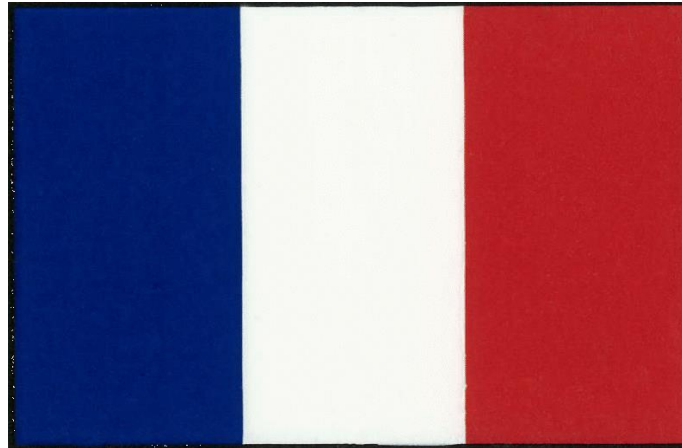


The French Revolution



The Old Regime (*Ancien Regime*)

- **Old Regime** – socio-political system which existed in most of Europe during the 18th century
- Countries were ruled by **absolutism** – the monarch had absolute control over the government
- Classes of people – privileged and unprivileged
 - **Unprivileged people** – paid taxes and treated badly
 - **Privileged people** – did not pay taxes and treated well



FRENCH LADY ENTERING A SEDAN CHAIR

The sedan chair, used by the upper classes during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was carried by two "chairmen." It had side windows, a hinged door at the front, and a roof that opened to allow the occupant to stand. It took its name from the town of Sedan, France. This engraving, made in Paris in 1777, shows the elegant costumes worn by the nobility and their servants.

