FRENCH REVOLUTION(S)

1789 to 1815
ABSOLUTISM AND CORRUPTION

Excess in Europe.
Absolutism is characterized by:

- Consolidation of power by a single, powerful monarch
- Executive, judicial, and legislative power in the hands of one ruler
- Prevalence in Western Europe between the 16th and 19th centuries, during the transition from feudalism to capitalism
Absolute monarchs justified their rule through theological underpinnings such as the Divine Right of Kings.

The Divine Right of Kings argued that because God granted kings the right to rule, subjects of a particular kingdom had no right to try and limit their power.
ABSOLUTISM IN EUROPE

Examples of absolute monarchs:
- Peter the Great (Russia)
- Catherine the Great (Russia)
- Henry VIII (England)
- Joseph II (Austria)
- Louis XIV (France)
Major problems with absolutism:

- Unfit and irresponsible rulers with unlimited political power
- Lavish overspending and heavy taxation

“Nothing so clearly indicates the limits of royal power as the fact that governments were perennially in financial trouble, unable to tap the wealth of those most able to pay, and likely to stir up a costly revolt whenever they attempted to develop an adequate income.”

William Bouwsma
Left: King Louis XIV— the “Sun King”-- in full royal regalia. Note the heels. Below: Louis XIV being crowned by an angel.
The palace at Versailles, constructed beginning in 1664.
I. Causes of the French Revolution
   A. Pre-Revolutionary French Hereditary Social Class System
      1. The First Estate
         a. Roman Catholic Clergy
         b. Income from:
            1. Feudal dues from peasants who lived on their land
            2. Tithes – 10% taxes charged to all church members
         c. Made-up about 1% of the total population
         d. Controlled about 10% of all land in France
         e. Exempt from paying taxes
         f. Those in high positions had very luxurious lifestyles

FRENCH REVOLUTION: BACKSTORY
2. The Second Estate
   a. Nobility
      1. only class eligible to serve in high government and clergy positions and as officers in the army and navy
      2. Income from feudal dues from peasants who lived on their land
      3. Very lavish lifestyle – living at Versailles or on their own lands
   b. Made-up about 2% of the total population
   c. Controlled about 35% of all lands in France
   d. Exempt from paying taxes
3. The Third Estate
   a. Commoners
   
   1. Bourgeoisie ("Middle Class")
      a. Doctors, lawyers, merchants, business owners
      b. Well-educated – many had read the works of the Enlightenment
      c. generally lived in the towns and cities
   
   2. Artisans
      a. most lived in the towns and cities
      b. most were poorly educated and lived and worked in slums
3. Peasants
   a. most lived in the countryside as farmers
   b. paid “rents” (feudal dues) as well as taxes
   b. Had very few rights and privileges
   c. Made up about 97% of the total population
   d. Controlled only about 55% of all lands in France
   e. Only social class required to pay taxes
B. Growing economic and social problems in the mid to late 1700s

1. Increasing populations caused resource shortages → a rise in the cost of living
   a. Nobles began to charge more feudal dues to peasants

2. The Bourgeoisie and Nobility demanded greater political power

3. A huge national debt caused by
   a. Many wars in the 1600s and 1700s – including French involvement in the American Revolution
b. Extravagant spending by previous French kings
4. In order to deal with these debts, the new king, Louis XVI:
   a. Decided to tax the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} estates– but they refused to pay them
   b. Tried to get a loan from French banks – but they refused
5. Bread Shortages in 1788-1789
C. Louis XVI summons the Estates-General (last summoned in 1614!) to meet at Versailles in May, 1789

1. What is the Estates-General?
   a. A gathering of representatives from all three of the Estates
   b. Designed to help the king make decisions
   c. Traditionally, each Estate received one vote

2. What Louis XVI wanted the Estates-General to do
   a. Have delegates from each Estate meet separately
   b. Decide that the Nobles and Clergy should pay taxes
3. What actually happened
   a. Many nobles wanted the Third Estate to pay higher taxes
   b. The delegates from the Third Estate demanded that the representatives of all three Estates meet in a joint session in which each delegate would get one vote
   *
   c. Many progressive members of the Nobility and Clergy supported this idea
   c. King Louis XVI orders the Estates to meet separately
      1. The members of the Third Estate refuse to do this
      2. In response, the King orders them to be “locked out”
D. These delegates of the Third Estate, calling themselves the National Assembly meet at a nearby indoor tennis court
   1. Are joined by their supporters from the other two Estates
   2. Pledged not to disband until they had finished writing a new constitution for France – “The Tennis Court Oath”

E. Seeing the danger of having the Third Estate write a new constitution, the King
1. Orders the delegates from the other Estates to join the National Assembly
2. Orders his troops to take up defensive positions in and around Paris
II. The Early Stages of the French Revolution (1789 – 1792)

