

Notes: The French Revolution and Napoleon

Spielvogel Chapter 19

1. Causes of Revolution

a. American independence

- i. **Based on Enlightenment Ideals** (remember France's role in the Enlightenment)
 1. Bill of Rights (1789) was full of them
 2. They saw America **as the fulfillment of the Enlightenment**
- ii. **France provided assistance**, and was therefore very familiar with the American founding fathers & their ideals
 1. Many French soldiers worked for American independence, had strong independence-minded ideals

b. The "Old Regime"

i. The **Three Estates**

1. Clergy (1-3%; owned 10% of the land)
2. Nobility (2-5%; owned 30% of the land)
 - a. Controlled high government offices
 - b. Controlled industry
- c. Exempt from paying the *taille* (income taxes)**
3. Commoners (up to 97% of population in some areas; owned 35-40% of the land)
 - a. Included peasants, skilled artisans, shopkeepers, etc.
 - i. **Right to Riot**/lack of adequate food/housing
 - b. Also included **bourgeoisie** (middle class; 8% that owned 20-25% of the land)
 - i. Frustrated because they had much of the wealth and knowledge of the aristocracy, but were excluded

c. Criticism of social privilege (remember the Enlightenment?)

d. Financial Crisis

- i. Versailles =wasteful
- ii. Taxes already too high
- iii. Parliament could issue taxes, not the king
- iv. Terrible financial crisis could not be resolved without raising taxes**

1. **Called Estates-General (hadn't met since 1614)**

- a. Third Estate=largest representation, many were lawyers

e. The meetings of the Estates-General

- i. Initial argument over voting by estate or head
 1. First Estate wanted to vote by order (estate – so each estate gets one vote)
 - 2. Third Estate responds by declaring themselves a "national assembly" on 17 June 1789**
 - a. Found doors to meeting place locked three days later, when they had scheduled to develop a constitution
 - b. Instead met in a tennis court and swore that they would produce a constitution (the "**Tennis Court Oath**")

c. Louis XVI threatened to use force to disband Estates General

2. Early Revolution

a. Enter the Commoners

i. Storming of the Bastille

1. Commoners saw Louis's attempts to interfere with the National Assembly as a direct attack on their rights

2. Attempted to seize arms at the Bastille

- a. Only contained 7 prisoners (5 forgers & 2 insane)
- b. Important as symbol of commoners' power
- c. Head of garrison commander (the marquis de Launay) paraded through the streets
- d. Only one of the many revolts that happened throughout France

ii. King Louis realized he had lost virtually all control

1. Made the marquis de Lafayette commander of the newly created National Guard (a citizens' militia)

iii. Peasant rebellions happened throughout France

1. Most were inspired by the rumor that Louis supported the end of taxes & tithes, but had asked the citizens themselves to destroy the associated titles (basically orders to pay)

iv. The Great Fear

1. Rumors stated that foreign powers were attempting invasion
2. Many peasants formed *militias* to defend France

b. The Night Session of August 4, 1789

- i. In one night, the National Assembly abolished special rights & fiscal privileges of aristocracy

c. Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (August 26)

- i. Modeled after the philosophes' ideas, and American Declaration of Independence & state constitutions
- ii. Everyone has rights to "liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression"
 1. Equal rights for all *men* (see p. 533 for women's rights)
 2. Access to public office based on talent
- iii. Proclaimed an end to exemptions from taxation

d. Women's March

- i. Crowds of women, armed with farm implements & firearms, marched on city hall (Hôtel de Ville) to get food
 1. After city hall, they marched to Versailles
- ii. They complained about starving children; Louis promised relief from grain supplies
- iii. Marquis de Lafayette had followed them with National Guard
- iv. They forced Louis & his family to come to Paris with them, where *he finally accepted the decrees of the National Assembly*

e. Choosing the National Assembly (new constitutional rules)

- i. 745 representatives, elected by electors, who were in turn elected by "active citizens" (could pay equivalent of 3 days unskilled wages in taxes)
- ii. Sat for two years

f. Jacobin Clubs

- i. Groups of radicals that met to discuss reforms
- ii. some were aristocracy; some were artisans & tradespeople

- g. Legislative Assembly – 1791
 - i. Not the same as the National Assembly (they had agreed not to be elected again) – tended to be more radically-minded individuals with experience in Jacobin clubs and the National Guard
 - ii. Source of left/right wing
- h. War
 - i. **Declaration of Pillnitz** -- Leopold II of Austria and Frederick II of Prussia advised all European rulers to strengthen Louis XVI
 - ii. Legislative Assembly used it as an excuse to declare war on Austria on 20 April 1792
 - iii. **France fared badly, everybody blamed everybody else**
 - iv. Led to mob attack on palace and Legislative Assembly in August 1792
 - 1. Also formation of **sans-culottes** (without fine clothes) – radical bourgeoisie

3. Radical Revolution

- a. Sept 21, 1792 – National Convention, led by the Paris Commune, dissolved the monarchy
- b. The **Mountain**
 - i. Represented the city of Paris itself
 - ii. Mostly radical middle-class
 - iii. Opposed by the **Girondins**
 - iv. **Condemned Louis XVI to death (carried out in January 1793)**
 - 1. Led to new enemies of the revolution
- c. Let's throw in a third party, just in case things aren't confusing enough – the **Commune**
 - i. Rulers of Paris, mostly artisans and shopkeepers
 - ii. Radicals
 - iii. **June 1793 – stormed into the National Convention and arrested the Girondins**
 - 1. Mountain was left in control