EUROPE IN 1789

Scale of Miles

0 50 100 150 200 250 300

----- Boundary of the Holy Roman Empire

Prussian Territories

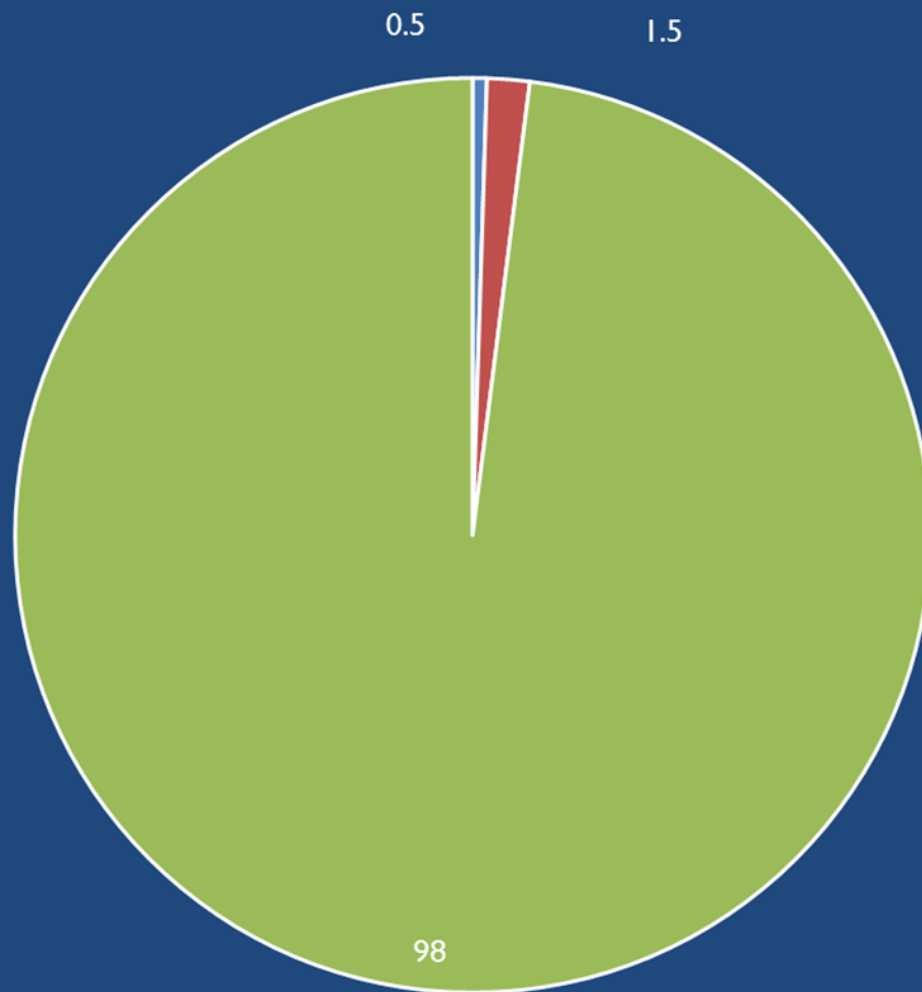
Austrian/Hapsburg Territories



Society under the Old Regime

- In France, people were divided into three estates
 - **First Estate**
 - High-ranking members of the Church
 - Privileged class
 - **Second Estate**
 - Nobility
 - Privileged class
 - **Third Estate**
 - Everyone else – from peasants in the countryside to wealthy bourgeoisie merchants in the cities
 - Unprivileged class
 - Peasants owed certain duties to the nobles (pay to use flour mill or wine press and/or harvest nobles crops)
 - Urban craftsmen and merchants also apart of this group. They are struggling to make \$ in 1700's due to increase in price of consumer goods faster than wages.

Population of France



□ 1st Estate □ 2nd Estate □ 3rd Estate □

Struggle for Survival

- Middle class was another part of the 3rd Estate
- These were merchants, bankers, lawyers, doctors, (professional type of people)
- Middle class was unhappy with privileges held by nobles
- They didn't want to abolish nobility they just wanted the chance to improve positions for themselves
- They shared similar goals to some nobles such as new political ideas from Enlightenment, social mobility, upset with absolute monarchy.

Financial Crisis

- Social conditions in France led to tension for many years before 1789
- Immediate cause of revolution was near collapse of French Economy
 - Bad Harvests in 1787 and 1788 and a slowdown in manufacturing led to food shortages
 - Despite these issues French king and his court spent frivolously
 - France also help fund American colonists fight against Great Britain
 - With country on verge of Financial collapse King Louis XVI had to call meeting of Estates-General

The Three Estates

Estate	Population	Privileges	Exemptions	Burdens
First	•Circa 130,000 •High-ranking clergy	•Collected the tithe •Censorship of the press •Control of education •Kept records of births, deaths, marriages, etc. •Catholic faith held honored position of being the state religion (practiced by monarch and nobility) •Owned 20% of the land	•Paid no taxes •Subject to Church law rather than civil law	•Moral obligation (rather than legal obligation) to assist the poor and needy •Support the monarchy and Old Regime
Second	•Circa 110,000 •Nobles	•Collected taxes in the form of feudal dues •Monopolized military and state appointments •Owned 20% of the land	•Paid no taxes	•Support the monarchy and Old Regime
Third	•Circa 25,000,000 •Everyone else: artisans, bourgeoisie, city workers, merchants, peasants, etc., along with many parish priests	•None	•None	•Paid all taxes •Tithe (Church tax) •Octrot (tax on goods brought into cities) •Corvée (forced road work) •Capitation (poll tax) •Vingtième (income tax) •Gabelle (salt tax) •Taille (land tax) •Feudal dues for use of local manor's winepress, oven, etc.

What does this contemporary political cartoon say about conditions in France under the Old Regime?



Government under the Old Regime: The Divine Right of Kings

- Monarch ruled by **divine right**
 - God put the world in motion
 - God put some people in positions of power
 - Power is given by God
 - No one can question God
 - No one can question someone put in power by God
 - Questioning the monarchy was blasphemy because it meant questioning God

What the King Did

Appointed the *Intendants*, the “petty tyrants” who governed France’s 30 districts

Appointed the people who would collect his taxes and carry out his laws

Controlled justice by appointing judges

Controlled the military

Could imprison anyone at any time for any reason (blank warrants of arrest were called *lettres de cachet*)

