

Unit 5: Identifications and Study Questions

Section A: Background to the French Revolution

the three Estates, the taille, hunting rights and banalities, the right of "eminent property"

1. Why was the French revolution considered to be such a significant and "world-altering" event?
2. In what ways did the legal division of society under the Old regime fail to reflect actual political and social conditions in France? What observations may be made about the existing property system?
3. How did the developments affecting both the nobility and bourgeoisie contribute to the Revolution?
4. What features of the agrarian and manorial system of the Old Regime were survivals of the feudal age? What is meant by the feudal reaction of the 18th Century? What effect did it have on the peasants?
5. How did the political unity of France contribute to the Revolution?
6. Did the ideas of the enlightenment cause the French Revolution?

Section B: The Revolution and the Reorganization of France

problems of taxation, Calonne, Lomenie de Brienne, *What is the Third Estate?*, the National Assembly and the Tennis Court Oath, the storming of the Bastille, the Great Fear of 1789, "the night of August 4" (The August Decrees) the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, Condorcet and the rights of women, the "patriots", the emigres, the March on Paris, the Jacobins, the Constitution of 1791, the "flight to Varennes", The Civil Constitution of the Clergy

1. How did the financial crisis facing the French government lead to revolution?
2. What special circumstances created hardship for the lower classes? What manifestations of unrest appeared in the city? in the countryside? What effect did these events have on the National Assembly?
3. What major principles were announced in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen? Of what significance was the Declaration to be? What about the rights for women?
4. How did the Constituent Assembly overhaul the institutions of the old regime? How would you assess the machinery of government established by the new constitution?
5. Describe the legislation introduced by the Constituent Assembly with respect to (a) public finances, (b) church lands, (c) guilds and other labor organizations.
6. Discuss the nature and the consequences of the religious measures adopted by the Constituent Assembly.

Section C: The Revolution and Europe: The War and the Second Revolution

Edmund Burke, emigres, William Pitt, Leopold II, The Declaration of Pillnitz, Girondins, Brunswick Manifesto, *Marseillaise*, storming of the Tuileries, "September Massacres"

1. Describe the general impact of the Revolution upon its age. What different interpretations did contemporaries give to the events taking place? What position was taken by Edmund Burke?
2. What were the reactions of the various European governments to the revolution in France?
3. How did the Declaration of Pillnitz affect developments in France? Why did various groups in France favor war?
4. Why were peasants and urban workers dissatisfied with the course of events so far?
5. Why may the insurrection of August 10, 1792, be called the "second" French Revolution?

Section D: The Emergency Republic, 1792-1795: The Terror

the National Convention, battle of Valmy, "sans-culottes", the "Mountain", Dumouriez, *enrages*, Robespierre, Committee of Public Safety, the "Reign of Terror", Committee of General Security, *levee en masse*, "general maximum", Constitution of 1793, Jacques Hebert, "Dechristianization", cult of the "Supreme Being", Danton, The Thermidorian Reaction

1. What relationship was there between French military expansion and the spread of the Revolution? How did the European powers resist? What factors weakened the coalition fighting France?
2. Explain the political division that developed inside the Convention. What policies did the "Mountain" represent? Who was the "Mountain" against?
3. Of what significance was the execution of the king? Why was the insurrection of May 31, 1793 important?
4. Discuss the problems and difficulties faced by the Convention in the spring of 1793. What program did it follow? What were the results?
5. Describe the events and significance of 9 Thermidor. What developments took place in the months that followed?

Sections E - K begin on next page

Section E: The Constitutional Republic: The Directory, 1795-1799

the Directory, the Constitution of 1795, Council of Five Hundred and the Council of Ancients, Louis XVIII and the Declaration of Verona, Conspiracy of Equals, Napoleon Bonaparte, the coup d'etat of Fructidor, Treaty of Campo Formio, the Second Coalition, the coup d'etat of Brumaire

1. How would you characterize the nature of the Directory? How was the Directory organized?
2. Who opposed the Directory and why?
3. Why might Napoleon have been disturbed by the elections of 1797? Describe Bonaparte's background, career, and accomplishments up to this point.
4. Why were the prospects for peace good in 1797? What happened to those prospects?
5. How did the coup d'etat of Fructidor affect the peace negotiations? What was significant about the peace treaty that was signed?
6. Discuss the military and political circumstances that prepared the way for Napoleon to seize power.

