

The French Revolution (1789 – 1791)

“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity?”

Intro Question

- What makes something a “Revolution” versus just one of many changes?

The French Revolution (1789-1815)

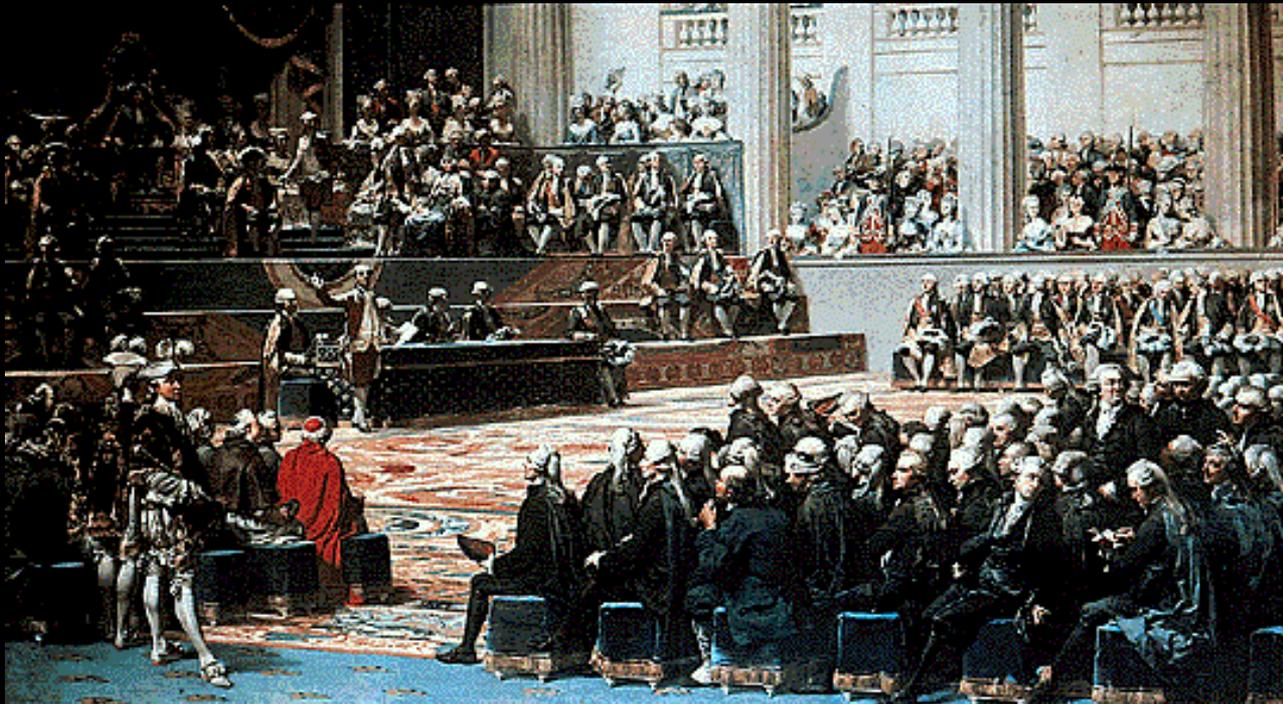
French Society and Fiscal Crisis

First Estate (clergy)

Second Estate (hereditary nobility)

Third Estate (peasants)

- Included bourgeoisie



Intellectual foment – the Enlightenment

- John Jacque Rousseau's **Social Contract** challenged Absolutism
- John Locke – citizens have **duty** to overthrow corrupt government
- Baron de Montesquieu – **separation of powers** to limit corruption
- Voltaire – anti-censorship, questioned “divine right”
- Coffee house and Salon culture of philosophes

