

The French Revolution (1789-1815)

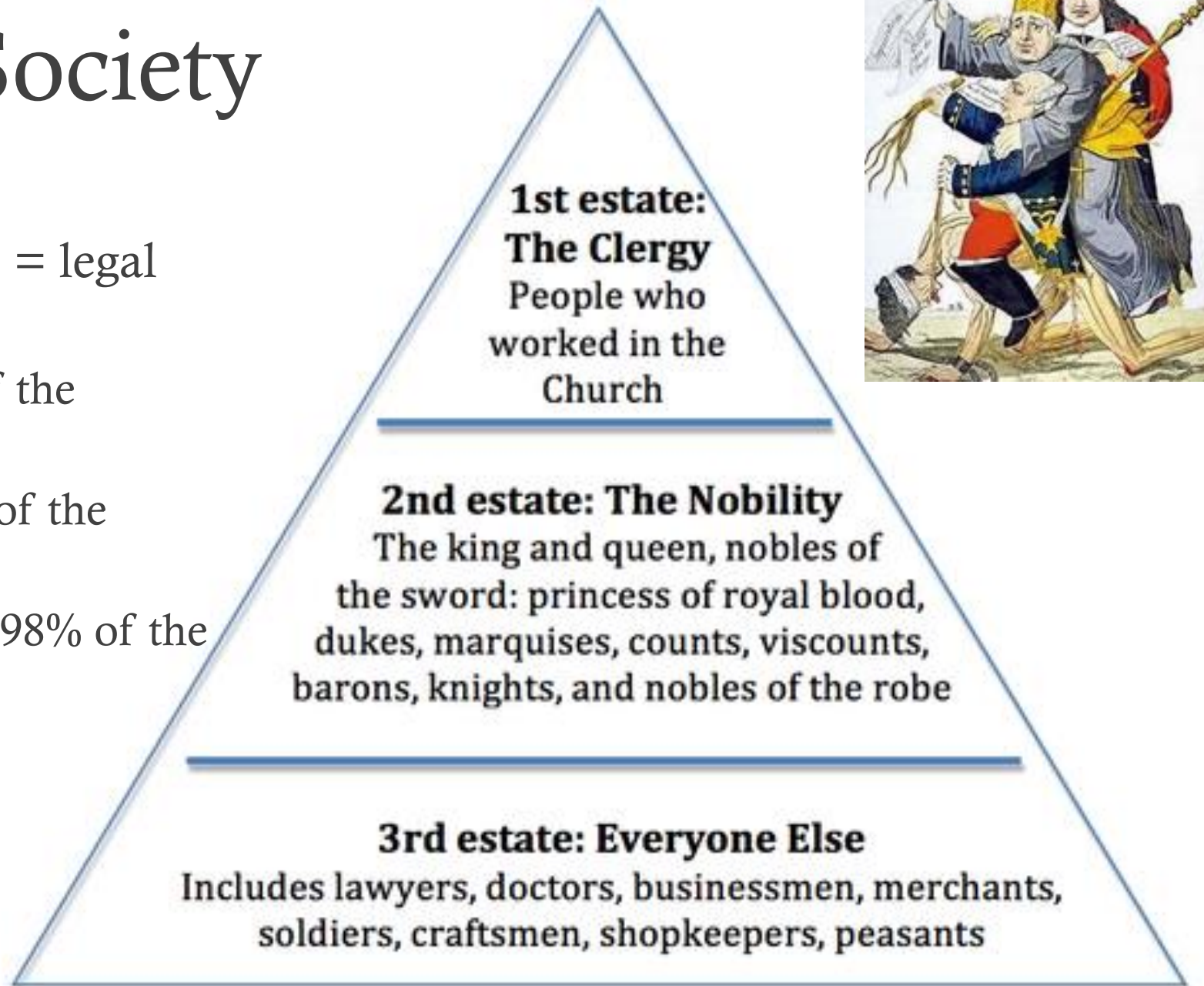
AP World History Notes

Chapter 17

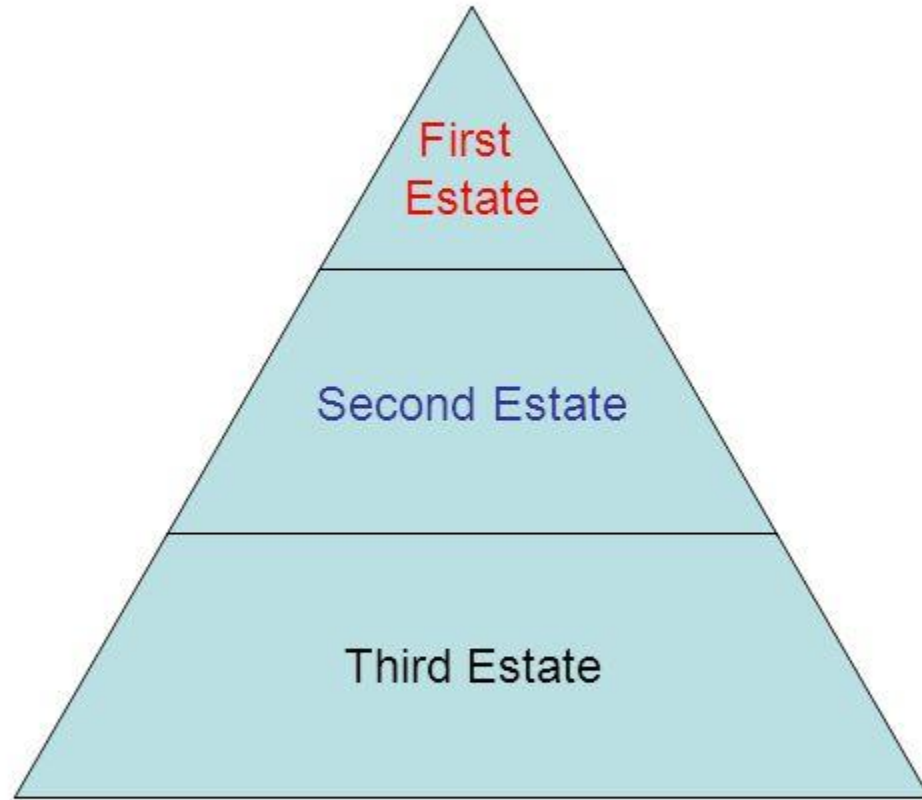
Atlantic Revolutions and their Echoes (1750-1914)

French Society

- Comprised of 3 “estates” = legal orders
 - Estate 1 = the clergy = 1% of the population
 - Estate 2 = the nobility = 1% of the population
 - Estate 3 = the commoners = 98% of the population



OLD REGIME



Population

First Estate: Church or Clergy

1% of population, owned
5-10% of land, paid little taxes

Second Estate: Nobles / Lords

2% of the population owned
25% of land, paid no taxes

**Third Estate: Bourgeoisie (or
Middle Class), Peasants,
Workers, and Serfs**

97% of the population, owned
40% land, paid high taxes (half
of their income!)



King Louis XVI

King of France at this time = King Louis XVI



Marie Antoinette

His wife = Marie Antoinette

The State of France



- On the brink of bankruptcy and government in debt
- Commoners upset with higher prices of goods and an increased cost of living
- Wealthy upper/middle class (bourgeoisie) = wanted more political power

The State of France

- King Louis XVI wanted to reform the tax system to make it more equal and efficient
 - At the time = clergy, nobility, and government officials = exempt from paying taxes
- He called into session the Estates General = an ancient representative body
 - Consisted of representatives from the 3 estates
 - Each estate gets 1 vote



