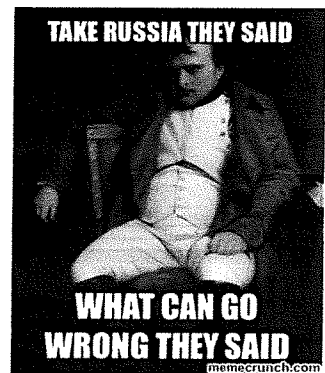
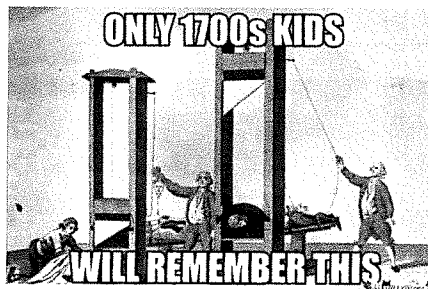
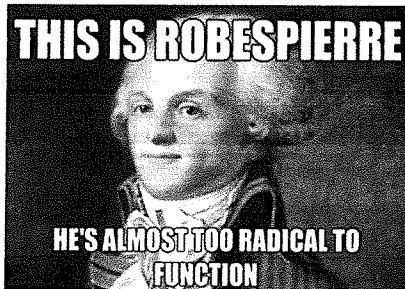


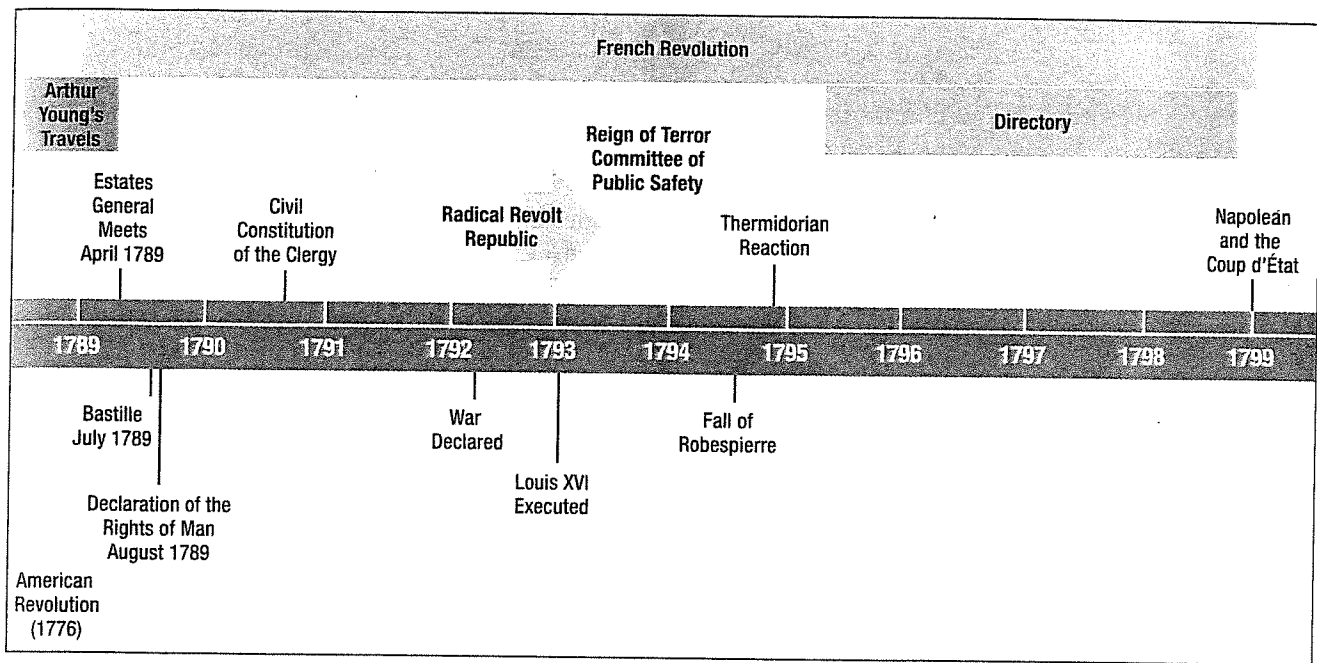
# AP EURO READINGS

## CHAPTER 19: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND AGE OF NAPOLEON

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# 9 The French Revolution

In 1789 the French Revolution ended the relative political and social stability of the Ancien Régime. This, and the earlier American Revolution, led to political and social changes that swept through Western civilization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Although the causes of the French Revolution are deep and controversial, most agree it was precipitated by financial problems that led Louis XVI to call a meeting of an old representative institution, the Estates General, in 1789. A struggle for power soon developed between a resurgent aristocracy and a rising middle class, both demanding support from the king. In an environment where peasants were turning against the aristocracy in the countryside and crowds were resorting to violence in Paris, the king managed to alienate both sides. Revolutionary legislation soon followed. By 1792 France was a constitutional monarchy, feudalism was abolished, liberal principles echoing Enlightenment thought were formally recognized, Church lands were con-

fiscated, and government administration was reorganized. The country was at war internally with counter-revolutionary forces and externally with much of the rest of Europe.

A second revolution in 1792 set France on a more radical course. Louis XVI was executed, and the government was declared a republic. Real power rested in the hands of the small Committee of Public Safety, which attacked internal dissent through the Reign of Terror and external wars through national mobilization. The period ended with a return to a more moderate course in 1794 and 1795, known as the Thermidorian Reaction. With power in the hands of the well-to-do middle class, an uneasy balance was maintained between forces clamoring for more radical policies and those wishing to return the monarchy until 1799, when Napoleon Bonaparte rose to power by means of a *coup d'état*.

Historians are fascinated by revolutions, for change is unusually rapid and dramatic. They are particularly interested in

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the causes of revolutions. In this chapter several primary documents address questions related to the causes of the French Revolution. What were some early signs of revolutionary discontent? What complaints were voiced by the middle class and by the commoners—the Third Estate? How did leaders of this Third Estate see themselves? Related secondary documents explore some of the interpretive debates over the revolution: Was this mainly a social revolution? What was the influence of politics on the French Revolution? Other sources examine the course and effects of the French Revolution. What happened is of particular importance, since the French Revolution was seen as a model for other revolutions and hoped-for revolutions. What were the main changes enacted during the revolution? How can we explain the most radical phase—the Reign of Terror? What

role did women play in revolutionary events? What part did nationalism play in revolutionary developments?

In short, the selections should provide broad insights into the nature and significance of the French Revolution, which more than any other event marks a dividing line between the Early Modern and the Modern eras of Western civilization.

### For Classroom Discussion

*What caused the French Revolution? Use evidence from three primary sources—Signs of Revolution, Discontents of the Third Estate, and Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen—as well as the arguments in the first two secondary sources by Georges Lefebvre and Donald M. G. Sutherland.*



## Primary Sources

### Travels in France: Signs of Revolution

Arthur Young

*In one sense, the French Revolution came as a great surprise. One of the last places people might have expected a revolution to occur was in a country so advanced and with such a stable monarchy as France. Yet to some sensitive observers of the time, the signs of revolution were at hand during the late 1780s. One of these observers was Arthur Young (1741–1820), a British farmer and diarist, best known for his writings on agricultural subjects. Between 1787 and 1789 he traveled extensively throughout France, keeping a diary of his experiences. In the following selection from that diary, Young notes deep dissatisfactions among the French.*

**CONSIDER:** *The problems and dissatisfactions that gave the French a sense of impending revolution; the specific problems that seemed most likely to lead to a revolutionary crisis and the steps that might have been taken to avoid such a crisis; how Young felt about these problems and dissatisfactions.*

PARIS, OCTOBER 17, 1787

One opinion pervaded the whole company, that they are on the eve of some great revolution in the government: that every thing points to it: the confusion in the finances great; with a deficit impossible to provide for without the states-general of the kingdom, yet no ideas formed of

what would be the consequence of their meeting: no minister existing, or to be looked to in or out of power, with such decisive talents as to promise any other remedy than palliative ones: a prince on the throne, with excellent dispositions, but without the resources of a mind that could govern in such a moment without ministers: a court buried in pleasure and dissipation; and adding to the distress, instead of endeavouring to be placed in a more independent situation: a great ferment amongst all ranks of men, who are eager for some change, without knowing what to look to, or to hope for: and a strong leaven of liberty, increasing every hour since the American revolution; altogether form a combination of circumstances that promise e'er long to ferment into motion, if some master hand, of very superior talents, and inflexible courage, is not found at the helm to guide events, instead of being driven by them. It is very remarkable, that such conversation never occurs, but a bankruptcy is a topic: the curious question on which is, *would a bankruptcy occasion a civil war, and a total overthrow of the government?* These answers that I have received to this question, appear to be just: such a measure, conducted by a man of abilities, vigour, and firmness, would certainly not occasion either one or the other. But the same measure, attempted by a man of a different character, might possibly do both. All agree, that the states of the kingdom cannot assemble without more liberty being the consequence; but I meet with so few men that have any just ideas of freedom, that I question much the species of this new liberty that is to arise. They know not how to value the privileges of THE PEOPLE: as to the nobility and the clergy, if a revolution added any thing to their scale, I think it would do more mischief than good. . . .

SOURCE: Arthur Young, *Arthur Young's Travels in France During the Years 1787, 1788, 1789*, 4th ed., ed. Miss Betham-Edwards (London: Bell, 1892), pp. 97–98, 124, 134.

RENNES, SEPTEMBER 2, 1788

The discontents of the people have been double, first on account of the high price of bread, and secondly for the banishment of the parliament. The former cause is natural enough, but why the people should love their parliament was what I could not understand, since the members, as well as of the states, are all noble, and the distinction between the *noblesse* and *roturiers* no where stronger, more offensive, or more abominable than in Bretagne. They assured me, however, that the populace have been blown up to violence by every art of deception, and even by money distributed for that purpose. The commotions rose to such a height before the camp was established, that the troops here were utterly unable to keep the peace. . . .

NANTES, SEPTEMBER 22, 1788

Nantes is as *enflammé* in the cause of liberty, as any town in France can be; the conversations I witnessed here, prove how great a change is effected in the minds of the French, nor do I believe it will be possible for the present government to last half a century longer, unless the clearest and most decided talents are at the helm. The American revolution has laid the foundation of another in France, if government does not take care of itself.

