

Events of the Revolution

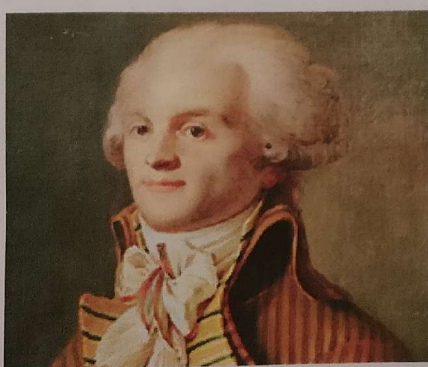
One of the first events of the Revolution was a meeting that nobility pressed Louis to call. The nobles wanted a meeting of the Estates-General, an assembly made up of the three estates, to approved new taxes on the Third Estate. Each of the three estates had always had only one vote in the Estates-General. Usually the First and Second Estates voted together, outvoting the Third Estate.

Inspired by ideas of the Enlightenment, members of the Third Estate wanted to change how the Estates General worked in France. They voted to create the National Assembly, which would pass laws in the name of the French people. The National Assembly effectively eliminated the monarchy and was the first real act of the revolution. That National Assembly was different from the Estates General because it gave the power to the majority group in France, instead of the nobility and members of the Church. The National Assembly reformed France by eliminating the Estates System and creating the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The declaration outlines the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity. A few days later, members of the third estate were locked out



of their meeting room. They broke down a door to the tennis court at the palace of Versailles. They vowed to stay until they had a new constitution. This became known as the Tennis Court Oath. Some Nobles and members of the Clergy who favored reform also joined the Third Estate delegates.

Rumors began to spread that King Louis XVI was going to use the army to stop the uprising. In response, the people of France began to gather weapons and gunpowder. On July 14th, 1789 a group of citizens stormed the Bastille, a prison that also served as a weapons stockpile. The fall of the bastille became a great symbolic act of Revolution. Before long, the rebellion spread, causing a wave a senseless panic called the Great Fear. They feared that the king would punish them and end the Revolution. Violence spread across France during the Great Fear and angry mobs forced Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI to return to Paris from Versailles. It was the last time that the King and his wife would see Versailles.



Other countries in Europe were fearful of the ideas of the French Revolution spreading to their own countries. Austria and Prussia wanted France to go back to an absolute monarchy. In July 1792, they issued a declaration warning against harming the French monarchs and hinting that any such action would provoke war. In response, the Legislative Assembly declared war. Due to their disarrayed army, however, France was defeated. In the chaos, National assembly's constitution was removed and a group called the Jacobins (radicals in France who wanted a Republic, not a Democracy), took control. The Jacobins were led by Maximilien Robespierre. Robespierre led as a dictator and used fear to

control the people of France. His rule became known as the Reign of Terror. Robespierre killed anyone who opposed his ideas. Approximately 40,000 people were killed during the Reign of Terror. Robespierre was also responsible for the execution of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.