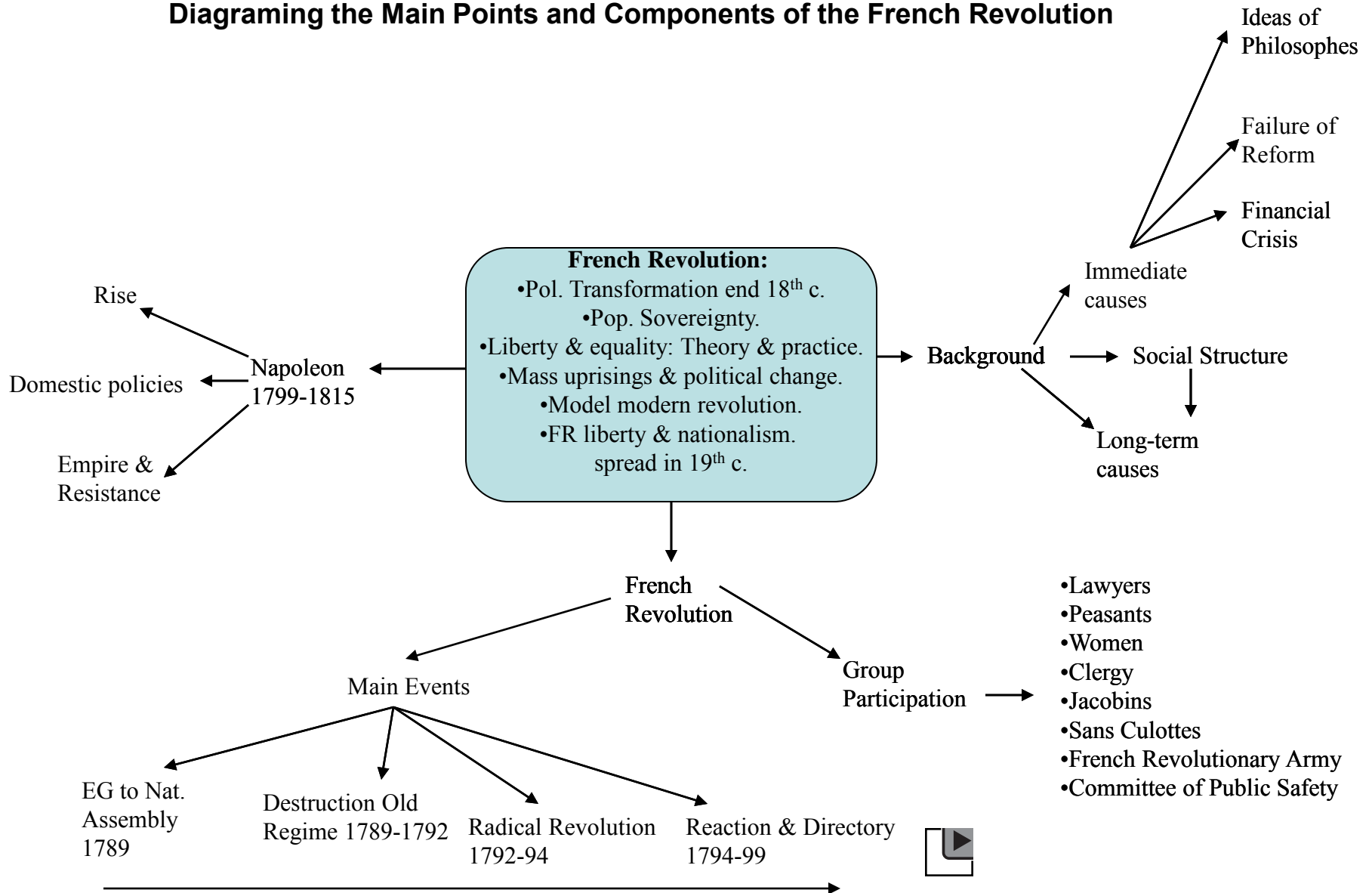


Diagramming the Main Points and Components of the French Revolution



Causes of the French Revolution

1. International: struggle for hegemony and Empire outstrips the fiscal resources of the state
2. Political conflict: conflict between the Monarchy and Aristocrats over the “reform” of the tax system led to paralysis and bankruptcy.
3. The Enlightenment: one variant reinforces traditional aristocratic constitutionalism, as in Montesquieu’s *Spirit of the Laws* (1748); Rousseau introduces new notions of good government in *Social Contract* (1762), with the argument for popular sovereignty
4. Social antagonisms between two rising groups: the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie
5. Ineffective ruler: Louis XVI
6. Economic hardship, especially the agrarian crisis of 1788-89 generates popular discontent and disorders caused by food shortages.

