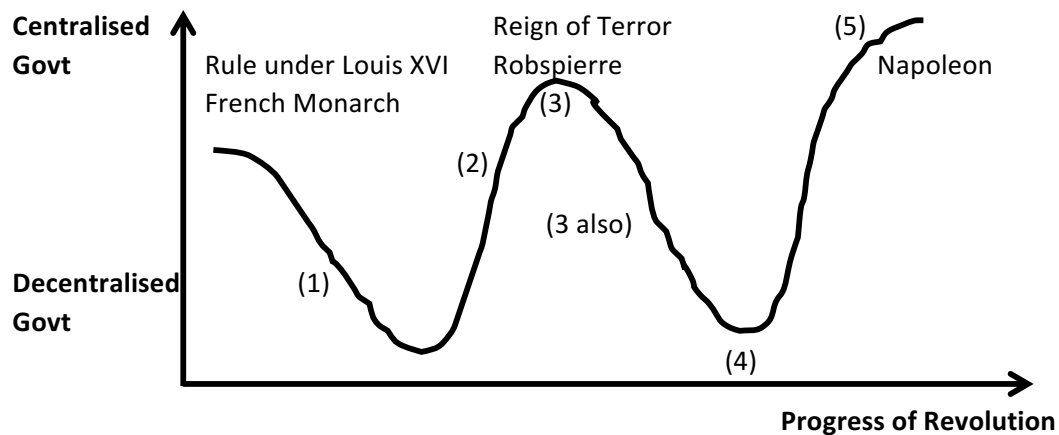


History Notes: French Revolution (Key events and the timeline of events)

Timeline:



(1): French monarch losing power

- Initially centralization of rule under King Louis XVI (French Monarch).
- From the incident in which the King needs to request permission from the Estates-General, which is seen as the representative of the people of France, we can thus see that the King cannot rule independently of his people.
- Also with the formation of the National Assembly + Regional administrative units to rule, this was the decentralization of rule. Eventually revolution breaks out.

(2): Suppressing the Counter Revolution

- Who is the head of the counter-revolution? Obviously the King (Louis XVI)
 - Originally, the National Assembly and the people wanted to work together with the King to carry out social reform and help make France a Constitution.
 - His failed attempt to escape into Austria was seen as the betrayal of the King towards his people and towards the National Assembly, and towards his commitment of making France a Constitution.
- The people and the National Assembly wanted a constitution, which was not widely accepted in Europe at the time. This led to the counter-revolution. Yet for the revolution to succeed, we need to have greater power granted to an individual, and to centralize government for more change to be able to take place, which is why the government becomes more centralized in this period of time.
 - Other monarchs started to help Louis XVI to re-attain his lost power.
 - This was because if the revolution in France succeeded with the universal values of **freedom, equality and fraternity**, the other monarchs will start to crumble as well
 - Louis' wife, who was an Austrian, collaborated with the other monarchs, such as Austria and Prussia, to wage war against France, in an effort to restore King Louis XVI to the throne.
 - Outbreak of the counter-revolution. Within the country and outside the country, there were wars being fought (civil wars and the French Revolutionary Wars) to protect the revolution.
 - Internal Division

- Parisian priests agreed that state should have higher priority over God
- Priests in other parts of France disagreed, and remained deeply religious.
- External War
 - French Revolutionary Army fighting against Prussia and Austria, losing most of the battles

(3): Maximillien Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety (CPS)

- Robespierre thought that the revolution was losing was because there were enemies everywhere, including within the country itself, so his logic was to use terror to suppress these people. This escalated to the point where his period of reign was termed as "The Terror". This was the consolidation of all power, and allowed Robespierre to be essentially the dictator of France (peak of (3))
 - Turns out that under this period of dictatorship, Robespierre manage to win wars
 - The counter-revolutionary activities also stopped, and this in combination with the winning of battles allowed Robespierre to think that terror was a suitable way to ensure the revolution kept going on.
 - It came to the point that even if you were not enthusiastic enough about the revolution, you could be suspected of not supporting the revolution and might lose your head.
 - He ended up persecuting those who helped him gain power
 - So they turned on him and he lost his head (executed)
 - More decentralization of the government
- White Terror (Revenge By Nobles)
 - **<Insert Research>**

