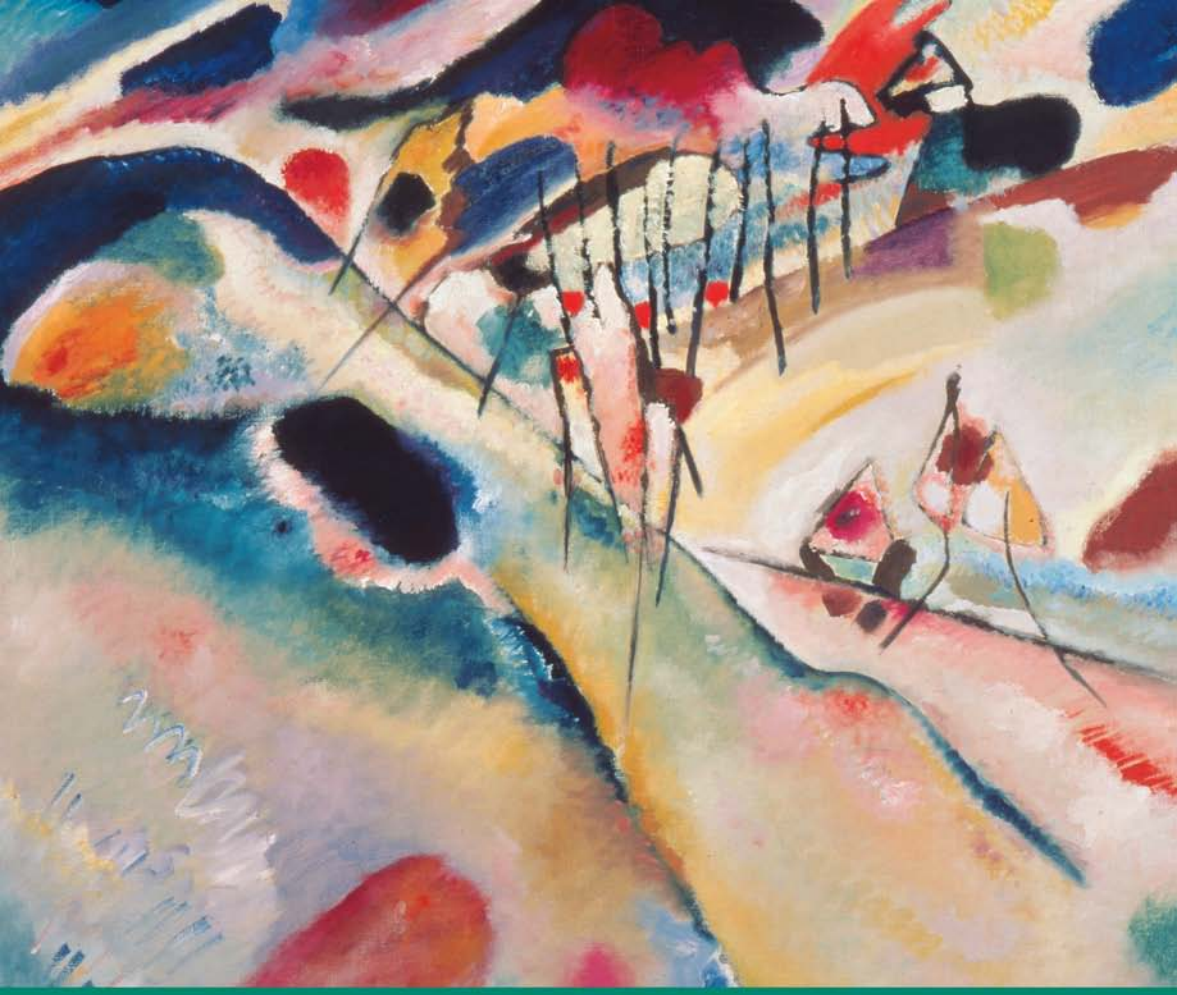

A HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE 4e

V2 • From the French Revolution to the Present

JOHN MERRIMAN

A HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE

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VOLUME 2: FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT

FOURTH EDITION

JOHN MERRIMAN
Yale University

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Preface

I am very pleased to present the fourth edition of *A History of Modern Europe*. We cannot understand the events and challenges of the present in Europe and elsewhere without understanding the past, and I hope students will find this book a helpful tool in this important endeavor.

Today, Europe confronts three daunting challenges. First, organizations like al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State have given rise to a new kind of warfare: that against terrorism. Second, the murderous civil war in Syria, instability in much of the Middle East and parts of Africa, and the wrenching poverty on both continents have generated a constant flow of refugees and immigrants hoping to reach Europe in order to find a better life. Thousands have perished in the Mediterranean in this effort. For centuries, Europe sent waves of emigrants to other parts of the world, particularly North and South America. Now the pattern has been reversed. Refugees and immigrants, both those arriving over the past decade and those decades earlier, have added to the religious and cultural complexity of European states.

Third, right-wing ultra-nationalist populism, often closely tied to hostility to the arrival of refugees and immigrants, has gained strength in many, if not most, European countries. This is sadly true in the United States, as well, where the resurgence of white supremacist groups can be seen, especially after the election of Donald Trump as president in 2016. Here, too, continuities with the European past are clear. To some extent, Europe seems to be reliving the xenophobia and ultra-nationalism of the 1920s and 1930s, without, hopefully, the same absolutely catastrophic consequences of a world war. As the global economic crisis that began in 2008 underscored, the interconnections of economies, nations, and societies around the world could not be clearer.

Today more than ever, the history of Europe cannot be understood without attention to Europe's interaction with cultures in the rest of the world. Europeans, to be sure, have for centuries learned from Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and American cultures. At the same time, through commercial contact, conquest, and intellectual, religious, and political influence, as well as, finally, decolonization, the European powers and cultures have affected the histories of non-Western peoples.

Our fourth edition also more specifically places questions of race and of racism in their long, sad history in the European context. This also becomes especially crucial in the chapters that consider colonialism and, in particular, the "new imperialism" that marked the period from the mid-1880s until the outbreak of

World War I in 1914, in the Great War itself, and the experience of Europe and colonial peoples in the post-war period. *A History of Modern Europe* makes it possible to put recent events and challenges in Europe in the context of changes and continuities with the past.

Europe's colonial and imperial empires were forged by military supremacy and one-sided murderous wars against indigenous peoples. To be sure, the dynamism of European trade, settlement, and conquest has had great impact, most notably on Asia, Africa, and the Americas, but also on the history of European peoples. Here, too, history provides its lessons. Unlike the Spanish Empire, trade was the basis of the burgeoning English Empire. The Spanish Empire reflected the combination of the absolutism of the Spanish monarchy and the determination to convert—by force if necessary—the indigenous populations to Catholicism. In sharp contrast, many settlers came to the North American English colonies in search of religious freedom. And, again in contrast to the building of the Spanish Empire a century earlier, the English colonists sought not to convert the indigenous peoples to Christianity, but rather to push them out of colonial areas of settlement. While the Spanish colonies in general reflected state centralization, their English counterparts evolved in a pattern of decentralization that would culminate in the federalist structure of the United States, achieved by the successful War of Independence from British rule (1775–1783). In this new edition, British domination in India also receives more well-deserved attention.

Our fourth edition also emphasizes the role of warfare in European history of the societies of the continent since the Middle Ages. In 1922, the Russian Communist Leon Trotsky in a speech described war as "a great locomotive of history." Quite conceivably, wars have been a motor for change in Europe even more than revolutions, although the two have often been connected (as in the cases of the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917). While discussing dynastic rivalries and nationalism, the fourth edition describes and analyzes how wars themselves have often generated political and social change. For example, French financial and military contributions to the American War of Independence further accentuated the financial crisis of the monarchy of France, helping to spark the French Revolution. Later, French armies of military conscripts that replaced the professional armies of the age of aristocracy contributed to the emergence of nationalism in Britain and France in the eighteenth century. The defeat of the Russian army by the Japanese in 1905 brought political concessions that helped prepare the way for the Russian Revolution of 1917. The German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian Empires disappeared in the wake of World War I and World War II; the economic and social impact of these wars generated political instability, facilitating the emergence of fascism and communism. World War I and the role played by colonized peoples gave impetus to movements for independence and nationalist insurgents within the British, French, and Dutch Empires that would ultimately be successful, transforming the world in which we live.

The growth of strong, centralized states helped shape modern Europe, and warfare was a major component of this essential history. Medieval Europe was a maze of overlapping political and judicial authorities. In 1500, virtually all Europeans defined themselves in terms of family, village, town, neighborhood, and religious solidarities. Over the next three centuries, dynastic states consolidated and extended their territories while increasing the reach of their effective authority over their own people. Portugal, Spain, England (and later as Great Britain), France, the Netherlands, and Russia built vast empires that reached into other continents. Ever larger and more powerful armies, navies, and the wars they fought were a crucial part of this story, too. By the early nineteenth century, the European Great Powers had emerged, their military forces ready for battle.

With the rise of nationalism in the wake of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, demands of ethnic groups for national states encouraged the unification of Italy and Germany and stirred unrest among Croats, Hungarians, Romanians, and other ethnic groups who were anxious for their own national states. The emergence of parliamentary rule in these new states proved to be no easy matter after World War I. In this fourth edition we devote more coverage to the long, fascinating history of East Central and Eastern Europe, adding to our coverage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the early modern period up until the Third Partition of Poland in 1795.

