

CHAPTER 59 : THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE NAPOLEONIC ERA

Many Frenchmen began to yearn for a revolution to overturn their own corrupt and despotic government, just as they perceived the American colonies had done. For years the French government promoted the cause of the American Revolution. And what could the French government now say against the United States model, having promoted its cause for so many years? It could not so readily demonize the secular humanist model of the United States as it had the Protestant model of bygone years. The French hero Lafayette had fought for it, and the French architect L'Enfant was busy designing its capital on property donated by America's most prominent Roman Catholic family. The United States embodied the Enlightenment ideals that so many in France yearned for.

Actually, the Enlightenment movement had been building for years in France. Its true antidote, Biblical Protestantism, had been thoroughly suppressed since 1685 when Louis XIV, the Sun King, revoked the Edict of Nantes. In the years that follow 1685 we become conscious of a dull, dead level of subservience, and conformity to the desperate will of a king so haughty that he would go on to declare: -

"The State, I am the State."

By his act, the great Protestant universities of Saumur, Montauban, Nimes and Sedan were suppressed and their professors fled to other lands, taking their learning with them. Bibles, hymnals and devotional books were burned, not merely under Louis XIV, but as late as 1727 his successor, Louis XV, was ordering that those who had been compelled to convert to Roman Catholicism, surrender all their books within fifteen days to be publicly burned. Libraries were put out of action, and all across France great bonfires were lit in towns and cities in which tens of thousands of valuable books, including Bibles, were destroyed. There were scarcely any Reformed Protestants in the towns, but the communities continued to exist in the country, often holding church services in the castles of Reformed nobility. From 1750 a reorganization of the Reformed Church began and synods were held, as suppression lessened.

Meanwhile the Roman Catholic Church in France had grown immensely rich and powerful by the property seized from the Protestants and by Royal gifts and grants. The papal clergy held one fifth of the landed property of France in their hands on the eve of the Revolution, and they still held many of the people in the same state of serfdom as did the aristocracy. Even the Roman Catholic writer Hilaire Belloc, on page 226 of his book on the French Revolution states: -

"The Bishops found nothing remarkable in seeing a large proportion of their body to be loose livers, or in some cases openly presenting their friends to their mistresses as might be done by any lay noble around them."

The late Mr. Hilaire Belloc M.P., himself a Roman Catholic, rightly stated in his book *"The French Revolution"* that: -

"It is impossible to understand the Revolution unless very high relief is given to the religious problem."

It was indeed the religious problem, which created the circumstances for Revolution. A people denied the Bible, turned to atheism. A nation from which the best and most industrious section of the population had either been slaughtered or driven into exile, was reduced to poverty and groaned under tyranny. The atheist Revolutionaries were to hold up to hatred and contempt the only form of Christianity permitted to exist in France, Roman Catholicism. Their cry was to be *"Ecrasez l'infame"* or *"Crush the Wretch"* as they sought the utter rejection and destruction of religion.

From 1758 - 1770 infidel, atheistic literature flooded into France. The circulation was enormous and was often printed on cheap paper and distributed in vast quantities among the lower classes. Amongst the writers of this material were such men as Rousseau, Didoret, D'Alembret, Condorcet, La Harpe, Boyle, Robinet, and the best known of all, Voltaire. This apostle of infidelity was born nine years after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and his brilliant yet ungodly teachings were to rush like a torrent into the void created the expulsion from France of the Gospel and the Huguenots who proclaimed it. For fifty years Voltaire was regarded as the leading intellectual in Europe, gaining the friendship of many of the crowned heads of Europe and such was his baneful influence that it has not ceased to this very day.

Like many other initiates of the secret societies of his era, Voltaire was not an open atheist, but rather a deist. He did subscribe to a belief in one Supreme Being, but to Voltaire, Christ was no better than Buddha or Mohammed. He exposed the gross corruption and superstition of Roman Catholicism, but he failed to recognize truth, and hence he put nothing in the place of that which he tore down. His concept of the Supreme Being quickly degenerated into the worship of the creature and his reason and intellect. The revolutionary leader Robespierre was later to declare: -

"If there be no God, we would invent one."

Those who followed Voltaire were not Deists, but for the most part Atheists. The infidel propaganda, which Voltaire poured forth for so many years, totally undermined all religion and moral standards, breeding a contempt for, and hostility to authority, and thus paving the road to Revolution. Just as the poisons within the body build up for a long time before bursting out in a boil or sore, so there were many years during which the poison of atheism, infidelity, godlessness and immorality was building up in France,

before the noisome sore burst in 1789. It is of interest to note that Voltaire once boasted to his friends: -

"It took twelve ignorant fishermen to establish Christianity, I will show the world how one Frenchman can destroy it."

But within thirty years of his death, his home was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and became a Bible storage building, whilst his infidel printing press was used to print an entire edition of the Bible.