Opening of the Estates General at Versailles --
May 5, 1789

The State of France



Meeting of the Estates General in 1789

- The 1st and 2nd estates could easily outvote the 3rd estate and voted against these tax reforms
- 3rd estate thought this was unfair → wanted to reform government so that votes were based on each representative, not on each estate
 - King refused because he didn't want the lowest class to control everything
 - Result = 3rd estate broke away and formed its own organization = the National Assembly

The National Assembly

- Met at indoor tennis court & swore the “Tennis Court Oath” = promised they wouldn’t disband until they had written a new constitution for France



Painting of the National Assembly convening at an indoor tennis court

The National Assembly



- Drafted the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen”
- Influenced by the Declaration of Independence
- Said all people were created equal
- Guaranteed freedoms of speech, press, and religion

Revolution in the Air

- King Louis XVI sensed trouble and called for more troops to protect Versailles and Paris
- Spirit of rebellion was everywhere – from the meetings of the National Assembly to the streets of Paris



The Gathering of French Troops

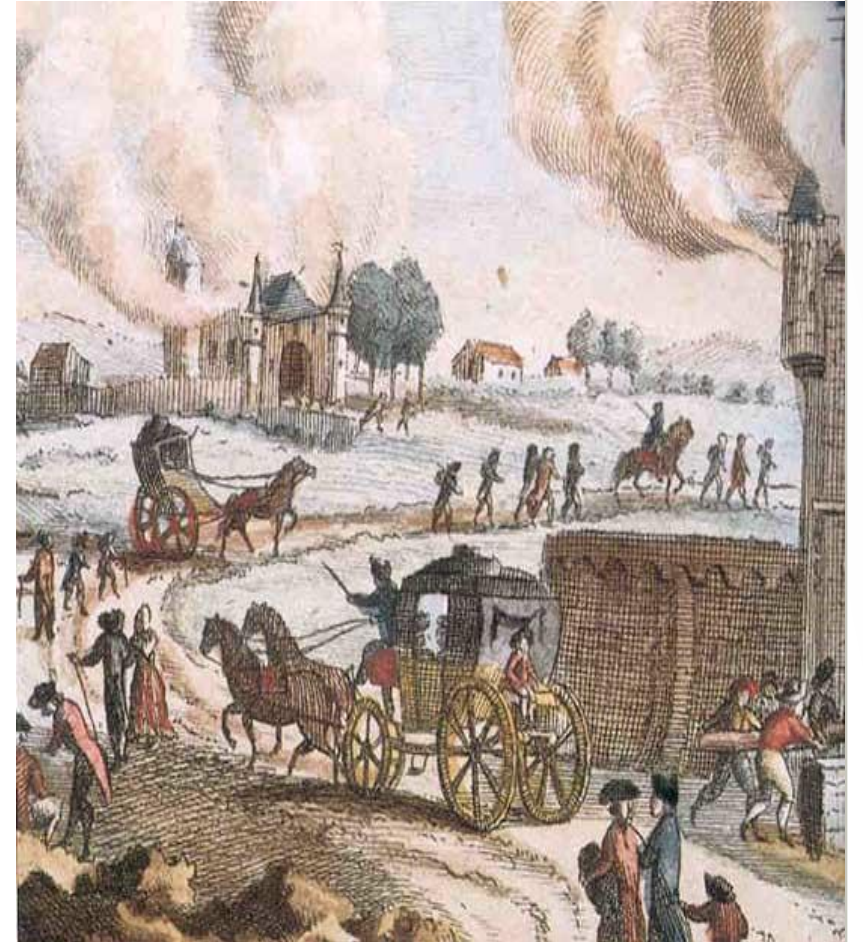
The Fall of the Bastille



- Bastille was a prison in Paris
- Symbolized the injustices of the monarchy
- Mob stormed the Bastille on July 14, 1789
- The prison fell and prisoners were freed

The Great Fear

- More violence followed = called the Great Fear
 - Peasants armed themselves and prepared for a revolution
 - Peasants attacked the castles of their lords
 - Fields and crops burned
 - Documents of dues and payments burned
 - Buildings attacked and destroyed