## The Cahiers: Discontents of the Third Estate

*Pressured by discontent and financial problems, Louis XVI called for a meeting of the Estates General in 1789. This representative institution, which had not met for 175 years, reflected the traditional formal divisions in French society: the First Estate, the clergy; the Second Estate, the nobility; and the Third Estate, all the rest from banker and lawyer to peasant. In anticipation of the meeting of the Estates General, the king requested and received cahiers, lists of grievances drawn up by local groups of each of the three Estates. These cahiers have provided historians with an unusually rich source of materials revealing what was bothering people just before the outbreak of the revolution in 1789. The following is an excerpt from a cahier from the Third Estate in Carcassonne.*

CONSIDER: How these grievances of the Third Estate compare to the grievances noted by Young; why these grievances might be revolutionary; the ways in which these grievances are peculiar to the Third Estate and not shared by the First and Second Estates.

8. Among these rights the following should be especially noted: the nation should hereafter be subject only to such laws and taxes as it shall itself freely ratify.
9. The meetings of the Estates General of the kingdom should be fixed for definite periods, and the subsidies judged necessary for the support of the state and the public service should be noted for no longer a period than to the close of the year in which the next meeting of the Estates General is to occur.
10. In order to assure to the third estate the influence to which it is entitled in view of the number of its members, the amount of its contributions to the public treasury, and the manifold interests which it has to defend or promote in the national assemblies, its votes in the assembly should be taken and counted by head.
11. No order, corporation, or individual citizen may lay claim to any pecuniary exemptions. . . . All taxes should be assessed on the same system throughout the nation.
12. The due exacted from commoners holding fiefs should be abolished, and also the general or particular regulations which exclude members of the third estate from certain positions, offices, and ranks which have hitherto been bestowed on nobles either for life or hereditarily. A law should be passed declaring members of the third estate qualified to fill all such offices for which they are judged to be personally fitted.
13. Since individual liberty is intimately associated with national liberty, his Majesty is hereby petitioned not to permit that it be hereafter interfered with by arbitrary orders for imprisonment. . . .
14. Freedom should be granted also to the press, which should however be subjected, by means of strict regulations, to the principles of religion, morality, and public decency.

## What Is the Third Estate?

Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès

*Before the Estates General met, issues arose among the Estates, particularly over whether the combined First and Second Estates should be able to hold the preponderance of power when the Estates General met. One of the most wide-ranging attacks on the privileged orders and assertion of*

SOURCE: "Cahier of the Grievances, Complaints, and Protests of the Electoral District of Carcassonne . . ." From James Harvey Robinson, ed., *Readings in European History*, vol. II (Boston: Ginn, 1904), pp. 399-400.

SOURCE: From Merrick Whitcomb, ed., "French Philosophers of the Eighteenth Century," in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol. VI, no. 1, ed. Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1898), pp. 34-35.

*Third Estate rights came from Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748–1836). A clergyman strongly influenced by Enlightenment ideas, Sieyès was eventually elected as a representative of the Third Estate and played an active role in events throughout the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. The following is a selection from his pamphlet, What Is the Third Estate?, which was published in January 1789 and gained quick popularity.*

CONSIDER: *The basis for the attack by Sieyès on the nobility; why members of the bourgeoisie might find this pamphlet very appealing; how the tone and content of this pamphlet compare with the cahier.*

It suffices here to have made it clear that the pretended utility of a privileged order for the public service is nothing more than a chimera; that with it all that which is burdensome in this service is performed by the Third Estate; that without it the superior places would be infinitely better filled; that they naturally ought to be the lot and the recompense of ability and recognized services, and that if privileged persons have come to usurp all the lucrative and honorable posts, it is a hateful injustice to the rank and file of citizens and at the same time a treason to the public weal.

Who then shall dare to say that the Third Estate has not within itself all that is necessary for the formation of a complete nation? It is the strong and robust man who has one arm still shackled. If the privileged order should be abolished, the nation would be nothing less, but something more. Therefore, what is the Third Estate? Everything; but an everything shackled and oppressed. What would it be without the privileged order? Everything, but an everything free and flourishing. Nothing can succeed without it, everything would be infinitely better without the others. . . .

What is a nation? A body of associates, living under a common law, and represented by the same legislature, etc.

Is it not evident that the noble order has privileges and expenditures which it dares to call its rights, but which are apart from the rights of the great body of citizens? It departs there from the common order, from the common law. So its civil rights make of it an isolated people in the midst of the great nation. This is truly *imperium in imperio*.

In regard to its political rights, these also it exercises apart. It has its special representatives, which are not charged with securing the interests of the people. The body of its deputies sit apart; and when it is assembled in the same hall with the deputies of simple citizens, it is none the less true that its representation is essentially distinct and separate; it is a stranger to the nation, in the first place, by its origin, since its commission is not derived from the people; then by its object, which consists of defending not the general, but the particular interest.

The Third Estate embraces then all that which belongs to the nation; and all that which is not the Third Estate, cannot be regarded as being of the nation. What is the Third Estate? It is the whole.

## Revolutionary Legislation: Abolition of the Feudal System

*During the summer of 1789, France was swept with a variety of revolutionary activities. The Third Estate had successfully formed the National Assembly. On July 14 a mob had stormed the Bastille, an act that symbolized a violent tearing down of the Ancien Régime and the beginning of the popular revolution. In the countryside the peasantry rose against the nobility. Faced with these pressures, elements of the nobility in the National Assembly moved on August 4 and 5 to abolish their own feudal rights and privileges. In sum, these laws constituted a formal repudiation of the feudal system and many of the institutions of the Ancien Régime. The following selection comes from that legislation.*

CONSIDER: *The extent to which these measures satisfied the grievances of the Third Estate as expressed in the cahier and the pamphlet by Sieyès; why members of the nobility proposed and supported these measures themselves; whether these measures should be interpreted as a repudiation of the monarchy as an institution or specifically of Louis XVI as the king.*

ARTICLE I. The National Assembly hereby completely abolishes the feudal system. It decrees that, among the existing rights and dues, . . . all those originating in or representing real or personal serfdom or personal servitude, shall be abolished without indemnification.

IV. All manorial courts are hereby suppressed without indemnification. . . .

V. Tithes of every description, as well as the dues which have been substituted for them . . . are abolished, on condition, however, that some other method be devised to provide for the expenses of divine worship, the support of the officiating clergy, for the assistance of the poor, for repairs and rebuilding of churches and parsonages, and for the maintenance of all institutions, seminaries, schools, academies, asylums, and organizations to which the present funds are devoted.

SOURCE: From James Harvey Robinson, ed., "The French Revolution, 1789–1791," in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol. 1, no. 5, ed. Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1898), pp. 2–5.

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VII. The sale of judicial and municipal offices shall be suppressed forthwith. Justice shall be dispensed *gratis*.

IX. Pecuniary privileges, personal or real, in the payment of taxes are abolished forever. Taxes shall be collected from all the citizens, and from all property, in the same manner and in the same form. . . .

X. . . . All the peculiar privileges, pecuniary or otherwise, of the provinces, principalities, districts, cantons, cities and communes, are once for all abolished and are absorbed into the law common to all Frenchmen.

XI. All citizens, without distinction of birth, are eligible to any office or dignity, whether ecclesiastical, civil or military; and no profession shall imply any derogation.

XVII. The National Assembly solemnly proclaims the King, Louis XVI, the *Restorer of French Liberty*.

XVIII. The National Assembly shall present itself in a body before the King, in order to submit to him the decrees which have just been passed, to tender to him the tokens of its most respectful gratitude. . . .

XIX. The National Assembly shall consider, immediately after the constitution, the drawing up of the laws necessary for the development of the principles which it has laid down in the present decree.

## The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

*No document better summarizes the ideals underlying the French Revolution than The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. After an extended discussion, this document was passed by the National Assembly on August 27, 1789; later a revised version of it was incorporated into the Constitution of 1791. Its provisions are a combination of general statements about human rights and specific statements about what the government should and should not do. This document corresponds to the American Declaration of Independence. It is also viewed more broadly as containing the general principles for democratic revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.*

CONSIDER: *How this document reflects ideals of the Enlightenment; at which social groups this document was aimed; who would suffer most from or be most infuriated by its pro-*

*visions; the ways in which this document is inconsistent with monarchical government; how a monarch might retain meaningful powers while still conforming to this document.*

The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being constantly before all the members of the social body, shall remind them continually of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, as well as those of the executive power, may be compared at any moment with the ends of all political institutions and may thus be more respected; and, lastly, in order that the grievances of the citizens, based hereafter upon simple and incontestable principles, shall tend to the maintenance of the constitution and redound to the happiness of all. Therefore the National Assembly recognizes and proclaims, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and of the citizen:—

ARTICLE 1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may only be founded upon the general good.

2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.
3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.
4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.
5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented which is not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by law.
6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally or through his representative in its formation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents.

SOURCE: James Harvey Robinson, ed., "The French Revolution, 1789-1791," in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol. I, no. 5, ed. Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1898), pp. 6-8.

7. No person shall be accused, arrested or imprisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law. Any one soliciting, transmitting, executing or causing to be executed any arbitrary order shall be punished. But any citizen summoned or arrested in virtue of the law shall submit without delay, as resistance constitutes an offence.
8. The law shall provide for such punishments only as are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one shall suffer punishment except it be legally inflicted in virtue of a law passed and promulgated before the commission of the offence.
9. As all persons are held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty, if arrest shall be deemed indispensable, all harshness not essential to the securing of the prisoner's person shall be severely repressed by law.
10. No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.
11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law.
12. The security of the rights of man and of the citizen requires public military force. These forces are, therefore, established for the good of all and not for the personal advantage of those to whom they shall be entrusted.
13. A common contribution is essential for the maintenance of the public forces and for the cost of administration. This should be equitably distributed among all the citizens in proportion to their means.
14. All the citizens have a right to decide, either personally or by their representatives, as to the necessity of the public contribution; to grant this freely; to know to what uses it is put; and to fix the proportion, the mode of assessment, and of collection, and the duration of the taxes.
15. Society has the right to require of every public agent an account of his administration.
16. A society in which the observance of the law is not assured, nor the separation of powers defined, has no constitution at all.
17. Since property is an inviolable and sacred right, no one shall be deprived thereof except where public necessity, legally determined, shall clearly demand it, and then only on condition that the owner shall have been previously and equitably indemnified.

## Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen

*Olympe de Gouges*

*While men of the French Revolution stood for principles of natural rights, equality before the law, and universal liberties, few favored applying those principles to women. However, several women and women's organizations struggled to win rights for women that corresponded to those gained by men. Olympe de Gouges (1743–1793), a self-educated daughter of a butcher and an author of several pamphlets and plays, was one of the most famous of these women. The following excerpts are from her September 1791 pamphlet, which she modeled on the National Assembly's Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Her critical writings would eventually bring her into conflict with Robespierre and the Jacobins. Charged for counter-revolutionary activities, she was arrested and executed in 1793.*

CONSIDER: What Gouges demands; the arguments and language she uses to support her demands.