A second important figure in the French Revolution was an evil genius named Adam Weishaupt. Weishaupt was born in 1748, in southern Germany, and is believed to have been of Jewish extraction. He was trained as a Jesuit and rose to occupy the chair of Canon Law at Ingolstadt University. In 1774 the Jesuit Order was suppressed by Pope Clement, because of its many crimes, and the complaints made against it by the monarchs of Europe, including the French King. However this fierce militaristic and highly secretive Order of Catholicism was not so easily disposed of. The Jesuits vowed to be avenged on the Pope and the French Monarchy and within a short space of time Clement died in suspicious circumstances, believed by many to have been a victim of poison.

On May 1st, 1776, Weishaupt officially brought into existence his secret revolutionary movement known as the Illuminati. Significantly, Communists and Socialists around the world still commemorate May 1st as Labor Day, and sadly this has now become a national public holiday in many places. The choice of name for his movement was by no means novel. Illuminism was being mentioned in Spain as far back as 1492, and some have traced its origins back to the Knights Templar, and the Gnostic cults of the early centuries of the Christian era. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, was himself arrested by the Spanish authorities in 1527 and questioned regarding his activities as an "Enlightened One" or member of the Illuminati. Weishaupt was described by the Nineteenth Century French Socialist, Louis Blanc, as being: -

"One of the profoundest conspirators who has ever existed."

Weishaupt joined forces with a Cabalistic Jew from Egypt named Kolmer and soon a network of Illuminati groups existed all over France. Shortly before the French Revolution broke out, the Marquis de Luchet wrote that the Illuminati were: -

"A subterranean fire smouldering eternally and breaking forth periodically in violent and devastating explosions."

"This society aims at governing the world. Its object is universal domination."

Marat, Robespierre, Danton, Desmoulins and many other Revolutionary leaders, were all Illuminati, and the bloodthirsty Jacobin Clubs, which played such a prominent part in the

Reign of Terror, based their network on the Illuminati. One of Weishaupt's affectionate titles was "*Patriarch of the Jacobins*." Every fundamental principle of the Illuminati may be traced through the French Revolution down to present day International Communism. Karl Marx, the grandson of a Jewish Rabbi and the recognized father of Communism, edited his teachings from the writings of Weishaupt, and the first Communist Manifesto published in 1848, the so-called Year of Revolutions, embodies within it the guiding ideals and spirit of Illuminism.

The situation in France heated up when French king Louis XVI faced a crisis in the royal finances. The French crown, which was fiscally one and the same as the French state, was deep in debt. During the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI several different ministers, most notably Turgot, unsuccessfully proposed to revise the French tax system to tax the nobles. Such measures encountered consistent resistance from the *parlements* (law courts), which the nobility dominated.

Because the need to raise taxes placed the king at odds with the established nobility, his finance ministers were typically, to use François Mignet's term, "rising men", usually of non-noble origin. Turgot, Chrétien de Malesherbes, and Jacques Necker successively attempted to revise the system of taxation and to make other reforms, such as Necker's attempts to reduce the lavishness of the king's court. Each was rebuffed in turn.

In contrast, Charles Alexandre de Calonne, appointed finance minister in 1783, restored lavish spending more reminiscent of the age of Louis XIV. By the time Calonne brought together an assembly of notables on February 22, 1787 to address the financial situation, France was as good as bankrupt: no one would lend the king funds sufficient to meet the expenses of government and court. According to Mignet, the loans amounted to "one thousand six hundred and forty-six millions... and... there was an annual deficit... of a hundred and forty millions [presumably of *livres*]." Calonne was succeeded by his chief critic Etienne Charles de Loménie de Brienne, archbishop of Sens, but the fundamental situation was unchanged: the government had no credit. To try to address this, the assembly "sanctioned the establishment of provincial assemblies, a regulation of the corn trade, the abolition of *corvées*, and a new stamp tax; it broke up on the 25th of May, 1787."

The subsequent struggle with the *parlements* in an unsuccessful attempt to enact these measures displayed the first overt signs of that the *ancien régime* was coming apart. In the ensuing struggle, Protestants were restored to their rights as full citizens, Louis XVI promised an annual publication of the state of finances, and Louis XVI promised to convoke the Estates-General within five years.

The *parlements* protested this as "ministerial tyranny." In response, several nobles, including Louis Philippe II, Duke of Orleans were banished, resulting in a further series of conflicting decrees by the king and the *parlements*. The conflict spilled out of the courts (and beyond the nobility) with disturbances in various provinces.

Despite the theory of *ancien régime* France as an absolute monarchy, it became clear that the royal government could not make the changes it desired without the consent of the nobility. The financial crisis had become a political crisis as well.

On July 13, 1787 parliament and the nobility had demanded that the king call the Estates-General; this had been seconded by the Estates of Dauphiné; on December 18, 1787, the king promised to call the Estates-General within five years; after Brienne's resignation on August 25, 1788, and with Necker back in charge of the nation's finances, the king, on August 8, 1788, agreed to convene the Estates-General in May 1789, for the first since 1614.

The prospect of an Estates-General highlighted the conflict of interest between the Second Estate (the nobility) and the Third Estate (in theory, all of the commoners; in practice the middle class or *bourgeoisie*). Society had changed since 1614. The First Estate (the clergy) and the Second Estate together represented only 2 percent of France's national population. The Third Estate, theoretically representing the other 98% of the French population and, in practice, representing an increasing proportion of the country's wealth, could still be outvoted by the other two Estates, which historically had often voted with each other. Many of this rising class nonetheless saw the calling of the Estates-General as a chance to gain power.

