

Chapter 9

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

9.41 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

Study Questions

1. In what ways did the legal division of society under the Old Regime fail to reflect actual political and social conditions in France? What observations may be made about the existing property system?
2. What was the role of the church in the Old Regime?
3. Describe the changes taking place in both the nobility and the bourgeoisie prior to the Revolution. How did these changes contribute to the outbreak of Revolution?
4. What features of the agrarian and manorial system of the Old Regime were survivals of the feudal age? What was the feudal reaction of the eighteenth century? What effect did it have on the peasants?
5. How did the political unity of France contribute to the Revolution? How did public opinion become a new political force after 1770?
6. Why was the last two decades of the Old Regime critical?
7. Describe the condition of people in the Third Estate below the commercial and professional families. What does the illustration on p. 365 suggest about the life of most members of the Third Estate?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. The three legal estates in French society under the Old Regime were politically, economically, and socially obsolescent.
2. The Revolution began in the social and political collision of two moving objects, a rising aristocracy and a rising bourgeoisie.

3. The political unity of France was a fundamental prerequisite, and even a cause, of the Revolution.
4. The Revolution was to revolutionize the law of property by freeing the private ownership of land from all the traditional and indirect encumbrances.
5. Enlightenment thought provided a language in which people could now describe their dissatisfactions with the obstacles that stymied professional or economic ambitions.

Identifications

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|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Old Regime | Taille | <i>Banalités</i> |
| First, Second, and Third Estates | Tithe | Eminent property rights |
| Feudal dues | Estates General | Hunting rights |

9.42 THE REVOLUTION AND THE REORGANIZATION OF FRANCE

Study Questions

1. How did the financial crisis facing the French government lead to revolution?
2. What circumstances created hardship for the lower classes? What manifestations of unrest appeared in the city and in the countryside? How did these events influence the National Assembly?
3. What major principles were announced in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen? What was the significance of the Declaration? What rights could women claim in the Revolutionary era?
4. What voices were heard on behalf of women in the Revolutionary era? In what ways did the Revolution both strengthen and curb women's social and political rights?
5. Describe the Jacobins. In what ways were the Jacobins an influence during the later and more radical phase of the Revolution?
6. How did the Constituent Assembly overhaul the institutions of the Old Regime?
7. How did the Constitution of 1791 transform French government?
8. Describe the legislation introduced by the Constituent Assembly with respect to (a) public

finances, (b) church lands, and (c) guilds and other labor organizations.

9. Discuss the nature and the consequences of the religious measures adopted by the Constituent Assembly.
10. How do the illustrations on pp. 372, 374, 376, 380, 382, and 384 illuminate key events in the initial phases of the Revolution?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. Although France was prosperous, the government treasury was empty.
2. The nobility forced the summoning of the Estates General and in this way initiated the Revolution.
3. On June 17, 1789 the Third Estate declared itself the “National Assembly.”
4. The Great Fear became part of a general agrarian insurrection in which the peasants intended to destroy the manorial regime by force.
5. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen affirmed the general principles of the new state, which were essentially the rule of law, the equality of individual citizenship, and the collective national sovereignty of the people.
6. The Constituent Assembly went about its work of simultaneously governing the country, devising a written constitution, and destroying in detail the institutions of the Old Regime.
7. The hostile attitude of Louis XVI greatly disoriented the Revolution.
8. The new political order, because it opposed the feminine corruptions of the Old Regime, excluded women from active political life.
9. Not all of the new machinery of state was democratic.
10. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy has been called the greatest tactical blunder of the Revolution.

Identifications

Calonne

Great Fear of 1789

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Count of Artois | Loménie de Brienne |
| Night of August 4 | Versailles |
| <i>What Is the Third Estate?</i> | Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen |
| Patriots | The Bastille |
| Olympe de Gouges | Jacobins |
| National Assembly | Constitution of 1791 |
| Active and passive citizens | Electors |
| Varennes | <i>The Rights of Man</i> |
| Assignats | Le Chapelier law |
| <i>The Rights of Woman</i> | Mary Wollstonecraft |
| Refractory clergy | Tennis Court Oath |

9.43 THE REVOLUTION AND EUROPE: THE WAR AND THE “SECOND” REVOLUTION, 1792

Study Questions

1. Describe the general impact of the Revolution upon its age. How did contemporaries interpret the events? What position did Edmund Burke take?
2. What were the reactions of the various European governments to the revolutionary events in France?
3. How did the revolutionaries in France react to the Declaration of Pillnitz? Why did various groups in France favor war?
4. Why were peasants and urban workers dissatisfied with the course of the Revolution so far?
5. Describe the agitation and violence that stirred up in Paris.
6. Why is the insurrection of August 10, 1792 called the “second” French Revolution?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. Pro-French and pro-revolutionary groups appeared all over Europe, but in all countries there were also enemies of the Revolution.
2. The Declaration of Pillnitz, far from cowing the French, enraged them against all the crowned heads of Europe.