Levied all taxes and decided how to spend the money

Made all laws

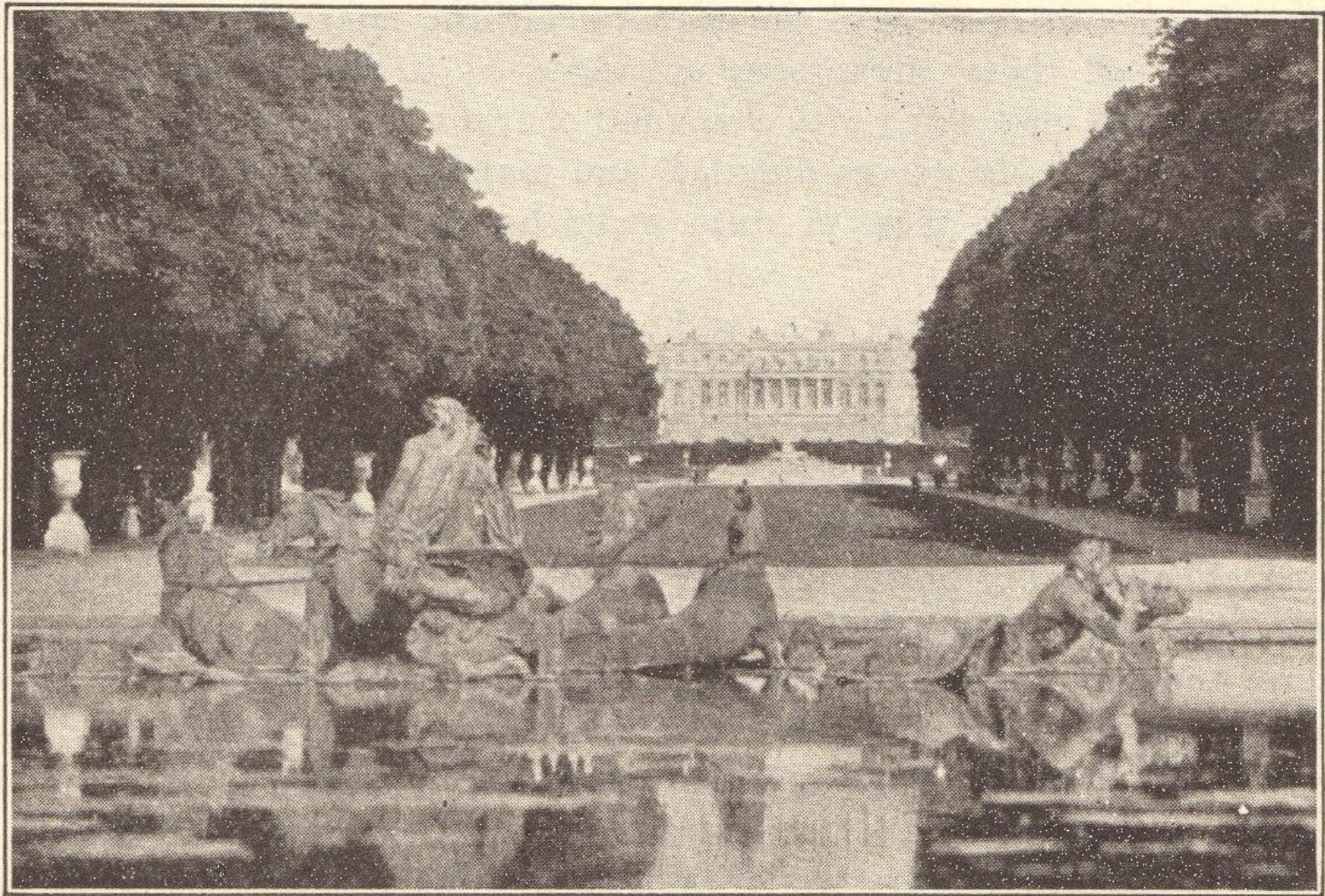
Made decisions regarding war and peace

Economic Conditions under the Old Regime

- France's economy was based primarily on agriculture
- Peasant farmers of France bore the burden of taxation
- Poor harvests meant that peasants had trouble paying their regular taxes
 - Certainly could not afford to have their taxes raised
- Bourgeoisie often managed to gather wealth
 - But were upset that they paid taxes while nobles did not

France Is Bankrupt

- The king (Louis XVI) lavished money on himself and residences like Versailles
- Queen Marie Antoinette was seen as a wasteful spender
- Government found its funds depleted as a result of wars
 - Including the funding of the American Revolution
- **Deficit spending** – a government spending more money than it takes in from tax revenues
- Privileged classes would not submit to being taxed



PALACE OF VERSAILLES AS SEEN FROM THE GARDENS

This side of the palace is almost 2000 feet long. The portion seen in this picture contains the Gallery of Mirrors, so named from the seventeen large mirrors which occupy the side of the room opposite the round arched windows on the second floor. It was in this great hall that the Treaty of 1919 with Germany, ending the World War, was signed by delegates representing nearly nine tenths of the population of the globe.