Section F: The Authoritarian Republic: The Consulate, 1799-1804

Napoleon's personality, the plebiscite, the list of notables, Treaty of Luneville, the Concordat with the Vatican, reforms of the Consulate, "careers open to talent", the Bank of France, the Napoleonic Code, the French Empire

1. How would you evaluate the personality, talents, and political ideas of Napoleon?
2. what type of governmental administration was set up under the Consulate? Where did real authority reside?
3. Describe and evaluate the significance of the major reforms introduced by Napoleon (a) in law and administration, (b) in public finance and taxation, (c) in church-state relations.
4. How would you summarize the major accomplishments of the Revolution by the end of the Consulate? In what ways had the Revolution strengthened France? How did the governments of Europe regard Napoleon?

Section G: The Formation of the French Imperial System

Peace of Amiens, the "shame of the princes", the Third Coalition, Battle of Trafalgar, Battle of Austerlitz, battles of Jena and Auerstadt, Treaty of Tilsit, the Berlin Decree, the Continental System, the Peninsular War, the capitulation at Baylen, Grand Duchy of Warsaw, Talleyrand, battle of Wagram, Metternich, Marie Louise

1. Why did the First and Second Coalitions against France seem to break apart so easily?
2. What general observations may be made about internal changes in the European countries in years of Napoleon's ascendancy? What were motives of the nations that fought Napoleon?
3. Why was the Treaty of Amiens important? How did Napoleon's policies provoke the formation of the Third Coalition? What happened to this coalition?
4. Why did the attitudes and policies of Tsar Alexander I puzzle and disturb the other leaders? In what sense may the Treaty of Tilsit be considered the high point of Napoleon's success? What led to the weakening of the alliance between Napoleon and Alexander?
5. Explain the origins, purposes and nature of Napoleon's Continental System. What effect did Napoleon's setbacks in Spain have on the other parts of Europe?
6. In what sense was the Napoleonic Empire at its height in the years 1809-1811?

Section H: The Grand Empire: The Spread of the Revolution

the French Empire, the "King of Rome", the Illyrian Provinces, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, the Confederation of the Rhine, the "Corsican Clan", Civil Codes

1. Describe the territory dominated by Napoleon at the height of his influence. What main divisions were there to the Napoleonic domain?
2. Explain the government and administration of the French Empire and of the Grand Empire. How did Napoleon use his family as a means of rule?
3. What justification is there for considering Napoleon as a reformer and a man of the Enlightenment? In what sense were the main principles of the French Revolution spread throughout Europe by Napoleon?
4. What appeal did the Napoleonic system have in Europe? To what extent was repression employed?

Section I: The Continental System: Britain and France

the "nation of shopkeepers", Berlin Decree, "order in council", Milan Decree

1. Describe Napoleon's efforts to find some basis other than force for the unification of Europe. How did he hope to exploit existing European attitudes toward Great Britain?
2. In what basic way did the British Blockade and Napoleon's Continental System resemble each other? How did the United States become involved in this economic and trade war? What were the results?
3. Explain the objective of Napoleon's Continental System with regard to the economy in Continental Europe.
4. What were the chief reasons for the failure of the Continental System? What effect did it have as a short-range war measure?

Section J: The National Movements: Germany

Nationalism, "romanticism", J.G. Herder, *Volksgeist*, Father Jahn, J.G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, "Prussianizing", Baron Stein

1. Of what significance was the Napoleonic age for the development of nationalism? What different forms did nationalist feelings take?
2. Describe the change in German national-mindedness that had set in about 1780. How did the ideas developing on Germany differ from the ideas characteristic of the enlightenment?
3. Discuss the development of nationalist political thought in Napoleonic Germany. In what sense was it "democratic"? What form did German nationalistic activities take?
4. Describe (a) the principle aims of the army reformers in Prussia and (b) the political philosophy and reforms of Baron Stein.

Section K: The Overthrow of Napoleon: The Congress of Vienna

Borodino, the retreat from Moscow, Leipzig, the "Frankfurt Proposals", Castlereagh, Metternich, Talleyrand, the first Treaty of Paris, the Polish-Saxon question, "Congress Poland", Waterloo, the Hundred Days, Quadruple Alliance, the second Treaty of Paris, Holy Alliance, the Peace of Vienna

1. What factors made everything "go wrong" in Napoleon's invasion of Russia. How did Europe react to Napoleon's setback?
2. To what extent did the charter of 1814 accept the changes of the Revolution and of the Napoleonic era?
3. Explain the nature of the first Treaty of Paris. What were the issues facing Europe after Napoleon's defeat?
4. What the territorial arrangements made at the Congress of Vienna? How did the European nations react?
5. Why did Frenchmen rally to Napoleon upon his return? How did the allies react?
6. How would you evaluate the accomplishments and failures of the Peace of Vienna? Any disappointments?