In Russia, the quest for democracy continues, even more than a quarter of a century since the fall of communism. President Vladimir Putin has consolidated his personal power, and that of the oligarchy that supports him. Several of his most outspoken opponents have perished in unexplained circumstances. Putin has aggressively worked to expand Russian interests as he defines them, annexing Crimea and supporting violent Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. The Baltic states, with sizable Russian minorities, have reason to be afraid. Putin's Russia has emerged as a rival of the United States, well after the end of the Cold War.

To make room for this new material, and to help make this book a better teaching tool, some of the chapters have been reduced in length. There are other changes, as well. As part of a beautiful new full-color design, the maps have been significantly improved and new illustrations have been added. The final chapter has been brought up to date with considerable attention given to the major challenges Europe now must confront. To take one important example, with the initiation of a new single currency within the European Union, Europe entered a new era. But "Brexit"—the shocking vote in Great Britain for a departure from the European Union—represents a serious challenge to the survival of that institution.

The fourth edition also boasts new resources for students and instructors. The text is available for the first time in an affordable ebook format. Whether in print or electronic form, students will find at the end of each chapter new materials for review, including key terms and names, study questions, and descriptive chronologies. Instructors may find expanded versions of these chronologies—with more than could fit on the limited space in these pages—available as printable handouts

online. Instructors will also find a brand-new test bank, including multiple-choice and short answer questions, and a set of art slides to present the illustrations and maps in the classroom.

For those teaching the Advanced Placement European History course, a brand-new Course Planning and Pacing Guide by Shawna Resnick (Lake Brantley High School) gives clear advice to use this text and other online resources to prepare students for the recently redesigned AP course. Further, the test bank includes questions designed to prepare students for the variety of questions on the AP European History test, including multiple-choice questions inviting students to analyze primary source excerpts and sample Document-Based Questions (DBQs).

We retain a narrative framework with the goals of both analyzing the central themes of the European experience and telling a long, wonderful story, full of triumphs and tragedies. Each chapter can be read as part of a larger, interconnected story. We stress the dynamics of economic, social, political, and cultural change, but within the context of the amazing diversity of Europe. The history of modern Europe and its influence in the world presents extraordinary characters, well known and little known. The text brings the past to life, presenting portraits of men and women who have played major roles in European history: religious reformers such as Martin Luther and Jean Calvin; Queen Elizabeth I, who solidified the English throne, and Maria Theresa, who preserved the Habsburg monarchy; King Louis XIV of France and Tsar Peter the Great, two monarchs whose reigns exemplified the emergence of absolutism in the seventeenth century; great thinkers like Sir Isaac Newton and Voltaire; Napoleon, perhaps the heir to the French Revolution, but also possibly a despot who betrayed it and was perhaps even an originator of total war. Inevitably, we describe and analyze the rise of Adolf Hitler, examining the sources of his growing popularity in Germany in the wake of World War I, and that of Joseph Stalin and his totalitarian communist state and murderous purges. However, we also enthusiastically focus on the experiences of ordinary men and women who made their own histories and who play a major part in the story of economic, political, and cultural change—in revolution and in war.

The causes and effects of economic change are another significant, related thread that weaves through the history of modern Europe. The expansion of commerce in the early modern period, which owed much to new means of raising investment capital and obtaining credit, transformed life in both Western and Eastern Europe. It also directly led to European imperialism in South Asia, Asia, and Africa. The Industrial Revolution, which began in England in the eighteenth century and spread to continental Europe in the nineteenth, depended on a rise in population and thus of agricultural production, but also manifested significant continuities with the past. As essential as were inventions, the Industrial Revolution also drew on ways of work that had been in place for centuries, transforming the ways Europeans worked and lived. It also changed warfare. New weapons were even more murderous. This, too, is inextricable from the histories of World War I and World War II, which killed millions of people.

The place of religion in the history of Europe since the Middle Ages remains another significant theme. Like politics, religion has also been a significant factor in the lives of Europeans and, at times, in the quest for freedom in the modern world. Catholicism was a unifying force in the Middle Ages; for centuries, European popular culture was based on religious belief. But religious differences and rivalries have also been a frequent cause of wars, for example, after the Reformation in the early sixteenth century, states extended their authority over religion, while religious minorities demanded the right to practice their own religion. Moreover, imperial missionaries carried their religions into Africa and Asia in the aggressive quest for converts. Spanish conquerors forced indigenous populations in the Americas to convert to Christianity. Religious (as well as racial and cultural) intolerance has scarred the European experience, ranging from the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century through the Wars of Religion (covered in Chapter 4), to Louis XIV's abrogation of religious toleration for Protestants in 1685, to the horror of the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. Religious conflict in Northern Ireland and the bloody civil war and atrocities perpetrated in Bosnia in the 1990s recall the ravaging of Central Europe during the Thirty Years' War, 1618–1648. Today, small extremist groups acting in the name of Islam—but condemned by the overwhelming majority of people who do practice that faith—have been responsible for terrorist attacks in Great Britain, France, Spain, Belgium, and Germany.

Understanding European history is now even more crucial to understanding the contemporary world. Chapter 30 emphasizes significant—and indeed, in some cases, dangerous—changes that have occurred very recently in Europe. These include the threat of terrorism and the resurgence of an aggressive populism that targets immigrants and refugees. One can clearly see continuities between the xenophobia and racism that characterized the period between World War I and World War II and the revival of racist populism and the rise of aggressive right-wing movements and indeed political parties in many European countries today. The return of Russian nationalism and the determination of President Vladimir Putin to reestablish his country as a dominant power offers striking, challenging parallels with the past.

The political, religious, economic, and cultural concerns that affect Europe and the world today can best be addressed by examining their roots and development in the past. As globalization continues to transform Europe and the world, it becomes even more relevant and exciting to study the continent's rich and complex history. The fourth edition of *A History of Modern Europe* is presented with this in mind. As we contemplate not only exhilarating triumphs and tragedies that have been an essential part of modern European history, we should also come to grips with the daunting challenges that now confront the continent, and the world.

Acknowledgments

The history of *A History of Modern Europe* began in the mid-1980s, when Don Lamm, chairman and president of W. W. Norton and Company, who helped make Norton a unique publisher, proposed that I undertake such a project. Steve Forman brilliantly edited the first three editions. I owe my friends Don and Steve so much. Justin Cahill has been a remarkable editor of this fourth edition and it has been a great pleasure working with him, as well as with Rachel Taylor and Rosy Lum. Stacey Davis of Evergreen College offered absolutely invaluable suggestions for this edition.

This edition benefits from Jillian Burr's superb full-color design, Agnieszka Czapski's talents in photo editing, and Caitlin Moran and Stephen Sajdak's coordination of these and other puzzle pieces coming together into a beautiful whole. The fourth edition also boasts, for the first time, a set of digital resources; thanks to Carson Russell and Lexi Malakhoff for coordinating these with contributions from Shawn Holderby (Mansfield University), John Mazis (Hamline University), and Matthew Unangst (Jacksonville University). Finally, thanks to Jenna Barry and Christina Magoulis for their concerted efforts to bring this book into the hands of students taking the AP European History course, and to Shawna Resnick (Lake Brantley High School) and Chris Freiler (Hinsdale Township High School) for preparing excellent resources to support these teachers and students.

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Histories have their own histories. Carol Merriman very ably edited every chapter in draft for the first three editions, and my other books as well. She loved history. A great deal of work over the decades made *A History of Modern Europe* part of our lives. I began working on the first edition before our children Laura and Chris were born. It then inevitably became part of their lives, too. Carol passed away suddenly in December 2016. As in history, unanticipated events can occur that dramatically change much of everything. This was our case. Laura, Chris, and I have been fortunate to have many friends in so many places in the United States and France who have helped us so much. Listing more than a few of them would overly lengthen the acknowledgements for this fourth edition. But I want to mention and thank in particular Phil Kalberer, Dave Bushnell, Chrisje Brouwer, Rachel Chrastil, Steve Shirley, Joe Malloure, Jim Read, Steve Pincus, Sue Stokes, Ben Kiernan, Glenda Gilmour, Jessica Honigberg, Hugh Eastwood, Jim and Claudia Klee, Jerry and Roberta Lohla, Janet McCarty and Billy Lieserson, Sven Wanegffelen, Chris Johnson, David Bell, Joe Fronczak, Thomas Forster, Charles Keith, Eric Fruleux, Mathieu Fruleux, Jean Sion, William and Ng Claveyrolat, Dominique Kalifa, Jeanne Innes, Victoria Johnson, Mathieu Fruleux, Hervé and Françoise Parain, and Élodie Parain. As before, this edition is dedicated to Laura Merriman and to Chris Merriman, and now also in memory of Carol Merriman.

Balazuc, France,
August 15, 2018

A HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE

PART FOUR

Revolutionary Europe, 1789–1850

The French Revolution of 1789 struck the first solid blow in continental Western Europe against monarchical absolutism on behalf of popular sovereignty. The roots of revolution extend back to the second half of the seventeenth century, an era of hitherto unparalleled absolute monarchical authority. The monarchs of France, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain, and Sweden had reinforced their authority to the extent that they clearly stood above any internal challenge to their power.

