

Notes on Thermidor and Napoleon

1) **Review:**

- a) Know the competing agendas and how they destabilize France
- b) Know what is done by the Jacobins to "save" France.
- c) Develop your own opinion on the Revolution and if it was worth it.

2) **What were the accomplishments of the Jacobin period of the revolution, if any. Abbe Sieyes' words: "I survived."**

a) **Political Accomplishments**

- i) It preserves and actually expands France's borders.
- ii) Creates the world's largest and first ever popular army, an **"army of the people."**
- iii) Rationalized government
- iv) Ended centrifugal tendencies
- v) Invented or tapped patriotism and nationalism.
 - (1) The Idea of fighting for the "La Patrie" "The Nation"
 - (a) Before you fought for your King or Queen.

b) **Social Accomplishments**

- i) Created universal manhood suffrage
- ii) State programs for the poor.
- iii) Eliminated all distinctions in society.
- iv) Repealed primogeniture
- v) "Leveled" society - explain.
- vi) Abolishes slavery
- vii) Prohibited imprisonment for debt
- viii) Established metric system

c) **Long-range impact of the Revolution**

- i) Infects all of Europe and eventually the world with "liberalism."
- ii) Revolutionary ideals are put into practice and France serves as the shining example of what can be done. The ideals spread among the lower classes especially in England and Ireland.
- iii) Explain United Irishmen
- iv) Worker groups in England support of the French Revolution**
- v) SWEPT THE OLD REGIME AWAY AND STARTED EUROPE AND THE WORLD, or so we thought, the PATH TO LIBERAL DEMOCRACY.**
 - (1) Key Issue that you need to keep in mind: This begins the process of the democratization of the world and also we will see continuing conflict between the Landed aristocracy and the rising urban and industrial World.

vi) Negative

- (1) Not even counting the wars during the Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars there was incredible loss of life:
- (2) It is estimated that between 25,000-30,000 were executed during the Terror and another 500,000 imprisoned.
- (3) This was only between Sept. 1793 to July 1794.
- (4) Economic retardation. - explain how the leveling of the radical period held back economic development.
- (5) Served as an example for the totalitarian dictatorships of the twentieth century.

3) **Significance**

- a) The old Regime is swept away and the "new world" you live in begins the process of being born.
- b) The slogans and example of the French Revolution still echo today in revolutions.
 - i) Liberty, Equality and Fraternity
- c) The problems created by the French Revolution are still with us today.
 - i) Deal with how it represents, during the Jacobin phase, the rise of the masses.
 - (1) Remember they were the ones- the Sans Culottes - who pushed the radical phase on.
 - (2) What we will see in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

4) **Stage-3 of the French Revolution - "THERMIDOREAN REACTION"**

- a) 9th of Thermidor (July 27, 1794) Robespierre is arrested and executed and the radical phase is ended. Executed the next day.
- b) This is a very Moderate phase of the Revolution. Much of what the Jacobins did was undone.

5) **What happens in this phase:**

- a) Royalist emigres returned.
- b) Law on maximum prices repealed.
- c) Law on suspects repealed.
 - i) **In 1795 Adopts a new constitution.**
 - (1) Universal male suffrage for those who could read and write.
 - (2) Indirect elections.
- d) It is a guarantee of the victory of the prosperous classes - **The middle and upper classes.**
- e) Government is known as the "Directory."

6) Key point for those in power at this time - they believed that:

- a) **"It is upon the maintenance of property. . .that the whole social order rests."**

7) **However, it was a period of instability.** Although it did

bring an end to the terror, it still had to fight wars and battle against threats from the left and the right.

