

12.6

The French Revolution Begins

Old Regime in France

Ancien Regime- Old Order

The French people used to belong to 3 classes or **estates: Nobility, Clergy, & everyone else**

**The Clergy owned 10% of the land & paid no taxes.
They did offer some social services**

**However, The Enlightenment criticized the church &
often the church tried to squash it**

Old Regime

The Noble class was under control of the king & many received little income

They began to hate absolutism as it threatened their freedom from pay taxes

At the top of the 3rd estate was the **bourgeoise-middle class made up of bankers, merchants, etc**

The rest consisted of peasants or urban workers at the very bottom of the status chart

Economic Crisis

Deficit Spending- Spending more money than it takes in

France had to pay for costly wars & half of the governments income went to pay for debt

The nobles & clergy did not pay taxes & the country had to raise taxes & reduce expenses

Bad harvests caused city dwellers & peasants to starve so they began to riot

Reform Failure

Louis XVI chooses **Jacques Necker**, a financial expert, to serve as advisor

He proposed the king to reduce court spending, reform government, & abolish tariffs.

Eventually dismissed after tried to tax clergy & nobles

Estates-General- Legislative body of France consisting of representatives from 3 estates

Call to Oath

France was close to bankruptcy & riots &
Louis XVI summoned the Estates-
General

The estates prepared **cahiers**, notebooks listing
their grievances

The first two estates held more voting power, so the
3rd estate argued to count votes by people
rather than group

They formed the National Assembly & took the
Tennis Court Oath to work for the people



Storming the Bastille

The **Bastille** was a medieval fortress used as a prison for political prisoners

The National Assembly heard rumors that the royal troops were going to occupy Paris

They marched to the Bastille demanding weapons, when the commander opened fire, the mob attacked

The mob destroyed the Bastille, but found no weapons, but this began the **French Revolution**

Revolts in Paris

A famine gripped France that cause people to spend 80% of income on bread

Peasants began to fear that nobles were taking the grain so the **Great Fear** began & peasants attacked the nobles

Faction- A group or clique within a larger group that has different ideas & opinions

Marquis de Lafayette led the National Guard to protect Paris from the royal troops in Paris

The National Assembly

Afraid of peasant uprisings, the nobles voted to end their privileges

This met a key Enlightenment goal, the equality of all male citizens before the law

The Declaration of the Rights of Man & The Citizen was a document that spelled out the rights of the individual

Women, such as Olympe de Gouges, wanted equality as well

Women's March



The royal court continued to live in excess as the poor starved

6,000 women marched from Paris to demand for BREAD! Most of the anger toward Marie Antoinette

Eventually King Louis XVI was ushered back to Paris & kept as virtual prisoners

Reforms of the National Assembly

**Church lands were sold to pay off government debt &
Catholic church put under state control**

**This would lead to a split in ideas for the
revolutionaries in Paris & peasants of the
country**

**The Constitution of 1791 was drafted to change
absolute monarchy to a limited one**

**The king & his family tried to escape, but were
caught & brought back to Paris**