End of the Old Order

- In an effort to end the violence:
 - Nobles gave up their aristocratic privileges
 - Nobles gave up their tax exemption
 - Feudalism abolished
 - Agreement that all male citizens could hold offices in the government, army, or church



End of the Old Order



Cartoon Representation of the Confiscation of Church Lands

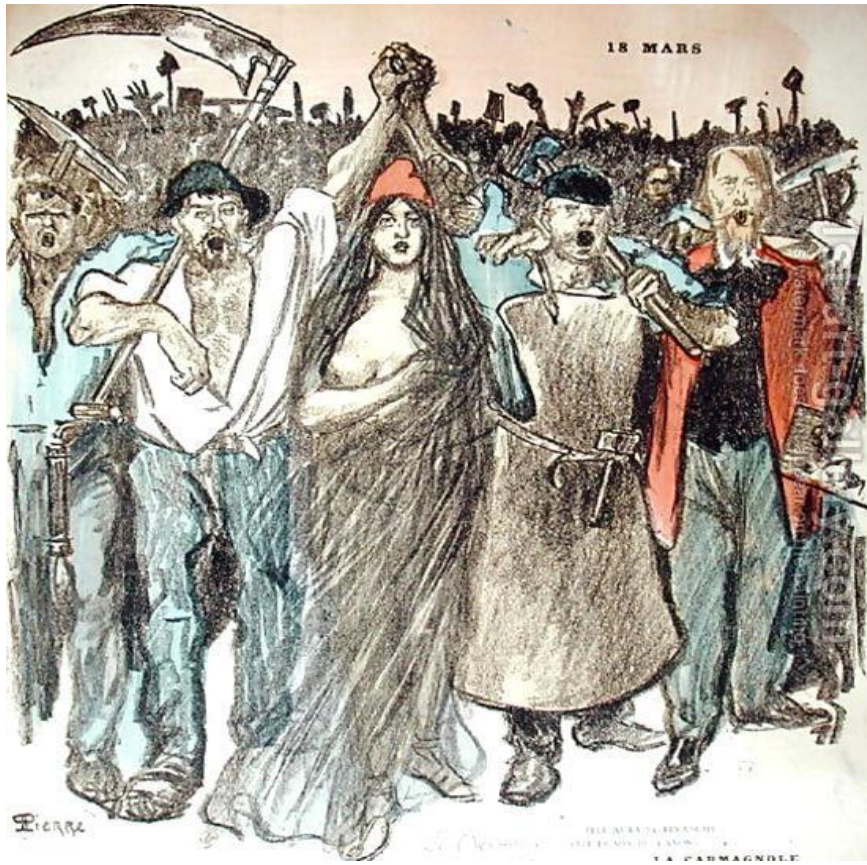
- Church lands = sold to raise revenue and pay government debts
- National Assembly passed the Civil Constitution of the Clergy = put French Church under government control; weakened the Catholic Church

March on Versailles

- Despite these changes, King Louis XVI still refused to accept the Declaration of Rights and recognize the National Assembly
- March on Versailles led by women who were upset with harsh economic conditions and bread shortages
- Marched to the King's palace and demanded he move the court to Paris → wanted him to show support for the new Assembly