According to the model of 1614, the Estates-General would consist of equal numbers of representatives of each Estate. The Third Estate demanded double representation (which they already had in the provincial assemblies). This became a topic for pamphleteers, the most notable pamphlet being Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès "What is the Third Estate?" Necker, hoping to avoid conflict, convened a second assembly of notables on the November 6, 1788, but, to his chagrin, they rejected the notion of double representation. By calling the assembly, Necker had merely underlined the nobles' opposition to the inevitable policy.

A royal decree of November 27, 1788 announced that the Estates-General would amount to at least a thousand deputies; it also granted the double representation. Furthermore, mere priests (*curés*) could serve as deputies for the First Estate, and Protestants could be deputed to the Third Estate. According to Mignet, after reasonably honest elections, "the deputation of the nobility was comprised of two hundred and forty-two gentlemen, and twenty-eight members of the parliament; that of the clergy, of forty-eight archbishops or bishops, thirty-five abbés or deans, and two hundred and eight curés; and that of the communes, of two ecclesiastics, twelve noblemen, eighteen magistrates of towns, two hundred county members, two hundred and twelve barristers, sixteen physicians, and two hundred and sixteen merchants and agriculturists."

When the Estates-General convened in Versailles on May 5, 1789 amidst general festivities, many in the Third Estate initially viewed the double representation as a revolution already peacefully accomplished. However, with the etiquette of 1614 strictly enforced, the clergy and nobility in their full regalia, the physical locations of the

deputies from the three estates dictated by the protocol of an earlier era, there was an immediate hint that less had, in fact, been achieved.

When Louis XVI and Barentin (the Keeper of the Seals) addressed the deputies on May 6, the Third Estate discovered that royal decree granting double representation was something of a sham. Yes, they had more representatives than the other two Estates combined, but voting would be "by orders": the 578 representatives of the Third Estate, after deliberating, were to have their collective vote weighted exactly as heavily as that of each of the other Estates. The apparent intent of the king and of Barentin was for everyone to get directly to the matter of taxes. The larger representation of the Third Estate was only to be a symbol, while giving them no extra power. Necker was more sympathetic to the Third Estate, but on this occasion he spoke only about the fiscal situation, leaving it to Barentin to speak on how the Estates-General was to operate.

Trying to avoid the issue of representation and focus solely on taxes, the king and his ministers had gravely misjudged the situation. The Third Estate wanted the Estates to meet as one body and vote per deputy ("voting by poll" rather than "by orders"). The other two estates, while having their own grievances against royal absolutism, believed - correctly, as history was to prove - that they stood to lose more power to the Third Estate than they stood to gain from the king. The king's minister Necker sympathized with the Third Estate in this matter but the astute financier was a less astute politician. He decided to let the impasse play out to the point of stalemate before he would enter the fray. The result was that by the time the King yielded to the demand of the Third Estate, it seemed to all as a concession wrung from the monarchy, rather than a magnanimous gift that would have convinced the populace of the king's good will.

The impasse was immediate. The first order of business of the Estates-General was the verification of powers. Mirabeau, noble himself but elected to represent the Third Estate, tried but failed to keep the all three orders in a single room for this discussion. Instead of discussing the taxes of the king, the three estates began separately to discuss not taxes but the organization of the legislature. Shuttle diplomacy continued without success until May 27, 1789, when the nobles voted to stand firm for separate verification. The following day, Abbé Sieyès (a member of the clergy, but, like Mirabeau, elected to represent the Third Estate) moved that the Third Estate, which was now meeting as the *Communes* (Eng.: "Commons"), proceed with verification and invite the other two estates to take part, but not to wait for them.

On June 17, 1789, and with the failure of efforts to reconcile the three Estates, the *Communes* completed their own process of verification, thereby becoming the only Estate whose powers had been appropriately legalized. The *Communes* almost immediately voted a measure far more radical: they declared themselves to be the National Assembly, an assembly not of the Estates but of the People. They invited the other orders to join them, but made it clear that they intended to do the nation's business with or without them.

This newly constituted assembly immediately linked itself to the capitalists -- the sources of the credit needed to fund the national debt -- and to the common people. They consolidated the public debt and declared all existing taxes to have been previously illegally imposed, but voted in these same taxes provisionally, only as long as the Assembly continued to sit. This restored the confidence of capital and gave it a strong interest in keeping the Assembly in session. As for the common people, a committee of subsistence was established to deal with the food shortages.

Necker's previous plan of conciliation -- a complex scheme of giving in to the *Communes* on some points while holding firm on others -- had been bypassed by events. No longer interested in Necker's advice, Louis XVI, under the influence of the courtiers of his privy council, resolved to go in state to the Assembly, annul its decrees, command the separation of the orders, and dictate the reforms to be effected by the restored Estates-General.

