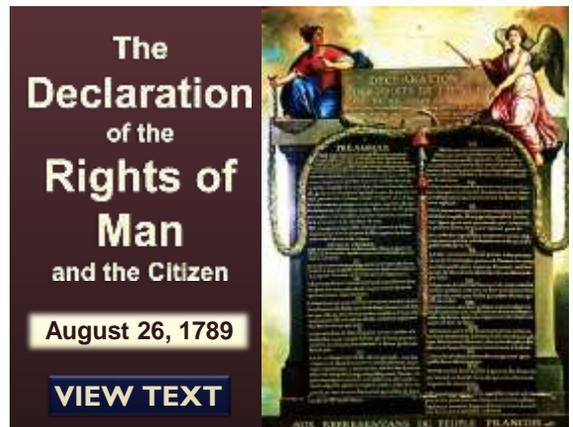
Aristocratic Privilege
State Religion
Absolute Monarchy

[Classical] Liberalism



“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

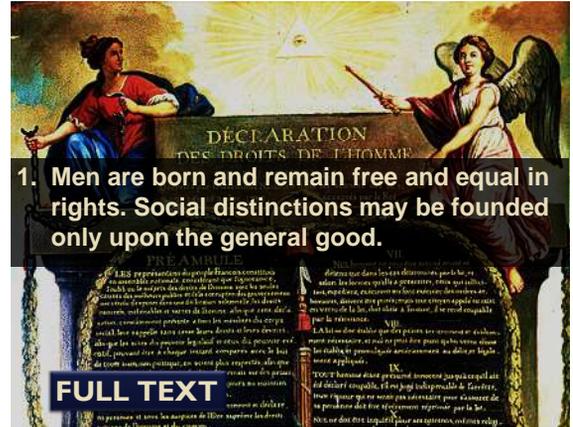
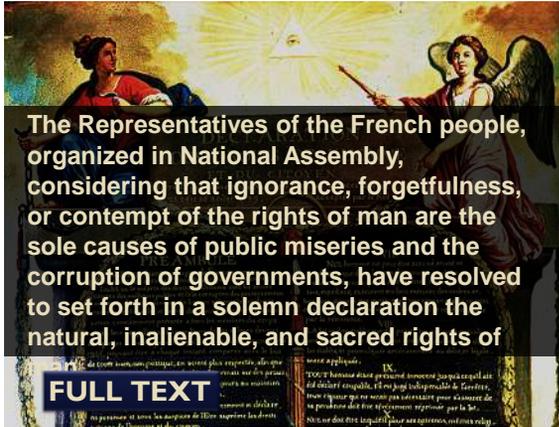
-- The Declaration of Independence



The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen

August 26, 1789

[VIEW TEXT](#)



INFLUENCERS

of the Declaration



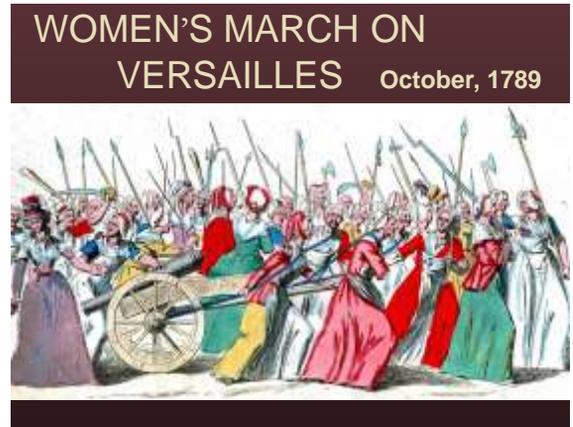
US
Declaration of Independence



Jean J. Rousseau



The British System of Gov.



Parisian Revolution



After the Women's March on Versailles, Paris became the Revolution's epicenter.

NEXT UP

The French Revolution Radicalizes

1790-1792



DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD REGIME

National Assembly = Constituent Assembly

National Assembly 1789-1791 -

1. The new revolutionary government
2. They are writing a new constitution for France - working to create a system of constitutional monarchy
3. They vote on the night of August 4, 1789 to abolish feudalism and aristocratic privileges
4. On August 26, 1789 they adopt the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen



August 26, 1789

- ✓ Liberty!
- ✓ Property!
- ✓ Resistance to oppression!
- ✓ Thomas Jefferson was in Paris at this time.