MARIE ANTOINETTE AND HER CHILDREN

From a painting by Madame Lebrun, in the Versailles Palace. Marie Antoinette was unpopular both at the French court and with the people almost from the time of her marriage. The ladies of the court disliked her because she made fun of their grand manners. The people considered her frivolous and extravagant. They declared that she was nothing but a "foreigner," and generally called her "the Austrian." She had four children—two daughters and two sons. The younger daughter died in infancy, in 1787; and the older son died at the age of seven, in 1789. The younger son, who survived his parents, is shown in the picture as the baby on the queen's lap.

Long- and Short-term Causes

- Long-term causes
 - Also known as *underlying causes*
 - Causes which can stem back many years
- Short-term causes
 - Also known as *immediate causes*
 - Causes which happen close to the moment the change or action happens
- Example: A person is fired from his or her job.
 - Long-term cause(s): The person is often late to work and is generally unproductive on the job.
 - Short-term cause(s): The person fails to show up for work and does not call the employer.
- Key: One typically does not happen without the other. Events which bring important change (or action) need both long-term and short-term causes.

Long-term Causes of the French Revolution

Everything previously discussed

- Absolutism
- Unjust socio-political system (Old Regime)
- Poor harvests which left peasant farmers with little money for taxes
- Influence of Enlightenment *philosophes*

Also

- Influence of other successful revolutions
 - England's Glorious Revolution (1688-1689)
 - American Revolution (1775-1783)

Short-term Causes of the French Revolution

Bankruptcy

- Caused by deficit spending
- Financial ministers (Turgot, Necker, Calonne) proposed changes
 - But these were rejected
- Assembly of Notables voted down taxation for the nobility in 1787

Great Fear

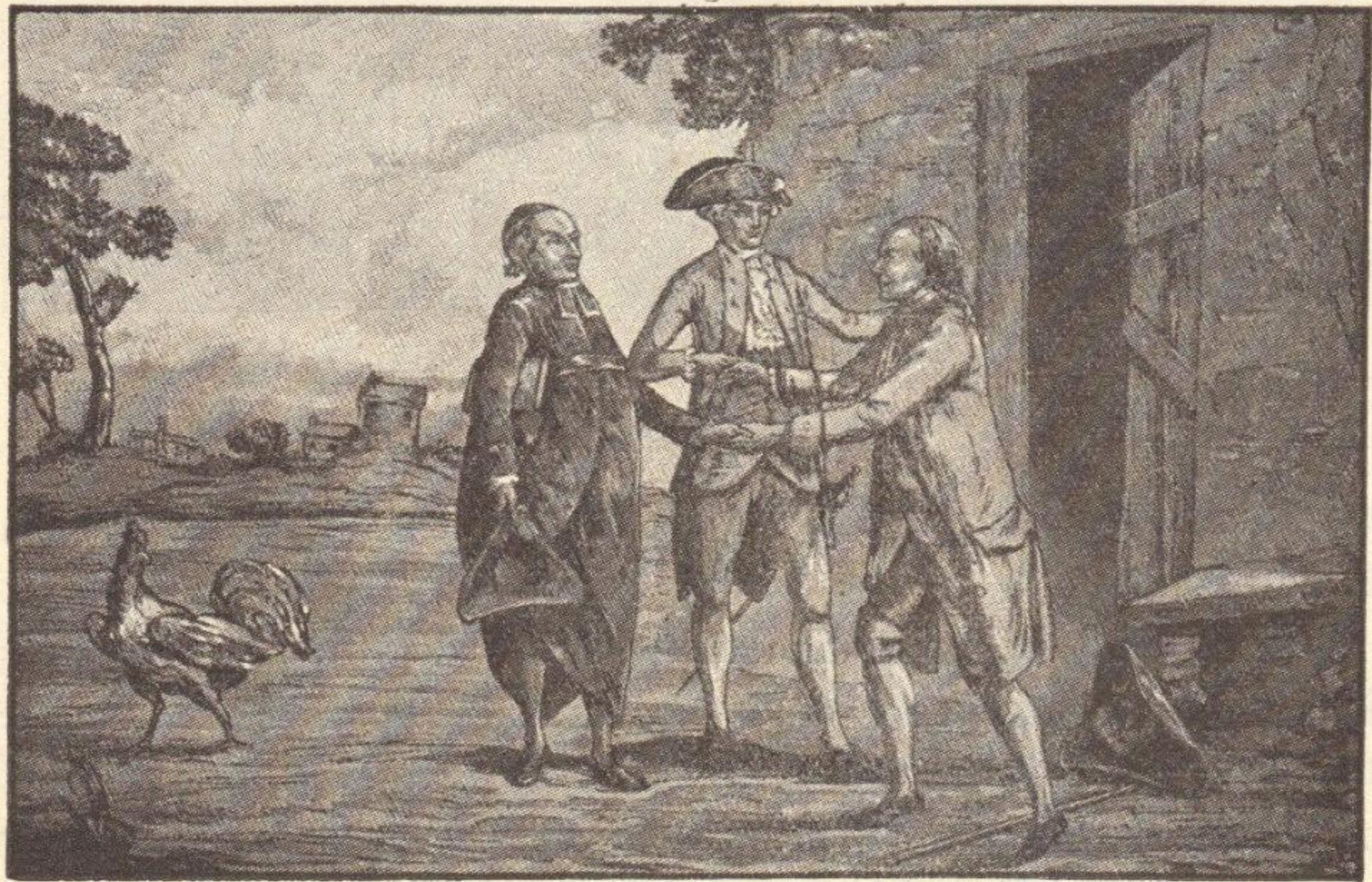
- Worst famine in memory
- Hungry, impoverished peasants feared that nobles at Estates-General were seeking greater privileges
- Attacks on nobles occurred throughout the country in 1789