Compliant nobles served as junior partners in absolutism, acknowledging the ruler's absolute power to proclaim laws, assess taxes, and raise armies, in exchange for royal recognition of their noble standing and protection against popular revolts. The governments of Great Britain and the Dutch United Provinces stood in sharp contrast to absolute states. In the English Civil War in the 1640s, Parliament had successfully turned aside the possibility of absolute monarchy in England, leading to the execution of King Charles II. After some years of turmoil, constitutional monarchy was restored. In the Netherlands, the Dutch revolt against absolutist Spain led to the establishment of the Dutch Republic. The theory of popular sovereignty developed not only as an alternative to absolute rule but also as an extension of constitutional rule. In the dramatic events of the French Revolution that began in 1789, the theory of popular sovereignty became reality as ordinary people helped

bring about the downfall of absolute rule and then, three years later, the monarchy itself.

True popular sovereignty was a short-lived experiment, however, as counter-revolution and foreign intervention led to the dramatic centralization of state authority. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte helped overthrow the Directory, the last regime of the revolutionary era in France. An admirer of the Enlightenment, Napoleon claimed that he was the heir of the French Revolution. But while Napoleon saw himself as a savior who carried "liberty, equality, and fraternity" abroad, his conquest of much of Europe before his final defeat left a mixed legacy for the future. More than a fifth of all the significant battles that took place in Europe from 1490 to 1815 occurred between the onset of the French Revolution and Napoleon's final defeat in 1815.

Following Napoleon's defeat in 1815 at the Battle of Waterloo, the Congress of Vienna created the Concert of Europe, the international basis of Restoration Europe, in the hope of preventing further liberal and nationalist insurrections in Europe. But liberal and nationalist movements could not so easily be swept away. During the subsequent three decades, "liberty" became the watchword for more and more people, particularly among the middle classes, who came to the forefront of economic, political, and cultural life. Liberal movements were, in many places, closely tied to the emergence of nationalism, the belief in the primacy of nationality as a source of allegiance and sovereignty.

In the meantime, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution slowly but surely transformed the way many Europeans lived. Dramatic improvements in transportation, notably the development of the railroad but also road improvements, expanded the market for manufactured and other goods. Rising agricultural production, increasingly commercialized in Western Europe, fed a larger population. Migrants poured into Europe's cities, which grew as never before. Contemporaries, particularly in Western Europe, sensed profound economic, social, political, and cultural changes.

The French Revolution 12

The beginning of the French Revolution, July 12, 1789, Paris

Late in the second year of the French Revolution, in 1791, King Louis XVI decided to flee Paris. Revolutionaries had made France a constitutional monarchy, leaving the king with little actual authority. In political clubs in Paris and the provinces, calls echoed for a republic. Now a virtual prisoner in his own palace, he had secretly negotiated for possible intervention on his behalf by the Austrian king and other European monarchs. The royal family furtively left Tuileries Palace late at night on June 20, 1791, disguised as the family and entourage of a Russian baroness riding in a large black coach with yellow trim. But in an eastern town, the postmaster recognized the king, whose image he had seen on a coin. He rode rapidly to the town of Varennes, where a municipal defense force prevented the king's coach from going on. Three representatives of the National Assembly—a radical new legislative body that had declared itself the true voice

of the French people—took the royal family back to Paris. Near the capital, the crowds became threatening, and national guardsmen stood by the roadside with their rifles upside down, a sign of contempt or mourning. The flight of the royal family would radicalize a revolution that had started four years earlier, as a nobles' revolt about taxes grew into an insurgent political movement against the monarchy led by ordinary people. For an increasing number of the king's subjects, it became possible to imagine France without any kind of a monarchy.

The French Revolution mounted the first effective challenge to monarchical absolutism on behalf of popular sovereignty. The creation of a republican government in France and the diffusion of republican ideals in other European countries would influence the evolution of European political life long after the Revolution ended. Many issues came to dominate the political agenda: the rights of the people, the role of the state in society, the values of democratic society, notions of "left" and "right" in political life, the concept of the "nation at arms," the place of religion in modern society and politics, and the question of economic freedom and the sanctity of property. They occupied the attention of much of France during the revolutionary decade of 1789 to 1799. The political violence of that decade would also be a legacy for the future. And so would the revolutionary wars that followed as France's enemies sought to undermine the revolution that challenged monarchical and noble prerogatives. The conflicts that stretched across the European continent and even far beyond would transform warfare.

French revolutionaries worked to make the state more centralized and efficient, as well as more just. Napoleon Bonaparte, whom some historians consider the heir to the Revolution and others believe to be its betrayer, continued this process after his ascent to power in 1799 (see Chapter 13).

Modern nationalism, too, has roots in the French Revolution. The revolutionaries enthusiastically proclaimed principles they held to be universal. Among these were the sovereignty of the nation and the rights and duties of citizenship. The revolutionaries celebrated the fact that the Revolution had occurred in France. But wars intended to free European peoples from monarchical and noble domination ultimately turned into wars of French conquest. The revolutionary wars, pitting France against the other great powers, contributed to the emergence or extension of nationalism in other countries as well. These included Great Britain, where the sense of being British was already flourishing in the mid-eighteenth century in response to wars with France, as well as in Central and Southern Europe, where some Germans and Italians began to espouse nationalism in response to the invading French armies.

The Old Regime in Crisis

The French Revolution was not inevitable. Yet difficult economic conditions in the preceding two decades, combined with the growing popularity of a discourse that stressed freedom in the face of entrenched economic and social privileges, made

some sort of change seem possible, perhaps even likely. When a financial crisis occurred in the 1780s and the king was forced to call the Estates-General, the stage was set for the confrontation that would culminate in the French Revolution.

LONG-TERM CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The increasing prevalence of the language of the Enlightenment, stressing equality before the law and differentiating between absolute and despotic rule, placed the monarchy and its government under the closer scrutiny of the new forum of public opinion. Adopting Enlightenment discourse, opponents accused Louis XV of acting despotically when he exiled the Parlement of Paris in 1771 and tried to establish new law courts that were likely to be more subservient than the parlements, the noble law courts, had been. Opponents believed that the king was trying to subvert long-accepted privileges. Following Louis XV's death in 1774, the young Louis XVI reinstated the parlements, which retained their right to register royal edicts.

As complaints mounted about noble privileges, guild monopolies, and corrupt royal officials, the implications of Enlightenment thought led to political action. In 1774, Controller-General of Finances Anne-Robert Turgot, a physiocrat (see Chapter 9) greatly influenced by Chancellor René-Nicolas de Maupeou, whom the king had dismissed in 1774, drew up a program to eliminate some monopolies and privileges that fettered the economy (see Chapter 11). However, the measures abolishing the guilds, among other decrees, generated immediate hostility from nobles, including the powerful Parlement of Paris, and from ordinary people, who rioted in Paris in 1775 because the freeing of the grain trade had resulted in higher prices in hard times. Two years later, Turgot's experiment ended. But some writers now began to laud the freedoms Turgot had in mind, which seemed to them necessary in view of the corporate and noble privileges that characterized the economy and society of eighteenth-century France.

France remained a state of overlapping layers of privileges, rights, traditions, and jurisdictions. Nobles and professional groups such as guilds and tax farmers (who generally had bought their offices and could pocket some of the taxes they collected) contested any plan to eliminate privileges. At the same time, the social lines of demarcation between nobles and wealthy commoners had become less fixed over the course of the eighteenth century. Despite increasing opposition from the oldest noble families who believed their ranks were being swamped by newcomers, during the fifteen years before 1789 almost 2,500 families bought their way into the nobility. Yet many people of means, too, resented noble privileges, above all the exemption of nobles from most taxes. Disgruntled commoners did not make the French Revolution, but their dissatisfaction helped create a litany of demands for reform. The monarchy's worsening financial crisis accentuated these calls.

The sharpest resistance to reform came from the poorer nobility. Among the "nobles of the sword," the oldest noble families whose ancestors had proudly taken arms to serve the king in the old days, some had fallen on hard times. They clung frantically to any and all privileges as a way of maintaining their status. They

resented the fact that the provincial parlements, in particular, had filled up with new nobles who had purchased offices—the "nobles of the robe"—and that power had shifted within the nobility from the oldest noble families to those recently ennobled.

The monarchy depended upon the sale of titles, offices, and economic monopolies for revenue and long-term credit. But creating more offices—there were more than 50,000 offices in 1789 (see Chapter 11)—risked destroying public confidence and driving down the value of offices already held. Men of means purchased offices for the prestige that came with them, but also because many of them provided income and the right to collect taxes or fees, depending on the type of office purchased.

Economic hardship compounded the monarchy's financial problems by decreasing revenue while exacerbating social tensions. Rising prices and rents darkened the 1770s and 1780s. A series of bad harvests—the worst was that of 1775—made conditions of life even more difficult for poor people. The harvests of 1787 and 1788, which would be key years in the French political drama, were also very poor. Such crises were by no means unusual; indeed, they were cyclical and would continue until the middle of the next century. Meager harvests generated popular resistance to taxation and protests against the high price of grain (and therefore bread). A growing population put more pressure on scarce resources.

Many peasants believed that landowners were increasing their hardship. Something of a "seigneurial reaction" was under way as smaller agricultural yields diminished noble revenues, while inflation raised the costs of noble life. Noble landowners hired estate agents, lawyers, and surveyors to maximize income from their lands, and reasserted old rights over common lands, on which many poor peasants depended for pasturing animals and gathering wood for fuel. Many landlords raised rents and tried to force sharecropping arrangements on peasants who had previously rented land.

Although the feudal system of the Middle Ages had long since passed, remnants remained. Peasants were still vexed by seigneurial dues owed to their lords. Many nobles still held some rights of justice over their peasants, which meant that they could determine guilt and assess penalties for alleged transgressions. Seigneurial courts were often used to enforce the landlord's rights over forests, lakes, and streams, and his exclusive rights to hunt and fish on his estate. The political crisis that led to the French Revolution would provide ordinary people with an opportunity to redress some of these mounting grievances.