- 8) **There were those on the left** like Gracchus Babeuf who argued for the abolition of private property.
 - a) He and his followers were very communistic and hated the new bourgeoisie.
 - b) Naturally he was arrested, executed as were many of his supporters.
 - i) Many others were imprisoned and/or exiled.
 - c) On the right the monarchists who tried to reestablish a monarchy or a constitutional monarchy.
 - i) They were implacable enemies of the Republic in any form.
 - ii) This threat from the **"Old Order"** and their desire to dominate France again would surface throughout the 19th and early 20th Centuries

- 9) **Finally this instability was too much for many people.**
 - a) Bonaparte, a war hero in Egypt and throughout Europe and by no means no modest soul, decided to leave his army and return to save France.
- 10) In Paris, he joined a conspiracy against the government.
 - a) In the coup d'etat of November 9-10, 1799 (18-19 Brumaire), he and his colleagues seized power and established a new regime—the Consulate.
 - b) Napoleon became "First consul," with almost dictatorial powers.
 - i) The constitution was then revised in 1802 to make Bonaparte **consul for life**
 - ii) Then in 1804 he made himself Emperor.

- 11) **The Age of Napoleon**
 - a) He is the perfect example as a product of the revolution.
 - i) Why?
 - (1) He has risen on his Merit.
 - b) **Who is he?**
 - i) He is the son of a minor aristocrat from Corsica and he rises through the ranks on his merit and abilities to the rank of Brigadier General. This could not have happened before the Revolution. He is a hero and a great motivator.
 - ii) He led to the forces of France to victory between 1796-1798 over Austria and Italy.
 - c) Between 1799-1804 he rules as "First Consul,"
 - i) This hearkens back to the Roman Republic.
 - (1) This has been the model for the French Revolution throughout.
 - d) **What does he do?**
 - i) **In this period he institutes many reforms.**
 - (1) Reinforced centralization of the government that began under the Jacobins

- (2) Created an orderly and rational system of collecting taxes.
- (3) This made it much easier to budget for the wars.
- (4) Institutes the Napoleonic Code, which becomes the model on the continent.
 - (a) Basically enshrined in law the accomplishments of the Revolution.

e) What did many of the laws reflect in this period?

- i) Laws benefited the elites from the Third Estate.
 - (1) Remember this is a revolution of the moderate elites and their interests are in these laws.
- ii) How did he do this?**
 - (1) Laws enshrined private property.
 - (a) There was a serious Commitment to Education
- iii) Why is this so important?**
 - (1) This benefited middle classes and opened education to more and more people
 - (2) Established "lycees" in every town.**
 - (a) Founded a national university.
- iv) Created "Meritocracy"**
 - (1) Promotions were now based on merit rather than buying an office or knowing the right person.
 - (a) This further strengthens the ideal that how you rise is based on your merit and your worth to society, not on what order you were born into.
- v) Put military and technical schools under state control.
- vi) Rapprochement with the Catholic church.**
 - (1) 1801 Concordant - Reunites Church with the State.**
 - (a) Doesn't really give up anything to the church and does it not out of any conviction but for reasons of Domestic harmony.
 - (2) Church gets stipend but the land that was expropriated stays in the hands of the new middle class.
 - (3) Toleration stayed in place for the Protestants and the Jews.

f) Result is that he has a unified state.

g) However, Napoleon begins to suffer from what most human beings suffer when they become too powerful. This is what the Greeks warned about and they warned that you would get slapped down by the Gods or blind luck would overwhelm you.

12) What is this?

- a) "Hubris"

13) What does Napoleon do?

a) We already know this:

- i) In 1804 with the overwhelming assent of the populace he crowns himself Napoleon I and goes about making Europe like France.**

b) The Response throughout Europe?

- i) Europe is appalled. They have been at war almost continuously with France since 1792.
- ii) Now they have to deal with some little Corporal who wants to remake Europe in his image.

14) There were short periods of peace but then war breaks out again in 1805. Eventually Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sweden and England unite to destroy Napoleon.

- a) However, Napoleon wins one battle after another.
- b) He is essentially extending the French Revolution to all countries of Europe.
- c) The "Grand Army" seems invincible.
- d) The force of the Idea of Liberalism is very strong.
 - i) To give you an idea of how popular these ideals were, the Grand Army was only 1/3 French and made up of people of every different nationality who supported the goals of the French Revolution.