3. Europe was soon split by a division that overran all frontiers.
4. The Girondins became the party of international revolution.
5. When the war came, the working classes rallied to the Revolution but not to the revolutionary government in power.
6. In the summer of 1792, masses of the French people burst out in a passion of nationalist and patriotic excitement.

Identifications

Reflections on the Revolution in France

Leopold II

William Pitt

Girondins

Émigrés

September massacres

Francis II

Francisco de Miranda

Brunswick Manifesto

Marseillaise

Tuileries

Madame Roland

Count of Artois

9.44 THE EMERGENCY REPUBLIC, 1792–1795: THE TERROR

Study Questions

1. What was the relationship between French military expansion and the spread of the Revolution? How did the European powers resist? What factors weakened the coalition fighting France?
2. Explain the political division that developed inside the Convention. What policies did the “Mountain” represent?
3. Why was the execution of the king so symbolically important? What was the significance of the insurrection of May 31, 1793?
4. Discuss the problems and difficulties faced by the Convention in the spring of 1793. What program did it follow? What were the results?
5. How may the loss of lives in the Terror be distinguished from the loss of lives in other ways during the Revolution?

6. Describe the events that occurred during the peak of the Revolution, 1793–1794, in France. What role did religion play during these times?
7. Why did many turn against Robespierre? What was his fate, and how did the Revolution change course in the months that followed his fall?
8. How do the illustrations on pp. 392, 397, and 398 reflect the more radical phases of the Revolution?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. The militancy and activism of the sans-culottes pressed the Revolution forward.
2. After the insurrection of May 1793, the Mountain ruled in the Convention but the Convention itself ruled very little.
3. Robespierre is one of the most argued about and least understood men of modern times.
4. To repress the “counterrevolution,” the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety set up what is popularly known as the “Reign of Terror”.
5. In 1794 the National Convention decreed the abolition of slavery in the French colonies.
6. Dechristianization contributed to the development of the cult of reason, which sprang up all over France at the end of 1793.
7. The political victors after Thermidor were “bourgeois” in an older social sense.

Identifications

National Convention
cannonade of Valmy
Hébertists
Sans-culottes
Revolutionary calendar
Levée en masse
Revolt of The Vendée
Federalist rebellions
Thermidorian reaction

Committee of General Security
Dechristianization
Committee of Public Safety
Dumouriez
Cult of the Supreme Being
General maximum
Constitution of the Year III
enragés

Insurrection of Prairial
Toussaint Louverture

Reign of Terror
Maximilien Robespierre

9.45 THE CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC: THE DIRECTORY, 1795–1799

Study Questions

1. How would you characterize the nature of the Directory? Which groups opposed it?
2. Why did Republicans and people like Napoleon find the results of the 1797 elections intolerable? Describe Bonaparte's background, career, and accomplishments to this point.
3. Describe the Right and Left enemies of the Directory.
4. How did the coup d'état of Fructidor affect the peace negotiations? Of what significance was the peace treaty that was signed?
5. Discuss the military and political circumstances that paved the way for Bonaparte's seizure of power.

Key Discussion Sentences

1. The Directory had enemies to both Right and Left.
2. The coup d'état of Fructidor was the turning point for France's constitutional republic, and it became a decisive event for all Europe.
3. The treaty of Campo Formio with Austria represented a victory for Bonaparte's ideas.
4. For those who sought "confidence from below, authority from above," Bonaparte seemed the answer.

Identifications

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|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Directory | Babeuf | Battle of the Nile (or Aboukir) |
| Constitution of 1795 | General Augereau | Treaty of Campo Formio |
| Abbé Sieyès | Louis XVIII | Second Coalition |
| Coup d'état of Brumaire | Declaration of Verona | |

Map Exercise

1. Study the map in your text on p. 404, The French Republic and Its Satellites, 1798–1799. What direct annexations did the Republic make? List the chief satellite republics. What did the treaty of Campo Formio provide with respect to the German states?

9.46 THE AUTHORITARIAN REPUBLIC: THE CONSULATE, 1799–1804

Study Questions

1. Evaluate the personality, talents, and political ideas of Bonaparte.
2. What kind of governmental machinery was set up under the Consulate? Where did real authority reside?
3. Describe and evaluate the significance of the major reforms introduced by Bonaparte (a) in law and administration, (b) in public finance and taxation, and (c) in church-state relations.
4. How was the concordat of 1801 signed by Bonaparte with the Vatican significant?
5. How would you summarize the major accomplishments of the Revolution by the end of the Consulate? In what ways had the Revolution strengthened France? How did the governments of Europe regard Napoleon?
6. How does the painting of Bonaparte by David on p. 407 depict him? How valid is that interpretation?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. Bonaparte was, or seemed, just what many people in France were looking for after ten years of upheaval.
2. Bonaparte may be thought of as the last and most eminent of the enlightened despots.
3. Under the Consulate the modern state took on clearer form; it was the reverse of everything feudal.
4. Both sides gained from the Concordat of 1801.
5. With the Consulate, the Revolution in France was over. If its highest hopes had not been accomplished, the worst evils of the Old Regime had at least been cured.