It is (barely) imaginable that if Louis had simply marched into the Salle des États where the National Assembly was meeting, his plan might have succeeded. Instead, he remained at Marly and ordered the hall closed, expecting to prevent the Assembly from meeting for several days while he prepared. The Assembly simply moved their deliberations to the king's tennis court, where they proceeded to swear the Tennis Court Oath, under which they agreed not to separate until they had given France a constitution.

Two days later, deprived of use of the tennis court as well, the National Assembly met in the church of Saint Louis, where they were joined by the majority of the representatives of the clergy: efforts to restore the old order had served only to accelerate events. When, on June 23, 1789, in accord with his plan, the king finally addressed the representatives of all three estates, he was met with stony silence. He concluded by ordering all to disperse, and was obeyed by the nobles and clergy; the deputies of the common people remained seated in a silence that was finally broken by Mirabeau, whose short speech culminated, "A military force surrounds the assembly! Where are the enemies of the nation? Is Catiline at our gates? I demand, investing yourselves with your dignity, with your legislative power, you inclose yourselves within the religion of your oath. It does not permit you to separate till you have formed a constitution." The deputies stood firm.

Necker, conspicuous by his absence from the royal party on that day, found himself in disgrace with Louis, but back in the good graces of the National Assembly. Those of the clergy who had joined the Assembly at the church of Saint Louis remained in the Assembly; forty-seven members of the nobility, including the duke of Orleans, soon joined them; by June 27, the royal party had overtly given in, although the likelihood of a military counter-coup remained in the air. The French military began to arrive in large numbers around Paris and Versailles.

Messages of support poured into the Assembly from Paris and other French cities. On July 9, 1789 the Assembly, reconstituting itself as the National Constituent Assembly, addressed the king in polite but firm terms, requesting the removal of the troops (which now included foreign regiments, whose obedience to the king was far greater than was

the case for French troops), but Louis declared that he alone could judge the need for troops, and assured them that the troops were strictly a precautionary measure. Louis "offered" to move the assembly to Noyon or Soissons: that is to say, to place it between two armies and deprive it of the support of the Parisian people.

Paris was unanimous in its support for the assembly, close to insurrection, and, in Mignet's words, "intoxicated with liberty and enthusiasm." The press published the debates of the assembly; the political conversation spread beyond the Assembly itself into the public squares and halls of the capital. The Palais Royal and its grounds became the site of a continuous meeting. The crowd, on the authority of the meeting at the Palais Royal, broke open the prisons of the Abbaye to release some grenadiers of the French guards who had been imprisoned for refusing to fire on the people. The Assembly recommended them to the clemency of the king; they returned to prison, and received pardon. Their regiment now leaned toward the popular cause.

July 11, 1789, the king, acting under the influence of the conservative nobles of his privy council, banished Necker, and completely reconstructed the ministry. News of Necker's dismissal reached Paris the afternoon of Sunday, July 12, 1789, where it was generally presumed to be the start of a coup by conservative elements. Crowds gathered throughout the city, including more than ten thousand at the Palais Royal. Camille Desmoulins, according to Mignet, successfully rallied the crowd by "mount[ing] a table, pistol in hand, exclaiming: 'Citizens, there is no time to lose; the dismissal of Necker is the knell of a Saint Bartholomew for patriots! This very night all the Swiss and German battalions will leave the Champ de Mars to massacre us all; one resource is left; to take arms!'"

A growing crowd, brandishing busts of Necker and of the duke of Orleans, passed through the streets to the Place Vendôme, where they put a detachment of the Royal-allemand (the king's German soldiers) to flight by a shower of stones. At the Place Louis XV, the dragoons of the prince de Lambesc shot the bearer of one of the busts; a soldier was also killed. Lambesc and his soldiers ran rampant, attacking not only the demonstrators but anyone in their path.

The regiment of the French guard favorably disposed towards the popular cause had been confined to its barracks. With Paris becoming a general riot, de Lambesc, not trusting the regiment to obey this order, posted sixty dragoons to station themselves before its dépôt in the Chaussée-d'Antin. Once again, a measure intended to restrain only served to provoke. The French regiment routed their guard, killing two, wounding three, and putting the rest to flight. The rebellious citizenry had acquired a trained military contingent; as word of this spread, even the foreign troops refused to fight in what looked to be a civil war with a divided military.

The rebels gathered in and around the Hôtel de Ville and sounded the tocsin. Distrust between the leading citizens gathered within the building and the masses outside was exacerbated by the failure or inability of the former to provide the latter with arms. Between political insurrection and opportunistic looting, Paris was a chaos. In

Versailles, the Assembly stood firm, and went into continuous session so that it could not, once again, be stealthily deprived of its meeting space.

The storming of the Bastille prison on July 14th, 1789, is commemorated today as Bastille Day. The insurgents invaded the Hôtel des Invalides to gather arms, and after four hours of combat, seized the Bastille. Although only seven prisoners were released -- four forgers, two lunatics, and a dangerous sexual offender -- it became a potent symbol of all that was hated of the *ancien régime*. Returning to the Hôtel de Ville, the mob accused *prévôt des marchands* (roughly, mayor) Jacques de Flesselles of treachery; on route to an ostensible trial at the Palais Royal, he was assassinated.