CHAPTER 45

CRANE BRINTON

The Anatomy of Revolution: Tentative Uniformities

We have studied four revolutions which on the surface seem to have certain resemblances, and deliberately avoided certain other types of revolution. Our four took place in the postmedieval Western world, were "popular" revolutions carried out in the name of "freedom" for a majority against a privileged minority, and were successful, that is, they resulted in the revolutionists becoming the legal government. Anything like a complete sociology of revolutions would have to take account of other kinds of revolution. . . .

When all necessary concessions are made to those who insist that events in history are unique, it remains true that the four revolutions we have studied do display some striking uniformities. Our conceptual scheme of the fever can be worked out so as to bring these uniformities clearly to mind. We shall find it worthwhile, in attempting to summarize the work of these revolutions, to recapitulate briefly the main points of comparison on which our uniformities are based.

We must be very tentative about the prodromal symptoms of revolution. Even retrospectively, diagnosis of the four societies we studied was very difficult, and there is little ground for belief that anyone today has enough knowledge and skill to apply formal methods of diagnosis to a contemporary society and say, in this case revolution will or will not occur shortly. But some uniformities do emerge from a study of the old regimes in England, America, France, and Russia.

First, these were all societies on the whole on the upgrade economically before the revolution came, and the revolutionary movements seem to

From Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1952), pp. 21, 277-285. Copyright © 1952 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., and reprinted by permission of the author and publisher.

originate in the discontents of not unprosperous people who feel restraint, cramp, annoyance, rather than downright crushing oppression. Certainly these revolutions are not started by down-and-outers, by starving, miserable people. These revolutionists are not worms turning, not children of despair. These revolutions are born of hope, and their philosophies are formally optimistic.

Second; we find in our prerevolutionary society definite and indeed very bitter class antagonisms, though these antagonisms seem rather more complicated than the cruder Marxists will allow. It is not a case of feudal nobility against bourgeoisie in 1640, 1776, and 1789 or of bourgeoisie against proletariat in 1917. The strongest feelings seem generated in the bosoms of men—and women—who have made money, or at least who have enough to live on, and who contemplate bitterly the imperfections of a socially privileged aristocracy. Revolutions seem more likely when social classes are fairly close together than when they are far apart. "Untouchables" very rarely revolt against a God-given aristocracy, and Haiti gives one of the few examples of successful slave revolutions. But rich merchants whose daughters can marry aristocrats are likely to feel that God is at least as interested in merchants as in aristocrats. It is difficult to say why the bitterness of feeling between classes *almost* equal socially seems so much stronger in some societies than others—why, for instance, a Marie Antoinette should be so much more hated in eighteenth-century France than a rich, idle, much publicized heiress in contemporary America; but at any rate the existence of such bitterness can be observed in our prerevolutionary societies, which is, clinically speaking, enough for the moment.

Third, there is the desertion of the intellectuals. This is in some respects the most reliable of the symptoms we are likely to meet. Here again we need not try to explain all the hows and whys, need not try to tie up the desertion of the intellectuals with a grand and complete sociology of revolutions. We need simply state that it can be observed in all four of our societies.

Fourth, the governmental machinery is clearly inefficient, partly through neglect—through a failure to make changes in old institutions; partly because new conditions—in the societies we have studied, conditions attendant on economic expansion and the growth of new monied classes, new ways of transportation, new business methods—these new conditions laid an intolerable strain on governmental machinery adapted to simpler, more primitive, conditions.

Fifth, the old ruling class—or rather, many individuals of the old ruling class—come to distrust themselves, or lose faith in the traditions and habits of their class, grow intellectual, humanitarian, or go over to the attacking groups. Perhaps a larger number of them than usual lead lives we shall have to call immoral, dissolute, though one cannot by any means be as sure about this as a symptom as about the loss of habits and traditions of

command effective among a ruling class. At any rate, the ruling class becomes politically inept.

The dramatic events that start things moving, that bring on the fever of revolution, are in three of our four revolutions intimately connected with the financial administration of the state. In the fourth, Russia, the breakdown of administration under the burdens of an unsuccessful war is only in part financial. But in all our societies the inefficiency and inadequacy of the governmental structure of the society come out clearly in the very first stages of the revolution. There is a time—the first few weeks or months—when it looks as if a determined use of force on the part of the government might prevent the mounting excitement from culminating in an overthrow of the government. These governments attempted such a use of force in all four instances, and in all four their attempt was a failure. This failure indeed proved a turning point during the first stages and set up the revolutionists in power.