15) What does Napoleon do?

- a) Napoleon, in all the conquered areas institutes reforms and spreads the contagion of Liberalism!
- b) He does the same thing that he did in France
 - i) Rationalizes governmental systems in all conquered areas.
 - ii) Establishes:
 - (1) Equality and meritocracy.
 - (2) Abolishes Monarchical and church courts abolished.
 - (3) Modernizes the Tax systems
 - (4) Codified the Laws
- c) By Accident he spreads the "disease" of "**Nationalism**" in areas he conquers, to his detriment,
 - i) This becomes a force that will eventually overwhelm Europe.

16) Still the "Hubris" is too much! - He overextends himself. - Thucydides warning.

- a) His reign is one of constant warfare. From 1799 to 1815 it is essentially a period of constant warfare between Napoleon and the rest of Europe.
- b) He creates the Continental System where he attempts to freeze England out of the Continent and destroy its economy.
- c) Tide begins to turn, especially after the invasion of Spain. 1808 - Never really subdue the Spanish. By 1813 he is pushed out of Spain.
 - i) England calls this period the "Peninsular Wars."
- d) Yet even with these defeats and problems in 1812 sets out to destroy the Tsar and Russia.
 - (1) Moscow burning and the Russian Winter
 - (2) Number of dead.

- (i) Went in with 600,000 men and came out with less than 100,000.

17) Finally In October 1813 at the Battle of the Nations near Leipzig Napoleon is defeated.

- a) From that point on steady retreat back to France.
- b) March 31, 1814 Tsar Alexander and King Ferdinand march into Paris and restore the Bourbons.
- c) Napoleon is sent to Elba escapes within the year and organizes another Grand Army and is finally defeated:
- d) Battle of Waterloo on 6/18/1815.
 - i) Then shipped to St. Helena's where he died in 1821.

18) Napoleon's Defeat ushers in a new period of reaction. The European states tried to re-stabilize Europe into the confines of the Treaty of Utrecht. However, even at this the monarchies of Europe were fighting a losing battle.

19) Even while seemingly winning against Napoleon and Liberalism; they faced the rising tide of the forces of Liberalism, Nationalism, and the newest threat to their stability - Industrialization.

20) Results of the Congress of Vienna. It was led by Metternich of Austria and Tsar Alexander I of Russia.

- a) Louis XVIII recognized sovereign of France.
- b) Creates (Metternich) the idea of "legitimacy."
 - i) That is, all pre-1789 rulers were to be restored to their thrones.
- c) Restored Bourbon rulers in Spain and the two Sicilies as well as reinstating the Bourbons in France.
- d) France had to pay indemnities of 700 million francs.
- e) France was allowed to keep their historical boundaries.
- f) Kept Germany deliberately divided.
- g) Split Poland Up.
- h) Enshrined the system of "balance of power" that was to hold until 1914.
 - i) It essentially kept Europe from a major war for 100 years.
- i) Eventually set up Belgium as a "trip-wire."
 - i) Explain why this is important

21) As a result of the war Russia is the hero and the Power Broker on the Continent. It stays that way until its defeat in the Crimean War in 1856. They have finally achieved great power status and now play an active role in Europe. They serve the reaction throughout 1848.

22) Final Analysis of the French Revolution.

- a) It had made its mark in France for all time.

- i) Although it can be argued that France was back to square one, change took place.
 - b) Even with the reaction that set in and the monarchies were victorious, most nations of Europe were irrevocably changed and infected.
 - c) Countries kept their rationalized bureaucratic systems and their legal systems.
 - d) The principles of the French Revolution were spread all across Europe. Europe became infected by:
 - i) Liberalism in all its manifestations.
 - ii) Liberty, Equality, Fraternity in all nations.
 - iii) Nationalism - Becomes a major force that affects all nations even today.
1. **Even though this has been a setback and reaction set in, within 15 years the battle was renewed and the struggle between the Ancien Regime and the rising Urban/Industrial classes is joined again.**