



>>>>>>then ..1774

Louis XVI, grandson of Louis XV

- brave but stupid.
- Timid, hesitant and weak (indecisive)
- married Marie-Antoinette, beautiful daughter of Marie Thérèse of Austria
- gracious, unimaginative, frivolous
- specialised in gigantic coiffures,
- profligate (Madame Déficit).... like Imelda Marcos

At that time, the “upper classes” held France in their grip

- merchant guilds
- royal pensions
- a reactionary aristocracy (noble birthright)
- corrupt nobles
- anointed King
- privileged clergy

1777 Louis appointed A Swiss Protestant financier and banker

VERY popular Necker

1787 France is ..BANKRUPT

two reasons

- 1.the building of the magnificent but costly Chateau de Versailles near Paris in a swamp (!)
- the financing of the French Army fighting against the British in USA

The “privileged classes” make up only about 3% of the population

1788/9 the Etats-Généraux (States General) is convoked

three groups

the Nobles 2 the Clergy 3 the Third Estate

about 97%)

revolution permanently changed social history

Not alone.....USA (1776) Independence and the Republican ideal

Great Britain (1650) Oliver Cromwell

This Assemblée numbered 1,100, but voting was skewed in favour of the Nobles, so the 3rd Estate doubled their numbers.

Foreign capital poured into France to stop the spread of the Révolution.

1789 5 mai 9 juillet

The Nobles featured Lafayette (friend of George Washington)

The Clergy Talleyrand fled France after supporting the Constitution.

Third Estate non-nobles lawyers, intellectuals incl. Robespierre

The Deputies proposed

-new taxes

-the abolition of Church privileges and property

the formation of Départements.

(mob rule?)

They defied the King, and were locked out of the Chamber, so assembled on the tennis court, refusing to budge.

The storming of the Bastille was prompted by King's decision to call up the Army. The Paris mob knew that supplies of gunpowder were hidden inside, only a small number of prisoners. The Governor was dragged through the streets and killed. It was dismantled, brick by brick, one year later.

Great unrest and uncertainty prevailed. An unstable, volatile peace ensued. *France was sailing in uncharted waters*

Some Nobles and clergy took fright and attempted to appease the Mob.

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The Vieux Régime gave way to Communes throughout France, and La Grande Peur began. People were dobbed in and decapitated for the slightest perceived fault.

There were "active" and "passive" citizens (even the King) Family members turned against each other, the Seine ran red with blood. All this carnage did not bring peace to France. Quite the opposite.

BUT on 14 July 1790, French National Assembly (1st time)

The radical Jacobins and moderate Girondins could not settle their differences.

Nonetheless, the Assembly passed the first of their Revolutionary laws.

-83 départements formed

-all are born with equal rights

-freedom of thought, speech and press, work, ownership

-feudal system abolished, along with chivalry, guilds and meritocracy (jobs for the boys) >>>>

market society

Civil marriage

Priests were required to swear an oath to the Constitution

(almost all refused)

Louis was called "King of the French", not "King of France"

Austria feared the spread of the Revolution and declared war on France, along with other neighbouring states.

-Marie-Antoinette "traitor"

60,000 women (les poissardes) marched on Versailles, almost assassinating Marie-Antoinette

La grande Terreur in 1793

Comité de salut publique 12 men>>> Gestapo / Stasi (Germany)

KGB (Russia)

-Monsieur and Madame are replaced all are citoyens (égalité)
-all street names that allude to saints are replaced.
In Year 7 (an VII), a new calendar is set up , based on rural/ seasonal activity
brumaire , Thermidor, like “vor unserer Zeit” in East Germany
Robespierre modestly proclaimed himself Être suprême ,
terrible blood-letting, like the 100,000 deliberately drowned in the Vendée

>>>>>And..NOW

The French Révolution is widely regarded as one of the most important events in human history.
Not the first country, not the last (5 more revolutions , including Mai 1968

Thousands of French people fled their homeland as *émigrés*
and settled in England, Germany , Austria Prussia and USA.

Taking with them *French culture ,immigration policies* and a safe *haven for Royalists* . Although
there was a brief return to the Monarchy in 1814, the radical reforms slowly but surely
transformed the landscape of France and set the scene for similar changes elsewhere.

In Italy and Switzerland, for example, *a separation of powers, the removal of tariffs*
weights and measure were standardized,
mixed marriages authorized, torture suppressed.

The French revolutionary calendar was introduced in neighbouring states e.g. Holland, and,
although it did not last,

sowed confusion for years after. (Dutch forebears)

Left-hand driving Although disputed, many believe that knights rode their horses on the left-hand
side of the road. All that changed over the left—hand side in the early 19th century.

The “*revolutionary spirit*” is alive and well in France. You only have to count the number of *strikes*
and demonstrations, where people stop work , wave banners , sing and shout.

The political division of “*left*” and “*right*”. Those in the assembly who favoured empowering the
poor, sat on the left -hand side.

The Conservatives on the right.

The metric system was essentially invented in France.

Artistic expression flourished

painters, even movements (Impressionism) and schools

Composers : Berlioz Saint-Saëns, Debussy Fauré

Photography: Daguerre

Architecture engineers: Vauban

Language from the language of court (Russia, Austria)
to official language of diplomacy

Academic institutions primacy of French universities

Scientists and inventors: Lavoisier, Curie, Pascal, Pasteur

Literature, poets and writers: Hugo, Lamartine
technologically , legally, culturally, even militarily

cinema George Méliès

automotive industry Cugnot steam car 1771

France's star has faded somewhat in the modern world, but she still ranks internationally in the top
6 languages, economy,