Mothers, daughters, sisters [and] representatives of the nation demand to be constituted into a national assembly. Believing that ignorance, omission, or scorn for the rights of woman are the only causes of public misfortunes and of the corruption of governments, [the women] have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of woman. . . .

### ARTICLE 1

Woman is born free and lives equal to man in her rights. Social distinctions can be based only on the common utility.

### ARTICLE 4

Liberty and justice consist of restoring all that belongs to others; thus, the only limits on the exercise of the natural rights of woman are perpetual male tyranny; these limits are to be reformed by the laws of nature and reason.

### ARTICLE 6

The laws must be the expression of the general will; all female and male citizens must contribute either personally or through their representatives to its formation; it must be the same for all: male and female citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, must be equally admitted to all honors, positions, and public employment according to their capacity and without other distinctions besides those of their virtues and talents.

SOURCE: Olympe de Gouges, "The Declaration of the Rights of Women," in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789–1795*, Darline Gay Levy, et al., eds. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 89–93.

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## ARTICLE 11

The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious rights of woman, since the liberty assures the recognition of children by their fathers. Any female citizen thus may say freely, I am the mother of a child which belongs to you, without being forced by a barbarous prejudice to hide the truth; [an exception may be made] to respond to the abuse of this liberty in cases determined by the law.

## ARTICLE 17

Property belongs to both sexes whether united or separate; for each it is an inviolable and sacred right; no one can be deprived of it, since it is the true patrimony of nature, unless the legally determined public need obviously dictates it, and then only with a just and prior indemnity.

## POSTSCRIPT

Woman, wake up; the tocsin of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe; discover your rights. The powerful empire of nature is no longer surrounded by prejudice, fanaticism, superstition, and lies. The flame of truth has dispersed all the clouds of folly and usurpation. Enslaved man has multiplied his strength and needs recourse to yours to break his chains. Having become free, he has become unjust to his companion. Oh, women, women! When will you cease to be blind? What advantage have you received from the Revolution? A more pronounced scorn, a more marked disdain. In the centuries of corruption you ruled only over the weakness of men. The reclamation of your patrimony, based on the wise decrees of nature—what have you to dread from such a fine undertaking? The bon mot of the legislator of the marriage of Cana? Do you fear that our French legislators, correctors of that morality, long ensnared by political practices now out of date, will only say again to you: women, what is there in common between you and us? Everything, you will have to answer. If they persist in their weakness in putting this non sequitur in contradiction to their principles, courageously oppose the force of reason to the empty pretensions of superiority; unite yourselves beneath the standards of philosophy; deploy all the energy of your character, and you will soon see these haughty men, not groveling at your feet as servile adorers, but proud to share with you the treasures of the Supreme Being. Regardless of what barriers confront you, it is in your power to free yourselves; you have only to want to. Let us pass not to the shocking tableau of what you have been in society; and since national education is in question at this moment, let us see whether our wise legislators will think judiciously about the education of women.

## The Declaration of Independence

*The American Revolution preceded the French Revolution by a few years. Yet its priority in time does not give it priority in historical importance. At that time America was at the fringes of Western civilization while France was at its heart. Nevertheless, the American Revolution influenced the French Revolution in a variety of ways. One similarity between the two is their two great declarations: the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789). Although it is uncertain whether the French were directly influenced by the American document, both are products of common ideas of the late eighteenth century and show evidence of a strong relationship between these ideas and revolutionary activities in Western civilization. The Declaration of Independence was written primarily by Thomas Jefferson. The following selection comes from the beginning of this document.*

CONSIDER: *The usefulness of this standard for evaluating the legitimacy of a revolution; similarities between the French and American declarations; how these two documents differ in purpose and substance.*

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.—We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under

SOURCE: *The Declaration of Independence, 1776* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1911), pp. 3–8.

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absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

## Speech to the National Convention— February 5, 1794: The Terror Justified

Maximilien Robespierre

*Between 1793 and 1794, France experienced the most radical phase of the revolution, known as the Reign of Terror. During this period France was essentially ruled by the twelve-member Committee of Public Safety elected by the National Convention every month. The outstanding member of this committee was Maximilien Robespierre (1758–1794), a provincial lawyer who rose within the Jacobin Club and gained a reputation for incorruptibility and superb oratory. Historians have argued over Robespierre, some singling him out as a bloodthirsty individual with the major responsibility for the executions during the Reign of Terror, others seeing him as a sincere, idealistic, effective revolutionary leader called to the fore by events of the time. In the following speech to the National Convention on February 5, 1794, Robespierre defines the revolution and justifies extreme actions, including terror, in its defense.*

CONSIDER: *What Robespierre means when he argues that terror flows from virtue; how the use of terror relates to the essence of the revolution; how this speech might be interpreted as an Enlightenment attack on the Ancien Régime carried to its logical conclusion.*

It is time to mark clearly the aim of the Revolution and the end toward which we wish to move; it is time to take stock of ourselves, of the obstacles which we still face, and of the means which we ought to adopt to attain our objectives. . . .

What is the goal for which we strive? A peaceful enjoyment of liberty and equality, the rule of that eternal justice whose laws are engraved, not upon marble or stone, but in the hearts of all men.

We wish an order of things where all low and cruel passions are enchained by the laws, all beneficent and generous feelings aroused; where ambition is the desire to merit glory and to serve one's fatherland; where distinctions are born only of equality itself; where the citizen is subject to the magistrate, the magistrate to the people,

the people to justice; where the nation safeguards the welfare of each individual, and each individual proudly enjoys the prosperity and glory of his fatherland; where all spirits are enlarged by the constant exchange of republican sentiments and by the need of earning the respect of a great people; where the arts are the adornment of liberty, which ennobles them; and where commerce is the source of public wealth, not simply of monstrous opulence for a few families.

In our country we wish to substitute morality for egotism, probity for honor, principles for conventions, duties for etiquette, the empire of reason for the tyranny of customs, contempt for vice for contempt for misfortune, pride for insolence, the love of honor for the love of money. . . . that is to say, all the virtues and miracles of the Republic for all the vices and snobbishness of the monarchy.

We wish in a word to fulfill the requirements of nature, to accomplish the destiny of mankind, to make good the promises of philosophy. . . . that France, hitherto illustrious among slave states, may eclipse the glory of all free peoples that have existed, become the model of all nations. . . . That is our ambition; that is our aim.

What kind of government can realize these marvels? Only a democratic government. . . . But to found and to consolidate among us this democracy, to realize the peaceable rule of constitutional laws, it is necessary to conclude the war of liberty against tyranny and to pass successfully through the storms of revolution. Such is the aim of the revolutionary system which you have setup. . . .

Now what is the fundamental principle of democratic, or popular government—that is to say, the essential mainspring upon which it depends and which makes it function? It is virtue: I mean public virtue. . . . that virtue which is nothing else but love of fatherland and its laws. . . .

The splendor of the goal of the French Revolution is simultaneously the source of our strength and of our weakness: our strength, because it gives us an ascendancy of truth over falsehood, and of public rights over private interests; our weakness, because it rallies against us all vicious men, all those who in their hearts seek to despoil the people. . . . It is necessary to stifle the domestic and foreign enemies of the Republic or perish with them. Now in these circumstances, the first maxim of our politics ought to be to lead the people by means of reason and the enemies of the people by terror.

If the basis of popular government in time of peace is virtue, the basis of popular government in time of revolution is both virtue and terror: virtue without which terror is murderous, terror without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing else than swift, severe, indomitable justice; it flows, then, from virtue.

## A Soldier's Letters to His Mother: Revolutionary Nationalism

François-Xavier Joliclerc

Despite tremendous internal difficulties, including counter-revolutionary movements in a number of provinces, French armies held back foreign forces after war broke out in 1792, but by 1794 the French forces had made gains even beyond the 1789 borders. Part of the reason for this success was the nationalistic enthusiasm that developed along with the revolution. This nationalism is demonstrated by the following letters from François-Xavier Joliclerc, a conscript in the French army, to his mother.

CONSIDER: The divisions within French society revealed in these letters; why such sentiments among soldiers are so important and how political leaders or military strategists might capitalize on them; whether the nationalism revealed in these letters is inherent in the nature of the French Revolution or in any particular phase of that revolution.

13 December, 1793

My dear mother,

You continue to point out to me, in all your letters, that we must get out of the army, cost what it may. Here are the difficulties and the obstacles that I can see.

First of all, it is difficult to find replacements despite the enormous sums that are expended for this purpose. Secondly, we have just had a call-up of men eighteen to twenty-five; and the call-up of those from twenty-five to thirty-five is being prepared. As soon as we got home, we

SOURCE: From Ludwig F. Schaefer, Daniel P. Resnick, and George F. Netterville, eds., *The Shaping of Western Civilization*, vol. II, trans. Daniel P. Resnick (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), p. 216. Reprinted by permission of the editors.

would have to get ready to go back, regretting the money we had spent. Thirdly, when *la patrie* calls us to her defense, we ought to fly there as if running to a good meal. Our life, our wealth, and our talents do not belong to us. It is to the nation, *la patrie*, that all that belongs.

I know well that you and all the others in our village do not share these sentiments. They are not aroused by the cries of an outraged fatherland, and all that they do results from being compelled to. But I have been brought up in conscience and thought, and have always been republican in spirit, although obliged to live in a monarchy. These principles of love for *la patrie*, *la liberté*, *la république*, are not only engraved in my heart, but are deeply etched and will remain there as long as it will please the Supreme Being to sustain in me the breath of life.

Even if it cost me three quarters of my possessions to have you share these sentiments with me, I would gladly part with them and consider it a very small sacrifice. Oh, if only one day you could know the price of liberty and lose your senseless attachment to material things.

30 May, 1794

What about my lot? I am at my post, where I ought to be, and every good man who knows what's what ought to fly to the aid of his country in danger. If I should perish there, you ought to rejoice. Can one make a finer sacrifice than to die for one's country? Can one die for a more just, glorious, and fairer cause? No! Would you rather see me die on a mattress of straw in my bed at Froidefontaine [his home village] working with wood or stone?

No, dear mother. Think that I am at my post and you will be consoled. If your conscience reproaches you in some way, sell even the last of your petticoats for *la patrie*. She is our only rudder, and it is she who guides us and gives us happiness. . . .