March on Versailles



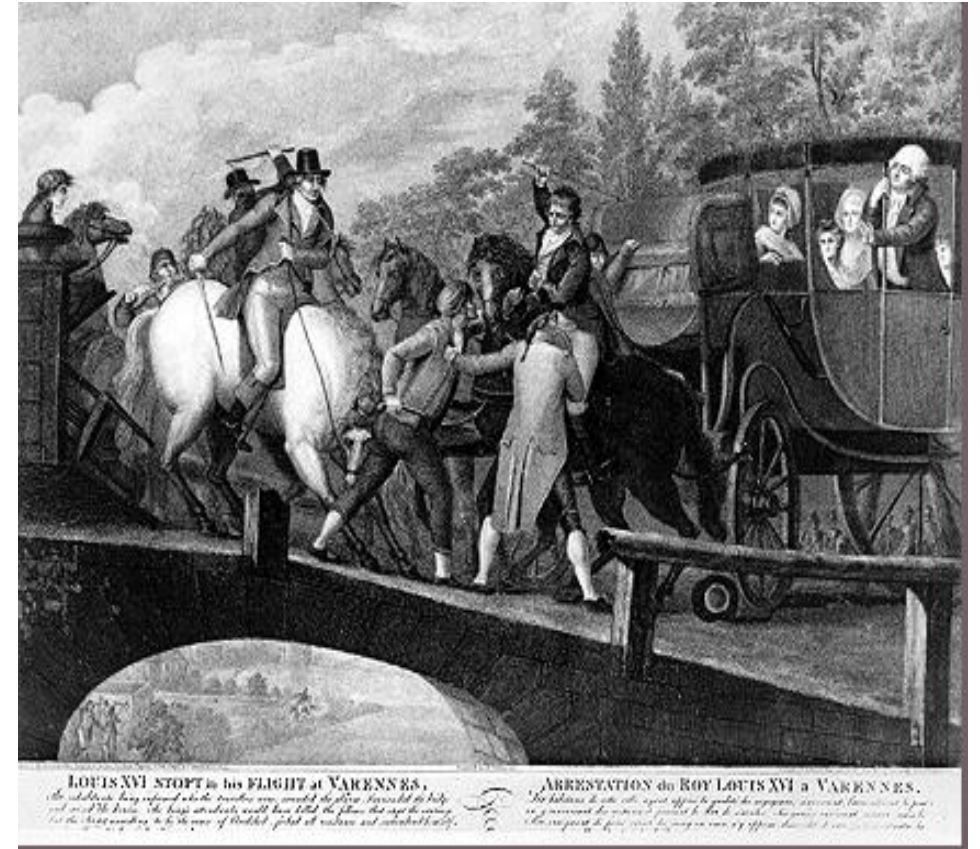
- Huge mob joined with pitchforks and torches
- Guards couldn't fight off the thousands of people
- King Louis XVI agreed to move to Paris

French Constitution of 1791

- Kept the monarchy but limited its power
- Set up a unicameral legislature
 - One-house assembly
 - Members chosen by the voters
- New constitution led to more unrest → some thought it went too far, others thought it didn't go far enough
 - Violence continued throughout the countryside
 - Fear of breakdown of law and order

Decline of the Monarchy

- In 1791 = King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette tried to escape Paris and go to Austria
 - Feared more violence
 - Were arrested before they got very far
 - Forced to return to Paris



Escape Attempt of the Royal Family in
June of 1791

The French Republic (1792)