(4): Different Legitimacies to Rule

- There were 3 Constitutions rewritten in 5 years, around 1799
 - Thus rule was not seen as legitimate through law and constitution
 - However has military power will then assume leadership, and this is the new form of legitimacy which is present in the French Revolution after Robespierre's Reign of Terror ended
- The Directory (Government) wanted to get Napoleon back, because the way he defeated the Austrians
 - He caught the Austrian army by surprise, travelled through mountains to reach Vienna which did not have any troops in it
 - This was **considered a brilliant success**, and Napoleon was seen as a hero of the French Revolution.
 - However, we must note that his major victories mostly came from fighting the Austrians and not the Prussians

(5): Napoleon

- Napoleon, through force, appointed himself First Consul of France (essentially a dictatorship, based on the roman system) by outwitting the Directory (since he held the power) and wanted to be crowned by the people and not through divine rights.

Conclusion:

- Revolutions depend largely on circumstance
 - Too much radical change can cause the perspective that enough change has occurred and since times are not good, a new alternative should be used
 - Internal/External Challenges to authority plays an important role in decentralizing or centralizing the government's rule
 - Fight to control armed forces (if law does not work as a form of legitimacy to rule)
 - Loyalties suspected (siding with certain groups of people)
 - E.g. National Guards were suspected of siding with the middle class
 - Poor working class had the revolutionary fervor and pushed the revolution forward
 - They demanded for food, and pressured for laws to reduce and limit the prices of bread (as a basic necessity)
- Poor economy
 - Most of the producers had stopped production and gone to fight the French Revolutionary Wars
 - Start to requisition (since the government can't pay)
 - <Insert what this actually means>
 - There isn't a booming economy at full employment rate but instead a hyperinflation (mismanagement of money, since the money was printed in excess), and the currency value thus dropped and by the time Napoleon came to power, the currency was practically worthless.
 - Confiscation of properties from the Church and the privileged classes (nobles and clergy) by the principle that the properties belonged to the state and the state can reclaim it
 - The land was sold to the peasants, but since they became in debt, the peasants soon realized that it was best if they sold the land, and they ended up selling the land back to the nobles.
 - This decrease in pressure of land delayed the Agricultural Revolution in France, which in turned slowed down the process of industrialization in exchange for achieving a political purpose to satisfy peasants who were unhappy about the way land was distributed and since they had insufficient land to farm
 - Estimated setback of 15 years in industrialization. We also have to bear in mind that this was also around the period of time in which Britain had exponential increase in industrialization (late 1790s, early 1800s)
- Societal Impact
 - All divisions in society surfaces
 - E.g. middle-working class tension, religious differences, nobles versus the peasants
 - The Great Fear (peasant revolts) [this was about at (1) in the graph as shown above]
 - As the name suggests, after the National Assembly and the Estates General incident took place, the peasants and 3rd class were afraid that the King was starting to gather an army to plot a counter-

revolution (needed grain which could be obtained from the third class through social obligations)

- In reaction they burnt down many nobles' houses which contained the documents which described their obligations, and by doing so they have essentially erased their binding from society as a third class
- Religion (Cause of division)
 - Disagreement between priests outside Paris and priests from Paris
- White Terror
 - Basically, this was the period in which there was a clear division between those who wanted a constitution and those who wanted a monarchy (who tended to be nobles)
- Paris Commune
 - Instructions from Paris
 - Disliked by other administrations
- Restructuring society
 - Army generals now selected based on merit, leading to better generals for the French Revolution
- Church
 - In the end Napoleon brought back the Church and it still remained a separate identity from the state despite previous attempts at subsuming it under the state
- Thus the need for arm forces to restore peace and ensure the population does not revolt and protest due to these inequalities, and that they are settled in a different less harmful way (essentially restores peace and stability)

We also see that in the political revolutions there are fundamental changes in the political foundations in that now sovereignty is obtained from the people and not by divine right, and in social foundations in terms of the social hierarchy. Also there are intellectual changes and developments, such as the concept of universal values of equality, freedom and fraternity, which was antagonized by other countries base on monarchs.