The Peasantry

Plight of France's Peasants

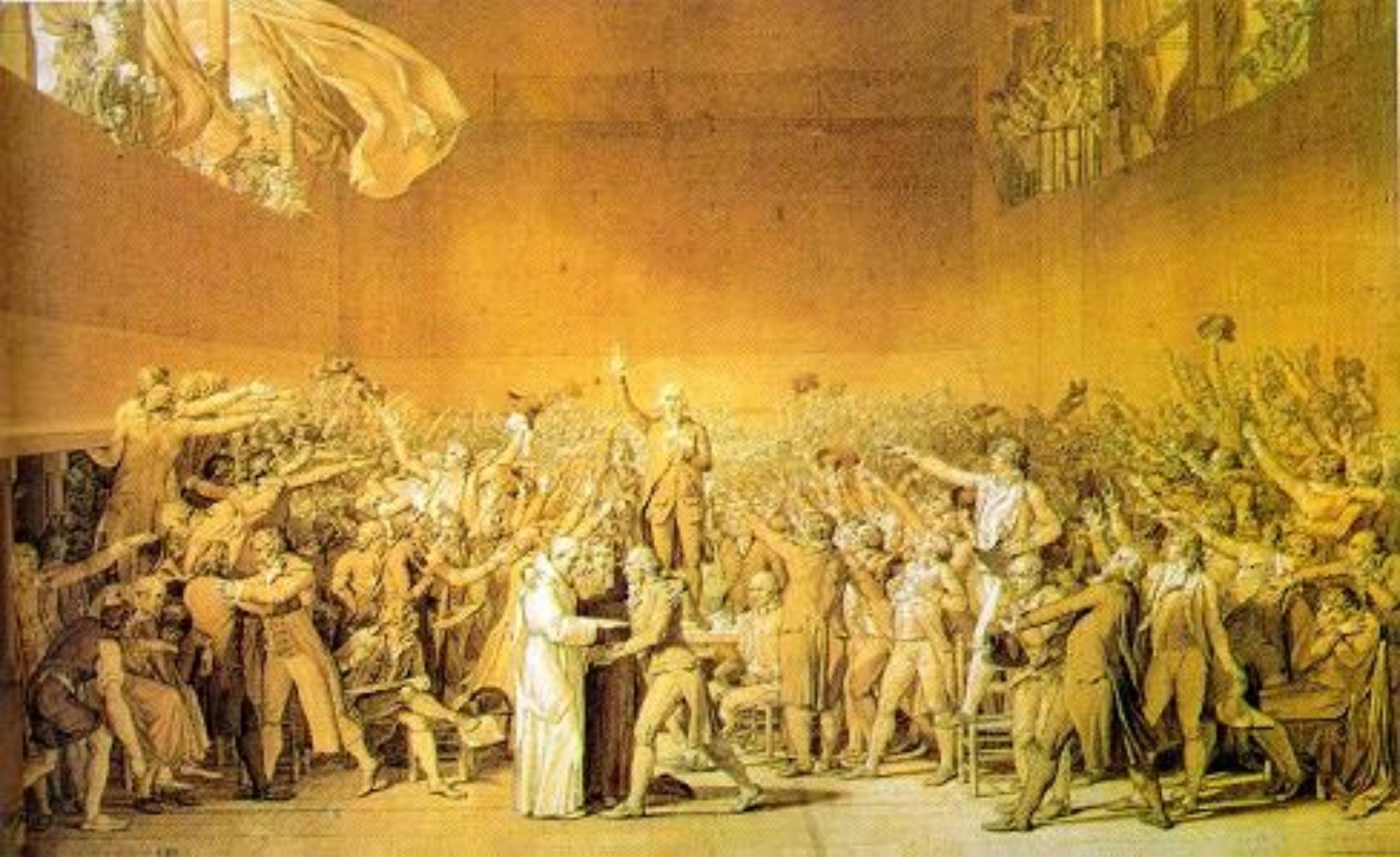
Economic Depression

Urban poverty and protests



From Estates General to Revolution

- French debt and higher taxes
 - Clever advice from Colbert staves off crisis
- King forced to call Estates General for new taxes
 - Cahier de Doleances
 - Conflict between Bourgeoisie and Nobles (old regime)
 - Conflict between powerful church officers and parish priests
- Estates general refused to meet with third estate separate – kicked out
- Met in tennis court at Versailles



The Tennis Court Oath

Revolution – Moderate Phase

- Creation of a National Assembly: Creation of a Constitution
 - Want constitutional monarchy like England
 - Louis XVI sends in royal guard, sends letters asking relatives outside of France to send troops
- Rebellions in support of National Assembly, Capture of the Bastille (July 11, 1789)
- **Declaration of the Rights of Man**
- Capture of the King & Queen
- National Assembly limits powers of Monarchy

Radicalization of the Revolution

- War with Austria, Prussia (1791)
- Execution of King (1792) and later Queen
- Radicalization – “The Terror” (1793-1794)
 - National Assembly dissolved;
National Convention created
 - Levee en Masse (Mass draft)
 - Paris Commune takes control in city
 - Committee for Public Safety formed by Radical Jacobins led by Robespierre
 - Capture and execution of “traitors” in countryside