A. June – August 1789

1. Power struggles between members of the three Estates
2. Poorer, more radical members of the Third Estate called the “Sans Culottes”:
   a. Attacked people who did not support their cause
   b. Storming of the Bastille (July 14, 1789)
      1. caused by rumor
      2. The mob took over the prison, seized the gunpowder
3. August 1789 – The National Assembly finally makes progress

a. Nobles and Clergy agreed to give up their feudal powers, dues and tax-exempt status
b. opened government jobs and voting to all male citizens
c. Drafted “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and The Citizen”
Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen

Aux représentans du peuple français...
EARLY REVOLUTION

d. The King refused to accept these reforms – many, again, are afraid that he will try to dissolve the National Assembly

B. October 1789 – the King and his family were forced to move from their palace at Versailles to Paris

C. Reforms made by the National Assembly in 1790

1. huge government debts to be paid off by the seizure and sale of Church-controlled lands
2. The Civil Constitution of the Catholic Church in France a department of the government
D. The Constitution of 1791
   1. What it did
      a. maintained the monarchy, but limited its powers
      b. created a one-house Legislative Assembly whose members were elected
* Eligible voters were males who paid a minimum tax

E. “The Flight to Varennes” (June 1791)
   1. The King and his family decide that they need to escape the unrest by fleeing to Austria
EARLY REVOLUTION

2. The King and his family are captured by French Soldiers at the town of Varennes and are sent back to Paris

3. Results:
   a. The King and his family live as a virtual prisoners in Paris
   b. The King is forced to accept his limited role in government
   c. Many of the French people distrust him even more
F. Events of 1792 through September

1. France declares war on Austria, Prussia and Sardinia
   a. The French Legislative Assembly feared Austria would back Louis XIV with military support
   b. Austria and its allies’ monarchs worried that their own citizens would get inspiration from the French and revolt against them.

2. Mobs began to attack the King’s residence in Paris and kill nobles and clergy imprisoned for “political crimes”

3. Radical members of the Legislative Assembly gain a majority – create yet another Constitution
Left: Charcoal portrait of the “Citoyen Capet,” after his forced return to Paris. 
Right: Citoyen Capet imprisoned at the Tour du Temple.
III. The Republic (1792 – 1795)

A. War with Austria and Prussia in 1792
   1. Initially, the war goes badly for the French
   2. Battle of Valmy – French forces win
      a. saves the revolution from being ended by Austria and/or Prussia

B. New Constitution → New government and new culture!
   1. Monarchy ended
      a. Debate began as to what to do with him
         (involving the two most powerful factions in the National Assembly)
Allons enfants de la Patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrive!
Contre nous de la tyrannie,
L'etendard sanglant est leve!
Entendez-vous dans les campagnes
Mugir ces feroces soldats?
Ils viennent jusque dans nos bras
Egorger nos fils et nos compagnes!

Aux armes, citoyens!
Formez vos bataillons
Marchons, marchons!
Qu'un sang impur
Abreuve nos sillons!

Arise children of the fatherland!
The day of glory has arrived.
Against us tyranny's
Bloody flag is raised
Listen to the sound in the fields
Do you hear the howling of these
fearsome soldiers?
They are coming into our midst
To cut the throats of your sons and
compatriots!

To arms citizens
Form your battalions
March, march!
Let their impure blood
Water our fields!
1. Moderates (Girondists) wanted him exiled
2. Radicals (Jacobins) wanted him executed
   b. November 1792 – Louis XVI’s letters to foreign kings discovered
   c. December 1792 – Louis XIV tried for treason
   d. January 1793 – King executed by a guillotine

2. Government ruled by an elected legislature called the National Convention

*. Voting rights given to all adult male citizens
THE REPUBLIC

3. New French cultural practices:
   a. everybody is now referred to as a “citizen”
   b. New, simpler system of weights and measures adopted – The Metric System!
   c. New calendar system
      1. day 1 of year 1 = Sept. 22, 1792
      2. New system of months
      3. 10 day weeks – 1 day weekend
CALENDRIER RÉPUBLICAIN,

Décreté par la Convention Nationale, pour la IIe année de la République Française;

Avec les mois et jours correspondants de l’ancien Calendrier.