Estates-General

- Louis XVI had no choice but to call for a meeting of the ***Estates-General*** to find a solution to the bankruptcy problem
 - All three estates
- Had not met since 1614
- Set in motion a series of events which resulted in the abolition of the monarchy and a completely new socio-political system for France

Preparing for the *Estates-General*

- Winter of 1788-1789
 - Members of the estates elected representatives
 - Louis XVI called for Meeting May 5, 1789
 - Representatives from each estate were called to meet.
 - First and Second Estate had 300 representatives each
 - Third Estate had 600 Representatives
 - Third Estate badly wanted constitutional government and make clergy and nobility to pay taxes.



THE THREE ESTATES

A contemporary cartoon, showing the Third Estate welcoming the nobles and the clergy to the ranks of the National Assembly, June 30, 1789.

Meeting of the *Estates-General*: May 5, 1789

- Voting was conducted by estate
 - Each estate had one vote
 - First and Second Estates could operate as a **bloc** to stop the Third Estate from having its way
- ◊ First Estate + ◊ Second Estate - vs. - ◊ Third Estate
- Representatives from the Third Estate demanded that voting be by population
 - This would give the Third Estate a great advantage
- Deadlock resulted

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graph TD; A[First Estate = 1 Vote or 130,000 Votes] --> B[Second Estate = 1 Vote or 110,000 Votes]; A --> C[Third Estate = 1 Vote or 25,000,000 Votes];
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First
Estate =
1 Vote or
130,000
Votes

Third Estate = 1
Vote or
25,000,000 Votes

Second Estate =
1 Vote or
110,000 Votes

Tennis Court Oath

The Third Estate declared itself to be the **National Assembly**.



Louis XVI responded by locking the Third Estate out of the meeting.



The Third Estate relocated to a nearby tennis court where its members vowed to stay together and create a written constitution for France.



On June 23, 1789, Louis XVI relented. He ordered the three estates to meet together as the **National Assembly** and vote, by population, on a constitution for France.

Tennis Court Oath by Jacques Louis David



The Tennis Court Oath

“The National Assembly, considering that it has been summoned to establish the constitution of the kingdom, to effect the regeneration of the public order, and to maintain the true principles of monarchy; that nothing can prevent it from continuing its deliberations in whatever place it may be forced to establish itself; and, finally, that wheresoever its members are assembled, there is the National Assembly;

“Decrees that all members of this Assembly shall immediately take a solemn oath not to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the kingdom is established and consolidated upon firm foundations; and that, the said oath taken, all members and each one of them individually shall ratify this steadfast resolution by signature.”