Your son, Joliclerc



## Visual Sources

### Allegory of the Revolution

Jeaurat de Bertray

Jeaurat de Bertray's Allegory of the Revolution (figure 9.1) is literally a jumble of historical and revolutionary symbols. At the top is a portrait of Jean Jacques Rousseau, at the time considered by many the spiritual and intellectual father of the French Revolution, even though he never advocated revolution and died eleven years before it began. Below him are the

new flags of the French Republic, the one on the left with the nationalistic words "love of country." Further to the left is a triangular monument to Equality, below it two maidens representing Goodness and Good Faith, and in the center a bundle of rods and arms topped by a red liberty cap, all symbolizing a fair, forceful republican government. Just below is paper money, the assignats, that helped finance the revolution and pay off debts, and in the center right grows a liberty tree. To the right are two unfinished pillars, the first dedicated to the

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uprising of the Paris Commune in May 1871, nearly a century later, "but not made of weaker stuff than our grandmothers of '93. Let us not cause their shades to blush for us, but be up and doing, as they would be were they living now."

## An Evaluation of the French Revolution

William Doyle

*Although most would say that rapid and vast changes occurred during the French Revolution, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which these changes were more apparent than real. Many historians have concluded that while the revolution stood for much, most of the promises made by the revolution were not carried out. Others argue that much that has been attributed to the revolution would probably have come about anyway. In the following selection William Doyle attempts to strike a balance between what was and was not accomplished by the revolution.*

CONSIDER: How Doyle determines what changes would in all probability have come about in any case; what Doyle attributes directly to the revolution; how Doyle's argument might be used by those opposing revolutions in general.

The shadow of the Revolution, therefore, fell across the whole of the nineteenth century and beyond. Until 1917 few would have disputed that it was the greatest revolution in the history of the world; and even after that its claims to primacy remain strong. It was the first modern revolution, the archetypal one. After it, nothing in the European world remained the same, and we are all heirs to its influence. And yet, it can be argued, much that was attributed to it would in all probability have come about in any case. Before 1789 there were plenty of signs that the structure of French society was evolving towards domination by a single élite in which property counted for more than birth. The century-long expansion of the bourgeoisie which underlay this trend already looked irreversible; and greater participation by men of property in government, as constant experiments with provincial assemblies showed, seemed bound to come. Meanwhile many of the reforms the Revolution brought in were already being tried or thought about by the absolute monarchy—law codification, fiscal rationalization, diminution of venality, free trade, religious toleration. With all these changes under way or in contemplation,

the power of government looked set for steady growth, too—which ironically was one of the complaints of the despotism-obsessed men of 1789. In the Church, the monastic ideal was already shrivelling and the status of parish priests commanding more and more public sympathy. Economically, the colonial trade had already peaked, and failure to compete industrially with Great Britain was increasingly manifest. In other structural areas, meanwhile, the great upheaval appears to have made no difference at all. Conservative investment habits still characterized the early nineteenth century, agricultural inertia and unentrepreneurial business likewise. And in international affairs, it is hard to believe that Great Britain would not have dominated the world's seas and trade throughout the nineteenth century, that Austro-Prussian rivalry would not have run much the course it did, or that Latin America would not have asserted its independence in some form or other, if the French Revolution had never happened. In all these fields, the effect was to accelerate or retard certain trends, but not to change their general drift.

Against all this, it is equally hard to believe that the specifically anti-aristocratic, anti-feudal revolutionary ideology of the Rights of Man would have emerged as it did without the jumble of accident, miscalculation, and misunderstanding which coalesced into a revolution in specifically French circumstances. It is equally hard to believe that anything as extraordinary as dechristianization would have occurred without the monumental misjudgement which produced the Revolution's quarrel with the Catholic Church. Without that quarrel, the dramatic revival in the authority of the papacy also seems inconceivable. Representative government may well have been on the horizon, but how long would the ideal of popular democracy have taken to establish itself without the example of the sansculotte movement? It certainly transformed and widened out of all recognition the cause of parliamentary reform in England—although the blood-stained figure of the sansculotte probably galvanized conservative resistance on the other side. Above all, the revolutionaries' decision to go to war, which all historians agree revolutionized the Revolution, destroyed an established pattern of warfare in a way no old regime government would otherwise have promoted. Arming the people was the last thing they would have dreamed of. The emergencies of that war in turn produced the scenes which have indelibly marked our memory of the Revolution: the Terror. Massacres were nothing new, and the worst ones of the 1790s occurred outside France. But there was something horribly new and unimaginable in the prospect of a government systematically executing its opponents by the cartload for months on end, and by a device which, however humane in concept, made the streets run with blood. And this occurred in what had

SOURCE: From William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, pp. 423–425. Copyright 1989. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

passed for the most civilized country in Europe, whose writers had taught the eighteenth century to pride itself on its increasing mildness, good sense, and humanity. This great drama transformed the whole meaning of political change, and the contemporary world would be inconceivable if it had not happened.

In other words it transformed men's outlook.

## CHAPTER QUESTIONS

1. What seems to have motivated many of the revolutionaries, as revealed by the demands made prior to the French Revolution and the actions taken during the revolution?
2. What factors help explain why this revolution occurred in France, one of the most prosperous and powerful nations of Europe? What does this explanation add to the significance of the revolution?
3. With the advantage of hindsight, what might the monarchy have done to retain control and minimize revolutionary changes?
4. In what ways should the French Revolution be considered a middle-class revolution or a revolution of the notables?

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# APPENDIX VI

## *The Revolutionary Calendar<sup>1</sup>*

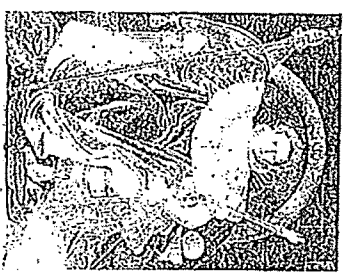
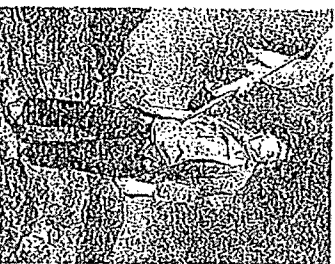
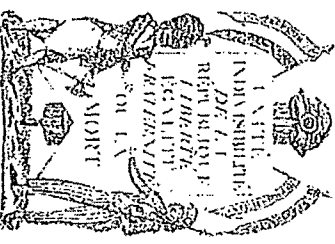
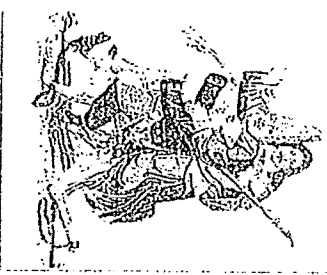
Vendémiaire Sept.—Oct.	Brumaire Oct.—Nov.	Frimaire Nov.—Dec.	Nivôse Dec.—Jan.	Pluviose Jan.—Feb.	Ventôse Feb.—March	Germinal March.—April	Floral April—May	Prairial May—June	Messidor June—July	Thermidor July—Aug.	Fructidor Aug.—Sept.	Jours sans- culottides September
1 22	1 22	1 21	1 21	1 20	1 19	1 21	1 20	1 20	1 19	1 19	1 18	1 17
2 23	2 23	2 22	2 22	2 21	2 20	2 22	2 21	2 21	2 20	2 20	2 19	2 18
3 24	3 24	3 23	3 23	3 22	3 21	3 23	3 22	3 22	3 21	3 21	3 20	3 19
4 25	4 25	4 24	4 24	4 23	4 22	4 24	4 23	4 23	4 22	4 22	4 21	4 20
5 26	5 26	5 25	5 25	5 24	5 23	5 25	5 24	5 24	5 23	5 23	5 22	5 21
6 27	6 27	6 26	6 26	6 25	6 24	6 26	6 25	6 25	6 24	6 24	6 23	
7 28	7 28	7 27	7 27	7 26	7 25	7 27	7 26	7 26	7 25	7 25	7 24	
8 29	8 29	8 28	8 28	8 27	8 26	8 28	8 27	8 27	8 26	8 26	8 25	
9 30	9 30	9 29	9 29	9 28	9 27	9 29	9 28	9 28	9 27	9 27	9 26	
10 1	10 31	10 30	10 30	10 29	10 28	10 30	10 29	10 29	10 28	10 28	10 27	
11 2	11 1	11 1	11 31	11 30	11 1	11 31	11 30	11 30	11 29	11 29	11 28	
12 3	12 2	12 2	12 1	12 31	12 2	12 1	12 1	12 31	12 30	12 30	12 29	
13 4	13 3	13 3	13 2	13 1	13 3	13 2	13 2	13 1	13 1	13 31	13 30	
14 5	14 4	14 4	14 3	14 2	14 4	14 3	14 3	14 2	14 2	14 1	14 31	
15 6	15 5	15 5	15 4	15 3	15 5	15 4	15 4	15 3	15 3	15 2	15 1	
16 7	16 6	16 6	16 5	16 4	16 6	16 5	16 5	16 4	16 4	16 3	16 2	
17 8	17 7	17 7	17 6	17 5	17 7	17 6	17 6	17 5	17 5	17 4	17 3	
18 9	18 8	18 8	18 7	18 6	18 8	18 7	18 7	18 6	18 6	18 5	18 4	
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20 11	20 10	20 10	20 9	20 8	20 10	20 9	20 9	20 8	20 8	20 7	20 6	
21 12	21 11	21 11	21 10	21 9	21 11	21 10	21 10	21 9	21 9	21 8	21 7	
22 13	22 12	22 12	22 11	22 10	22 12	22 11	22 11	22 10	22 10	22 9	22 8	
23 14	23 13	23 13	23 12	23 11	23 13	23 12	23 12	23 11	23 11	23 10	23 9	
24 15	24 14	24 14	24 13	24 12	24 14	24 13	24 13	24 12	24 12	24 11	24 10	
25 16	25 15	25 15	25 14	25 13	25 15	25 14	25 14	25 13	25 13	25 12	25 11	
26 17	26 16	26 16	26 15	26 14	26 16	26 15	26 15	26 14	26 14	26 13	26 12	
27 18	27 17	27 17	27 16	27 15	27 17	27 16	27 16	27 15	27 15	27 14	27 13	
28 19	28 18	28 18	28 17	28 16	28 18	28 17	28 17	28 16	28 16	28 15	28 14	
29 20	29 19	29 19	29 18	29 17	29 19	29 18	29 18	29 17	29 17	29 16	29 15	
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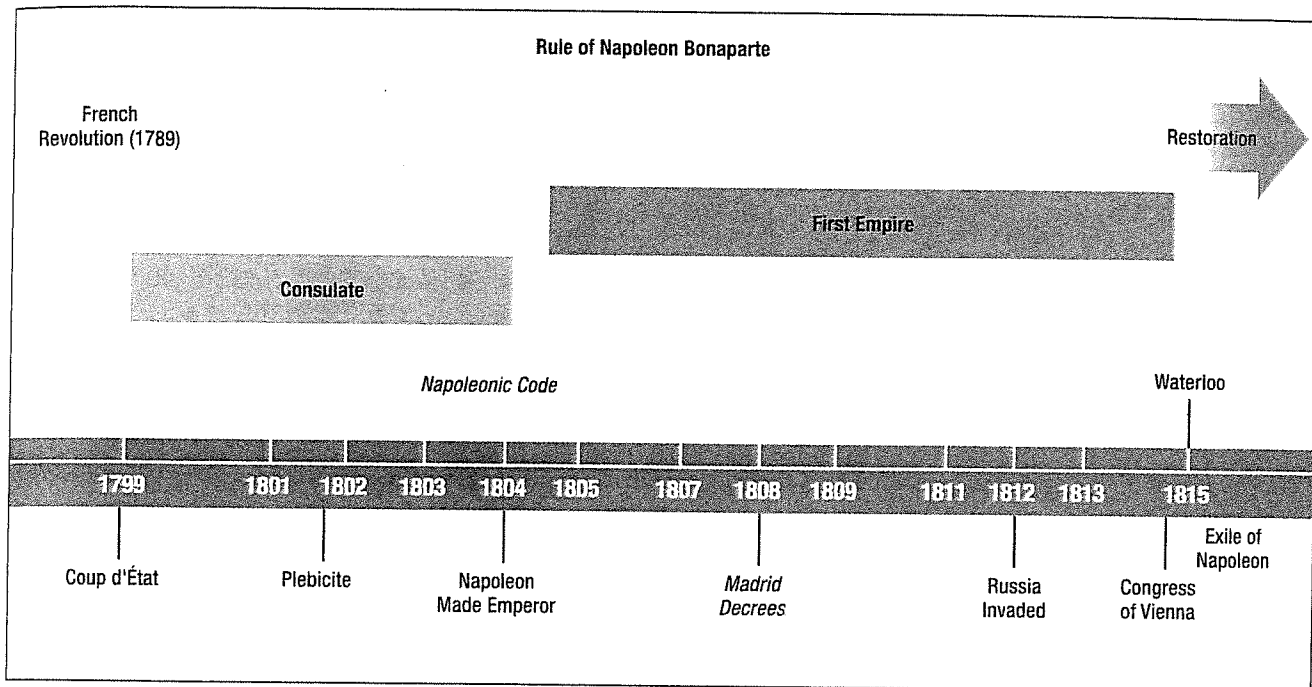
<sup>1</sup> The Revolutionary (or Republican) Calendar was in official use between 22 September 1793 (1st Vendémiaire of the Year II) to the end of 1805 (11th Nivôse of the Year XIV). In leap-years (1796, 1800, 1804), 11th Ventôse corresponded to 29 February and the extra day of the Republican Year was 'found' by adding a sixth 'jour sans-culottide' (or 'jour complémentaire') to the five shown above.