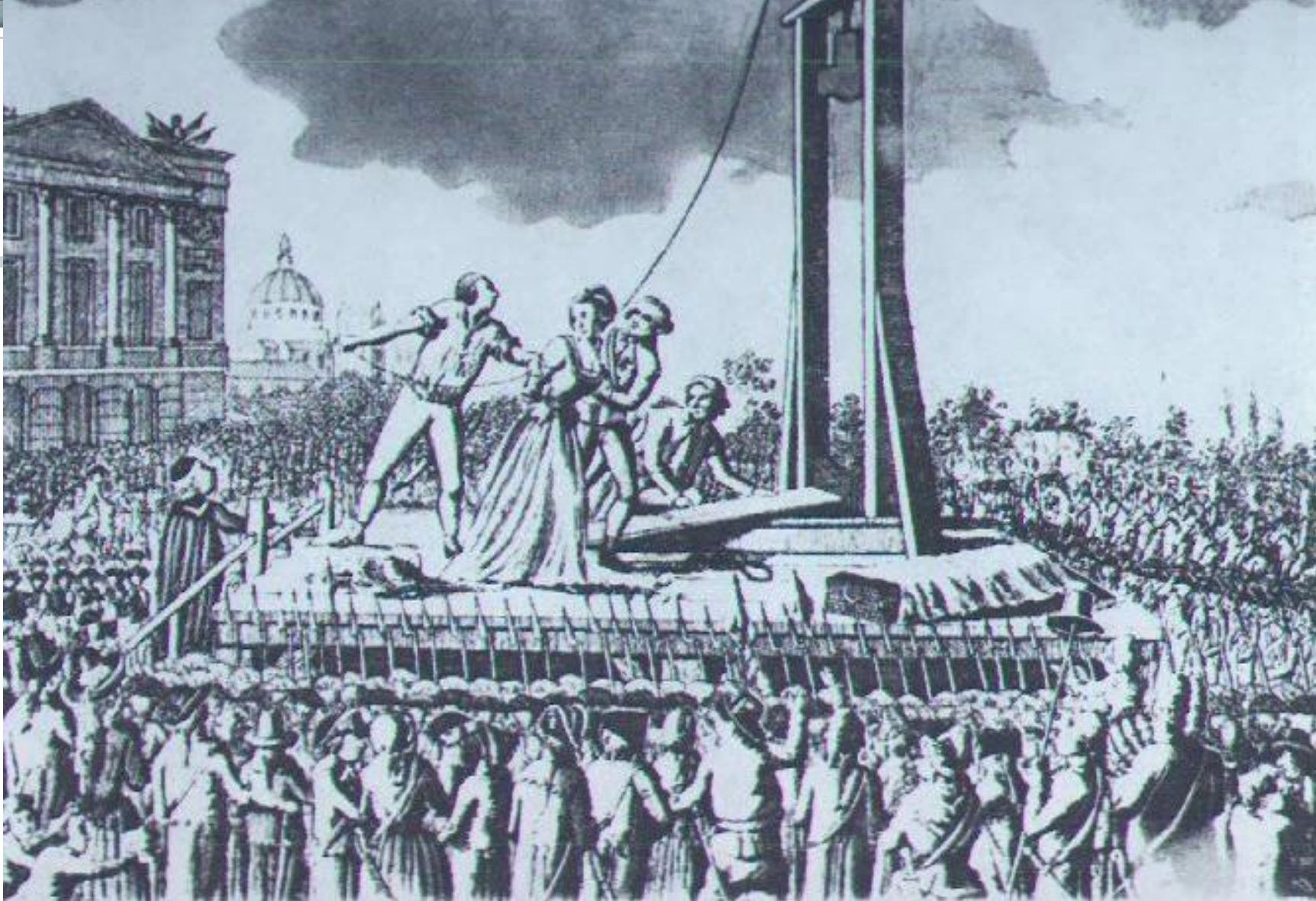
“Lady Liberty” Leading the People

- France attempted to create a whole new society
- Created a new government = a republic
- Wrote a democratic constitution
 - Passed universal male suffrage = every man could vote
- New calendar with “Year 1” in 1792 = marking a new start for France

The French Republic

- The new Republic had to decide the fate of King Louis XVI
 - Tried and convicted him of treason and conspiring against the nation
 - Beheaded on the guillotine in 1793
 - Crowds celebrated his death





Marie Antoinette met the same fate years later

The Reign of Terror (1793-1794)



- Began after the execution of Louis XVI
- Led by Maximilien Robespierre and his Committee of Public Safety
- Traitors and enemies of the revolution = executed with the guillotine
- An estimated 40,000 people were killed in this 1 year