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND THE CITIZEN

1. The charter of basic liberties of revolutionary France
2. The most important document of the revolution
3. Declared that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights"
4. Government must protect people's natural rights
5. Political power comes from the people
6. Ended legal inequality
7. Ended tax exemptions
8. Gave all citizens the right to participate and serve in government
9. Outlawed arbitrary arrests
10. Established freedom of speech and press

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen Posed New Dilemmas

1. Did women have equal rights with men?
 - ❖ Women's Rights - leaders of the National Assembly said women have equal civil rights but not equal political rights
2. What about free blacks in the colonies?
3. How could slavery be justified if all men were born free?
4. Did religious toleration of Protestants and Jews include equal political rights?

March of the Women, October 5-6, 1789

A spontaneous demonstration of Parisian women for bread.



*We want the baker, the baker's wife
and the baker's boy!*

THE WOMEN'S MARCH TO VERSAILLES

- ❑ October 5, 1789 - thousands of angry women demanding bread march to Versailles to confront the king and the National Assembly
- ❑ The crowd demand and force the king and his family to return to Paris
- ❑ The people want the king in Paris so they can keep an eye on him and pressure him if needed
- ❑ The king is forced to accept the authority of the National Assembly

The "October Days" (1789)



The king was thought to be surrounded by evil advisors at Versailles so he was forced to move to Paris and reside at the **Tuileries Palace**.

Planting the Tree of Liberty



1790

Sir Edmund Burke (1790): *Reflections on the Revolution in France*



The conservative response
to the French Revolution



How to Finance the New Govt.?

1. Confiscate Church Lands



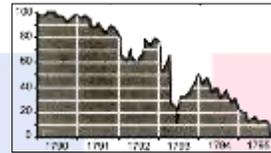
One of the most controversial decisions of the
entire revolutionary period.

2. Print Assignats



- ✓ Issued by the National Constituent Assembly.
- ✓ Interest-bearing notes which had the church lands as security.

Depreciation of the Assignat

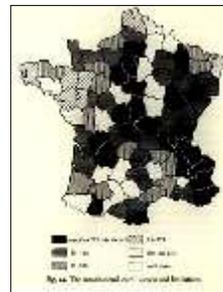


- ✓ Whoever acquired them were entitled to certain privileges in the purchase of church land.
- ✓ The state would retire the notes as the land was sold.
- ✓ They began circulating as paper currency.
 - Government printed more → **INFLATION** [they lost 99% of their value ultimately].
 - Therefore, future governments paid off their creditors with cheap money.

THE REVOLUTION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- The National Assembly confiscates church lands and declare it to be the property of the government
- July 1790 - the National Assembly issues the Civil Constitution of the Clergy
 1. Bishops and priests were to be elected by the people
 2. Clergy were to be paid by the government = become employees of the state
 3. All clergy required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Civil Constitution
 4. Pope forbids clergy to take this oath - almost half the clergy obey the pope
 5. Refractory Clergy - those who refuse to swear the oath/they come to be seen as enemies of the rev.
 6. The attacks on the church cause some people to become counter-revolutionaries

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy



July 12, 1790

Jurying
vs.
Non-Jurying [refractory] Clergy

The oath of allegiance permanently divided the Catholic population!

New Relations Between Church & State

- ✓ Government paid the salaries of the French clergy and maintained the churches.
- ✓ The church was reorganized:
 - Parish priests → elected by the district assemblies.
 - Bishops → named by the department assemblies.
 - The pope had NO voice in the appointment of the French clergy.
- ✓ It transformed France's Roman Catholic Church into a branch of the state!!