After this violence, nobles started to flee the country. Initially, the Assembly announced (and for the most part probably believed) itself to be operating in the interests of the king as well as the people. In theory, royal authority still prevailed and the king's consent continued to be part of the process of adopting new laws.

August 4, 1789 the Assembly abolished feudalism, abolishing both the seigneurial rights of the Second Estate and the tithes gathered by the First Estate. They published the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Laws passed November 2, 1789, February 13, 1790 and April 19, 1790 confiscated Roman Catholic Church lands on behalf of the State. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was passed July 12, 1790 and signed by the king December 26, 1790, turning the remaining clergy into employees of the State and requiring that they take an oath of loyalty to the constitution. New paper money was introduced in that same year, causing high inflation.

The King tried to flee in June 1791 to join the nobles in exile, but his flight to Varennes did not succeed. He reluctantly accepted the new constitution in September 1791, which made France a constitutional monarchy. The king had to share power with the elected Legislative Assembly (successor to the National Assembly), but he still retained his royal veto and the ability to pick ministers.

New factions emerged such as the Feuillants (constitutional monarchists), Girondins (liberal republicans) and Jacobins (radical revolutionaries). The King, the Feuillants and the Girondins wanted to wage war. The King wanted war to become popular or be defeated: either would make him stronger. The Girondins wanted to export the Revolution through Europe. France declared war on Austria, and Prussia joined on the Austrian side a few weeks later. The French Revolutionary Wars had begun, leading to death and horror throughout much of continental Europe. The Franco-Prussian Battle of Valmy (September 20, 1792) was the first significant military engagement of the French Revolutionary Wars. Although heavy rain prevented a conclusive resolution, the superiority of French artillery was evident.

Nonetheless, fighting soon went badly and prices rose sky-high. In August 1792 a mob assaulted the Royal Palace in Paris and arrested the King. On September 21, 1792, monarchy was abolished and a republic declared. The French Revolutionary Calendar commenced. The legislative power in the new republic was vested in the National

Convention, while the executive power was vested in the Committee of Public Safety. The Girondins became the most influential party in the Convention and on the Committee.

On January 21, 1793 King Louis was condemned to death for "conspiracy against the public liberty and the general safety" by a 1-vote Convention majority of 361 to 360. The execution caused more wars with European countries.

When war went badly, prices rose and the sans-culottes (poor laborers and radical Jacobins) rioted; counter-revolutionary activities began in some regions. This caused the Jacobins to seize power through a parliamentary coup.

The Revolutionaries were so incited to remove all vestiges of Christianity in the nation that they devised and implemented a French Revolutionary Calendar. It was in use by the French government for 13 years from 1793. The calendar was adopted by the Jacobin-controlled National Convention on October 24, 1793. Years appear in writing as Roman numerals, counted from the beginning of the 'Republican Era', beginning on September 22, 1792 (the date of the official abolition of the monarchy and the nobility in France). As a result the calendar began a year before it was actually adopted. The calendar also did away with a 7-day week (which is based on the Creation week), and replaced it with a 10-day week.

The Committee of Public Safety came under the control of Maximilien Robespierre. The Jacobins unleashed the Reign of Terror (1793-1794). At least 1200 people met their deaths under the guillotine after accusations of counter-revolutionary activities. The slightest hint of counter-revolutionary thoughts or activities could place one under suspicion, and the trials were not over-scrupulous. It has been estimated that during the French Revolution some 1,240,000 people perished, of whom 900,000 were men, 250,000 women and 90,000 children. Amongst the victims were some 24,000 Roman Catholic clergy. Many of these deaths occurred during the Reign of Terror. In Thomas Carlyle's work "The French Revolution", we read of the fate of some of the victims as follows:

"And still the prison fills fuller, and still the guillotine goes faster. On all the high roads march flights of prisoners wending towards Paris...chained two and two they march...they rest by night in unutterable noisome dens, crowded to choking, one or two dead in the morning. Some 400 priests of whom also there is a record ride at anchor on the roads of the Isle of Aix...ragged, sordid, hungry, wasted to shadows, eating their unclean ration...choked in horrible miasma."

Let us read some other accounts of the Reign of Terror as given by Archibald Alison in his work "The History of Europe during the French Revolution."

"The massacre of priests was but the prelude to a general massacre at the Abbaye, the horrors of which exceeded anything hitherto witnessed in the Revolution. Wearied at length with the labour of hewing down so many victims, they fell upon the plan of instituting a mock tribunal with the murderer, Maillard, for its president. The priests were removed to the prison of the Abbaye amidst the yells and execrations of the mob, and no sooner had they arrived than they were surrounded by a furious multitude, headed by Maillard, armed with spears and sabres...after going through a form of trial they turned them out to be massacred by the maddened people who thronged the prison doors, clamoring for their share in the work of extermination. The cries of these victims who were led out to be hewn to pieces by the multitude, first drew the attention of the prisoners in the cells to the fate which awaited themselves...The forms of justice were prostituted to the most inhuman massacre. Torn from their dungeons, the prisoners were hurried before a tribunal where the President Maillard sat by torchlight with a drawn sabre before him and his robes drenched with blood; officials with drawn swords, and shirts stained in gore, surrounded the chair. A few minutes, often seconds, disposed of the fate of each victim. Dragged from the pretended judgement-hall, they were turned out to the populace, who thronged around the doors, armed with sabres, panting for slaughter...no executioners were required, the people dispatched the condemned with their own hands...in the upper chambers of the building the other prisoners endured the agony of witnessing the prolonged sufferings of their comrades; a dreadful thirst added to their tortures and the inhuman jailers refused even a draught of water."