4. Counterrevolution

- a. The Vendéan – peasants who revolted against the new military draft
- b. Broke away from authority of Paris
 - i. Included some major cities, like Lyons and Marseilles

5. The Committee of Public Safety

- a. Organized in Spring of 1793
- b. Attempt to provide leadership to counter informal coalition of Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Britain, and the Dutch Republic
- c. Called for **universal mobilization**: raised 1,169,000 people by Sep 1794 (largest army in European history)
 - i. **Beginning of strong nationalist sentiment in raising armies**
- d. **The Reign of Terror**
 - i. Committee on Public Safety wanted to track down those who might cause internal disruption
 - ii. Included **royalists** (i.e. Marie Antoinette), **Girondins** (including Olympe de Gouges, advocate for women's rights), and **peasants** who opposed the sans-culottes
 - iii. 9 months long
 - iv. 16,000 died (officially) by guillotine
 - 1. Real number probably closer to 50,000

- v. Most of these were in the *Vendée* & in cities like *Lyons*, and *Marseilles* (part of counterrevolution)
- vi. Not only guillotine – read the description on p. 538-9
- vii. *Violence seen as temporary until the “Republic of Virtue” took over*
- e. *Dechristianization* – remove saint from street names, closed churches, priests encouraged to marry
 - i. Notre-Dame designated “*Temple of Reason*,” accompanied by ceremonies
 - ii. New *calendar*, based on Sep 22, 1792 (day French Republic proclaimed)
 - iii. Angered overwhelmingly Catholic France
- f. Ended when Committee sought to control reign of terror
 - i. 1794 – executed its most radical members
 - ii. Still didn’t quite end – *Robespierre* tried to use it to get rid of all the corrupt so he could have the Republic of Virtue
 - 1. *He himself was guillotined in July of 1794, ending the Reign of Terror*

6. *Thermidorean Reaction*

- a. National Convention reduced the power of the Committee of Public Safety, shut down Jacobins
 - b. Gave freedom of worship
 - c. *Constitution of 1795*
 - i. Established Council of 500 who initiated legislation
 - ii. Established Council of Elders (250) who approved suggested laws (or not)
 - iii. The *Directory*
 - 1. Leaders of the Council of Elders (five selected by Council of Elders from a list suggested by the council of 500)
 - 2. Ruled with corruption
 - 3. Opposed by the royalists and the Jacobins
7. Results of the French Revolution
- a. Model revolution (Europe can copy if they desire)
 - b. Attempt to construct new political and social order

8. *Napoleon*

- a. *Early life – Corsican*
 - i. Educated at expense of Louis XIV (his father was a French official)
 - ii. Corsica rebelled during French revolution
 - iii. Napoleon fled to France
- b. *Command period*
 - i. Napoleon was fighting rebels, artillery captain went down, he jumped in & saved battle
 - ii. Made commander of armies in Italy, right after marrying high-up Josephine
 - 1. Defeated 4 armies larger than his
 - iii. Invaded Egypt with *intention to take England’s land in India*
 - 1. Soundly defeated at the Battle of the Nile (only 4 ships left)
 - 2. He stayed to rebuild Egypt’s constitution, give rights to peasants
 - 3. Went back to France as a *hero* – said he wanted to “defend Directorship”
- c. *Napoleon takes control*
 - i. *Coup d’etat of 1799*
 - 1. *Self-crowned*
 - ii. *Conquers Europe, putting relatives in charge*

- iii. Divorced wife, Josephine to marry an actress
 - 1. No kids with Josephine, and an emperor needs an heir
- iv. Domestic policies
 - 1. Concordat – agreement with Pope 1801
 - a. Pope could depose French bishops, but France can appoint
 - b. Pope won't ask for land taken in revolution
 - c. Catholic church not enemy of France anymore
 - 2. **Civil Code** (or Code Napoléon)
 - a. Equality for all citizens
 - b. Religious toleration
 - c. Abolition of serfdom/feudalism
 - 3. No tax exemptions
- v. Foreign relations
 - 1. Achieved very temporary peace with foreign powers in 1802 at Amiens
 - 2. **Defeated all of France's continental enemies between 1805-1807**
 - a. **Took over Europe**
 - 3. The Grand Empire
 - a. See map p. 548
- d. Napoleon's downfall
 - i. Britain survived (anti-British economic policies angered Europeans)
 - ii. Nationalism – French were too proud to be French; others proud to be themselves
 - iii. **1812 – invaded Russia**
 - 1. Russian scorched-earth policy
 - 2. Moscow burned as French enter (winter was coming)
 - 3. Retreat back – attacked the entire way, France lost 2/3 of troops
 - e. **Elba**
 - i. Napoleon stepped down, wanted son to rule but others would not have it
 - ii. Exiled to island of Elba, where he was allowed to "rule"
 - f. Louis XVIII was weak
 - i. Napoleon escaped Elba, returned to Paris in triumph – called "**100 Days**"
 - ii. Europe united against him
 - g. **Waterloo**
 - i. Exiled to St. Helena, where he remained until his death in 1824 (body removed to France 40 years later)