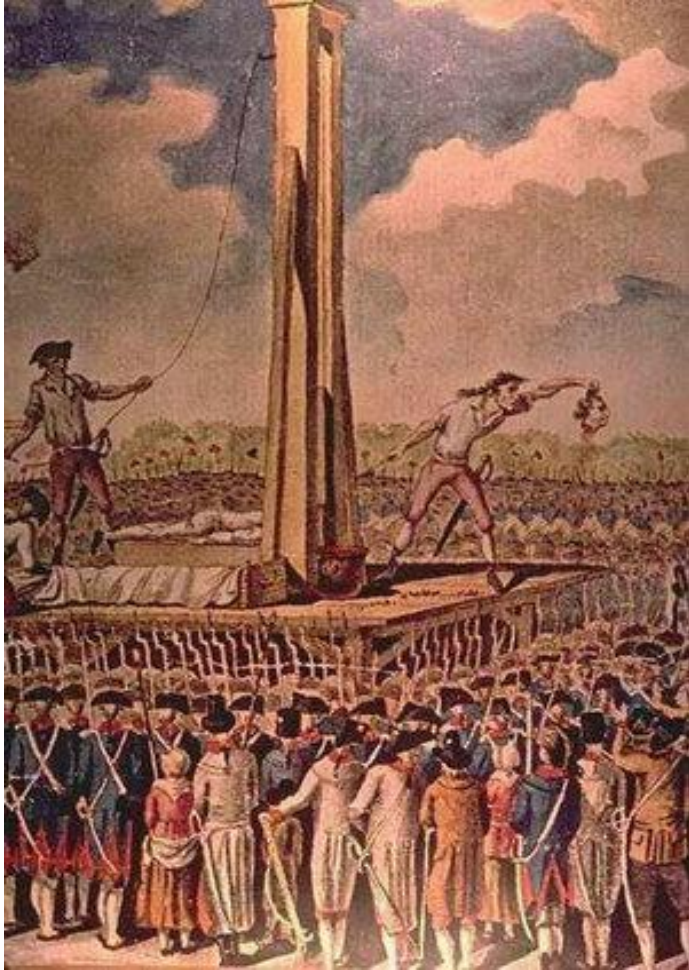
The Reign of Terror (1793-1794)

- Robespierre was soon arrested himself
- Accused of leading France into tyranny and dictatorship
- Executed with the guillotine



Execution of Maximilien Robespierre

Spreading the Revolution



- Other European leaders feared the French Revolution would spread to their countries
 - These countries united against the new French government
 - Austria, Prussia, Great Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands
- In response = France issued a conscription order = a draft
 - Men between 18 and 45 had to serve in the military

Napoleon Bonaparte

- French military leader
- Seized power in 1799 and ruled France until 1814
- He and a group of men led a coup d'etat = quick seizure of power of the government
- Napoleon tamed the French Revolution in the face of growing issues with its more radical features
- Named himself emperor of France in 1804



Restoring Order to France



- Napoleon preserved many elements of the French Revolution
- Set up a national school system
- Created the Bank of France
- Required that all citizens pay taxes
- Maintained civil equality
- Secular (non-religious) law code
- Religious freedom

Napoleon's Empire

- Napoleon wanted to spread the benefits of the French Revolution through military conquests and the building of an empire
- By 1812 = Napoleon controlled most of Europe



Napoleon's Empire



- Revolutionary practices imposed within his empire:
 - Ending of feudalism
 - Equality of rights
 - Religious toleration
 - Uniform, secular law codes

Downfall of the Empire

- Conquered countries resented French rule and began revolting
- 1812 = Failed invasion of Russia
 - Napoleon's troops marched into Moscow
 - French troops couldn't handle the harsh winter
 - As they finally withdrew, Russians attacked
 - 400,000 of the 600,000 French soldiers died
 - Battle wounds, starvation, exposure to cold, etc.



Napoleon's Retreat of Moscow

Downfall of the Empire



The Battle of Waterloo

Several of Napoleon's conquered nations successfully won back their freedom

Final defeat of Napoleon = at the Battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815

- He was exiled to an island in the South Atlantic where he died several years later

Marked an end to the era of the French Revolution