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

The debilitating financial crisis that confronted the monarchy in the 1780s was the short-term cause of the French Revolution. France had been at war with Britain, as well as with other European powers, off and on for more than a century. The financial support France had provided the rebel colonists in the American

War of Independence against Britain had been underwritten by loans arranged by the king's Swiss minister of finance, Jacques Necker (1732–1804). Almost three-fourths of state expenses went to maintaining the army and navy, and to paying off debts accumulated from the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748), the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), the American War of Independence, and from sustaining and expanding its empire. The monarchy was living beyond its means.

Where were more funds to be found? Nobles had traditionally enjoyed the privilege of being exempt from most, and the clergy from all, taxation. There was a limit to how many taxes could be imposed on peasants, by far the largest social group in France. In short, the financial crisis of the monarchy was closely tied to the very nature of its fiscal system.

The absolute monarchy in France collected taxes less efficiently than did the British government. In Britain, the Bank of England facilitated the government's borrowing of money at relatively low interest through the national debt. In France, there was no central bank, and the monarchy depended more than ever on private interests and suffered from a cumbersome assessment of fiscal obligations and inadequate accounting. French public debt already was much higher than that of Britain and continued to rise as the monarchy sought financial expedients.

The hesitant and naïve Louis XVI was still in his twenties when he became king in 1774. Louis knew little of his kingdom, venturing beyond the region of Paris and Versailles only once during his reign. He preferred puttering around the palace, taking clocks and watches apart and putting them back together. He excelled at hunting. The unpopularity of Louis's elegant, haughty wife, Marie-Antoinette (1755–1793), accentuated the public's lack of confidence in the throne (whether or not she really snarled "Let them eat cake!" when told that the people had no bread). At age fifteen, Louis was forced to marry Marie-Antoinette, the daughter of the Austrian queen Maria Theresa. The goal of the marriage was to strengthen dynastic ties between Austria and France. She never felt really at home in France.

Unhappy in her loveless marriage, Marie-Antoinette lived extravagantly and embroiled in controversy. In 1785, she became entangled in a seamy scandal when a cardinal offered her a fabulous diamond necklace in the hope of winning favor. The necklace and some of the prelate's money were then deftly stolen by plotters, a strange scenario that included a prostitute posing as the queen. The "diamond necklace affair," as it was called, seemed to augment the public image of the king as a weak man, a cuckold. The queen's reputed indiscretions and infidelities seemed to undercut the authority of the monarchy itself. Although Louis kept the queen out of royal decisions, Marie-Antoinette wielded more and more indirect authority. Her goal was to strengthen the king's personal authority. Marie-Antoinette's detractors indelicately dubbed her the "Austrian whore." The animosity against Marie-Antoinette was related to the fact that Austria had been France's enemy during the first half of the eighteenth century, until the abrupt change in partners that occurred with the 1756 Diplomatic Revolution.

(*Left*) Louis XVI. (*Right*) Marie-Antoinette.

Louis XVI did not lack intelligence and in the early years of his reign kept abreast of state and foreign affairs, but became increasingly indecisive. Ironically, as the French monarchy had become more centralized since the days of Louis XIII, with its reach extending more efficiently into the provinces, the government in authority became increasingly chaotic, with determined factions undercutting each other. Moreover, the king relied more and more on ad hoc committees instead of ministerial councils, as he struggled with the monumental financial crisis that ultimately brought down the monarchy.

In the meantime, Necker continued to float more loans. The Swiss minister of finance produced a fanciful account of the royal finances that purported to demonstrate that more revenue was coming to the state than was being spent. Necker hoped to reassure creditors that reform was unnecessary. Bankers, however, did not believe Necker's figures and some refused to loan the monarchy any more money until the state enacted financial reforms. In 1781, ministers and noble hangers-on convinced the king to dismiss Necker. The new finance minister, Charles-Alexandre de Calonne (1734–1802), demonstrated that Necker's calculations of royal finances were far-fetched. Yet Calonne spent even more money and put the royal treasury deeper in debt by borrowing from venal officeholders to pay off creditors now gathered at the royal door.

The parlements opposed fiscal reform, which they believed would lead to an increase in taxation through a general tax on land. They distrusted Calonne, whom they identified with fiscal irresponsibility and governmental arrogance that some believed bordered on despotism.

To sidestep the parlements, Calonne asked the king in February 1787 to convoke an Assembly of Notables to approve reforms. The Assembly consisted of representatives handpicked by the king from each of the three estates: clergy, nobility,

and the third estate—everybody else, thus the vast majority of the population of France. The crown expected the Assembly to endorse its reform proposals, including new land taxes from which nobles would not be exempt. Calonne suggested that France's financial problems were systemic, resulting from a chaotic administrative organization, including the confusing regional differences in tax obligations. The monarchy's practice of selling the lucrative rights to "farm" or collect taxes worsened the inefficiency. Tax farmers could keep a certain percentage of what they collected and many squeezed more out of peasants than the state actually demanded. Calonne knew that the crown's contract with the tax farmers would soon have to be renegotiated, and that many short-term loans contracted by the monarchy would soon come due.

Denouncing "the dominance of custom" that had for so long prevented reform and encumbered commerce, Calonne proposed to overhaul the entire financial system. The Assembly of Notables, however, rejected Calonne's proposals for tax reform and refused to countenance the idea that nobles should be assessed land taxes. Moreover, the high clergy of the first estate, some of whom were nobles, also vociferously opposed Calonne's reforms. They, too, feared losing their exemption from taxation. The privilege-based nature of French society was at stake. In the meantime, Marie-Antoinette and a number of ministers worked in the background to organize opposition to the Assembly of Nobles.

Nobles convinced the king to sack Calonne, which he did on April 8, 1788. Louis XVI replaced Calonne with the powerful archbishop of Toulouse, Étienne-Charles de Loménie de Brienne (1727–1794). Like his predecessor, Loménie de Brienne asked the provincial parlements to register—and thus approve—several edicts of financial reform, promising that the government would keep more accurate accounts. But the Parlement of Paris refused to register some of the edicts, including a new land tax and a stamp tax, which evoked the origins of the American Revolution.

The Revolution Begins

Some members of the Assembly of Notables had been willing to accept fiscal reform and to pay more taxes, but only with accompanying institutional reforms that would guarantee their privileges. They wanted the king to convoke regular assemblies of the Estates-General—made up of representatives of the three estates—which had not been convoked since 1614. The king was in a difficult position. He needed to reduce the privileges of the nobles to solve the financial crisis, but to do so without their approval would lead to accusations of despotism, or even tyranny, the sometimes violent implementation of the structures of despotic authority. On the other hand, capitulating to the demands of the privileged classes in return for new taxes would compromise his absolute authority and suggest that his word was subject to the approval of the nation, or at least the nobility.

The resolution of this dilemma would lead to the events that constituted the first stages of the French Revolution.

CONVOKING THE ESTATES-GENERAL

The "noble revolt" began the French Revolution. In response to the refusal of the Parlement of Paris to register the land and stamp taxes, in August 1787 Louis XVI exiled its members to Troyes, east of Paris. Nobles and even some powerful clergymen protested vigorously. The provincial parlements, which were dominated by nobles, backed up the Parlement of Paris. The Parlement of Grenoble refused to register the new stamp and land taxes and convoked its provincial Estates (the assembly of nobles that represented the interests of the region) without royal authorization. The "revolt" against the monarchy's attempt to force nobles to pay taxes spread. Provincial parlements demanded that the Estates-General be convoked. This revolt was not directed against the institution of the monarchy itself, but against what the nobles considered abuses of the rights and privileges of the nation committed by a crown that seemed to be behaving in an increasingly despotic way.

The monarchy sought compromise. Loménie de Brienne agreed to withdraw the new land and stamp taxes in exchange for maintaining the tax on income (the vingtième tax), which nobles and other privileged people had first been assessed in the late 1750s to pay for the Seven Years' War against Great Britain (1756–1763). He made clear, however, that the crown would be forced to settle its debts in paper money backed by royal decree. Louis XVI recalled the Parlement of Paris from exile in November 1787. But the king ordered new loan edicts registered without giving the Parlement a chance to be heard. When the duke of Orléans, the king's cousin, interjected that such a procedure was illegal, Louis replied, "That is of no importance to me. . . . it is legal because I will it." Louis XVI thus seemed to cross the line from absolutism into despotism.

In May 1788, the king ordered the arrest of two of the most radical members of the Parlement of Paris. He then suspended the parlements, establishing new provincial courts to take their place and creating a single plenary court that would register royal edicts. Resistance to the king's acts came quickly. The Assembly of the Clergy, which had been summoned to decide on the amount of its annual gift to the crown, protested the abolition of the parlements. Riots in support of the parlements occurred in several towns. In Grenoble, crowds expressed support for their parlement by pelting soldiers with stones and roof tiles.

On August 8, 1788, Louis XVI announced that he would convoke the Estates-General on May 1 of the following year. He hoped that he could avert royal bankruptcy if the Estates-General would agree to the imposition of the new taxes. Two weeks later, he reappointed Necker as minister of finance, a measure he believed would appease nobles, investors, and holders of government bonds, who had never objected to unrestrained borrowing.