Yet one is impressed in all four instances more with the ineptitude of the governments' use of force than with the skill of their opponents' use of force. We are here speaking of the situation wholly from a military and police point of view. It may be that the majority of the people are discontented, loathe the existing government, wish it overthrown. Nobody knows. They don't take plebiscites *before* revolutions. In the actual clash—even Bastille Day, Concord, or the February Days in Petrograd—only a minority of the people is actively engaged. But the government hold over its own troops is poor, its troops fight half-heartedly or desert, its commanders are stupid, its enemies acquire a nucleus of the deserting troops or of a previous militia, and the old gives place to the new. Yet, such is the conservative and routine-loving nature of the bulk of human beings, so strong are habits of obedience in most of them, that it is almost safe to say that no government is likely to be overthrown until it loses the ability to make adequate use of its military and police powers. That loss of ability may show itself in the actual desertion of soldiers and police to the revolutionists, or in the stupidity with which the government manages its soldiers and police, or in both ways.

The events we have grouped under the name of first stages do not of course unroll themselves in exactly the same order in time, or with exactly the same content, in all four of our revolutions. But we have listed the major elements, and they fall into a pattern of uniformities: financial breakdown, organization of the discontented to remedy this breakdown (or threatened breakdown), revolutionary demands on the part of these organized discontented, demands which if granted would mean the virtual abdication of those governing, attempted use of force by the government, its failure, and the attainment of power by the revolutionists. These revolutionists have hitherto been acting as an organized and nearly unanimous group, but with the attainment of power it is clear that they are not united.

The group which dominates these first stages we call the moderates. They are not always in a numerical majority in this stage—indeed, it is pretty clear that if you limit the moderates to the Kadets, they were not in a majority in Russia in February, 1917. But they seem the natural heirs of the old government, and they have their chance. In three of our revolutions, they are sooner or later driven from office to death or exile. Certainly there is to be seen in England, France, and Russia a process in which a series of crises—some involving violence, street fighting, and the like—deposes one set of men and puts in power another and more radical set. In these revolutions power passes by violent or at least extralegal methods from Right to Left, until at the crisis period the extreme radicals, the complete revolutionists, are in power. There are, as a matter of fact, usually a few even wilder and more lunatic fringes of the triumphant extremists—but these are not numerous or strong and are usually suppressed or otherwise made harmless by the dominant radicals. It is therefore approximately true to say that power passes on from Right to Left until it reaches the extreme Left.

The rule of the extremists we have called the crisis period. This period was not reached in the American Revolution, though in the treatment of Loyalists, in the pressure to support the army, in some of the phases of social life, you can discern in America many of the phenomena of the Terror as it is seen in our three other societies. We cannot here attempt to go into the complicated question as to why the American Revolution stopped short of a true crisis period, why the moderates were never ousted in this country. We must repeat that we are simply trying to establish certain uniformities of description and are not attempting a complete sociology of revolutions.

The extremists are helped to power, no doubt, by the existence of a powerful pressure toward centralized strong government, something which in general the moderates are not capable of providing, while the extremists—with their discipline, their contempt for half measures, their willingness to make firm decisions, their freedom from libertarian qualms—are quite able and willing to centralize. Especially in France and Russia, where powerful foreign enemies threatened the very existence of the nation, the machinery of government during the crisis period was in part constructed to serve as a government of national defense. Yet though modern wars, as we know in this country, demand a centralization of authority, war alone does not seem to account for all that happened in the crisis period in those countries.

What does happen may be a bit oversimply summarized as follows: emergency centralization of power in an administration, usually a council or commission, and more-or-less dominated by a "strong man"—Cromwell, Robespierre, Lenin; government without any effective protection for the normal civil rights of the individual—or if this sounds unrealistic, especially for Russia, let us say the normal private life of the individual; setting up of

extraordinary courts and a special revolutionary police to carry out the decrees of the government and to suppress all dissenting individuals or groups; all this machinery ultimately built up from a relatively small group—Independents, Jacobins, Bolsheviks—which has a monopoly on all governmental action. Finally, governmental action becomes a much greater part of all human action than in these societies in their normal condition; this apparatus of government is set to work indifferently on the mountains and molehills of human life—it is used to pry into and poke about corners normally reserved for priest or physician, or friend, and it is used to regulate, control, plan, the production and distribution of economic wealth on a national scale.

