



# Liberalism: Fuel for Revolution

- Roots of Liberalism
  - Greco-Roman philosophy emphasized the importance of the individual and the dignity of mankind
  - Judeo-Christian tradition also emphasized the dignity of man as well as his social responsibility to society
  - Truly formulated by the Enlightenment philosophes
- Liberalism consisted of two radical ideas:
  - Liberty – Human rights and a new form of gov't
  - Equality – Identical civil rights and equality of opportunity
- Attractions of Liberalism
  - Educated elite desired representative government
    - Just like England, voting was limited to the propertied class!

# Old Regime - Structure of French Society

- The King was at the top
  - France was ruled by an absolute monarch who controlled every aspect of his subjects' lives.
- Below the King, there were three Estates
  - Three social classes



# The First Estate

- The clergy of the Gallican (French Catholic) Church
- Composed 0.5% of French population
- Owned 10% of land in France
- Paid very few taxes
  - Voluntary gift every 5 years!



# The Second Estate

- The Nobility
  - Very rich
  - Social status based on bloodline
- Composed 2% of French population
- Major landowners
  - Owned 25% of French land
- Paid NO taxes!



# The Third Estate

- The COMMONERS, consisted of three different groups
  - Bourgeoisie, or Middle Class
    - Merchants and Artisans
    - Well-educated and highly influenced by Enlightenment
    - Some were just as rich as the nobles in the Second Estate
  - Urban Workers
    - Cooks and Servants
  - Peasants
    - Farmers
    - Constituted 80% of total French population
- Third Estate composed 97.5% of total French population
- Owned 55-65% of French land
- Paid taxes – lots of taxes!
  - 50% of income!

# A Revisionist's Social Reality

- Recent historians argue that the structure of the Old Regime does not accurately describe the relationship between nobles and bourgeoisie
  - The nobles and bourgeoisie were not united, and they were not at odds against each other!
- In fact, these two groups “formed two parallel social ladders increasingly linked together at the top by wealth, marriage, and Enlightenment culture.”
- Most importantly, this educated elite was continually frustrated by a bureaucratic monarchy that continued to claim absolute power

# Political Crisis of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

- 1715 – Power of the parlements had been restored
- 1748 – Due to war debt, Louis XV tries to tax the exempt...they protest!!!!
- 1763 – Due to war debt, Louis XV tries again, but Parlement of Paris says that taxes cannot be levied without its consent
- 1768 – Angrily, Louis asserts his absolutism and appoints Rene de Maupeou to abolish parlements
  - Creation of Maupeou Parlements!!!
- Legitimacy of the monarch was called into question when Louis experienced desacralization by the public due to scandals relating to his morality

# Financial Crisis of the 1780s

- Louis XVI inherited a massive national debt from Louis XV
  - 50% of gov't spending was interest on the debt
  - 25% military
  - 6% for the king and his court
    - “Madame Deficit”
  - <20% for state improvement
- Due to this financial disaster, creditors decided to stop loaning the French gov't any money!



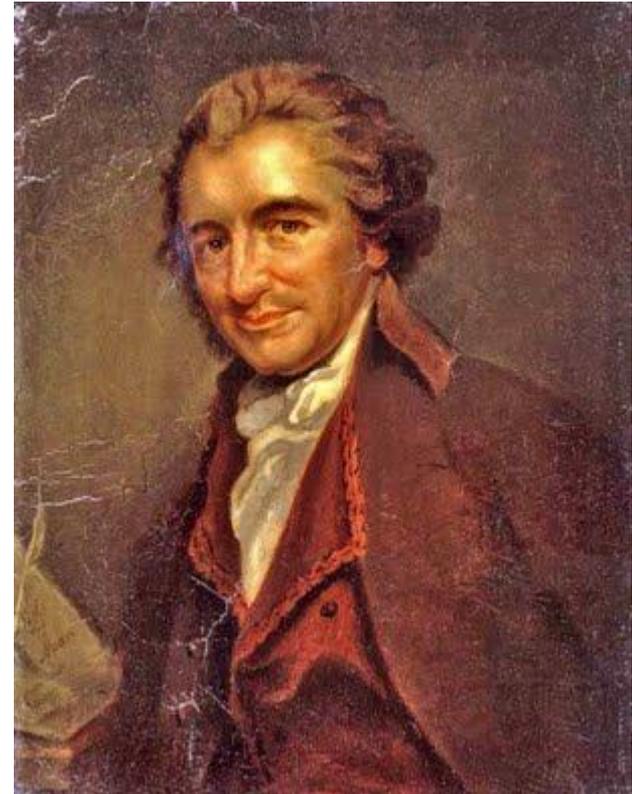
# The Weak Monarch: Louis XVI

- At first, Louis was irresponsible and indecisive
  - He failed to listen to his advisors...and instead, procrastinated his responsibilities!
- France had no internal means of improving its situation...other than taxes!!!
  - But, this would mean a complete reform of the tax system
- Louis tried to establish taxes by decree, but a wave of protest forced him to call the Estates General
  - For the first time since 1614!