A PARIS.
C. January 1793 – July 1793

1. Continuation of the War with Austria and Prussia
   a. Great Britain, Spain, Sardinia and the Netherlands join Austria and Prussia’s alliance against France
   b. Call for more volunteers to join the army
   c. In spite of winning some minor battles, the French army is overwhelmed and begin to retreat
THE REPUBLIC

d. Fearing an invasion, the National Convention:
1. Forms a “Committee of Public Safety” to direct the war
2. Starts *The Levee en Masse*, a national draft
   a. all men between 18 and 45 have to fight in the army
   b. all other citizens have to work for the good of France

2. Meanwhile, internal problems develop
   a. Civil War in western France – royalist peasants fight against the draft and the execution of the king
   b. Food shortages ➔ more mob violence in the cities
c. Problems in the National Convention
   1. Jacobins seize control and arrest the Girondists on charges of secretly being royalists
THE REIGN OF TERROR

1793 - 1794
D. “The Reign of Terror” July 1793 – July 1794

1. Disorder leads to the Committee of Public Safety (led by Robespierre) ruling France

2. Events of the Reign of Terror
   a. 40,000 people found guilty of treason and executed
      1. One was Marie Antoinette, the former Queen
      2. actually 85% of those executed were commoners!
b. A “Republic of Virtue” is established by the Jacobins
   1. Public schools set up to teach the children of all citizens
   2. Farmers given free instruction on how to produce more
   3. fixed prices and wages to control inflation
REIGN OF TERROR

4. abolished slavery in French colonies
5. encouraged religious toleration

*. But it took all power and lands away from the Catholic Church in France – converted many churches into “Temples of Reason”
2. End of the Reign of Terror

a. by spring, the war was going better, so there was a call for the Committee of Public Safety to step down

b. Robespierre accuses those politicians of treason and sends them to the guillotine

c. Other members of the National Convention arrest Robespierre and his followers and execute them for treason instead!

d. Backlash against the Jacobins and all of the “reforms” made during the “Reign of Terror”
1. all “reforms” ended
2. moderates in control of the National Convention
3. more rioting by the lower classes ensues

*. Yet another new constitution is called for by the people
IV. The Directory (1795 – 1799)

A. New constitution written

1. Two elected branches of government
   a. Executive branch comprised of a council of five “Directors”
   b. Two-housed legislature

2. Only male citizens who owned property could vote

* Essentially, total power now rested in the hands of the middle class
B. Many problems develop
   1. Rise of royalist sentiment – many people want the return of the monarchy
   2. sans-culottes riot due to continuing food shortages
   3. Gaps between the rich and poor widen
   4. The national debt had gotten even bigger!
   5. Many of the Directors were corrupt

C. France’s army is revered by the people – they are holding their own in the continuing war against Europe’s combined powers.
   * One of France’s most successful and young generals, Napoleon Bonaparte, became very powerful.
THE NAPOLEONIC PERIOD 1799 - 1815
THE CONSULATE

1799 - 1804
V. The Napoleonic Period (1799 – 1815)
A. The Consulate (October 1799 – 1804)

1. In October 1799, Napoleon returned from his fighting against the British in Egypt
   a. Led a successful coup d'état, overthrowing the Directory
   b. A new constitution written
      1. The executive branch now run by a council of three “Consuls”
      2. While supposedly a republic, this actually was a dictatorship
NAPOLEONIC PERIOD: CONSULATE

1. Napoleon became the “First Consul,” then “Consul for Life” in 1802
2. Napoleon replaced local, elected officials with his own appointees

2. Napoleon restructures the government with his vision of what the Revolution had in mind
   a. establishes a national school system (including universities and technical schools)
   b. fixes the national financial system
      1. establishes a Bank of France
      2. requires everybody to pay taxes
      3. inflation and high prices brought under control
NAPOLEONIC PERIOD: CONSULATE


1. some laws based on ideals of the Enlightenment
   a. legal equality of all citizens
   b. religious toleration
   c. advancement based on merit

2. some laws based on Napoleon’s own whims
   a. censorship of speech, press, books, plays
   b. women lost most of the rights that they got during the earlier stages of the Revolution
d. The Concordat of 1801 – Napoleon makes an agreement with the Pope

1. Catholicism is officially recognized as the official religion of France

2. But:
   a. Religious toleration made official, too
   b. Napoleon appoints bishops and the Church is still under government control
THE EMPIRE PERIOD

1803 - 1807
B. The French Empire and Napoleonic Wars
   1. Napoleon formed his Empire (1803-7)
      a. Britain and France’s treaty breaks down in May 1803 due to disagreements over trading rights
      b. War breaks out across Europe
      c. Napoleon had crowned himself Emperor of France in 1804
      d. Napoleon plans to invade Great Britain, but his plans are foiled by Britain’s navy
e. Napoleon turns his attention to taking over his neighbors through warfare and diplomacy