Pope Pius VI [1775-1799]

Louis XVI "Accepts" the Constitution & the National Assembly. 1791



CONSTITUTION OF 1791

The Constitution of 1791 –

1. The National Assembly writes a new constitution then disbands
2. France becomes a constitutional monarchy
3. King has few powers under the new constitution
4. Legislative Assembly = the new national parliament of France
5. Active Citizens = those who could pay a tax and vote/Passive Citizens = those who couldn't vote

The French Constitution of 1791:

A Bourgeois Government

- ✓ The king got the **"suspensive" veto** [which prevented the passage of laws for 4 years].
 - He could not pass laws.
 - His ministers were responsible for their own actions.
- ✓ A permanent, elected, single chamber National Assembly.
 - Had the power to grant taxation.
- ✓ An independent judiciary.

The French Constitution of 1791:

A Bourgeois Government

- ✓ **"Active" Citizen** [who pays taxes amounting to 3 days labor] could vote vs. **"Passive" Citizen**.
 - 1/3 of adult males were denied the franchise.
 - Domestic servants were also excluded.
- ✓ A newly elected **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**.

↓
GOAL → Make sure that the country was not turned over to the mob!

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly -

1. Administrative restructuring = France is divided into "83 departments" which were local districts
2. Election of local councils and officials
3. Bourgeoisie /lawyers now control local government
4. Assignats = new revolutionary paper currency - hit by inflation
5. Massive financial problems for the govt - tax evasion

83 Revolutionary



February 26, 1790

The Royal Family Attempts to Flee

- Y June, 1791
- Y Helped by the Swedish Count Hans Axel von Fusen [Marie Antoinette's lover].
- Y Headed toward the Luxembourg border.
- Y The King was recognized at Varennes, near the border



THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

- ❑ June 1791 - The king tries to escape to Austria and is captured at Varennes near the border
- ❑ The National Assembly begins governing in Oct. 1791 with a discredited and disloyal king heading the govt



OLYMPE DE GOUGES

- ❑ Olympe de Gouges - woman playwright who wrote that women should have all the same rights as men even equal political rights



Olympe de Gouges (1745-

1793)

- ✓ Women played a vital role in the Revolution.
- ✓ But, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man* did NOT extend the rights and protections of citizenship to women.

Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen (1791)



OPPOSITION FROM ABROAD



Old Regime/Absolute monarchs in Europe opposed the French Revolution

Feared the rev would set a bad example
Feared that it might spread to their states

The Declaration of Pillnitz = Austria and Prussia call on all monarchs to join together to restore

King Louis to absolute power
The D. of P. angers the Nat. Assembly - France Declares war on Austria in April 1792

The Prussian King and the Austrian Emperor - enemies of the French Revolution

THE SUMMER OF 1792

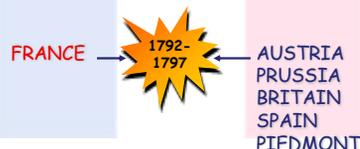
1. France does badly at the start of the war against Austria
2. Economic shortages
3. Radicals in Paris begin to demonstrate and protest - blame the king for all problems
4. The Paris Commune = radical leaders in Paris form their own city got to overthrow the existing govt
5. August 1792 - Radical mobs attack the Tuileries (the king's palace in Paris)
The king's guards are slaughtered and the king and family flee to the Nat. Assembly
Radical mobs attack the National Assembly
King is captured and imprisoned
National Assembly is forced to suspend the monarchy and create a new government
6. The new government will be created by the "National Convention" whose members will be elected on the basis of universal male suffrage (all males have right to vote)
7. The National Convention will write a new constitution = create a republic/no more monarchy



The First Coalition & The Brunswick Manifesto

(August 3, 1792)

Duke of Brunswick → if the Royal Family is harmed, Paris will be leveled!!



This military crisis undermined the new Legislative Assembly.

French Soldiers & the Tricolor: *Vive Le Patrie!*



- ✓ The French armies were ill-prepared for the conflict.
- ✓ $\frac{1}{2}$ of the officer corps had emigrated.
- ✓ Many men deserted.
- ✓ New recruits were enthusiastic, but ill-trained.
- ✓ French troops often broke ranks and fled in disorder.

French Expansion: 1791-1799