# Types of Government Before, During and After the French Revolution

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Moderate Phase		Radical Phase					
<p><b>Old Regime</b> Pre 1789</p> <p><i>Absolute Monarchy</i></p> <p>Financial mismanagement Parlements (Courts) ruled by aristocrats Estates General called</p>	<p>⇒</p> <p><b>National Assembly</b> 1789 - 1791</p> <p><i>Constitutional Monarchy</i></p> <p>Tennis Court Oath Storming of Bastille Great Fear Abolition of feudalism Declaration of Rights and Man Women's March to Versailles Civil Constitution of the Clergy Parlements =&gt; 83 Departments Draft Constitution of 1791 Declaration of Pillnitz</p>	<p>⇒</p> <p><b>Legislative Assembly</b> 1791 - 1792</p> <p><i>Constitutional Monarchy</i></p> <p>Factionalism among Jacobins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girondins</li> <li>Sans-culottes</li> </ul> <p>War with Austria</p> <p>Brunswick Manifesto Constitution of 1791 suspended Attack on royal palace</p>	<p>⇒</p> <p><b>National Convention</b> 1792 - 1795</p> <p><i>Republic</i></p> <p>Abolition of the monarchy Regicide Committee for Public Safety War continues =&gt; Levee en Masse Robespierre and the Reign of Terror Thermidorian Reaction brings more moderates back to power Execution of Robespierre</p>	<p>⇒</p> <p><b>Directory</b> 1795 - 1799</p> <p><i>5 Man Directory</i></p> <p>Constitution of 1795 Middle Class in control General Napoleon Bonaparte puts down internal revolts and leads to victory against Austria Military success overshadowed weak and corrupt Directory govt.</p>	<p>⇒</p> <p><b>Consulate</b> 1799 - 1804</p> <p><i>Enlightened Monarchy</i></p> <p>Coup d'Etat Napoleon implements domestic and legal reforms Concordat of 1801 with Roman Catholic Church</p>	<p>⇒</p> <p><b>Empire</b> 1804 - 1814</p> <p><i>Dictatorship</i></p> <p>War and defeat Militarism Empire Building</p>	





# 10 The Age of Napoleon

In 1799 members of the ruling Directory conspired with the well-known military leader Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) to take over the French government by means of a *coup d'état*. It was successful, and Napoleon quickly asserted his own dominance over others. By 1802 he had full power, and by 1804 he was the self-proclaimed Emperor Napoleon I.

The period from 1799 to 1815 is generally known as the Age of Napoleon. Rising with opportunities presented by the French Revolution, Napoleon gained power not only in France, but directly and indirectly throughout much of continental Europe. Within France he crushed threats from both radicals and royalists who wanted to extend or reverse the French Revolution. Through administrative reforms, codification of laws, and settlement with the Church, he in-

stitutionalized some of the changes brought about by the revolution and took the heart out of others. Backed by the ideological force of the revolution and strong nationalism, his armies extended French rule, institutions, and influence throughout Europe. In 1814 Napoleon's forces, weakened by overextension and a disastrous Russian campaign, were defeated by a coalition of European powers. After Napoleon's defeat, the major powers, meeting at Vienna, attempted to establish a new stability that would minimize the revolutionary and Napoleonic experiences.

The sources in this chapter focus on the principal interpretive debate connected with Napoleon: How should Napoleon and his policies be understood? Is Napoleon best viewed as a moderate defender of the French Revolution or as an enlightened despot in the eighteenth-century

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tradition? To provide insight into these issues, the selections will examine Napoleon's rise to power and his ideas, external policies, and internal institutions.

### For Classroom Discussion

*What do you think of Napoleon? Should he be thought of as a progressive politician building on the French Revolution? Should he be thought of as a conservative and a conqueror? Use the selections by Blanning, Lyons, and Smith to debate these questions.*



## Primary Sources

### Memoirs: Napoleon's Appeal

*Madame de Remusat*

*Napoleon was neither the candidate of those longing to turn France to a more revolutionary course nor the favorite of those who wanted to return France to the legitimacy of the Ancien Régime. He came to power promising to uphold both revolutionary principles and order. Scholars have analyzed the question of why he was able to rise to power. Some see him as a military and political genius; others argue that he was an opportunist who took advantage of circumstances as they arose. One of the earliest analyses of Napoleon's rise to power was written by Madame de Remusat (1780–1821). As a lady in waiting to Empress Josephine and wife of a Napoleonic official, she observed Napoleon firsthand and described him in her Memoirs.*

CONSIDER: *Why, according to Remusat, Napoleon was so appealing to the French; the means Napoleon used to secure his power.*

I can understand how it was that men worn out by the turmoil of the Revolution, and afraid of that liberty which had long been associated with death, looked for repose under the dominion of an able ruler on whom fortune was seemingly revolved to smile. I can conceive that they regarded his elevation as a degree of destiny and fondly believed that in the irrevocable they should find peace. I may confidently assert that those persons believed quite sincerely that Bonaparte, whether as consul or emperor, would exert his authority to oppose the intrigue of faction and would save us from the perils of anarchy.

None dared to utter the word "republic," so deeply had the Terror stained that name; and the government of the Directory had perished in the contempt with which its chiefs were regarded. The return of the Bourbons could only be brought about by the aid of a revolution; and the slightest disturbance terrified the French people, in whom enthusiasm of every kind seemed dead. Besides, the men in whom they had trusted had one after the

other deceived them; and as, this time, they were yielding to force, they were at least certain that they were not deceiving themselves.

The belief, or rather the error, that only despotism could at that epoch maintain order in France was very widespread. It became the mainstay of Bonaparte; and it is due to him to say that he also believed it. The factions played into his hands by imprudent attempts which he turned to his own advantage. He had some grounds for his belief that he was necessary; France believed it, too; and he even succeeded in persuading foreign sovereigns that he constituted a barrier against republican influences, which, but for him, might spread widely. At the moment when Bonaparte placed the imperial crown upon his head there was not a king in Europe who did not believe that he wore his own crown more securely because of that event. Had the new emperor granted a liberal constitution, the peace of nations and of kings might really have been forever secured.

### Memoirs: Napoleon's Secret Police

*Joseph Fouché*

*Although historians have found various aspects of Napoleonic rule admirable, most condemn Napoleon's use of the secret police. Joseph Fouché, Duke of Otranto (1763–1820), headed this institution for most of the period between 1802 and 1810. Fouché combined the attributes of a powerful politician, a police officer, and an opportunist. In the following selection from his Memoirs, Fouché boasts of his accomplishments.*

CONSIDER: *The credibility of this document; whether it was reasonable of Napoleon to have Fouché carry out these activities.*

With regard to the interior, an important spring was wanted, that of the general police, which might have rallied the past round the present, and guaranteed the security of the empire. Napoleon himself perceived the void, and, by an imperial decree of the 10th July, reestab-

SOURCE: From James Harvey Robinson, ed., *Readings in European History*, vol. II (Boston: Ginn, 1904), pp. 491–492.

SOURCE: Joseph Fouché, *Memoirs* (London: Gibbins and Co., 1894), pp. 188–191.

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lished me at the head of the police; at the same time investing me with stronger functions than those which I had possessed, before the absurd fusion of the police with the department of justice. . . .