But the fact that the nobles had forced the crown to convoke the Estates-General became the first act of the French Revolution, and helped unify public opinion against the king. Many people believed that the Estates-General, more than the parlements, would represent their interests and check royal despotism. Here we can see clearly the influence of the Enlightenment. The writings of the philosophes (see Chapter 9) had encouraged the belief that checks and balances to prevent monarchies from lapsing into despotism should exist and that rulers should enact economic policies that worked for the best interests of her or her subjects. Thus France had evolved considerably from the time of Louis XIV, as reflected by the fact that Louis XVI was willing to convoke the Assembly of Notables and then the Estates-General.

The question of how voting was to take place when the Estates-General met assumed increasing importance. Would each of the three estates—clergy, nobles, and the third estate—have a single vote (which would almost certainly quash any reform since the majority of nobles and clergymen were against reform), or would each member of the Estates-General be entitled to his own vote?

On September 25, 1788, the Parlement of Paris, which had been reinstated amid great celebration, ruled that voting within the Estates-General would take place by estate, as had been the case when that body had last met in 1614. Thus, each of the three estates would have the same number of representatives and be seated. Henceforth, the parlements would be seen by many people as defending the prerogatives of the privileged against the interests of the third estate, losing their claim to defend the nation against the king's despotism for having registered the royal decree that voting would be by estate.

Popular political writers now began to salute the third estate (which made up 95 percent of the population) as the true representative of liberty and of the nation against royal despotism. Others asked for some sort of representative assembly that would reflect "public opinion." The "patriot party," a coalition of bourgeois members and some liberal nobles, began openly to oppose royal policies, which they contrasted with the rights of the "nation." "Patriots" denounced the vested interests of the court and the nobles close to it. Political publications transformed these debates into national political issues. The Society of the Thirty, a group that included liberal nobles from very old families—for example, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834), French hero of the American War of Independence—as well as a number of commoner lawyers, met to discuss, debate, and distribute liberal political pamphlets. They proposed that the third estate be entitled to twice as many representatives in the Estates-General as the nobility and clergy.

In January 1789, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748–1836), an obscure priest, offered the most radical expression of a crucial shift in political opinion. In a pamphlet that was widely read and which changed public opinion, Sieyès wrote: "We have three questions to ask and answer; First, What is the Third Estate? Everything. Second, What has it been heretofore in the political order? Nothing. Third, What does it demand? To become something therein." He contrasted the "nation"

against royal absolutism and noble prerogative, demanding a predominant role for the third estate in political life.

The vast majority of men elected to the Estates-General by adult men in towns, villages, and parishes were residents of cities and towns, and two-thirds of these had some training in the law. Male peasants, many of whom were illiterate, had the right to cast ballots. Voting was indirect, with local elections determining the district assemblies that selected the delegates to the Estates-General. But such elections represented a radical, unprecedented change. Two-thirds of those elected to the first estate were parish priests, many of whom were of humble origin and resented the privileges of the bishops and monastic orders. Some of the younger noble representatives elected to the second estate were relatively liberal. They wanted institutional reforms in the organization of the French monarchy that would permit them to check the power of the king, in much the same way as the Parliament in England served as a check on the English crown. In December 1788, the king agreed to double the number of representatives of the third estate but declined to give all members an individual vote. This seemed fairer, as the Third Estate represented about 95% of the population of France.

The king asked the local assemblies, along with the first two estates, to draw up lists of grievances (*cahiers de doléances*), which the Estates-General would discuss. Remarkably enough, in villages throughout much of France peasants gathered in churches, village squares, or even in the barns or halls owned by nobles whose land they worked to draw up lists of complaints. Thousands of grievances offered the monarchy a wide variety of opinions, ranging from concrete suggestions for reform to the considered opinion that the foul breath of sheep was ruining pastureland in Lorraine. More important, cahiers criticized monarchical absolutism and the inflexibility of seigneurs, asked for a more consistent and equitable tax structure, and called for the creation of a new national representative body. A few of the cahiers denounced as an abuse of royal power the so-called *lettres de cachet*, documents issued in the name of the king that allowed a person to be arrested for any reason and imprisoned indefinitely. For example, one cahier demanded "that no citizen lose his liberty except according to law." However, some cahiers also reflected continued reverence for the king, while denouncing the rapacity and bad faith of his advisers and ministers. In any case, the vast majority of cahiers never reached the king.

On May 5, 1789, the nearly 1,200 members of the Estates-General (about 600 of whom represented the third estate) assembled at Versailles. The king greeted the first two estates, but kept the commoners waiting for two hours. When he finished his speech, members of the third estate boldly violated protocol by putting their hats back on, a right reserved for the two privileged orders. On June 17, the third estate overwhelmingly approved a motion by Sieyès that declared the third estate to be the "National Assembly" and the true representative of national sovereignty. The third estate now claimed legitimate sovereignty and an authority parallel, if not superior, to that of the king of France.

But, on June 20, as rumors circulated that the king might take action against them, representatives of the third estate found that their meeting hall had been locked for "repairs." Led by their president, Jean-Sylvain Bailly (1736–1793), an astronomer, the members of the third estate took the bold step of assembling in a nearby tennis court. There they took an oath "not to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the kingdom is established and consolidated upon solid foundations." With principled defiance, the third estate demanded that defined limits be placed on the king's authority.

The king declared the third estate's deliberations invalid. Yet on June 23, he announced some substantial reforms, agreeing to convoke periodically the Estates-General, to abolish the *taille* (the tax on land) and the *corvée* (labor tax), to eliminate internal tariffs and tolls that interfered with trade, and to eliminate the *lettres de cachet*. He also agreed that the Estates-General would vote by head, but only on matters that did not concern "the ancient and constitutional rights of the three orders." To the radicalized members of the third estate, the king's concessions were not enough.

Louis XVI had again dismissed Necker on June 22, but reversed himself after learning that thousands of people in Paris had invaded the courtyard of the Tuileries Palace in Paris to demand that Necker stay on. Necker's contention in 1781 that the kingdom's finances could be put on an even keel without raising taxes had increased his popularity, as had the fact that nobles were pushing for his recall. During these days, most of the clergy and a number of nobles had joined the third estate. Now, after threatening to dissolve the Estates-General by force, on June 27

The Tennis Court Oath, June 20, 1789.

the king ordered the remaining clergy and nobles of the first two estates to join the third. The new gathering began to constitute itself as the National Constituent Assembly.

STORMING OF THE BASTILLE

Amid a shortage of food and high prices, many ordinary people now believed that a conspiracy by nobles and hoarders was to blame. Furthermore, the number of royal troops around Paris and Versailles seemed to be increasing. Rumors spread that the National Assembly would be quashed. On July 11, the king once again ordered Necker, who remained unpopular with the court, into exile. He and other ministers were dismissed because the king was convinced they were unable to control the demands for change coming from the Estates-General. In the meantime, bands of Parisians attacked the customs barriers at the gates of the city, tearing down tollbooths where taxes on goods entering the city were collected, thus making foodstuffs more expensive.

On the morning of July 14, 1789, thousands of people—mostly tradesmen, artisans, and wage earners—seized weapons stored in the Invalides, a large veterans' hospital on the Left Bank. Early that afternoon, the attention of the Paris crowd turned toward the Bastille, a fortress on the eastern edge of the city, where

The storming of the Bastille, July 14, 1789.

the crowd believed powder and ammunition were stored. For most of the eighteenth century, the Bastille had been a prison, renowned as a symbol of despotism because some prisoners had been sent there by virtue of one of the king's lettres de cachet, summarily and without a trial. On that hot summer day, the Bastille's prisoners numbered but seven, a motley crew that included a nobleman imprisoned upon request of his family, a renegade priest, and a demented Irishman, who alternately thought he was Joan of Arc, Saint Louis, and God.

The crowd stormed and captured the Bastille, which was defended by a small garrison. More than 200 of the attackers were killed or wounded. A butcher decapitated the commander of the fortress, and the throng carried his head on a pike in triumph through the streets. The Bastille's fall would be much more significant than it first appeared. The king entered "nothing new" in his diary for that day, July 14. But the crowd's uprising probably saved the National Assembly from being dissolved by the troops the king had ordered to Versailles and Paris. Now unsure of the loyalty of his soldiers, Louis sent away some of the troops he had summoned to Paris, recognized both the newly elected municipal government, with Bailly becoming mayor on July 25, and a municipal defense force or National Guard (commanded by the Marquis de Lafayette), and capitulated to the popular demand that he recall Necker to office.

On July 17, 1789, the king came to Paris to be received by the municipal council at the town hall, accepting and wearing an emblem of three colors, red and blue for the city of Paris, and white for the Bourbons. By doing so, Louis XVI seemed to be recognizing what became the tricolor symbol of the French Revolution and subsequently the flag of France.

THE GREAT FEAR AND THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 4

News of the convocation of the Estates-General had brought hope to many rural people that the king would relieve their crushing fiscal burdens. They had expressed such hopes in the grievances they sent with their third estate delegates to Versailles. Now, upon news of the fall of the Bastille, between July 19 and August 3 peasants attacked châteaux. In some places they burned title deeds specifying obligations owed to lords. These peasant rebellions helped cause a subsequent panic known as the "Great Fear." Fueled by the rumor of an aristocratic "famine plot" to starve or burn out the population, peasants and townspeople mobilized in many regions of France. To repel the rumored approach of brigands sent to destroy crops, townspeople and peasants formed armed units to defend themselves and save the harvest. New local governments and National Guard units were established to institute reforms and to restore order as the effective authority of the state disintegrated. These events brought to local influence lawyers, merchants, and other "new men" who had formerly been excluded from political life.