Review Questions

1. What was the Old Regime?

2. How does an absolute monarchy (absolutism) operate?

3. Describe the size, privileges, exemptions, and burdens of the three estates.

4. What is deficit spending?

5. Describe the type of thinking used by the *philosophes*.

6. What were the underlying (long-term) causes of the French Revolution?

7. What were the immediate (short-term) causes of the French Revolution?

8. Explain the debate over voting which occurred in the *Estates-General*.

9. What was the Tennis Court Oath?

National Assembly (1789-1791)

- Louis XVI did not actually want a written constitution
- When news of his plan to use military force against the National Assembly reached Paris on **July 14, 1789**, people stormed the **Bastille**



STORMING THE BASTILLE

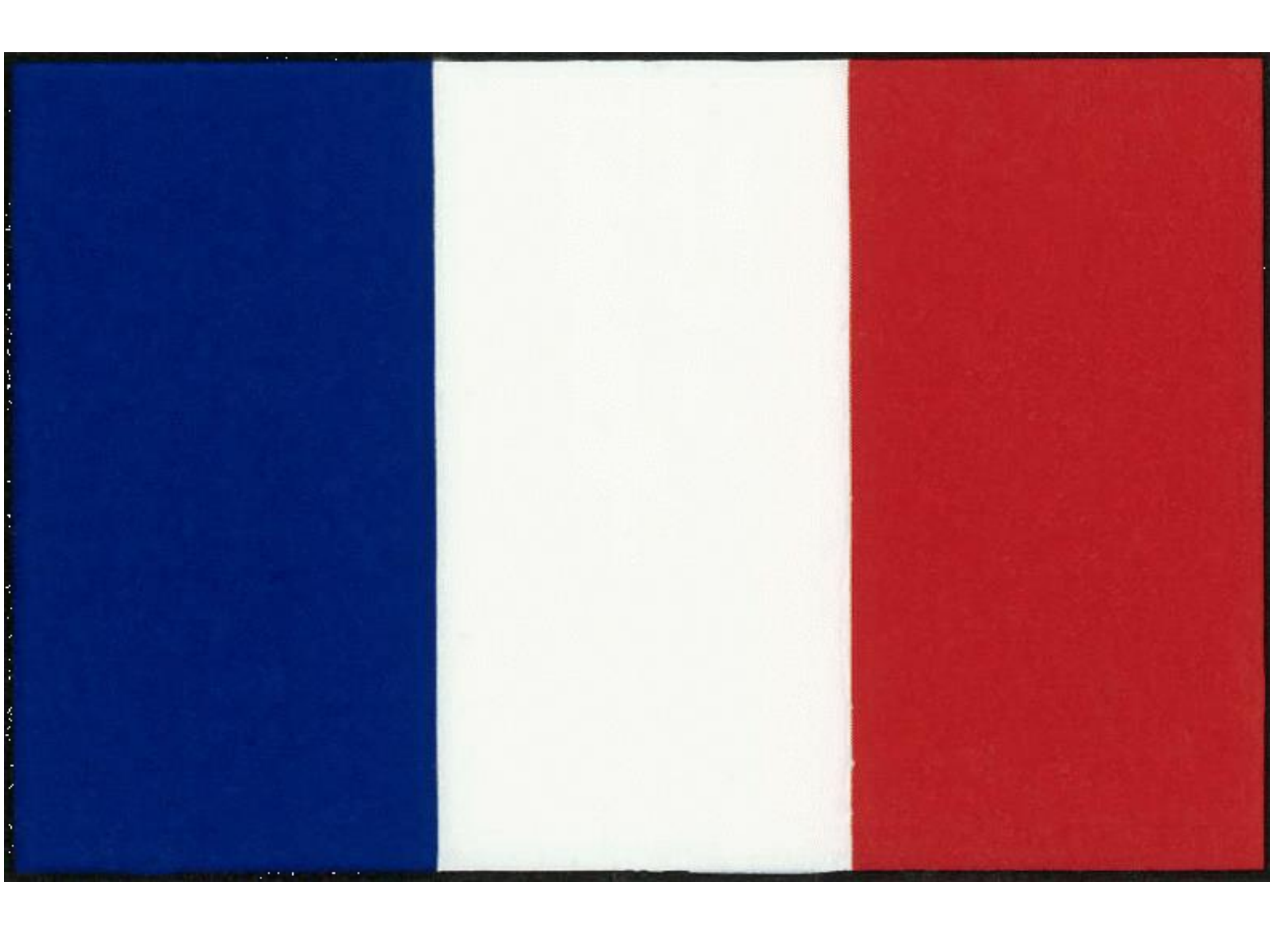
Uprising in Paris

People of Paris seized weapons from the **Bastille**

- July 14, 1789
- Parisians organized their own government which they called the **Commune**
- Small groups – **factions** – competed to control the city of Paris