It will not be doubted that I had salaried spies in all ranks and orders; I had some of both sexes, hired at the rate of a thousand or two thousand francs per month, according to their importance and their services. I received their reports directly in writing, having a conventional mark. Every three months, I communicated my list to the emperor, in order that there might be no double employment; and also in order that the nature of the service, occasionally permanent, often temporary, might be rewarded either by places or remunerations.

As to the government's police abroad, it had two essential objects, namely, to watch friendly powers, and counteract hostile governments. In both cases, it was composed of individuals purchased or pensioned, and commissioned to reside near each government, or in each principal town, independent of numerous secret agents sent into all countries, either by the minister of foreign affairs, or by the emperor himself.

I also had my foreign spies. It was in my cabinet, also, that the foreign gazettes, prohibited to the perusal of the French people, were collected, abstracts of which were made for my own use. By that means, I held in my hands the most important strings of foreign politics; and I discharged, in conjunction with the chief of the government, a task capable of controlling or balancing that of the minister charged with foreign relations.

I was thus far from limiting my duties to *espionnage*. All the state prisons were under my control, as well as the *gendarmerie*. The delivery of the *visa* of passports belonged to me. To me was assigned the duty of watching amnestied individuals and foreigners. I established general commissariats in the principal towns of the kingdom, which extended the net-work of the police over the whole of France, and especially our frontiers.

My police acquired so high a renown, that the world went so far as to pretend that I had, among my secret agents, three nobles of the *ancien régime*, distinguished by princely titles, and who daily communicated to me the result of their observations.

I confess that such an establishment was expensive; it swallowed up several millions, the funds of which were secretly provided from taxes laid upon gambling and prostitution, and from the granting of passports. Notwithstanding all that has been said against gambling, reflecting and firm minds must allow, that in the actual state of society, the legal converting of vice into profit is a necessary evil. . . .

It became necessary to organize the gambling-houses upon a much larger scale, for the produce of them was not solely destined to reward my moving phalanxes of spies. I nominated as superintendent-general of the gambling-

houses in France, Perrein the elder, who already farmed them, and who, after the coronation, extended his privilege over all of the chief towns of the empire, upon condition of paying fourteen million yearly, independent of three thousand francs daily to the minister of the police, which, however, did not remain entirely in his hands.

## Napoleon's Diary

*Napoleon's accomplishments and place in history are explained in part by the type of individual he was. The principal sources of information on his personality are his diaries, memoirs, and letters, particularly the portions in which he reflects on himself. The following selection comes from diary entries made between 1798 and 1817.*

CONSIDER: *Napoleon's opinions about what made him successful; Napoleon's analysis of his power and his personality; how Napoleon wants to be remembered.*

Paris, January 1, 1798

Paris has a short memory. If I remain longer doing nothing, I am lost. In this great Babylon one reputation quickly succeeds another. After I have been seen three times at the theatre, I shall not be looked at again; I shall therefore not go very frequently.

Paris, January 29, 1798

I will not remain here; there is nothing to be done. They will listen to nothing. I realize that if I stay my reputation will soon be gone. All things fade here, and my reputation is almost forgotten; this little Europe affords too slight a scope; I must go to the Orient; all great reputations have been won there. If the success of an expedition to England should prove doubtful, as I fear, the army of England will become the army of the East, and I shall go to Egypt.

The Orient awaits a man!

Milan, June 17, 1800

I have just reached Milan, somewhat fatigued.

Some Hungarian grenadiers and German prisoners passing by, who had already been prisoners in the campaigns of 1796 and 1797, recognized the First Consul. Many began to shout, with apparent enthusiasm: "Vive Bonaparte!"

What a thing is imagination! Here are men who don't know me, who have never seen me, but who only knew of me, and they are moved by my presence, they would do anything for me! And this same incident arises in all centuries and in all countries! Such is fanaticism! Yes, imagination rules the world. The defect of our modern institutions is that they do not speak to the imagination.

By that alone can man be governed; without it he is but a brute.

December 30, 1802

My power proceeds from my reputation, and my reputation from the victories I have won. My power would fall if I were not to support it with more glory and more victories. Conquest has made me what I am; only conquest can maintain me.

Friendship is only a word; I love nobody; no, not even my brothers. Perhaps Joseph a little; even then it's a matter of habit, it's because he is my elder.—Duroc? Ah, yes, I love him; but why? His character attracts me: he is cool, dry, severe; and Duroc never sheds tears. As for me, you don't suppose I care; I know perfectly well I have no real friends. As long as I remain what I am, I shall have as many as I need so far as the appearance goes. Let the women whimper, that's their business, but for me, give me no sentiment. A man must be firm, have a stout heart, or else leave on one side war and government.

Saint Helena, March 3, 1817

In spite of all the libels, I have no fear whatever about my fame. Posterity will do me justice. The truth will be known; and the good I have done will be compared with the faults

I have committed. I am not uneasy as to the result. Had I succeeded, I would have died with the reputation of the greatest man that ever existed. As it is, although I have failed, I shall be considered as an extraordinary man: my elevation was unparalleled, because unaccompanied by crime. I have fought fifty pitched battles, almost all of which I have won. I have framed and carried into effect a code of laws that will bear my name to the most distant posterity. I raised myself from nothing to be the most powerful monarch in the world. Europe was at my feet. I have always been of opinion that the sovereignty lay in the people. In fact, the imperial government was a kind of republic. Called to the head of it by the voice of the nation, my maxim was, *la carrière est ouverte aux talents* without distinction of birth or fortune, and this system of equality is the reason that your oligarchy hates me so much.

Saint Helena, August 28, 1817

Jesus was hanged, like so many fanatics who posed as a prophet, a messiah; there were several every year. What is certain is that at that epoch opinion was setting towards a single God, and those who first preached the doctrine were well received: circumstances made for it. It is just like in my case, sprung from the lower ranks of society I became an emperor, because circumstances, opinion, were with me.



## Visual Sources

### Napoleon Crossing the Alps

Jacques Louis David

Jacques Louis David was a leading painter of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and one of the first great painters to consciously devote his talents to the art of propaganda. A republican during the French Revolution, he painted a number of pictures supportive of the revolution and what it stood for. David argued that "the arts should . . . contribute forcefully to the education of the public" and that art "should have grandeur and a moral"; if a painting is properly presented, the "marks of heroism and civic virtue offered the eyes of the people will electrify its soul, and plant the seeds of glory and devotion to the fatherland."

When Napoleon rose to power, David became a Bonapartist. In 1800 he was asked by Napoleon to paint a picture of him leading his army across the Alps. The result, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (figure 10.1), shows Napoleon in a heroic pose on a white charger following the glorious footsteps of Hannibal and Charlemagne (whose names are carved in the rocks below) across the Alps. Napoleon is pointing upward, probably both to heaven and to the top of the mountains, while a wind blows at his back—a traditional symbol of victory. Under the horse's belly are troops and cannon moving up

the trail. In reality, Napoleon wisely rode a sure-footed mule. He also posed only briefly for David, informing him that "it is the character and what animates the physiognomy that needs to be painted. No one inquires if the portraits of great men are likenesses. It is enough that their genius lives in them."

CONSIDER: The way this painting and the circumstances surrounding its execution by David illustrate connections between politics and art of the period.

### Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims at Jaffa

Antoine-Jean Gros

Despite the British victory at Aboukir Bay in Egypt, which annihilated French sea power, Napoleon retained hopes of conquering the Near East by land. In February 1799, French forces moved northeast from Cairo to Gaza and Nazareth. Despite some victories, the campaign failed to establish French control over the area. Nevertheless, Napoleon tried to transform these disappointments by promoting paintings that created images of success in this campaign.

In 1804 Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835) presented a scene from the Near Eastern campaigns of 1799 that showed the

(17)

heroic Napoleon displaying humanism, charity, and nobility. The painting (figure 10.2) records Napoleon, after the battle of Jaffa, entering the mosque courtyard (with its horseshoe arches and pointed arcades) of a pest house (plague hospital) at the Palestinian city of Jaffa in the Holy Land on March 11, 1799. Within lay victims of the bubonic plague, which had recently broken out among Arab defenders of the city and spread to the French. When the plague struck, Napoleon at first had his chief medical officer Desgenettes (just behind and to the right of Napoleon, who stands at the center of the painting) deny the presence of the sickness. Here Napoleon tries to stop the panic and inspire his troops by showing that he is not afraid of contamination and that the victims will be well cared for. At this moment the apparently immune and clearly fearless Napoleon reaches out and even touches the dreaded buboes (an inflamed swelling of the lymphatic glands that usually preceded death) of a French victim, perhaps conveying a sense that his touch might miraculously heal the stricken man. Just behind Napoleon, to the left, a more cautious officer holds a handkerchief to his face to ward off the stench of disease and death. In the foreground lay the dead and the agonized dying. At the left, an Arab physician in white robes attends the sick and an assistant carries bread for distribution to the needy. To the right, a blind man, leaning against a column, tries to approach Napoleon, and on the extreme bottom right a doctor, while caring for a soldier, succumbs himself. In the background are the white cubic houses and rising minarets of Jaffa. High in the center from the top of a Franciscan monastery flies triumphantly the French tricolor.