In all of our societies the crisis period was followed by a convalescence, by a return to most of the simpler and more fundamental courses taken by interactions in the old network. . . . The equilibrium has been restored and the revolution is over. But this does not mean that nothing has been changed. Some new and useful tracks or courses in the network of interactions that makes society have been established, some old and inconvenient ones—you may call them unjust if you like—have been eliminated. . . .

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 gov-

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

ern 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 é'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....

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 *englamé* 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.

Unit 5
Supplemental
Readings

The Coming of the French Revolution

Georges Lefebvre

Probably no event in modern history has been interpreted at greater length and with greater passion than the French Revolution. The historiographic tradition related to this event is so extensive that numerous books and articles have been written on this historiography itself. A central controversy involves the cause or causes of the revolution and is dealt with in the following selection from The Coming of the French Revolution by Georges Lefebvre. Lefebvre held the prestigious chair of French revolutionary history at the Sorbonne until his death in 1959. His work on the French Revolution continues to be highly respected and accepted among historians, many of whom differ greatly among themselves.

Consider: The most important cause of the French Revolution, according to Lefebvre; how this interpretation relates the revolution in France to areas outside of France; how social, economic, and political factors are linked in this interpretation of the French Revolution; how this view is supported by the primary documents.

The ultimate cause of the French Revolution of 1789 goes deep into the history of France and of the western world. At the end of the eighteenth century the social structure of France was aristocratic. It showed the traces of having originated at a time when land was almost the only form of wealth, and when the possessors of land were the masters of those who needed it to work and to live. It is true that in the course of age-old struggles (of which the Fronde, the last revolt of the aristocracy, was as recent as the seventeenth century) the king had been able gradually to deprive the lords of their political power and subject nobles and clergy to his authority. But he had left them the first place in the social hierarchy. Still restless at being merely his "subjects," they remained privileged persons.

Meanwhile the growth of commerce and industry had created, step by step, a new form of wealth, mobile or commercial wealth, and a new class, called in France the bourgeoisie, which since the fourteenth century had taken its place as the Third Estate in the General Estates of the kingdom. This class had grown much stronger with the maritime discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the ensuing exploitation of new worlds, and also because it proved highly useful to the monarchical state in supplying it with money and competent officials. In the eighteenth century commerce, industry and finance occupied an increasingly important place in the national economy. It was the bourgeoisie that rescued the royal treasury in moments of crisis. From its ranks were recruited most members of the liberal professions and most public employees. It had developed a new ideology which the "philosophers" and "economists" of the time had simply put into definite form. The role of the nobility had correspondingly declined; and the clergy, as the ideal which it proclaimed lost prestige, found its authority growing weaker. These groups preserved the highest rank in the legal structure of the country, but in reality economic power, personal abilities and confidence in the future had passed largely to the bourgeoisie. Such a discrepancy never lasts forever. The Revolution of 1789 restored the harmony between fact and law. This transformation spread in the nineteenth century throughout the west and then to the whole globe, and in this sense the ideas of 1789 toured the world.

The Age of Democratic Revolution

R. R. Palmer

For a long time the French Revolution was studied in relative isolation from other political and social developments of the time. In the years after World War II, some historians viewed the French Revolution in a broader context. The most forceful exponent of this broader view is R. R. Palmer. He places the French Revolution within the context of the Atlantic civilization and argues that the French Revolution was one aspect of a much broader Age of Democratic Revolution. The following is an excerpt from the first volume of his two-volume work on this age. In it he tells the reader what he will argue.

Consider: The role the Enlightenment would play in this interpretation; any inconsistencies between this interpretation and the implications of Lefebvre's argument; how this view might elevate the significance of the American Revolution and The Declaration of Independence.

Let us pass from the concrete image to the broadest of historical generalizations. The present work attempts to deal with Western Civilization as a whole, at a critical moment in its history, or with what has sometimes recently been called the *Atlantic Civilization*, a term probably closer to reality in the eighteenth century than in the twentieth. It is argued that this whole civilization was swept in the last four decades of the eighteenth century by a single revolutionary movement, which manifested itself in different ways and with varying success in different countries, yet in all of them showed similar objectives and principles. It is held that this forty-year movement was essentially "democratic," and that these years are in fact the Age of the Democratic Revolution. "Democratic" is here to be understood in a general but clear enough sense. It was not primarily the sense of a later day in which universality of the suffrage became a chief criterion of democracy, nor yet that other and uncertain sense, also of a later day, in which both Soviet and Western-type states could call themselves democratic. In one way, it signified a new feeling for a kind of equality, or at least a discomfort with older forms of social stratification and formal rank, such as Thomas Shippen felt at Versailles, and which indeed had come to affect a good many of the habitués of Versailles also. Politically, the eighteenth-century movement was against the possession of government, or any public power, by any established, privileged, closed, or self-recruiting groups of men. It denied that any person could exercise coercive authority simply by his own right, or by right of his status, or by right of "history," either in the old-fashioned sense of custom and inheritance, or in any newer dialectical sense, unknown to the eighteenth century, in which "history" might be supposed to give some special elite or revolutionary vanguard a right to rule. The "democratic revolution" emphasized the delegation of authority and the removability of officials, precisely because, as we shall see, neither delegation nor removability were much recognized in actual institutions.