# The Impact of the American Revolution

- The colonial rebellion provided Europe with an opportunity to weaken Britain
  - Holland, France, and Spain declared war on Britain
  - French support will bankrupt the country!
- Key idea: The AR provides a real example of how successful the Enlightenment principles could be if implemented!
  - It will inspire others to at least try to achieve the same result as the British colonists



# The Estates General of 1789

- Delegates from all estates shared similar views, which can be found in the *cahiers de doléances*:
  - Desire for constitutional monarchy
  - Individual liberties guaranteed
  - Economic regulations loosened
- At first, hopes were high that reform would occur...but,
  - Each Estate was given one vote
- How do you think the Estates would vote?

Estate	% of population	% of land owned	Paid taxes
First	0.5%	10%	Very little
Second	2%	20%	None
Third	97.5%	55-65%	A lot

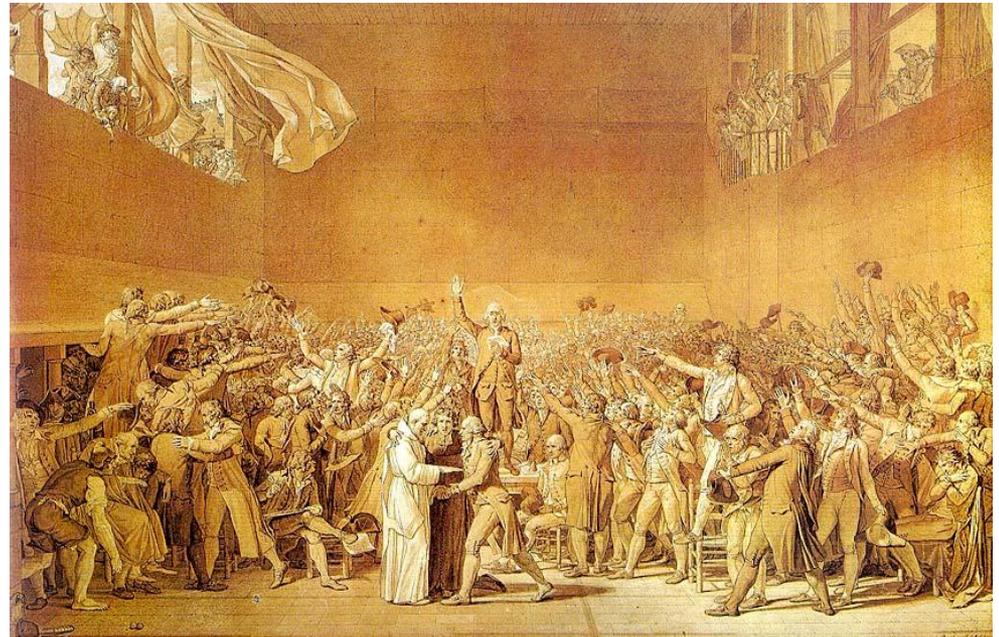
# The National Assembly

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate wanted each delegate to receive a vote
  - This would favor them!
  - Of course, the nobles said, “NO WAY!”
- Sieyes proposed that the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate become the National Assembly
  - Pass laws in the name of the people
- June 17, 1789 – Approved Sieyes plan by vote



# Tennis Court Oath

- June 20, 1789 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate was locked out of their meeting room
- So, they met in a nearby indoor tennis court
- Pledged to remain there until a new constitution had been created
  - First step toward revolution!
- In response, Louis reacted conservatively and called upon 18,000 troops to dismiss the National Assembly!



# Storming of the Bastille

- Rumors spread around France that soldiers were going to suppress the French people
- July 14, 1789 – Mob attacked the Bastille to gain arms and weapons
  - Killed the guards and paraded around the streets with decorated pikes!



# The Great Fear

- Panic spread across the countryside that nobles were attacking peasants
  - So the peasants rose up against the nobles
- October 1789 – Women's Bread Riot
  - Protest the rising price of bread
  - Forced royal family to leave Versailles and go to Paris



# Revolutionary Reform and Terror



# Declaration of the Rights of Man

- August 1789
  - Influenced by the Declaration of Independence
- Natural Rights
  - Liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression
- Not for women, though!
  - Olympe de Gouges executed in 1793