News of peasant violence galvanized members of the National Assembly. On August 4, 1789, in an effort to appease the peasants and to forestall further rural disorders, the National Assembly formally abolished the "feudal regime,"

including seigneurial rights. This sweeping proclamation was modified in the following week: owners of seigneurial dues, or payments owed by peasants who worked land owned by nobles, would, in principle, receive compensation from the peasants. The Assembly abolished personal labor servitude owed to nobles, without compensation. The members of the National Assembly thus renounced privilege, the fundamental organizing principle of French society. Other reforms enacted the following week included the guarantee of freedom of worship and the abolition of the sale of offices, seigneurial justice, and even of the exclusive right of nobles to hunt. The provinces and cities, too, were required to give up most of their archaic privileges. The National Assembly, although most of its members remained committed to the monarchy, but a reformed one, enacted a sweeping agenda that proclaimed the end of what soon became known as the Old Regime.

Consolidating the Revolution

The Assembly's decrees destroyed absolutism by redefining the relationship between subject and king. No longer would the king rule by divine right, or buy allegiance by dispensing privileges to favorites. Instead, he would be constrained by powers spelled out in a constitution. The Assembly promulgated the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, a remarkable document that proposed universal principles of humanity. It next established a new relationship between church and state, creating a national church, making Catholic Church property "national property," and compelling the clergy to swear allegiance to the nation. The National Assembly then turned to the long process of framing a constitution for the new regime, and is therefore sometimes also known as the Constituent Assembly.

In the meantime, Marie-Antoinette denounced the revolutionaries as "monsters"; some of the king's most influential advisers balked at accepting any weakening in royal authority. Fearing the influence of uncompromising nobles at the court, a crowd of thousands, including many and perhaps even mostly women, marched on October 5 to Versailles, returning to Paris with the king and the royal family. Henceforth, while many nobles, among others, fled France for exile and sought the assistance of the monarchs of Europe against the Revolution, the king himself became vulnerable to the tide of Parisian popular radicalism. As nobles and clergy led resistance to the Revolution, the Parisian political clubs made more radical demands.

THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND CITIZEN

As it set out to create a constitutional monarchy, the Assembly promulgated the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen on August 26, 1789. This set forth the general principles of the new order, intending to educate citizens about liberty. One of the most significant documents in Western political history, the Declaration

reflected some of the ideas that Thomas Jefferson had enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence of 1776. Article One proclaims, "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights." The Enlightenment's influence is apparent in the document's concern for individual freedom, civic equality, and the sense of struggle against corporatism, unjust privilege, and absolute rule, a discourse based upon a belief in the primacy of reason. All men were to be equal before the law, "equally eligible to all honors, places, and employments . . . without any other distinction than that created by their virtues and talents." No person could be persecuted for his or her opinions, including those concerning religion.

The Declaration invoked "universal man," meaning mankind. But at the same time, its authors excluded women from the Declaration and did not espouse or foresee equality of the sexes. Nonetheless, many men and women now began to greet each other as "citizen." Indeed, some calls for women's rights arose from the beginning of the Revolution. As all French men had never been granted political equality in any previous time, there was nothing pre-ordained about the barring of political rights for women. Yet male peasants could vote, but not women.

Proclaiming universal principles, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen clearly placed sovereignty in the French nation. The notion of rights stemming from membership in the "nation," as opposed to that in any corporate group or social estate, was a fundamental change. Laws were to reflect the notion of the "general will," an Enlightenment concept, which would be expressed by national representatives. The nation itself, not the monarch alone, was to be "the source of all sovereignty." The assertion of equality of opportunity, however, was not intended to eliminate all social distinctions. The preservation of property rights assured that differences due to wealth, education, and talent would remain and be considered natural and legitimate. The Declaration thus helped make wealth, not birth, blood, or legal privilege, the foundation of social and political order in modern France.

The abolition of feudalism and the proclamation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen were such monumental achievements that already in 1790 people were referring to the Old Regime as having been that which existed before the representatives of the Estates-General constituted the National Assembly. It remained, however, for Louis XVI to accept the Assembly's work.

"THE BAKER, THE BAKER'S WIFE, AND THE BAKER'S LITTLE BOY"

The political crisis was by no means over. Louis XVI remained unwilling to accept the Revolution and agree to the Constitution. The king's closest advisers, the "court party," rejected any constitutional arrangement that would leave the monarch without the power of absolute veto. Royal authority was at stake. Speaking for the "patriot party," Sieyès insisted, "If the king's will is capable of equaling that of twenty-five million people . . . it would be a lettre de cachet against the general will." The majority of the Assembly, having defeated a motion that an upper-chamber

like the British House of Lords be created, offered the king in September the power of a "suspending" veto over legislation. The king would be able to delay a measure passed by the Assembly from becoming law for up to four years.

When the king refused to accept these provisions and the decrees of August 4, a flood of pamphlets and newspapers attacked his intransigence. The first daily political newspapers summarized the proceedings of the National Assembly for readers in Paris and the provinces, offering editorial opinions about what had transpired. The radical journalist Jean-Paul Marat (1743–1793) quickly found a popular following for his new newspaper, *The Friend of the People*. A physician beset by financial woes, Marat was like one of the ambitious, frustrated "scribblers" whom Voltaire, forty years earlier, had scathingly denounced as "rabble," as hacks. Marat captured with stirring emotion and the colorful, coarse slang of ordinary Parisians the mood of those for whom he wrote. The rhetoric of popular sovereignty, some of it borrowed from the philosophe Jean-Jacques Rousseau, came alive in the outpouring of political pamphlets that undermined popular respect for Louis XVI and even for the institution of monarchy itself. The king's authority continued to decline.

By October, some "patriots" were demanding that the king reside in Paris, echoing a number of cahiers. Like many of the most important events in the French Revolution, the "marching to Versailles" began with a seemingly minor event. The officers of the Flanders Regiment insulted the newly adopted tri-color emblem at a reception in their honor attended by the king and queen. According to rumor, they shouted, "Down with the National Assembly!"

On October 5, women from the neighborhoods around the Bastille, having found little at the market, gathered in front of the town hall. From there, some 10,000 people, mostly women, left on foot for Versailles, hoping to convince the

Women of Paris leaving for Versailles.

king to provide them with bread. Some of them occupied the hall of the National Assembly, where they claimed power in the name of popular sovereignty. Later in the day, a large force of national guardsmen led by Lafayette also arrived at Versailles, hoping to keep order and to convince the king that he should return with them to Paris. Louis cordially greeted the women in the late afternoon, promising them bread. That night Louis XVI announced his acceptance of the Assembly's momentous decrees of the night of August 4.

Nonetheless, violence followed at dawn. When people tried to force their way into the château, royal guards shot a man dead, and the crowds retaliated by killing two guards and sticking their heads on pikes. The crowd insisted that the royal family join it on the road to Paris. Some of the women sang that they were returning to Paris with "The Baker, the Baker's Wife, and the Baker's Little Boy," reflecting the popular notion that the king was responsible for providing bread for his people. The National Assembly, too, left Versailles for Paris. By putting the king and the Assembly under the pressure of popular political will, the women's march to Versailles changed the course of the French Revolution.

REFORMING THE CHURCH AND CLERGY

As the National Assembly set about creating a constitution that would limit the authority of the king, it proclaimed Louis "the king of the French," instead of the king of France, a significant change that suggested that his sovereignty stemmed not from God, but from the people. Alarmed by such changes, the king's brother, the count of Artois, left for exile after the October Days, and was soon followed by more than 20,000 other émigrés, most of whom were nobles, other people of means, and clergymen. In all, about 12 percent of nobles left France for the German states, the Netherlands, England, and the Americas, among other places.

The Assembly turned its attention to reforming the Church. The decrees of August had ended the unpopular tithe payments to the Church, and now the Assembly looked to the Church's wealth to help resolve the state's mounting financial crisis. On October 10, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand (1754–1838), who had entered the priesthood at the insistence of his family and had been consecrated bishop early in 1789, proposed that Church property become "national properties" (*biens nationaux*). After the Assembly narrowly passed Talleyrand's measure on November 2, some 400 million francs in Church property—roughly 10 percent of the nation's land—began to be offered for sale at auction. The primary beneficiaries of the sale were urban bourgeois and prosperous peasants who could marshal enough cash to buy the land put up for sale.

To raise funds immediately, the Assembly issued paper money (*assignats*), which was backed by the value of the Church lands. Although the law required everyone to accept assignats in payment of debts, their value fell dramatically because of a lack of public confidence, and those who used the assignats to purchase Church lands or pay debts received a windfall. Even poor peasants were thus able to reduce

their debts with inflated currency. Among the consequences of the sale of Church lands, and later of lands owned by noble émigrés, was that more land was brought under cultivation by peasants. The clearing of trees and brush to make room for crops and small-scale farming also put increased pressure on the environment.

The Assembly then altered dramatically the status of the Church itself. On February 13, 1790, it decreed the abolition of the religious orders, deemed politically suspect by many reformers. On July 12, the National Assembly passed the Civil Constitution of the French Clergy. The Assembly redefined the relationship between the clergy and the state, creating, in effect, a national church. Bishops, who could now only publish pronouncements with the authorization of the government, were to be elected by local assemblies at the local level. Ten days later, the king reluctantly accepted these measures affecting the Church.

The Church became essentially a department of the state, which henceforth would pay clerical salaries, the expenses of worship, and poor relief. In November 1790, the National Assembly proclaimed that all priests had to swear an oath of loyalty to the Revolution, and thus accept the Civil Constitution of the French Clergy. His authority directly challenged, Pope Pius VI denounced the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in March, and in April 1791, condemned the Civil Constitution of the French Clergy.