Uprising spread throughout France

- Nobles were attacked
- Records of feudal dues and owed taxes were destroyed
- Many nobles fled the country – became known as *émigrés*
- Louis XVI was forced to fly the new tricolor flag of France



Tuileries Palace (Paris, France)



Changes under the National Assembly

Abolishment of
guilds and labor
unions

Abolition of
special privileges

Constitution of
1791

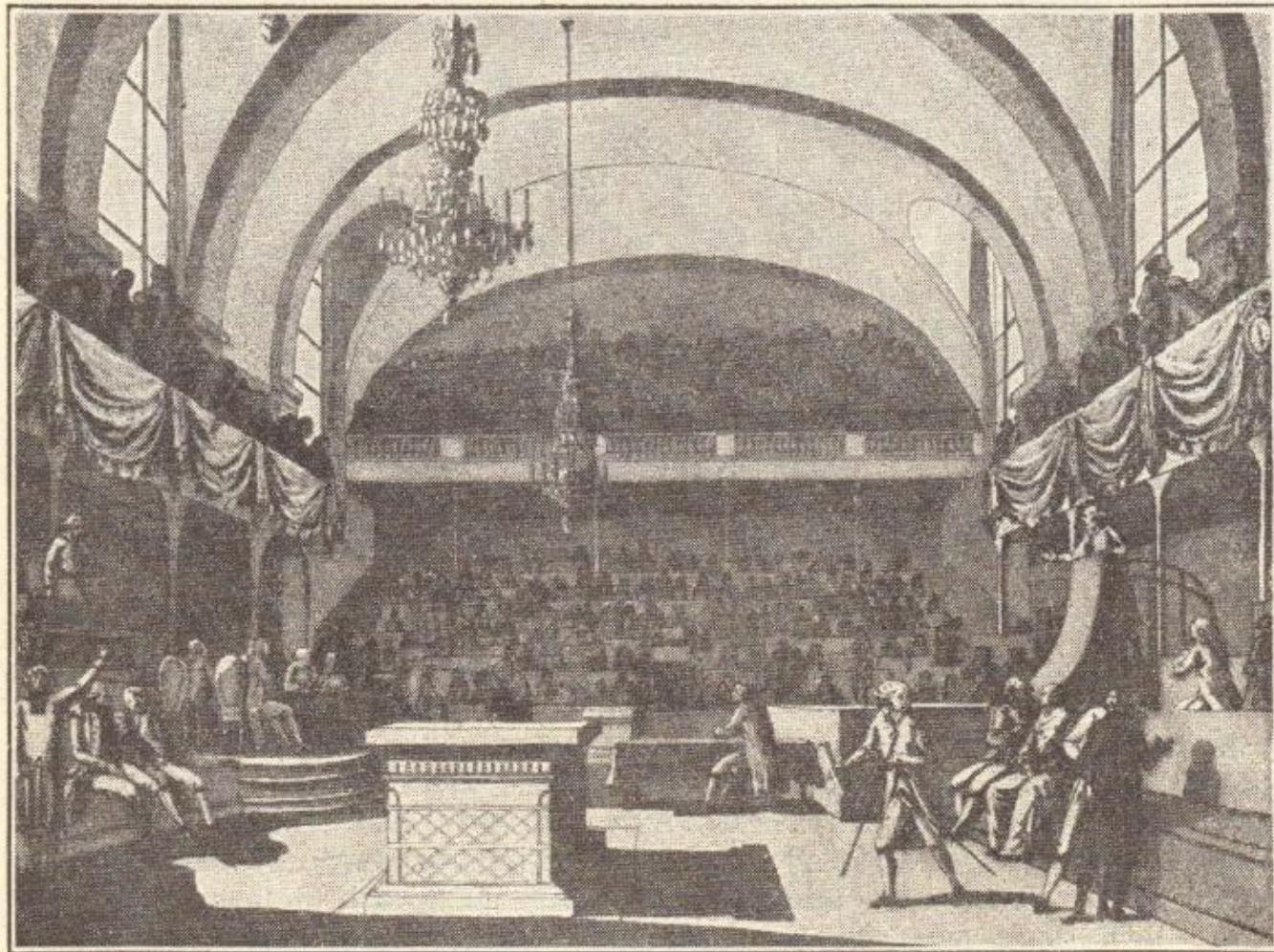
*Declaration of the
Rights of Man*

Equality before the
law (for men)