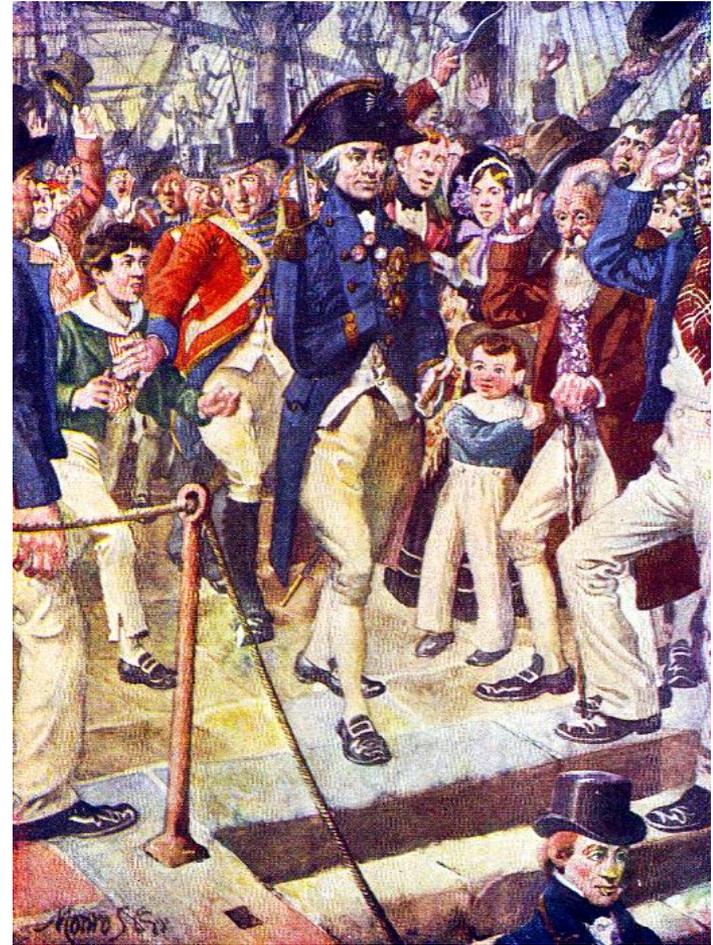
# A State-Controlled Church

- National Assembly abolished the Catholic Church
  - All church officials were to be elected and paid by the state
  - All church land was taken away and sold
- Peasants, as devout Catholics, did not approve!



# Constitutional Monarchy

- September 1791 – New constitution stripped the king of his law-making powers
- New Legislative Assembly was created to pass laws
- Factionalism ensued
  - Radicals
  - Moderates
  - Conservatives



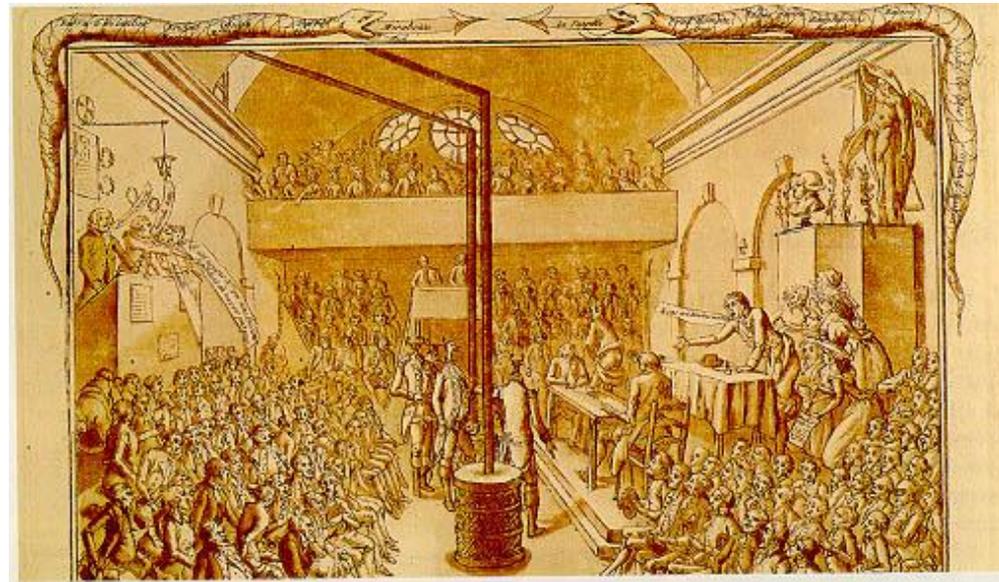
# Revolutionary France Goes To War

- The Assembly declared war on Prussia and Austria in April 1792
- Almost every country in Europe joins war against France
  - 1793, draft was established
- September Massacres
  - Rumor-mongering again!
  - Fearful Parisians raided prisons and killed over 1,000 pro-royal prisoners



# The New French Republic

- Constitution of 1791 was abolished and King Louis was deposed
- New legislature was established, called the National Convention
- Declared France a republic
  - Adult male citizens could vote and hold office



# Jacobins push for radicalism

- Jacobins – radicals who pushed for the new republic
  - Marat called for the death of all those who supported Kings
- National Convention tried Louis for treason
  - Found him guilty and sentenced him to execution by guillotine



# The Reign of Terror

- Robespierre sought to create a “Republic of Virtue”
- Committee of Public Safety
  - Essentially the dictator of France
  - Protect the revolution from its enemies
- Executed as many as 40,000 people by guillotine



# End of Robespierre

- National Convention turned on Robespierre and demanded his execution
  - Reign of Terror was over
- Moderate opinion gained power
- In 1795, established a new constitution
  - Two-house legislature
  - Directory – (five men)