It is a corollary of these ideas that the American and the French Revolutions, the two chief actual revolutions of the period, with all due allowance for the great differences between them, nevertheless shared a good deal in common, and that what they shared was shared also at the same time by various people and movements in other countries, notably in England, Ireland, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and Italy, but also in Germany, Hungary, and Poland, and by scattered individuals in places like Spain and Russia.

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 Third Estate rights come 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.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

No document better summarizes the ideas 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 ideas of the Enlightenment, at which social groups this document was aimed, who would suffer most from or be most infuriated by its provisions; 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.

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.

Loaves and Liberty: Women in the French Revolution

Ruth Graham

Historians have long recognized that women played an important role in certain aspects of the French Revolution. But only in the last twenty years have extensive examinations been made of the significance of the French Revolution for women's history. The following selection by Ruth Graham is a good example of this recent work.

Consider: Any connections between sex and class lines in the French Revolution; the ways in which women became a "revolutionary force unprecedented in history" during the revolution; what Graham means by women's victories and defeats.

It would be wrong to assume that because women had come into the Revolution in 1789 asking for bread and liberty and had come out in 1795 with starvation and restriction of their movements, they had gained nothing. They won laws protecting their rights in marriage, property, and education. True, women were denied political rights in the French Revolution (as were the majority of men when the Convention scrapped the democratic constitution of 1793) but nowhere else at the time did women share political rights with men.

Although women were a cohesive group during the Revolution, they responded mainly to the needs of their class and were never an autonomous force. The ideology of the revolutionary authorities who distrusted women's political movements derived seemingly from Rousseau, but actually from the facts of their lives: France's small-scale, home-based economy needed middle- and working-class women to contribute their special skills and labor to their families. Women were not yet a large, independent group in the working class.

In the early days of the French Revolution, women from the middle classes (as can be seen from cahiers written by them) welcomed the res-

SOURCE: Ruth Graham, "Loaves and Liberty: Women in the French Revolution," in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, eds., *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 251-253.

toration of their natural rights as wives and mothers to participate in society as men's "natural companions." Women of the urban poor—wage earners, artisans of women's crafts, owners of small enterprises, such as the market women—agitated for bread rather than for women's rights. There is, however, evidence that "respectable" middle-class women joined them. Although these movements crossed class lines, which were perhaps not rigidly fixed, they did not cross sex lines. When men participated, as they did in the October Days of 1789, they came as armed escorts or separate detachments.

As the Revolution entered its more radical phase, as economic crisis followed war and civil strife, the polarization between the rich and the poor sharpened the older struggle between aristocrat and patriot. During the last days of the National Convention, the women who surged into the hall crying "Bread and the Constitution of 1793!" truly represented the poor, whom the upper classes and their women now feared. The bread riots belonged to the women of the poor, who incited their men to insurrection, but the insurrection belonged to both of them, the sans-culottes and their women.

Yet, the Revolution had called upon women to make great sacrifices and they did; in consequence, women became a revolutionary force unprecedented in history. The men in power feared women who challenged the Revolution's failure to guarantee bread for the poor. So feared were the women of the French Revolution that they became legendary—they became Mme. Defarge later to those who feared revolution itself.

A new elite of the upper middle class, men of wealth and talent, rose to power in the four years of the Directory following the dissolution in 1795 of the National Convention. Their women had no political rights but emerged as influential ladies of the salon, such as the brilliant writer Mme. de Staël, and Mme. Tallien, former wife of an aristocrat and now derisively called "Our Lady of Thermidor," as a symbol of the reaction. One of these ladies, Josephine de Beauharnais, the widow of a general, became the mistress of one of the Directors before she married the young Napoleon Bonaparte, who soon afterward became general of the armies in Italy.