The Civil Constitution of the French Clergy altered the course of the Revolution, largely because it was widely resisted and contributed directly to the growth of a

The Three Estates hammering out the constitution.

counter-revolutionary movement. Between one-half and two-thirds of parish priests refused the oath, and the Assembly prohibited these disloyal, "non-juring" priests from administering the Church sacraments. Nonetheless, many continued to do so with popular support. The issue of the oath split dioceses, parishes, and some households. In some provinces, violence mounted against "non-juring" priests; in others, refractory priests received popular support and protection. Such issues were no small matter, as many Catholics, Louis XVI among them, believed themselves obliged by faith to refuse to take sacraments from the "juring" clergy, that is, those who had taken the oath.

THE REFORMS OF 1791

The Constitution of 1791 formalized the break with the Old Regime by substituting a constitutional monarchy for absolute rule. Although the king retained only the power of a suspending veto, he would still direct foreign policy and command the army. Acts of war or peace, however, required the Assembly's approval.

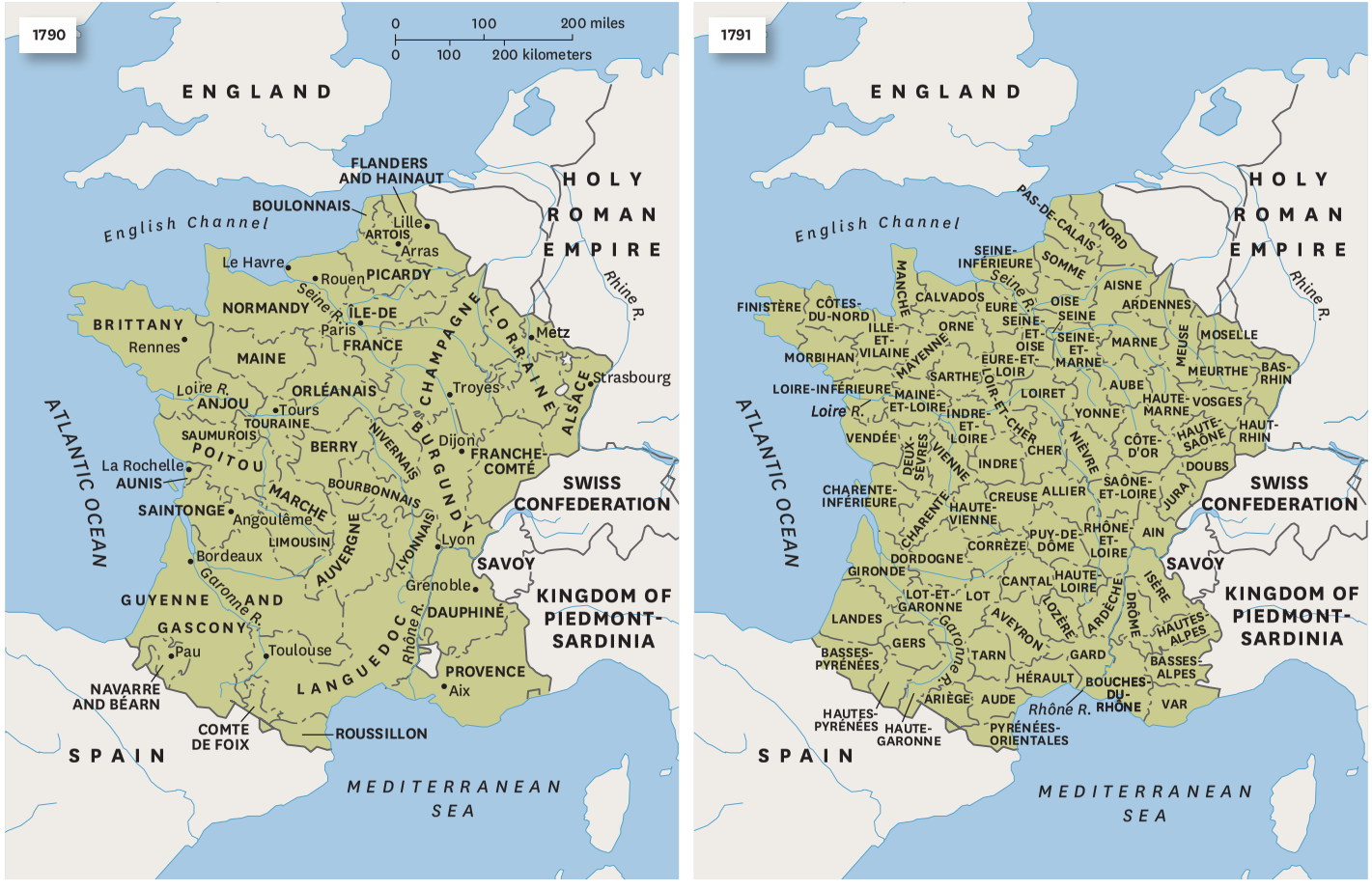
But France was far from being a republic. In sweeping away the Old Regime, the Revolution had redefined the relationship between the individual and the state by stripping away hereditary legal privileges. The Assembly abolished titles of hereditary nobility in June 1790. The establishment of the United States may have contributed by demonstrating that a country could do perfectly well without a privileged rank; indeed, several nobles who pushed for this major change had fought on the side of the American rebels, including Lafayette.

Although all citizens were to be equal before the law, the decree carefully distinguished between "active" and "passive" citizens. Only "active citizens," men paying the equivalent of three days' wages in direct taxes, had the right to vote in indirect elections—they would vote for electors, wealthier men, who, in turn, would select representatives to a new legislature (see Map 12.1). Critics such as Marat and Georges-Jacques Danton (1759–1794) denounced the restrictive franchise, claiming that the Assembly had merely replaced the privileged caste of the Old Regime with another by substituting the ownership of property for noble title as the criterion for political rights. Rousseau himself would have been ineligible to vote.

In Europe at the time, religious discrimination still characterized many states. In Britain, English Dissenters and Catholics could not hold public office and were excluded from certain professions; in Hungary and the Catholic Rhineland, Protestants faced discrimination. Jews suffered intolerance and persecution in much of Europe, excluded, for example, from certain occupations or forced to live in specially designated places. In some parts of Eastern Europe and Ukraine, they suffered violence as well.

By contrast, the National Assembly granted the freedom of religion to Protestants and Jews by decrees in 1790 and 1791, as well as citizenship to Jews (of whom there were about 36,000, most of whom lived in Alsace and Lorraine); Protestants had already gained civil rights in 1787. The Assembly abolished guilds, declaring each person "free to do such business and to exercise such profession, art or trade

MAP 12.1 France before and after 1789 The map on the left indicates the provinces and provincial capitals in France before the Revolution. The map on the right indicates the administrative districts (départements) created in France in 1790.



as he may choose." It subsequently passed the Le Chapelier Law on June 14, 1791, prohibiting workmen from joining together to refuse to work for a master. This law was a victory for proponents of free trade. The Assembly also passed laws affecting the family: establishing civil marriage, lowering the age of consent for marriage, permitting divorce, and specifying that inheritances be divided equally among children.

The National Assembly abolished slavery in France, but not in its colonies. In 1789, there were 700,000 slaves in the French empire, as many as then in the United States. Huge numbers of slaves brought from various points in Africa worked the sugar plantations. This exception led to a rebellion by free blacks on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola in October 1790 against the French sugar plantation owners, many of whom were nobles. Haiti, rich in coffee and tobacco as well as sugar cane, had become the most profitable slave colony anywhere. The enormous uprising of slaves, most of whom were of African origin, was led by Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743–1803), a former slave who had fought in the French army. The revolt of 1791–1792 succeeded. The National Convention (which would replace the Assembly in September 1792) allied with the slaves in the hope of finding support against Great Britain. France would abolish slavery in the colonies in 1794 and proclaim that the former slaves in the French colonies were now French citizens and would fight against Britain. Indeed, Toussaint's forces turned back British and Spanish invasion attempts. Modern-day Haiti would become the first free black state in 1804 (see Chapter 13). Thus, the revolutionary ideology led to profound changes far across the ocean.

In 1791, the call for equal rights for women was first made explicit in France when Olympe de Gouges (1755–1793), the daughter of a butcher, published *The Rights of Women*. Encouraging women to demand their natural rights—and thereby evidencing the influence of the Enlightenment—she called on the Assembly to acknowledge women's rights as mothers of citizens of the nation. She insisted on women's right to education, to control property within marriage, and to initiate divorce proceedings. Olympe de Gouges defined the nation as "the union of Woman and Man," and suggested that men would remain unfree unless women were granted similar rights, stopping short of demanding full political rights for women.

RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTION

On July 14, 1790, the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, an imposing commemorative festival took place on the Champ-de-Mars, a royal parade ground in Paris. But there was no revolutionary consensus in France. In the south, nobles had already begun to organize resistance against the Revolution, and militant Catholics attacked Protestants, who tended to support the Revolution. By the summer of 1791, as the Assembly promulgated its constitution, open resistance to the Revolution had broken out in parts of the south and west, and in Alsace.

Such resistance prompted calls for even more radical changes. Some revolutionaries, who did not accept the distinction between active and passive citizens, called for more democratic participation in political life. From where did this democratic

thrust come? The monarchical state had rested on an intertwining network of groups at virtually every level of society. These included judicial, professional and administrative groups, as well as clergy, ranging from provincial Estates to artisanal guilds. Participatory and sometimes even democratic procedures within such bodies (or corps) may have instilled a tendency toward democracy that affected the course of the Revolution and pushed France toward a republic.