Similar scenes were being enacted all over France during this Terror. Alison states again:

"At Lyons the scaffold opposite the Hotel de Ville, where the trials were conducted, was kept in ceaseless employment. Around its bloody foundations large quantities of water were daily poured, but they were inadequate to wash away the ensanguined stains or remove the fetid odour...at length a guillotine was placed in the middle of the bridge at Morand in the centre of the Rhone, into which the stream of blood at once fell, and into which the headless trunks and severed heads were precipitated."

Describing what became known as the Noyades, he states:

"At Nantes, a Revolutionary tribunal was formed under the direction of Carrier...their principle was that it was necessary to destroy en masse all the victims. Boats were loaded with victims and taken out into the river and sunk with all on board. Couples were tied together and thrown into the River Loire and drowned. These were termed Republican Marriages and Baptisms...on one occasion a hundred priests were stripped of their clothes and precipitated into the waves...women big with child, children eight, nine and ten years of age were thrown together into the stream...the reason given was that they were little wolflings who would grow into wolves...the Noyades or drowning en masse at Nantes amounted to twenty-five, on each of which occasions up to one hundred and fifty

people drowned. Such was the quantity of corpses accumulated in the Loire, that the water of the river was so infected as to render a public ordinance necessary forbidding use of it by the inhabitants...birds of prey flocked to the shores and fed on human flesh, while the very fish became poisonous. From Saumur to Nantes...sixty miles, the Loire was for several weeks dyed red with human blood. The multitude of corpses it bore to the ocean was so prodigious that the adjacent coast was strewn with them."

Initially, those, who fell victims to the Guillotine, were the aristocrats, the clergy and the members of the Royal Family, as in the painting in the previous section, which depicts the execution of Queen Marie-Antoinette and the one in this section depicting the earlier execution of her husband, King Louis XVI. This comes as no surprise as the noisome sore was to afflict the upholders of the Papal Beast System. The Roman priesthood and hierarchy had incited the persecution of the Huguenots, and the aristocracy had enforced it at the behest of the Royal Family. When Louis XVI and his Queen Marie-Antoinette met their fate at the hands of the Revolutionaries, they were representative of the two European Monarchies most responsible for the Counter-Reformation and the slaughter of Protestants. The French Royal Family had initiated the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the Dragonnades. Persecution had continued right up to the 1760's and between 1750 and 1762, fifty-eight persons were sent to the galleys for their Protestant faith. In 1759 Marguerite Robert was arrested and condemned in the diocese of Uzes for having been married to Joseph Vincent by a Protestant minister.

Marie-Antoinette, daughter of the Empress Marie Theresa of Austria, was a Hapsburg. This Royal Family, both in its Spanish and Austrian branches, had been responsible for the most inhuman barbarities against the Protestants of Bohemia and the Netherlands. Whilst many of those who perished by the guillotine may have been relatively innocent, there can be no doubt they were suffering for the sins of their fathers.

As the Revolution took its course, the horrible work of destruction afflicted all classes of society. Lists of the Revolutionary tribunals show tailors, hairdressers, butchers, farmers and laborers amongst the victims. Anyone could be accused of counter Revolutionary activity, especially if they had land, money, property or a business to be confiscated. The French Revolution was the example and forerunner of all future Communist Revolutions, and the bloody events of the Reign of Terror have had their counterparts in Russia, China, Hungary and Cambodia, to name but a few places. It was little wonder that Madame Roland declared: -

"O Liberty, what crimes are committed in your name."

The streets of Paris, which had been dyed red with the blood of the innocent Protestants, now witnessed the slaughter of their persecutors. Thousands died by the Guillotine, others were roasted in ovens as the Huguenots had been, and others were tied together and thrown into the River Seine. The aristocrats and Roman Catholic Clergy, even the King and Queen were taken to their death in the tumbrels, even as the Huguenots, loaded with chains, had been paraded through the streets in carts. The last act of the deposed Louis XVI was his attempt to speak a few words to his subjects before his execution. His

voice was drowned out by the beating of drums - exactly what had taken place at the martyrdom of the Huguenot Pastor Fulcan Rey years before. The Roman Catholic clergy, who had been responsible for the awful fate of the Huguenots, now suffered in identical ways. Many were guillotined, others were sent in chains as prisoners to Rochelle and the Isle of Aix. As a group of priests stood in chains at Limoges, they were compelled to watch a procession of asses in vestments led by a pig wearing a mitre. Many Roman Catholic clergy died along the very roads that once their Huguenot victims had been forced to march. The Revolutionaries converted the Cathedral of Notre Dame into a Temple of Reason and a prostitute was there enthroned as Goddess of Reason. The crucifix was burned, the consecrated hosts, Rome's wafer gods, were trampled underfoot and a donkey was made to drink from the chalice. Events in Paris were re-enacted all over France, the districts, which had witnessed the Dragonnades of the Protestants, now witnessed the Noyades of the Royalists. Nantes, where the famous Edict of Toleration, later revoked, had been granted, saw some of the worst massacres. It is said that the guillotine was worked until the headsman sank exhausted, and then mass butchery took place. Areas, which had been prosperous in the days of the Huguenots, were reduced to ruin and starvation.

