

French Revolution Reading Notes

- I. French Monarchy faces a crisis
 - a. Old Regime has three estates
 - i. First Estate
 1. Roman Catholic church and the clergy, making up 10%
 2. did not pay taxes, although incredibly wealthy
 - ii. Second Estate
 1. they held the highest positions in government, courts, army
 2. nobles owning 20% of land, made up less than 2% of population
 3. paid no taxes and refused to pay them
 - iii. Third Estate- 98% of population
 1. **Bourgeoisie**
 - a. city dwelling middle class, many educated, but treated like peasants
 - b. called the culottes for the types of clothes
 2. **urban lower classes**
 - a. workers of cities (butchers, tailors, weavers, etc)
 - b. called the sans-culottes
 3. **peasant farmers**
 - a. largest group, made up 4/5 of population
 - b. lost 1/2 of income to taxes and had to pay taxes in the form of work
- II. Louis XVI was a weak ruler
 - a. married to the hated Marie Antoinette
 - b. in debt because of involvement in the Seven Years War (French and Indian War)
 - c. tried to tax nobles, but nobles required a call of the Estates General
- III. National Assembly takes power
 - a. National Assembly was actually the 3rd Estate
 - b. 3rd estate clamors for power, the 1st and 2nd estate always overruled them
 - c. They decide to end the monarchy, first act of revolution
- IV. Storming of the Bastille (which was a prison)
 - a. the National Assembly wanted to get inside Bastille because of the supply of gunpowder
 - b. needed it to defend themselves against Swiss troops marching in to break-up riots
 - c. the storming was important because reduced the king's power and saved the National Assembly

- d. **the day is now similar to July 4th over here**
- V. Great Fear sweeps France
 - a. the group of Parisian women eventually stormed the queen's apartment
 - b. this caused King Louis XVI to go to Paris
 - c. **Revolution leads to reform August 4, 1789; people continue to speak about revolution**
- VI. Assembly adopted many reforms
 - a. the new slogan of the revolution becomes "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"
 - b. Rights of Man - "men are born and remain free and equal in rights."
 - c. A Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen written
 - d. Limited Monarchy- form government similar to Britain
 - e. Departments - 83 districts each with elected local ruler
 - f. State-controlled church

**Eventually caused a split between the peasants and bourgeoisie, leading the peasants to resist revolution

**King Louis XVI tried to escape, but was found on the Netherlands's border, he lost all credibility

- VII. Factions split France
 - a. the three factions included the radicals who advocated change (left side of the hall)
 - b. the conservatives sat on the right side of the hall (believed that King was the way to go)
 - c. middle ground (centrists) sat in the middle
- VIII. France went to war with Austria
 - a. the ruler of Austria was Maria Antoinette's brother
 - b. in 1792, the Austrian army was winning until he threatened war if the royal family was harmed
 - c. the new governing body was named national Convention
- IX. The radicals executed Louis XVI
 - a. radicals are people that that continually want more and more change
 - b. the radicals abolished the monarchy and allowed France to become a republic
 - c. eventually, Louis was found to be a common citizen, condemned to death, and beheaded by the guillotine
- X. France creates a citizen-army
 - a. the First Coalition included Britain, Spain, Portugal, Prussia and Austria
 - b. although outnumbered, the dedicated French patriots were victorious
- XI. Robespierre began the Terror (nicknamed the "Incorruptible")
 - a. although the Jacobins had friends, many peasants were afraid of the constant beheadings of church and governmental leaders

- i. Maximilien Robespierre eventually came to power
 - b. two changes to the calendar include making every month have 30 days and changing the name to make more sense
 - i. Robespierre formed the Committee of Public Safety in 1793
 - c. many leaders and radicals were eventually beheaded because they were judged to be an enemy of the republic
 - d. many historians believe over 40,000 were killed, nearly 80% were of the 3rd estate, supposedly who the revolution was supposed to help
- XII. Robespierre falls from power
 - a. he fell from power because of the paranoia surrounding him
- XIII. Moderates rule in the Directory
 - a. new government switches to the right (less radical)
 - b. they find a conservative general named Napoleon making his headways