The surrounding facts differ from the historical image presented by this painting. During the battle of Jaffa, Napoleon

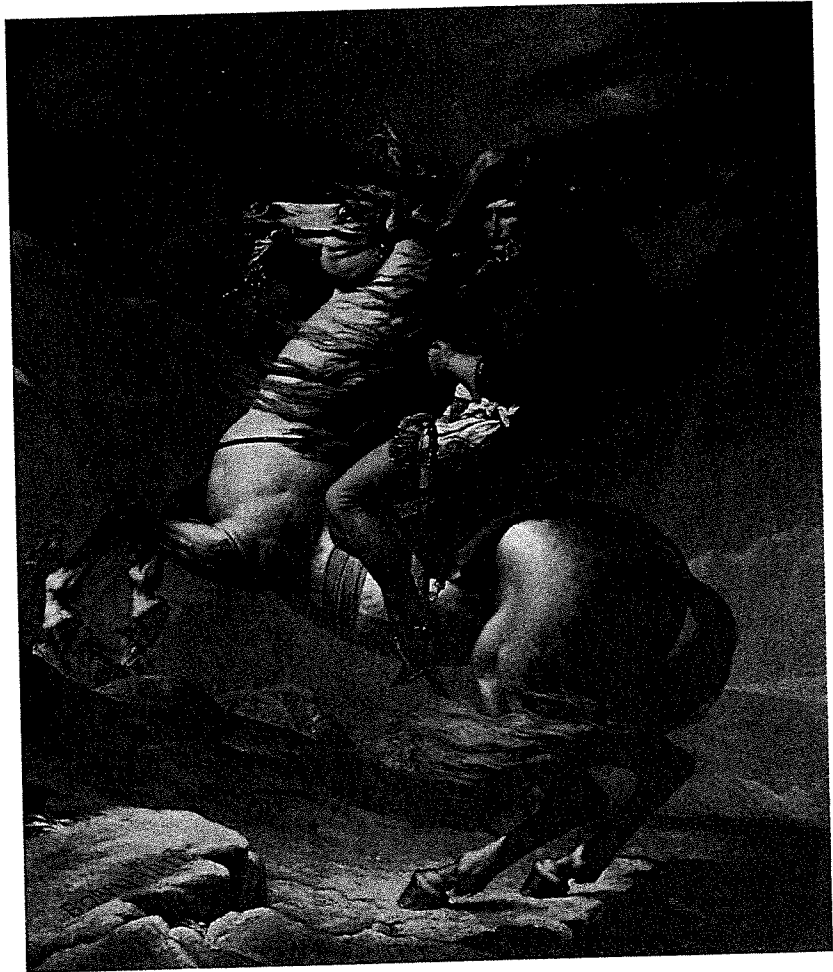


FIGURE 10.1 © Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY

had agreed to protect the lives of enemy soldiers if they capitulated. But upon laying down their arms, Napoleon ordered the 3,000 prisoners massacred and plundered the town. By May 1799, French forces had retreated back to Egypt.

CONSIDER: The message the artist intended to convey to viewers; how high quality art might be used for propaganda purposes.



## Secondary Sources

### Napoleon: The Authoritarian Statesman

Tim Blanning

As with most charismatic figures, it has been difficult to evaluate Napoleon objectively. Even before his death, a number of myths were developing about him. Since then much of the de-

bate among scholars has dealt with whether Napoleon should be considered a defender or a destroyer of the revolution, and whether his rise to power reversed the revolutionary tide or consolidated it. In the following selection, Tim Blanning focuses on the consequences for France of Napoleon's rule and argues that he used statesman-like qualities to help create order.

CONSIDER: What Blanning considers Napoleon's accomplishments within France; why Blanning calls Napoleon "statesman-like"; whether the primary and visual sources support this interpretation.

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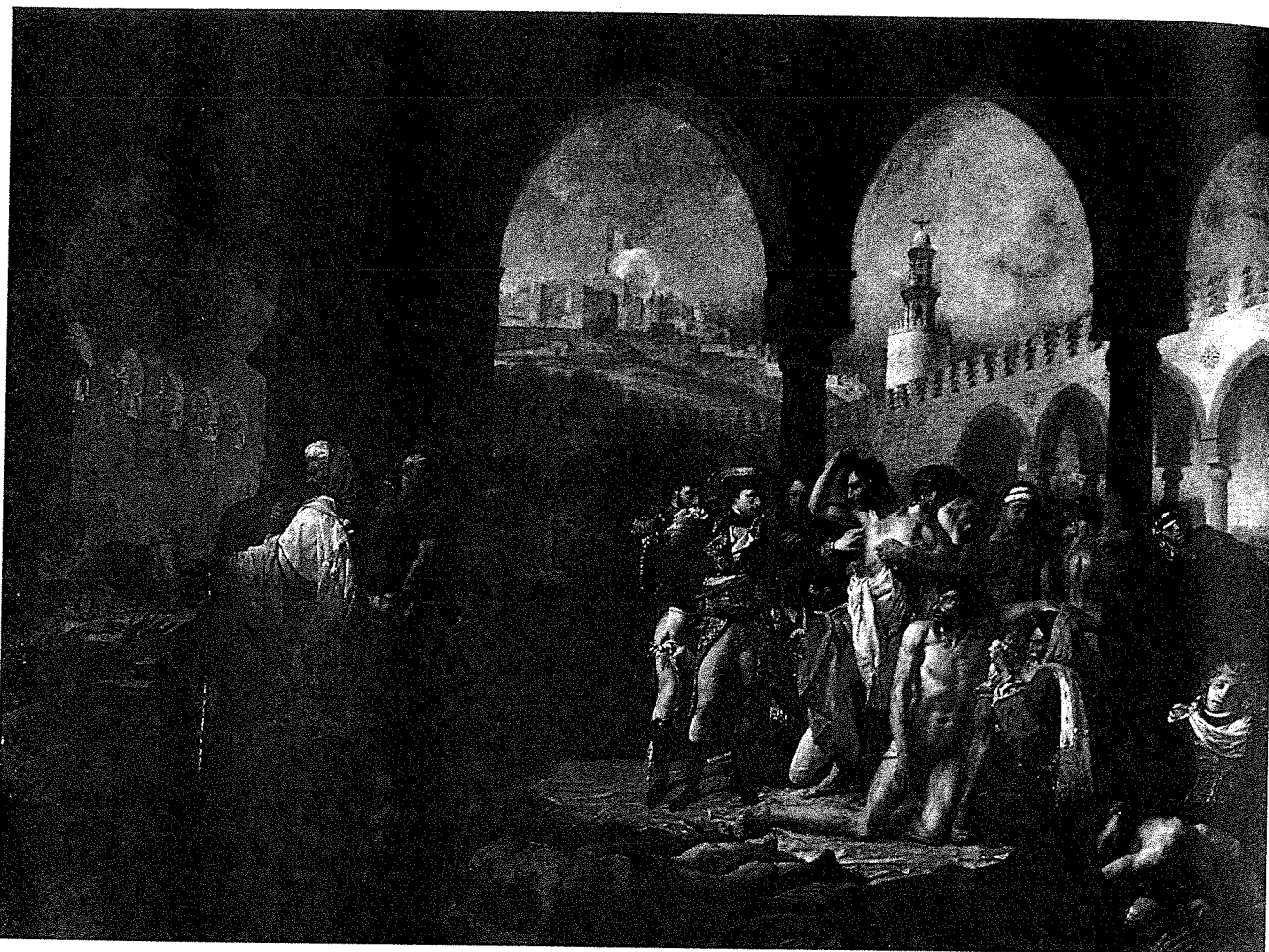


FIGURE 10.2 © Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY)

It can safely be said that France had never been better governed, if quality is assessed in terms of effective obedience to orders issued by the centre. Almost everyone could be pleased by the dramatic improvement in public order which followed Bonaparte's seizure of power. The Vendée was pacified at long last by a judicious mixture of stick and carrot, the sectarian tit-for-tat killings in the Rhône valley were halted and everywhere banditry was suppressed. The prefects and their subordinates passed the acid test – the ability to enforce conscription – with flying colours, at least during the early years of the regime. Together with the repair of existing roads and the construction of new highways, physical communication enjoyed much-needed and long-overdue improvement. The other great failure of the successive revolutionary regimes, public finance, was also rectified. Building on preparatory work by the Directory and enjoying the benefit of a sustained recovery in the economy, Bonaparte established the Bank of France, stabilized the currency, improved revenue collection and brought the national debt under control. . . .

In restoring order to a revolution-torn country and continent, Bonaparte was at his most statesman-like in

his search for reconciliation. Proscribing only irreconcilable royalists and Jacobins, he encouraged the rest of the émigrés to return home and rally to the regime. This policy was an undoubted success, as the appearance of aristocratic names among the list of prefects shows. His greatest eirenic triumph, however, was making peace with the Catholic Church by the Concordat of 1802. At a stroke, he took from the counter-revolutionaries their most potent appeal. It was some measure of the catastrophe which had befallen the papacy since 1789 that Pius VII was prepared to accept the terms offered, including recognition of the expropriation of ecclesiastical property and the subordination of Church to state. Although Bonaparte's vaulting ambition eventually led to a new schism, in the short and medium term the Concordat greatly facilitated his hold not only on France but on all Catholic Europe.

His other great positive achievement at home was the promulgation of six legal codes, the Civil Code of 1804 being both the first and the most important. It was renamed the Napoleonic Code in 1806, a not unreasonable personification as it was he who took the chair at most of the sessions of the drafting committee and who gave the

final document his own unmistakable stamp. As it was imported into many other parts of Europe, it became the most important single legal document of modern European history. It has often been criticized on the grounds that Bonaparte's personal conservatism was reflected in the provisions dealing with property, women, the family and landed inheritance. No doubt these limitations would fall foul of some cosmic court of human rights, but compared with the chaos of the 400-odd legal codes of old regime France, the Napoleonic Code was a model of rationality and equity and was recognized as such by grateful recipients.

## Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution

Martyn Lyons

*In recent years, some historians have taken a fresh look at Napoleon and the significance of his régime. In addition to examining his words and deeds, they stress the historical context of his rise to power and the break from the Old Régime of the Bourbon monarchy. In the following selection, Martyn Lyons argues that Napoleon was not an enlightened despot but rather the founder of the modern state, and that his régime was the fulfilment of the "bourgeois" Revolution of 1789–1799.*

CONSIDER: *What Lyons means by founder of the modern state; how he disagrees with Bergeron and others who argue that Napoleon was an enlightened despot; in what ways Napoleon's régime was a fulfilment of the "bourgeois" Revolution of 1789–1799.*

Throughout this evolution, two main themes stand out. Napoleon was, as he is often described, the founder of the modern state. His régime was also the fulfilment of the bourgeois Revolution of 1789–99.

The new state, which emerged from the Revolution and was shaped by Napoleon, was a secular state, without a trace of the divine sanction which had been one of the ideological props of the old régime monarchy. It was a state based on a conscripted army and staffed by a professional bureaucracy. Administration was "rationalised," in the sense that corruption and favouritism were officially outlawed. The affairs of all citizens were dealt with in principle on a basis of equality and according to fixed regulations, instead of being at the mercy of a monarch's whim. Above all, the modern state was a well-informed state, which used its own machinery to collect data on the lives and activities of its subjects. As it knew them better, it policed them more closely and it taxed them more efficiently. . . .

In Napoleon's hands, however, the state had become the instrument of dictatorship. Although lip service was still paid to the principle of popular sovereignty, Napoleon negated its democratic essence by claiming that he alone embodied the indivisible rights of the people. He manipulated a series of plebiscites to consolidate his personal authority. Bonapartism was not, then, a military dictatorship, for its power was characteristically derived from repeated consultations with the popular will, in 1800, 1802, 1804 and 1815. It was, however, a régime which brought parliamentary life to an end and expressed utter contempt for the liberal intellectuals who defended the representative style of democracy. The imperial years of Bonapartism were anti-parliamentary and anti-liberal. In addition, the information media were strictly controlled by Napoleon's popular dictatorship. . . .