Robespierre

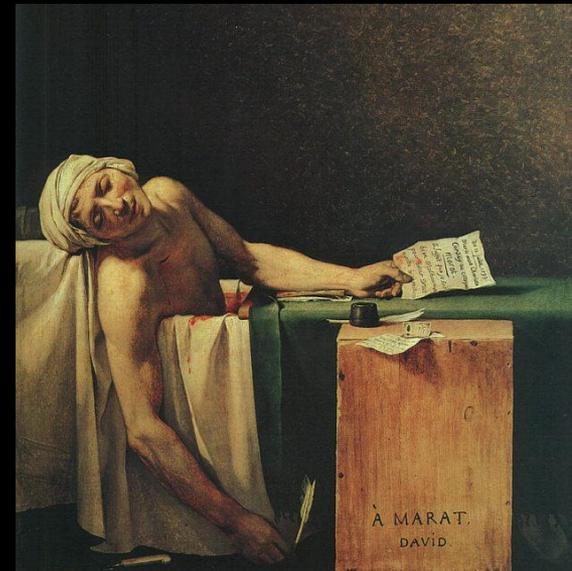
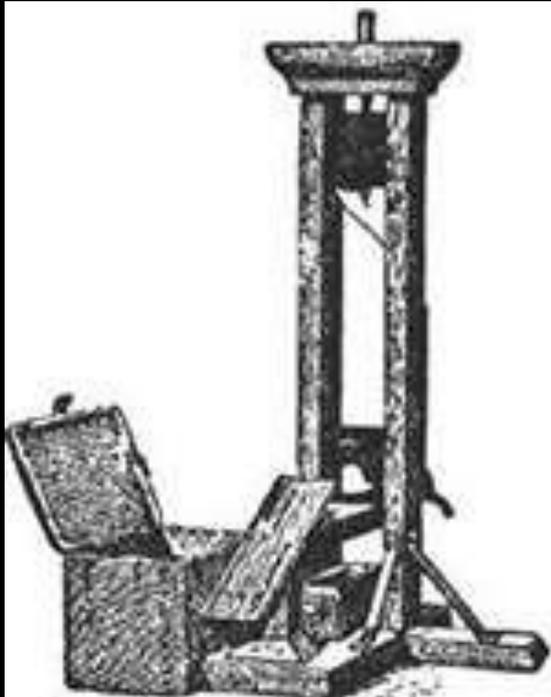


- Catholic church attacked
- Old rituals replaced with rituals of state
- “Temples of Reason” erected
- Destruction or capture of châteaux
- New calendar adopted reflecting secular names (e.g. August = Thermidor)

Radicalization of Revolution (cont)

Radicalization of Revolution

- Robespierre and Committee for Public Safety accuses and executes many members of revolution, e.g. Marat
- Guillotine as “equal justice for all”



Thermidorian Reaction

- Reaction in August, 1794 to radical Terror
- Robespierre put on trial and executed, committee for public safety disbanded
- Elections held – but results suspended in the name of public order
- Napoleon Bonaparte gained control of Consulate (temporary government)



The Execution of Robespierre
Ways of the World, First Edition
Musée de la Révolution Française, Vizille, France/ Bridgeman Art Library

Roll-back of revolutionary changes

- Retreat to popular authoritarianism
 - control by despot on behalf of “the people”
- Private property restored to many of nobility
- Concordat of 1801 re-established Catholic church
- Napoleon crowned Emperor in 1804 – supported by population



Napoleon's Imperial Ambitions

- Wanted land empire; specifically all of Europe
- Stunning victories against Austrians, Prussians, British (on land), Spanish, Portuguese, Italians
- Occupied Iberian peninsula, put relatives in power
- Revolutionary movements (Juntas) began to resist Napoleonic rule

Napoleon's downfall



- Decided to attack Russia (1812) – big mistake
- Troops unprepared for Russian winter
- Captured Moscow – but burned to ground
- Ultimately, out of 600,000, only 50,000 made it back to France
- 1814 – Defeated at Waterloo
- Captured, exiled, escaped, recaptured, exiled



Conservative Backlash in Europe

- Great Powers (Austria, Russia, England) to prevent another Napoleon
- “Holy Alliance” to keep down revolutionary movements (e.g. Spain)
- Social revolutions of 1848 & 1853 put down harshly
- Congress of Vienna – map of Europe re-drawn; France lost border territories



Women and the Revolution

- Enlightenment: Women's involvement
 - Salonnières
- Early phases – women heavily involved, e.g. bread riots, march on Versailles
- National Assembly dominated by men; Declaration cut out women
- Women like Olympe de Gouges protested (e.g. Declaration of Rights of Women)
- Radical Phase: Women turned into symbols, return to mother role seen as “revolutionary”



Olympe de Gouges



Women march on Versailles