Outside of Paris, away from the glamour of these women, middle-class morality prevailed. Napoleon subscribed to this morality. When he became emperor in 1804, he wrote laws into his code to strengthen the authority of the husband and father of the family as a safeguard for private property. Women lost whatever rights they had gained in the Revolution, for now they had to obey their husbands unconditionally. Napoleon left women the right to divorce (for Napoleon to use against Josephine when she failed to provide him an heir), but this right was taken from them after 1815 by the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy.

What could not be taken from women was their memory of victories during the French Revolution: their march to Versailles in the October Days, their petitions to the legislature, their club meetings, their processions, their insurrections. Their defeats served as lessons for next time. "We are simple women," a woman was reported to have said at a club meeting in the days of the 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."

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 lawyer-member Committee of Public Safety elected by the National Convention every month. The outstanding member of this committee was Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794), a prominent 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 blondbraided 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 snobishness 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 that 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 set up....

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: powerless. Terror is nothing else than swift, severe, indomitable justice; it flows, then, from virtue.

Europe and the French Imperium: Napoleon as Enlightened Despot

Geoffrey Bruun

As with most charismatic figures, it has been difficult to evaluate Napoleon objectively from a historical perspective. Even before his death, a number of myths were developing about him. Since then much of the debate among scholars has dealt with whether Napoleon should be considered a defender or a destroyer of the revolution, whether his rise to power reversed the revolutionary tide or consolidated it. In the following selection Geoffrey Bruun argues that Napoleon should be viewed more as an eighteenth-century enlightened despot than as anything else.

Consider: Bruun's support for his contention that Napoleon was to a considerable degree a "son of the philosophes"; the ways in which Napoleon differed from eighteenth-century monarchs; whether Bruun's view is supported by Napoleon's decree issued from Madrid.

The major misconception which has distorted the epic of Napoleon is the impression that his advent to power was essentially a dramatic reversal, which turned back the tide of democracy and diverted the predestined course of the revolutionary torrent. That this Corsican liberticide could destroy a republic and substitute an empire, seemingly at will, has been seized upon by posterity as the outstanding proof of his arrogant genius. To reduce his career to logical dimensions, to appreciate how largely it was a fulfillment rather than a miscarriage of the reform program, it is necessary to forget the eighteenth century as the seedtime of political democracy and remember it as the golden era of the princely despots, to recall how persistently the thinkers of that age concerned themselves with the idea of enlightened autocracy and how conscientiously they laid down the intellectual foundations of Caesarism. Napoleon was, to a degree perhaps undreamed of in their philosophy, the son of the *philosophes*, and it is difficult to read far in the political writings of the time without feeling how clearly the century prefigured him, how ineluctably in Vandal's phrase *l'idée a précédé l'homme*.

All the reforming despots of the eighteenth century pursued, behind a façade of humanitarian pretexts, the same basic program of administrative consolidation. The success achieved by Frederick the Great in raising the military prestige and stimulating the economic development of Prussia provided the most notable illustration of this policy, but the same ideals inspired the precipitate decrees of Joseph II in Austria, the cautious innovations of Charles III of Spain, the paper projects of Catherine the Great of Russia and the complex program pursued by Gustavus III in Sweden. Military preparedness and economic self-sufficiency were the cardinal principles guiding the royal reformers, but they also shared a common desire to substitute a unified system of law for the juristic chaos inherited from earlier centuries, to eliminate the resistance and confusion offered by guilds, corporations, provincial estates and relics of feudatory institutions, and to transform their inchoate possessions into centralized states dominated by despotic governments of unparalleled efficiency and vigor. In crowning the work of the Revolution by organizing a government of this type in France, Napoleon obeyed the most powerful political tradition of the age, a mandate more general, more widely endorsed, and more pressing than the demand for social equality or democratic institutions. Read in this light, the significance of his career is seen to lie, not in the ten years of revolutionary turmoil from which he sprang, but in the whole century which produced him. If Europe in the revolutionary age may be thought of as dominated by one nearly universal mood, that mood was an intense aspiration for order. The privileged and the unprivileged classes, philosophers, peasants, democrats, and despots all paid homage to this ideal. Napoleon lent his name to an epoch because he symbolized reason enthroned, because he was the philosopher-prince who gave to the dominant aspiration of the age its most typical, most resolute, and most triumphant expression.