Even many of the partisans of the French Revolution grew weary of the carnage. In 1794 Robespierre had ultraradicals and moderate Jacobins executed, so eliminating popular support. On July 27, 1794, the French people revolted against the excesses of the Reign of Terror in what had become known as the Thermidorian Reaction. It resulted in Robespierre and several other leading members of the Committee of Public Safety being deposed and executed by moderate Convention members. The new Constitution of the Year III was voted by the Convention August 17, 1795 and ratified by plebiscite in September, taking effect September 26, 1795.

The years 1789-1794 had not only taken a toll on Roman Catholic leadership, but also on Protestant leadership. From the 205 pastors of the time before 1789, there were only 120 left in 1794 when the reconstruction of the Reformed Church was undertaken. Yet despite the oppression of these years, by 1798 the Reformed Church in France had still grown to almost a million members.

The new constitution installed the *Directoire* and created the first bicameral legislature in French history, paralleling the Congress in the United States. The parliament, consisted of 500 representatives (the *Conseil des Cinq-Cent*) and 250 senators (the *Conseil des Anciens*). Executive power was vested in five "directors" who were annually named by the *Conseil des Anciens* from a list submitted by the *Conseil des Cinq-Cent*.

The new regime met with opposition from remaining Jacobins and royalists. Riots and counter-revolutionary activities were suppressed by the army. In this way the army and its successful general, Napoleon Bonaparte, gained much power.

On November 9, 1799 (18 Brumaire of the Year VIII, according to the French Revolutionary Calendar), Napoleon staged the coup which installed the Consulate; this effectively led to his dictatorship and eventually to his proclamation as emperor, which

brought to a close the specifically republican phase of the French Revolution. Napoléon functioned as effective ruler of France beginning in 1799 and as emperor of France as Napoléon I from May 18, 1804 to April 6, 1814; he also conquered and ruled over much of western and central Europe. He was the first ruler of the Bonaparte dynasty. Napoleon was one of the so-called "enlightened monarchs" – despots of the time who were influenced by the Enlightenment movement.

A coalition against France formed in Europe, the royalists rose again, and Napoléon abandoned his troops and returned to Paris in 1799; in November of that year, a *coup d'état* made him the ruler and military dictator ("First Consul") of France. According to the French Revolutionary Calendar, the date was 18 Brumaire.

Napoléon instituted several lasting reforms in the educational, judicial, financial and administrative system. His set of civil laws, the Napoleonic Code or Civil Code, has importance to this day in many countries. The Code was largely the work of Jean Jacques Régis de Cambacérès, who held the office Second Consul under Bonaparte from 1799 to 1804.

The accession of Napoleon I in 1799 also meant major changes for the Reformed Church of France. Although Napoleon granted the Protestants the right of existence, he simultaneously opposed the independence of the Church. No national synods were planned. The Church was divided up by the French State into districts – 80 consistorial churches, each with about 6000 members. This had the consequence that many formerly independent parishes were integrated into larger units, for local parishes were not recognized legally. The pastors were paid by the state and conversions were not allowed. The state regulated the church life. But the most devastating aspect of these years on the Reformed Church were heresies which crept in and held sway in many of the churches. These were generally errors common to the Enlightenment era.

Napoléon was also a dictator and military adventurer, who cost France and her allies millions of lives. In the end, all the Napoleonic Empire Wars did not gain any territory for France. In 1800, Napoléon attacked and defeated Austria again; afterwards, the British also signed a peace treaty.

In 1802, Napoléon sold a large part of northern America to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase; he had just faced a major military setback when his army sent to conquer Santo Domingo and establish a base in the western world was destroyed by a combination of yellow fever and fierce resistance led by Toussaint L'Ouverture. With his western forces diminished, Napoléon knew he would be unable to defend Louisiana and decided to sell it.

After Napoléon had enlarged his influence to Switzerland and Germany, a dispute over Malta provided the pretext for Britain to declare war on France in 1803 and support French royalists who opposed Napoléon. Napoléon, however, crowned himself Emperor on December 2, 1804. Claims that he seized the crown out of the hands of Pope Pius VII during the ceremony in order to avoid subjecting himself to the authority of the Pontiff

are apocryphal; after the Imperial regalia had been blessed by the Pope, Napoléon crowned himself before crowning his wife Josephine as Empress. Then at Milan's cathedral on May 26, 1805, Napoléon was crowned King of Italy.