Many nobles left
France and
became known as
émigrés

Reforms in local
government

Taxes levied based
on the ability to
pay



HALL OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN PARIS

From a contemporary print. The States-General which met in May, 1789, had adopted the name National Assembly. When the mob compelled the king to move to Paris from Versailles the Assembly followed and convened in a hall near the Tuileries. From the speaker's rostrum at the right of the picture the Assembly was addressed at various times by the leaders of the Revolution, including Lafayette and Mirabeau. The mob filled the galleries, hissing or applauding the speakers. Those who could not crowd inside stood without and were informed by signals from the windows of what was going on within.

Declaration of the Rights of Man

August 26, 1789

(Similar to English Bill of Rights and American Declaration of Independence)

Freedom of
religion

Freedom of
speech

Freedom of
the press

Guaranteed
property
rights

“Liberty,
equality,
fraternity!”

Right of the
people to
create laws

Right to a fair
trial

Public office
based on
talent/merit

No group
exempt from
taxes

Declaration of the Rights of Woman

Journalist **Olympe de Gouges** argued in her *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* that women are equal citizens and should benefit from governmental reforms just as men did.

Madame Jeanne Roland also served as a leader in the women's rights movement, and was able to heavily influence her husband (a government official).

Women did gain some rights during the French Revolution, but these were designed for purposes other than liberating women.

- Women could **inherit property**, but only because doing so weakened feudalism and reduced wealth among the upper classes.
- **Divorce** became easier, but only to weaken the Church's control over marriage.

Goodbye, Versailles! *Adieu, Versailles!*

- Parisian Commune feared that Louis XVI would have foreign troops invade France to put down the rebellion
 - Louis XVI's wife, Marie Antoinette, was the sister of the Austrian emperor
- A group of women attacked Versailles on October 5, 1789
 - Starving Women Forced King Louis XVI to accept new decrees and had royal family relocate to Paris along with National Assembly
 - Royal family spent next several years in the Tuileries Palace as virtual prisoners

End of Special Privileges

- Church lands were seized, divided, and sold to peasants
- **Civil Constitution of the Clergy** required that Church officials be elected by the people, with salaries paid by the government
 - 2/3 of Church officials fled the country rather than swear allegiance to this
- All feudal dues and tithes were eradicated
- All special privileges of the First and Second Estates were abolished

Constitution of 1791

- **Democratic features**
 - France became a **limited monarchy**
 - King became merely the head of state
 - All laws were created by the **Legislative Assembly**
 - Feudalism was abolished
- **Undemocratic features**
 - Voting was limited to taxpayers
 - Offices were reserved for property owners
- This new government became known as the **Legislative Assembly**

Legislative Assembly (1791-1792)

- King Louis hated new government's regulation of church and his loss of absolute power
- Royal family sought help from Austria
 - In June, 1791, they were caught trying to escape to Austria
- Nobles who fled the revolution lived abroad as *émigrés*
 - They hoped that, with foreign help, the Old Regime could be restored in France
- Church officials wanted Church lands, rights, and privileges restored
 - Some devout Catholic peasants also supported the Church
- Political parties, representing different interests, emerged
 - **Girondists**
 - **Jacobins**



HALTING THE ROYAL FAMILY AT VARENNES

From a contemporary print. The royal family traveled in a great coach built for the purpose. The roads were bad, and the traveling carriage was heavy, but all went well until, at a point near Varennes, the king put his head out of the window and was recognized by the likeness of his features to the profile stamped on the French coins. The man who thus discovered the royal flight jumped on a horse, dashed into Varennes and roused the citizens to stop the coach. A messenger was dispatched to Paris, and shortly after, under the escort of members of the National Assembly, the royal family was compelled to return.

Opposition to the New Government

- European monarchs feared that revolution would spread to their own countries
 - France was threatened by Austrian and Prussian troops to restore King Louis XVI
 - Legislative Assembly decided to strike 1st and declared war on Austria in Spring of 1792 and initial fights were a major FAIL.
 - In Spring of 1792 food shortages and defeats in war led to an uprising by Paris Radicals
- In the uproar, the Commune took control of Paris
 - Commune was made up of many members who called themselves sans-culottes. They wanted universal male suffrage