

The French Revolution 1789-1815

1. Moderate Phase - National Assembly
2. Radical Phase - Reign of Terror
3. Reaction - Directory
4. Age of Napoleon

The Three Estates

First Estate- CLERGY

- considered highest on the social ladder
- possessed an enormous amount of power
- made up .5% of the population
- owned 10% of all the land in France
- *Not required to pay taxes***

Second Estate- NOBLES

- made up 1.5% of the population
- the richest of the nobility held top jobs in government, army, courts
- *Not required to pay taxes***

Although the Second Estate was considered to be the nobility there were some that were poor, many had some wealth, and a few were filthy rich.

Both the First Estate and Second Estate did not want anything to change in France unless there was chance they could gain more political power.

Third Estate

98% of the population → many different groups of people

Top-BOURGEOISIE-middle class

-bankers-merchants-lawyers-doctors-journalists-professors

Middle-PEASANTS-9/10 people in class

Bottom-CITY WORKERS

- overworked and underpaid
- objected the most to the living conditions & politics in Fr
- became known as the sans culottes because of the way they dressed and their support for the French Revolution

****REQUIRED TO PAY TAXES****

ENLIGHTENMENT

-people start to question the inequalities of Fr. society

Why should the 1st & 2nd Estates enjoy privileges at the expense of the 3rd Estate?

Doesn't meet the test of reason

ECONOMIC CRISIS

Deficit spending-government spending more than it takes in

→ debt

- war-American Revolution
- loans-need to be paid back with interest
- poor harvests→not enough food→prices soar→hunger
- extravagant spending
 - Louis XIV built the Palace at Versailles

WEAK LEADERSHIP

-Louis XIV-responsible for most of France's debt

-Louis XV-only made debt worse

-Louis XVI-

- weak & indecisive
- wouldn't stand up to the 1st & 2nd Estates

FAILURE TO REFORM

-Louis XVI hires an advisor-Jacques Necker

- suggests a reduction in spending & taxing the First & Second Estate
 - fires advisor

-still under pressure to reform→Louis XVI calls a meeting of the Estates General

-all 3 Estates prepare cahiers-notebooks listing their grievances for the meeting in May 1789

-voting problem

- each estate would meet separately and vote as a group→each estate had one vote
 - the First & Second estate would always outvote the Third estate 2 to 1
 - the Third Estate wanted to meet together as a single body with votes counted by head
- new voting procedure rejected
 - claiming they represented the people of France the Third estate declared themselves the National Assembly
 - delegates from the First & Second estate are invited to join the National Assembly
- few days later the National Assembly finds its meeting hall locked
 - gather at a nearby tennis court instead
 - take the Tennis Court Oath
 - promise not to disband until they have a written constitution for France

The Third Estate had taken a peaceful first step in a revolution that would transform France!!

Storming of the Bastille

-Louis brings troops to the palace at Versailles

- Many fear he plans to dissolve the National Assembly
- Commoners saw Louis's attempts to interfere with the National Assembly as a direct attack on their rights
 - attempt to seize arms at the Bastille
- commander killed and his head paraded through the streets on a pike

July 14, 1789 marks the storming of the Bastille--now Bastille Day

Becomes the symbol of the French Revolution

Reforms Under the National Assembly

1st step towards a constitution- **A Declaration of the Rights of Man & Citizen**

-similar to America's Declaration of Independence

- *all men have natural rights*
- *it is the job of government to protect the natural rights of the people*
- *guarantees all male citizens equality under the law*
- *people are free to practice any religion they choose*
- *tax people according to what they could afford*

principles of the declaration are summed up in the slogan of the revolution

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"

March on Versailles-October 1789-crowd of women march to Versailles

- *angry over the price of bread*
- *concerned that the king & queen were secretly plotting against the National Assembly*
 - *they demand that the royal family return with them to Paris where they could be watched over*

Religious Reforms-1790-the Civil Constitution of the Clergy

-The French government takes control over the Catholic Church

Need to raise \$ → government starts to sell church land

→ Catholics had supported the revolution but will now condemn it