At this time too the French Revolutionary Calendar was abolished by Napoléon. The calendar was abolished because the Catholic church strongly opposed it as an attempt to rid the calendar of all Christian influences; because having a ten-day work week gave workers less rest (one day off every ten instead of one day off every seven); because the equinox was a mobile date to start every new year (a fantastic source of confusion for almost everybody); and because it was incompatible with the secular rhythms of trade fairs and agricultural markets.

A plan by the French, along with the Spanish, to defeat the British Royal Navy failed dramatically at the Battle of Trafalgar, and Britain gained lasting control of the seas.

By 1805 the Third Coalition against Napoléon had formed in Europe; Napoléon attacked and secured a major victory against Austria and Russia at Austerlitz and, in the following year, humbled Prussia at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt. As a result, Napoléon became the *de facto* ruler over most of Germany. Napoléon marched on through Poland and then signed a treaty with the Russian tsar Alexander I, dividing Europe between the two powers. In the French part of Poland, he established the restored Polish state of Grand Duchy de Varsovie with the Saxonian King as a ruler.

Then on May 17, 1809 Napoléon ordered the annexation of the Papal States to the French empire.

Napoléon attempted to enforce a Europe-wide commercial boycott of Britain called the "Continental System". He invaded Spain and installed his brother Joseph Bonaparte as king there. The Spanish rose in revolt, which Napoléon was unable to suppress. The British invaded Spain through Portugal in 1808 and, with the aid of the Spanish nationalists, slowly drove out the French. While France was engaged in Spain, Austria attacked in Germany, but after initial success suffered defeat at the Battle of Wagram.

Alexander I of Russia had become distrustful of Napoléon and refused to co-operate with him against the British. Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812. Napoleon didn't take into account the advice of Poles, who predicted long-term war instead of quick victorious campaign. They proposed to gradually retrieve former Polish areas from the Russian hands and build there the base for the further war. As Poles predicted, the Russians under Kutuzov retreated instead of giving battle. Outside of Moscow on 12 September, the Battle of Borodino took place. The Russians retreated and Napoléon was able to enter Moscow, assuming that Alexander I would negotiate peace. Moscow began to burn and within the month, fearing loss of control in France, Napoléon left Moscow. The French Grand Army suffered greatly in the course of a ruinous retreat; the Army had begun as over 500,000 men, almost half of it was Polish, but in the end fewer than 10,000 crossed the Berezina River (November 1812) to escape. Encouraged by this dramatic reversal, several nations again took up arms against France. The decisive defeat

of the French came at the Battle of Leipzig, also called "The Battle of the Nations" (October 1813).

In 1814 Great Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria formed an alliance against Napoléon. Although the defense of France included many battles which the French won, the pressure became overwhelming. Paris was occupied on 31 March 1814. The marshals asked Napoléon to abdicate, and he did so on April 6 in favor of his son. The Allies, however demanded unconditional surrender and Napoléon abdicated again, unconditionally, on April 11. In the Treaty of Fontainebleau the victors exiled the Corsican to Elba, a small island in the Mediterranean 20 km off the coast of Italy. They let him keep the title of "Emperor" but restricted his empire to that tiny island.

Napoléon tried to poison himself and failed; on the voyage to Elba he was almost assassinated. In France, the royalists had taken over and restored King Louis XVIII to power. On Elba, Napoléon became concerned about his wife and, more especially, his son, in the hands of the Austrians; the French government refused to pay his allowance and he heard rumors that he was about to be banished to a remote island in the Atlantic. Napoléon escaped from Elba on February 26, 1815 and returned to the mainland on March 1, 1815. The French armies sent to stop him received him as leader. He arrived in Paris on March 20 with a regular army of 140,000 and a volunteer force of around 200,000 and governed for the Hundred Days.

Napoléon's final defeat came at the hands of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington and of Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher at the Battle of Waterloo in present-day Belgium on 18 June 1815. Off the port of Rochefort, Napoléon made his formal surrender.

One lasting effect of the Revolution in France was French secularism. Secularism in France took a more militant form than in America, in reaction against the abuses of Roman Catholicism. In both places it became the *de facto* state religion, but for very different reasons and in very different ways. In America it became the undeclared state religion as a way to deal with religious differences; whereas in France it was more explicit, and instituted ostensibly to suppress religious "bigotry". French Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire, Diderot and Montesquieu regarded religion as divisive, benighted and intolerant. Church assets were confiscated and Romish priests made to swear allegiance to the republic. Both during the Revolution and its imperial aftermath the Vatican resisted the republican order Paris was trying to impose across Europe. The French responded by marching on Rome twice - in 1798 and 1809 - and abducting recalcitrant Popes. Napoleon Bonaparte reached a peace of sorts with the Roman Catholic Church, which was brought under state tutelage - but left alone as long as it confined itself to spiritual matters. The arrangement, known as a Concordat, lasted a century. The Concordat system allowed Roman Catholic clergy to receive government salaries in exchange for not insisting on political power. In 1905, amid renewed anti-clerical militancy, the Third Republic decreed the complete disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church. Only in the eastern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine - which were German when the Roman Catholic Church was weaned off the state in 1905 - kept the Concordat system which allows clergy to receive government salaries. French

progressives have seen the pulpit as an enemy, whereas in America it was viewed far more benignly, even by most progressives.

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