6. Like all enlightened despots, Bonaparte codified the laws, and of all law codes since the Romans the Napoleonic codes became the most famous.
7. France, no longer revolutionary at home, was revolutionary outside its borders.

Identifications

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Plebiscite | Prefect | Careers open to talent |
| Notables | Fouché | Bank of France |
| Council of State | Talleyrand | Napoleonic codes |
| Treaty of Lunéville | Concordat of 1801 | Civil Code |

GENERAL ESSAY QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 9

1. How did the Revolution in the years 1789–1804 replace the Old Regime in France with a more modern society?
2. What separate phases can be distinguished in the Revolution between 1789 and 1804? Describe (a) the principal actors in each phase and (b) the accomplishments and limitations of each phase.
3. Why were the doctrines of the Revolution highly exportable? What impact did they have on the various classes of Europe? What effect did the coming of war have on the Revolution?
4. In what sense did the Revolution accelerate older trends and in what sense was it innovative?
5. What new conceptions of liberty and equality emerged from both the American and French Revolutions? How would you compare the course and outcomes of each? How did the two great events deal with the issue of slavery?
6. In what sense was Bonaparte (a) a child of the Enlightenment and of the Revolution and (b) the last of the enlightened despots?
7. How did the revolutionary era affect the rights of women?

GENERAL DISCUSSION PASSAGES FOR CHAPTER 9

1. In 1789 France fell into revolution, and the world has never since been the same. The French Revolution was by far the most momentous upheaval of the whole revolutionary age. It replaced the “old regime” with “modern society,” and at its extreme phase it became very radical, so much so that later revolutionary movements often looked back to it as a predecessor. (p. 363)
2. Under the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, liberty was defined as the freedom to do anything not injurious to others, which in turn was to be determined only by law. (p. 375)
3. The “rights of man” had become a motto or watchword for potentially revolutionary ideas well before 1789. “Man” in this sense was meant to apply abstractly to the rights of all people, regardless of nationality, race, or sex. The Declaration of 1789 was not intended to refer to males alone. But when it came to the exercise of specific legal rights the Revolutionaries went no farther than contemporary opinion. Thus they assigned the right to vote and hold office only to men, and in most matters of property, family law, and education it was the boys and men who benefited most. (p. 376)
4. Following the official Declaration in each of its 17 articles, Olympe de Gouges applied them to women explicitly in each case, and she asserted also, in addition, the right of women to divorce under certain conditions, to the control of property in marriage, and for equal access with men to higher education and to civilian careers and public employment. But among the leaders of the Revolution, only Condorcet argued for legal equality of the sexes. (p. 377)
5. The doctrines of the French Revolution, as of the American, were highly exportable—they took the form of a universal philosophy, proclaiming the rights of man regardless of time or place, race or nation. (p. 385)
6. In all countries of the European world, though least of all in eastern and southern Europe, there were revolutionary or pro-French elements that were feared by their own governments. In all countries there were people whose political ideas and local conflicts increasingly expressed their strong support or deep hostility for the revolutionary changes in France. There had been no such situation since the Protestant Reformation, nor was there anything like it again until after the Russian Revolution of the twentieth century. (p. 387)
7. If the Terror is understood to mean the official program of the government, which at one time decreed “terror the order of the day,” the number who died in it was not large by the brutal standards of the twentieth century, in which dictatorial governments attempted to

wipe out not only their political opponents but whole social classes or ethnic groups. Meanwhile, however, in 1793–1794, the Terror evolved into a kind of self-perpetuating revolutionary violence that was inhumane, expansive, irrational, and in some places a method for mass killings, as at Nantes, where 2,000 persons were loaded on barges and deliberately drowned. (p. 393)

8. The French Republic, in falling into the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte, fell also to a man whom many of his contemporaries and some later historians viewed as a “genius” or “great man” in European history. (p. 405)
9. Bonaparte delighted in affirming the sovereignty of the people; but to his mind the people were a sovereign, like Voltaire’s God, who somehow created the world but never thereafter interfered in it. (p. 406)
10. The new France could tap the wealth of its citizens and put able men into positions without inquiring into their origins. Every private, boasted Napoleon, carried a marshal’s baton in his knapsack. (p. 410)