To compare Napoleon with the Bourbons is to sin by anachronism. Turning Napoleon into the last of the Enlightened Absolutists of the late eighteenth century means ignoring the momentous events that separate them. The French Revolution was a decisive historical rupture which places Louis XVI and Napoleon Bonaparte in totally different spheres. The historical role of the Enlightened Absolutists had been to rationalise the confused and creaking old régime state structure. Their aim was to squeeze more resources from it, without disturbing its fundamental framework which was based on inequality and privilege. They had no intention of undermining the society of orders itself. On the contrary, they stood at its pinnacle, and its existence justified their authority.

When Bonaparte came to power, the society of orders had been completely transformed by the French Revolution. Legal privilege and tax exemptions had been destroyed—a fact which Napoleon emphatically confirmed. Bonaparte's task was not to extract more resources from a traditional social structure; that traditional social structure, along with noble privilege, the guilds, the Parlements and provincial autonomies, had been swept away by the Revolution. The role of the Enlightened Absolutists was to rationalise the Old Régime, but Napoleon's was to rationalise the new one. His task was not to safeguard the social prestige of the aristocracy (to which the monarchies were dedicated, and to whom in 1789 Louis XVI had linked his own fate). Napoleon's role was rather to build the institutions which would realise new forms of equality of opportunity. . . .

Its social basis is what distinguishes the Napoleonic régime from the Bourbon monarchy, and makes it the heir of the Revolution. The social foundations of the Napoleonic régime, as this book has argued, lay in the bourgeois and peasant revolution of 1789.

The Consulate and Empire rested on the support of the *notables*, whom the régime itself helped to define

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and cultivate. The *notables* were gathered from the successful revolutionary bourgeoisie of landowners, professional men and administrators, together with elements of the commercial and manufacturing élites. They supported Napoleon because he preserved the social gains of the Revolution. He himself was an enduring symbol of careers open to talent. He perpetuated the abolition of seigneurialism and of aristocratic privilege. He confirmed the material gains of the bourgeoisie, especially the sale of the *biens nationaux*. He established a legal code which embodied equality before the law, and he introduced a system of secondary education which served the interests of the professional and administrative élite. The creation of the new imperial nobility seemed to many to be a retrograde step, but it could also be interpreted as an assertion of new social priorities. The new imperial nobility was intended to bury the old. The society of orders was obsolete and archaic. Instead of birth and connections, society now declared its new criteria for distinguished status: propertied wealth, personal talent and service to the state. . . . Napoleon was the consolidator of the bourgeois Revolution, but he was not the passive instrument of any class or social group.

## Women and the Napoleonic Code

Bonnie G. Smith

*However they evaluate Napoleon and his rule, most historians point to the set of rationally organized laws—the Napoleonic Code—as one of Napoleon’s most important and lasting legacies. The Code embodied many principles of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and the Code was modified and adopted outside of France in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. While it has been generally considered a progressive legal system, historians now point out that it may have represented a step back for women. In the following selection from her comprehensive survey, Changing Lives: Women in European History Since 1700, Bonnie G. Smith analyzes the significance of the Napoleonic Code for women.*

CONSIDER: *Ways the Code made women legally and economically dependent on men; what concept of woman’s proper role the Code supported; what concept of man’s proper role the Code supported.*

First, women acquired the nationality of their husbands upon marriage. This made a woman’s relationship to the

state an indirect one because it was dependent on her husband’s. Second, a woman had to reside where her husband desired. Women could not participate in lawsuits or serve as witnesses in court or as witnesses to civil acts such as births, deaths, and marriages. Such a reduction in woman’s civil status enhanced that of the individual male. Moreover, the Code reduced, if not eliminated, male accountability for sexual acts and thrust it squarely on women. For example, men were no longer susceptible to paternity suits or legally responsible for the support of illegitimate children. Women were weakened economically if they bore illegitimate children, whereas men were not so affected if they fathered them. Finally, female adultery was punished by imprisonment and fines unless the husband relented and took his wife back. Men, however, suffered no such sanctions unless they brought their sexual partner into the home. The sexual behavior of women was open to scrutiny and prescribed by law, whereas that of men, almost without exception, had no criminal aspect attached to it. Thus male sexuality was accepted with few limitations, but women’s was only acceptable if it remained within strict domestic boundaries. The Napoleonic Code institutionalized the republican responsibility of women to generate virtue—a term that began to acquire sexual overtones to its civic definition.

The Napoleonic Code also defined the space women would occupy in the new regime as marital, maternal, and domestic—all public matters would be determined by men. This circumscription was made more effective by the way the property law undercut the possibilities for women’s economic independence and existence in a world beyond the home. In general, a woman had no control over property. Even if she was married under a contract that ensured a separate accounting of her dowry, her husband still had administrative control of funds. This administrative power of the husband and father replaced arbitrary patriarchal rule and was more in tune with modern ideas of government. Instead of serving the king’s whim, governmental officials served the best interests of the nation just as the father increased the well-being of the family. This kind of economic control of women held in all classes. Women’s wages went to their husbands, and market women and others engaged in business could not do so without permission from their husbands. Once a woman gained permission she did acquire some kind of legal status, in that a business woman could be sued. On the other hand, she had no control of her profits—these always passed to her husband, and court records demonstrate the continuing enforcement of this kind of control. Moreover, the husband’s right to a business woman’s property meant that the property passed to his descendants rather than hers. All of these provisions meant that, in the strictest sense, women could not act freely or independently.

SOURCE: From Bonnie G. Smith, *Changing Lives: Women in European History Since 1700*, pp. 120–122. Copyright 1989 by D. C. Heath and Co. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.



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# *Napoleon's Account of the Internal Situation of France in 1804*

J. H. Robinson, ed.,  
*Readings in European History*  
2 vols. (Boston: Ginn, 1906), 2:491-4.

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*Robinson's Note: [Page 491] Five years after Bonaparte had become the head of the French government he sums up the general situation in France in a statement which he laid before the Legislative Body, December 31, 1804.*

The internal situation of France is today as calm as it has ever been in the most peaceful periods. There is no agitation to disturb the public tranquillity, no suggestion of those crimes which recall the Revolution. Everywhere useful enterprises are in progress, and the general improvements, both public and private, attest the universal confidence and sense of security. . . .

A plot conceived by an implacable government was about to replunge France into the abyss of civil war and anarchy. The discovery of this horrible crime stirred all France profoundly, and anxieties that had scarcely been calmed again awoke. Experience has taught that a divided power in the state is impotent and at odds with itself. It was generally felt that if power was delegated for short periods only it was so uncertain as to discourage any prolonged undertakings or wide-reaching plans. If vested in an individual for life, it would lapse with him, and after him would prove a source of anarchy and discord. It was clearly seen that for a great nation the only salvation lies in hereditary [Page 492] power, which can alone assure a continuous political life which may endure for generations, even for centuries.

The Senate, as was proper, served as the organ through which this general apprehension found expression. The necessity of hereditary power in a state as vast as France had long been perceived by the First Consul. He had endeavored in vain to avoid this conclusion; but the public solicitude and the hopes of our enemies emphasized the importance of his task, and he realized that his death might ruin his whole work. Under such circumstances, and with such a pressure of public opinion, there was no alternative left to the First Consul. He resolved, therefore, to accept for himself, and two of his brothers after him, the burden imposed by the exigencies of the situation.

After prolonged consideration, repeated conferences with the members of the Senate, discussion in the councils, and the suggestions of the most prudent advisers, a series of provisions was drawn up which regulate the succession to the imperial throne. These provisions were decreed by a *senatus consultus* of the 28th Floreal

last. The French people, by a free and independent expression, then manifested its desire that the imperial dignity should pass down in a direct line through the legitimate or adopted descendants of Napoleon Bonaparte, or through the legitimate descendants of Joseph Bonaparte, or of Louis Bonaparte.

From this moment Napoleon was, by the most unquestionable of titles, emperor of the French. No other act was necessary to sanction his right and consecrate his authority. But he wished to restore in France the ancient forms and recall those institutions which divinity itself seems to have inspired. He wished to impress the seal of religion itself upon the opening of his reign. The head of the Church, in order to give the French a striking proof of his paternal affection, consented to officiate at this august ceremony. What deep and enduring impressions did this leave on the mind of Napoleon and in the memory of the nation! What thoughts for future races! What a subject of wonder for all Europe!

[Page 493] In the midst of this pomp, and under the eye of the Eternal, Napoleon pronounced the inviolable oath which assures the integrity of the empire, the security of property, the perpetuity of institutions, the respect for law, and the happiness of the nation. The oath of Napoleon shall be forever the terror of the enemies of France. If our borders are attacked, it will be repeated at the head of our armies, and our frontiers shall never more fear foreign invasion.

The principles safeguarded by the coronation oath are those of our legislation. Hereafter there will be fewer laws to submit to the Legislative Body. The civil code has fulfilled the expectations of the public; all citizens are acquainted with it; it serves as their guide in their various transactions, and is everywhere lauded as a benefaction. A draft of a criminal code has been completed for two years and has been subjected to the criticism of the courts; at this moment it is being discussed for the last time by the council of state. The code of procedure and the commercial code are still where they were a year ago, for pressing cares have diverted the emperor's attention elsewhere.

New schools are being opened, and inspectors have been appointed to see that the instruction does not degenerate into vain and sterile examinations. The *lycees* and the secondary schools are filling with youth eager for instruction. The polytechnic school is peopling our arsenals, ports, and factories with useful citizens. Prizes have been established in various branches of science, letters, and arts, and in the period of ten years fixed by his Majesty for the award of these prizes there can be no doubt that French genius will produce works of distinction.

The emperor's decrees have reestablished commerce on the left bank of the Rhine. Our manufacturers are improving, although the mercenaries subsidized by the British government vaunt, in their empty declamations, her foreign trade and her precarious resources scattered about the seas and in the Indies, while they describe our shops as deserted and our artisans as dying of hunger. In spite of this, our [Page 494] industries are striking root in our own soil and are driving English commerce far from our shores. Our products now equal theirs and will soon compete with them in all the markets of the world.

Religion has resumed its sway, but exhibits itself only in acts of humanity. Adhering to a wise policy of toleration, the ministers of different sects who worship the same God do themselves honor by their mutual respect; and their rivalry confines itself to emulation in virtue. Such is our situation at home.