1. Between 1805 and 1807, Napoleon defeat most of Europe’s armies

2. By 1807 Napoleon controlled most of western and Central Europe

f. Napoleon spreads many of his reforms to those places which he controlled (directly or indirectly).
2. Established the Continental System
   a. Purpose – to promote French economic/trade superiority and to cripple Great Britain
   b. How it was supposed to work
      1. Napoleon ordered all his “allies” to stop trading with Great Britain
      2. Outlawed the importation of all British-made goods
      3. Ordered allied ships to seize ships carrying British goods
c. Britain demanded that all ships from all nations heading for European ports stop in Britain first

d. Why it failed:
   1. British naval superiority
   2. It hurt the economies of many of Napoleon’s allies
   3. It actually hurt the French economy, too!
3. The Beginning of the End for Napoleon (1809 – 1814)
   a. The Peninsular War – England, Portugal and Spain united to remove the French from Spain by 1812
   b. Problems with Russia
      1. Czar Alexander I pulled Russia out of the Continental System in 1811
      2. Napoleon retaliates by invading Russia in May 1812 with 600,000 troops
      3. Russian forces practice “Scorched Earth” tactics – retreat into the interior of Russia while destroying their own supplies
4. After taking Moscow in September, 1812, it is burned by the Russian people
5. Winter sets in and the French, without supplies, have to retreat
6. Napoleon and about 10,000 of his troops make it back

c. The “War of Liberation” – Russia allies with Prussia and Austria to remove French control over Europe
d. By March 1814, the forces of Europe converge on Paris, forcing Napoleon to surrender, abdicate his throne, and live in exile on Elba

*. Louis XVI’s brother becomes Louis XVIII, King of France
Carte figurative des p�riodes successives en hommes de l'Arm�e Fran�aise dans la campagne de Russie 1812 - 1813.

Paris, le 20 Novembre 1869.

Les nombres d'hommes prises sont representees par les longueur des lignes reliees � raison d'un millimetre pour dix mille hommes; ils sont se placent en tores des gares. Le trait reglant les homens qui entrent en Russie, le noir ceux qui en sortent. Les renforcements qui entrent s'addition a certaine la carte en bleu jusqu'a ce que les renny aient le degit dans le courant de M. Chiray, de Figar, de Ferenczi, de Chambray et le journal intime de Jaccot; promeneur de l'Armee depuis le 28 Octobre....

Pour mieux faire juger � l'aide la diminution de l'Armee, je rappelle que les corps du Prince Nieve et du Marquis Davorno qui servirent � l'Armee de Russie en major c'est-�-dire en Russie Minsk-Mahilow en reviente Oescha a Witek, encore toujours marche avec l'Armee....

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TABLEAU GRAPHIQUE de la temp�rature en degr�s du thermom�tre de R�amur au dessous de z�ro.

Les Campagnes sont au galop
la Th�meau gaz...
4. “The Hundred Days” (March – June 1815)
   a. Napoleon escapes his exile and returns to France
   b. With the help of the French Army, he regains the French throne
   c. The armies of Western Europe mobilized
   d. Napoleon was defeated for a final time at the Battle of Waterloo in June, 1815

5. Napoleon was exiled to the remote island of St. Helena, where he died in 1821
AFTER THE REVOLUTION

1815 - 1900
VI. Aftermath and Results of the Revolution (1815)

A. The Congress of Vienna (September 1814 – June 1815)
   1. Delegates from most European nations meet at the Capital of Austria
   2. Overall guiding principles
      a. compensation – France pays everyone back
      b. legitimacy – restoration of Europe’s monarchies
      c. balance of power – no European country becomes vastly more powerful than the others
3. Results of the Congress of Vienna
   a. France gave up its territories and paid money to many of Europe’s powers
   b. All Monarchies removed by the French Revolution/Napoleonic Empire in Europe restored
   c. Established many new countries as “buffer states” around France
d. Alliances formed
   1. Quadruple Alliance (Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia) – formed to enforce the decisions of the Congress of Vienna
   2. The Holy Alliance (Russia, Prussia, and Austria) – formed to promote peace and cooperation (against the Ottoman Turks)
B. Things to come as a result of all of this:

1. Liberalism – movement stressing the importance of social and democratic reforms

2. Nationalism – movement of ethnicities and/or conquered peoples to rule themselves as a country based on their identity. Does not become a VERY important theme of the 1800s and 1900s!

3. Napoleon’s domination of Spain and Portugal → Latin American Revolutions

4. Precedent of competition and confusing alliances in Europe
5. Other revolutions in France (in brief)
   a. Revolution of 1830
      1. Rise in liberalism → King Charles X removes freedom of speech, the legislature, and voting rights
      2. France’s working class overthrows the king and adopts a constitutional monarchy under King Louis-Philippe
   b. Revolution of 1848
      1. Louis-Philippe is overthrown by the working class
      2. A “Second Republic” is formed – new constitution
         a. an elected National Assembly is formed
         b. a president (with a four-year) term is elected
* This revolution leads to other, unsuccessful, revolutions based on Nationalism in Europe
c. Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon’s nephew), who was elected the president of the Second Republic, led a coup d'état in 1851.

*. He became Emperor Napoleon III, and ruled until 1870.

d. France established a new constitution and government formed “The Third Republic” in 1875.
THE END.

For now.