Dictatorship—Its History and Theory: Napoleon as Dictator

Alfred Cobban

There is a tradition of historians much more critical of Napoleon than Bruun or Remusat. They see in Napoleon's rise to power and in the means he used to retain it elements of a modern dictatorship. This view was particularly strong during the 1930s and 1940s, perhaps a reaction to events of those times. The following selection by Alfred Cobban, a scholar from the University of London and a recognized authority on French history, is a good example of this interpretation. Here Cobban analyzes how Napoleon gained power.

Consider: Cobban's definition of the term "dictator"; how the document by Fouché might be used to support Cobban's view; how Bruun might react to this interpretation.

Bonaparte came to power because his name provided a new source of authority, but at the same time the principle of the sovereignty of the people had established too firm a hold over men's minds to be abandoned. Some means of reconciling this principle with the rule of one man had to be found. Emotionally this was easy: the sovereignty of the people had become fused with nationalism, and Napoleon through his victories had come to be a living symbol of the national greatness. But to add the appearance of free choice he adopted the method used by the Jacobins in presenting their Constitution of 1793 to the country—the plebiscite. Sieyès and the men of Brumaire had themselves presented this device to Bonaparte, when they incorporated in the Constitution of the year VIII the name of the First Consul, Citizen Bonaparte; so that when it was submitted to the popular vote, it was as much a plebiscite on Bonaparte as a vote for a constitution. The votes on the life consulate in 1802 and on the establishment of the Empire in 1804 are mere sequels. By these popular votes democracy, or at least the principle that all authority is derived from the people, was to be triumphantly vindicated by the election of Napoleon to the post of supreme power in the state. In this way arose, in the modern world, the idea that one man might himself represent the will of the people, and be invested with all the authority of the most despotic ruler in the name of democracy. The idea of sovereignty, freed from all restraints, and transferred to the people, had at last given birth to the first modern dictatorship....

Napoleon came to power as a dictator from the right—not, of course, as a leader of the old reactionary party, but as a dictator supported by the propertied classes, the financiers and commercial men, the upper bourgeoisie, and speculators, who had made large fortunes out of the revolution and had bought up church or crown lands or the property of *émigrés* with worthless *assignats*.

Napoleon as Preserver of the Revolution

George Rudé

In recent years historians have become more reluctant to categorize Napoleon under any one label. Instead, they tend to interpret more judiciously his words and deeds, taking care to note that both were inconsistent and even contradictory at various times. This tendency among historians is exemplified in the following selection by the well-known British social historian George Rudé. Rudé, who has emphasized looking at history from the bottom up, sees Napoleon as sympathetic to and supportive of the revolution.

Consider: How Bruun and Cobban might reply to Rudé's interpretation; the ways in which this interpretation is supported or contradicted by the primary documents.

Napoleon himself believed that his work was a kind of crowning of the Revolution, and he was remarkably honest about his friendship with Robespierre's brother. He defended Robespierre from the charge of being bloodthirsty; he respected him as a man of probity. Napoleon would never have imagined that his own career could have flourished as it did without the surgery performed on French society by the Revolution. He was born in Corsica of poor, proud, petty-noble parents, and before the Revolution he could not possibly have risen above the rank of captain in the French army. Also, he had read Rousseau and sympathized with much of the Jacobin philosophy.

Napoleon had two different aspects. He believed in the overthrow of the old aristocracy of privilege; on the other hand, he believed in strong government—and he learned both of these beliefs from the Revolution. He was both an authoritarian and an egalitarian. Yet, admittedly little of this seems to fit the man who created a new aristocracy, who prided himself on being the son-in-law of Francis of Austria, referred to his late "brother" Louis XVI, and aspired to found a new imperial dynasty.

However, if we judge Napoleon on what he actually did and not only on those things that are usually remembered (despotism and foreign conquest), we must concede that his armies "liberalized" the constitutions of many European countries. They overthrew the aristocratic system in Italy and Germany, and even, to some extent, in Poland and Spain. A great many European liberals rallied to Napoleon's banners, particularly where French administration was at its best (as under Napoleon's brother Jerome in Westphalia). Napoleon's armies did bring many of the ideals of the Revolution to Europe: the basic ideas of the overthrow of aristocratic privilege, of a constitution, of the *Code Napoléon* (which was a codification of the laws of the French Revolution). In this sense Napoleon was a revolutionary. He turned his back on revolution to the extent that he was authoritarian and contemptuous of "the little man," but certain important accomplishments of the Revolution—peasant ownership of land free from feudal obligations, expropriation of the possessions of the Church and of the émigré nobility—were retained and even extended beyond France's borders. Napoleon was indeed a military despot, but he did not destroy the work of the Revolution; in a sense, in a wider European context, he rounded off its work.