The first clubs were established by political factions among the deputies to the National Assembly. Some of the Assembly's most radical members split off to form the Jacobin Club, so-called because it met in the large convent of the religious order of the Jacobins. The Cordeliers Club brought together the radicals of Paris, while supporters of the cause of constitutional monarchy, whose members broke with the Jacobins in July 1791, gathered at the Club of the Feuillants. Monarchists formed royalist clubs. Moreover, some women began their own political clubs, such as the Club of Knitters, or joined the Fraternal Society of Patriots of Both Sexes. By 1793, there were at least 5,000 clubs in France, which usually met in the same places and maintained their own procedures, electing officers and forming committees, for example, to assess the status of the needy in their town or to organize the procurement of arms. Most clubs charged a small fee for membership and some met virtually every day or evening. Representatives in the Assembly spoke at club meetings, but so did other members who discussed what stances they believed representatives should take and which strategies the club should adopt to make its voices heard. Those in attendance could hear summaries of that day's political events in the Assembly. During the first years of the Revolution, however, there was little in France that was not political, and the clubs were not the only place where

Women knitting red Phrygian caps for their Jacobin men.

political debate occurred. In Paris, there were also meetings of neighborhood "sections," which had first been defined as electoral districts for the convocation of the Estates-General.

Parisian revolutionaries became increasingly known as *sans-culottes*. They defined themselves by what they were without—the fancy knee britches, or culottes, which were associated with the aristocracy. The sans-culottes were shopkeepers, artisans, and laborers who were not opposed to private property, but who stood against unearned property, and especially against those people who seemed to have too much property, or who did not work for a living. They demanded that a maximum price be placed on bread, which alone absorbed more than half of the earnings of the average working family. Sans-culottes were for "the people," as they put it. They were defined by their political behavior. Even aristocrats could be sans-culottes if they supported the Revolution. Likewise, laborers or peasants could be called "aristocrats" if they seemed to oppose the Revolution. In a world in which symbols played a crucial political role, sans-culottes could be identified by the Phrygian cap, a symbol of freedom drawn from the Roman Republic—close-fitting, red in color, with a tricolor emblem—in contrast to the three-cornered hat that had been worn by urban social elites. The language of the sans-culottes also quickly indicated who they were; they called everyone "citizen" and used the familiar (*tu* and never *vous* in French), an egalitarian form of address. The political ideal of the sans-culottes was that popular sovereignty had to be practiced every day in direct democracy, in revolutionary clubs and in the sections.

THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

Louis XVI feared the growing violence of the Revolution. He and Marie-Antoinette sent secret letters to the kings of Prussia and Austria asking them to send armies to crush the Revolution. Louis XVI and his family tried to flee France in June 1791. The king's goal was to then return to France to revoke the concessions that he had made. Apprehended by the National Guard in Varennes, the royal family was prevented from continuing their journey into exile and freedom.

The king's attempt to flee turned public sentiment further against him, and strengthened support for a republic. The day after his flight, the Cordeliers Club called for the establishment of a republic, but the majority of the Assembly feared civil war. On July 17, 1791, at the Champ-de-Mars in Paris, people came to sign (or put their "X" on) a petition resting on the "Altar of the Fatherland" that called on the National Assembly to replace the king "by all constitutional means." The National Guard opened fire, killing fifty people. Bailly, the moderate mayor of Paris, and Lafayette, the commander of the National Guard in Paris, declared martial law. However, even Louis XVI's formal acceptance of the constitution on September 14, 1791, could not stem the popular tide against the monarchy.

Louis XVI and his family being brought back to Paris from Varennes after their ill-fated attempt to leave France.

War and the Second Revolution

The Revolution now entered a new, more radical phase. The king's flight seriously weakened the constitutional monarchists within the Assembly. The leaders of the Parisian population—Danton, Marat, and Maximilien Robespierre—were Jacobins who had given up on the idea that a constitutional monarchy could adequately guarantee the liberties of the people. Elections brought to Paris a Legislative Assembly, which met on October 1, 1791. It replaced the Constituent Assembly, which had dissolved following the proclamation of the constitution the previous month. Republicans—now identified with the "left" as monarchists were with the "right," due to the location of the seats each group occupied in the Assembly—became a majority in March 1792.

In the meantime, French émigrés at the Austrian and Prussian courts were encouraging foreign intervention to restore Louis XVI to full monarchical authority. The republican followers of Jacques-Pierre Brissot (1754–1793), former radical pamphleteer and police spy as well as a flamboyant orator, called for a war to free Europe from the tyranny of monarchy and nobility. The members of this faction became known as the Girondins because many were from the district of Gironde,

in which the major Atlantic port of Bordeaux is located. Under Girondin leadership, the Assembly's proclamations took on a more aggressive tone. The French declaration of war against Austria led to the Second Revolution, the formation of a republic, and, ultimately, a Jacobin-dominated dictatorship, which imposed the "Terror."

REACTIONS TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN EUROPE

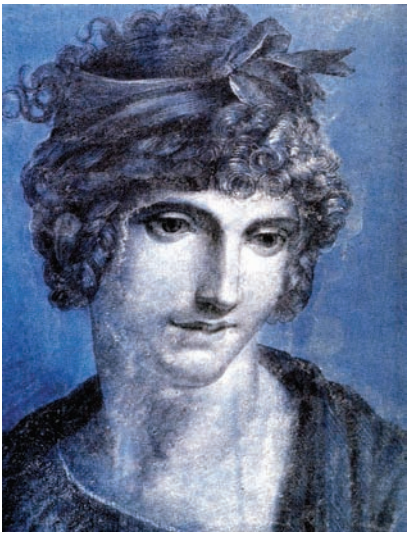
The French Revolution had a considerable impact on the rest of Europe. The early work of the National Assembly, particularly the abolition of feudal rights and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, found considerable favor among educated people in Britain, the Netherlands, and some German and Italian states. Some lawyers and merchants in other lands applauded, for example, measures taken to reduce the independence of the Catholic Church. The promulgation of the principles of national sovereignty and self-determination, however, threatened the monarchies of Europe. The threat posed by the French Revolution brought about a reconciliation between Austria and Prussia, rivals for domination in Central Europe, as well as a wary alliance between Great Britain and Russia.

The Prussian government's first reaction to the Revolution had been to try to subvert the alliance between France and Austria and to undermine Austrian authority in the Southern Netherlands (Belgium). In Vienna, the Habsburg emperor Leopold II was initially preoccupied with demands from the Hungarian nobility for more power. In 1789, a rebellion drove Habsburg forces out of the Austrian Netherlands and led to the establishment of a republic that survived only until Austrian troops returned in force the next year.

In London, some radical Whigs greeted with enthusiasm the news of the fall of the Bastille and the first steps toward constitutional monarchy in France. But in 1790, the British writer Edmund Burke attacked the Revolution in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. He contended that the abstract rationalism of the Enlightenment threatened the historic evolution of nations by undermining monarchies, which he defended passionately, and established churches, as well as what he considered the "natural" aristocratic ruling elite.

In contrast, another Englishman, Thomas Paine (1737–1809; see Chapter 11) wrote pamphlets denouncing monarchical rule and unwarranted privilege. The *Rights of Man* (1791–1792) defended the Revolution against Burke's relentless attack. Political societies supporting the Revolution, in which artisans played a major role, sprang up in Britain during the early 1790s. A small group of English women also enthusiastically supported the Revolution. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), a teacher and writer, greeted the Revolution with optimism, traveling to France to view events firsthand. Angered that the Assembly limited the right to education to men only, she published *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), the first book in Britain demanding the right for women to vote and hold elected office.

The rulers of the other European states felt threatened by the proclamation of universal principles embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and



Olympe de Gouges (*left*), whose book *The Rights of Women* was published in France in 1791. It detailed the notion of equal rights that Mary Wollstonecraft (*right*) would take up the next year in Britain with the publication of her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

Citizen. The Revolution also posed the threat of French expansion, now on behalf of carrying the revolutionary principles of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" to other lands. Besieged by exiles from France eager to tell tales of their suffering, the rulers of Prussia, Austria, Naples, and Piedmont undertook the suppression of Jacobin sympathizers in their states. In Britain, the seeming threat of foreign invasion helped affirm British national identity (see Chapter 11). Popular respect for the British monarchy and probably also for nobles soared as anti-French and anti-Catholic feelings came to the fore. Pitt the Younger's government lashed out at the development of popular politics in Britain, suspending the freedoms of association, assembly, and the press, as well as the writ of habeas corpus. "Coercion Acts" facilitated the arrest of those advocating parliamentary reform.

Thus, Louis XVI's virtual imprisonment in the Tuileries Palace in Paris and the thunderous speeches in the Assembly proclaiming the necessity of "a war of peoples against kings" worried the crowned heads of Europe. On August 27, 1791, Emperor Leopold II of the Holy Roman Empire (brother of Marie-Antoinette, who had not seen him in twenty-five years) and King Frederick William II of Prussia promulgated the Declaration of Pilnitz. It expressed their concern about the plight of the French monarchy and stated the common interest of both sovereigns in seeing order restored in France.

Despite Robespierre's speeches warning the deputies that the Revolution must first deal with its enemies within France before waging war abroad, the Assembly, egged on by General Charles François Dumouriez (1739–1823), minister of foreign