Which do you think are the four most important causes from this list?

Revolutionary situation: When can we say that a revolution has begun?

When the government's monopoly of power & force is effectively challenged by some groups who no longer recognize its legitimate authority, no longer grant it loyalty, and no longer obey its commands.

Dual or multiple sovereignty is the identifying feature of a revolutionary situation - the fragmentation of an existing polity into two or more blocs, each of which exercises control over some part of the government and lays claim to its exclusive control over the government. A revolutionary situation continues until a single, sovereign polity is reconstituted.

In 18th century France, this moment occurred on June 20, 1789 when the delegates of the Third Estate, joined by some members of the clergy, claimed that they were the true representatives of the Nation—the sovereign nation—and that they would not disband until the King and the other two orders (Nobility and Clergy) would recognize this. The Nobility and Clergy were asked to join the Third that now renamed themselves: The National Assembly.

Revolutionary Process in Stages

Four Phases, 1789-1799.

- 1789-1792. A liberal phase under a constitutional monarchy and national legislature (National Assembly, followed by Legislative Assembly).
- 1792-1794: A radical, republican phase that led to authoritarian terror under the Committee of Public Safety, August 10 1792 to 9 Thermidor (July) 1794.
- 1794-99: Thermidor & the Directory: A reactionary phase in response to the excesses of radical republicanism (universal male franchise) and of Terror.
- 1799: The Napoleonic coup d'etat, the ending of the Revolution by military coup and the restoration of "order" and domestic peace through an authoritarian regime.

The French Revolution: The Big Picture

The French Revolution was both destructive and creative:

- It was an unprecedented effort to break with the past and to forge a new state and new national community based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity.
- After the old government was replaced, differences over the meaning of those principles and the ways they were to be put into practice grew more salient and serious.
- Shaped and driven by passionate ideological differences, violence, and war, the revolution continued until a stable state organization was consolidated, in part through the use of military force.
- The revolution bequeathed to the French and to the World a new and enduring political vision: at the heart of progress lay liberation from the past, egalitarianism, and broadly based representative government.

Characteristics of the French Revolution: Big Picture II

- **Reform vs. revolution.** The first modern revolution focused on the creation of new rights, not the restoration of traditional or old rights.
- From **liberty** = privilege to liberty = political participation.
- The level of violence increased after the Revolution of 1789.
- An unprecedented mobilization of ordinary people in the political process. The **sans culotte** movement in Paris.
- **Renewed War in the Competitive State System.** The renewed war for hegemony and empire launched in April 1792 radicalized the Revolution and led to greater violence not only abroad but within France, creating a civil war internally and both the risk and reality of foreign invasion. This led to the Terror of 1793-94.
- **From reliance to domination by the army.** The continuation of war after 1795 made way for the *coup d'etat* of Napoleon in 1799 and the conquest of the Republic by the army.

Estates General to the National Assembly, 1788-1789

Destruction of the Old Regime and the establishment of the Constitutional Monarchy 1789-1792

War and The Radical Revolution 1792-1794: The first years of the First French Republic

The Thermidorian Reaction and the Directory 1794-1799

Major Events

1788 Louis XVI calls for the meeting of the Estates General in 1789

Sieyès publishes *What is the Third Estate?*

1789 June 17-20 the Third Estate at Versailles declares itself to be the National
July 14, Seizure of the Bastille

August, the abolition of feudalism (August 4th) and the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen (August 26)

October, Women's march to Versailles. King returned to Paris.

1790 July 12 the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which makes the church subordinate to the state and calls upon the clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the new State. Many clergy refuse.

1791 June 20-21, Louis XVI and the royal family attempt to flee the country but are captured at Varennes and returned to Paris: the faith in the King declines sharply. (see the print images showing the transformation of the king into a barnyard animal)

1792 April 20. France declares war on Austria, and subsequently on Prussia, Britain, and Russia.

August 10 The Second Revolution: the Tuilleries palace is attacked by Parisians, the monarchy is overthrown in a 'second' revolution. (film version, too)

September 21, 1792. The monarchy is abolished and the Republic is declared.

1793 January 21, Louis Capet, former Louis XVI, is executed

August *Levee en masse*, the mobilization of the country to secure the Republic and defeat invading armies.

September 1793-July 1794, War and Terror: the authoritarian rule of France by the Committee of Public Safety, in which Robespierre was one of 12 members but often thought to be the leader.

1794 the 9th of Thermidor (July 28). Overthrow and execution of Robespierre and other members of the Jacobin Committee of Public Safety.

1795 August 22. The reorganization of the Republic into a regime known as the Directory, a collective executive. A new constitution attempts to turn the clock back to 1789 by, among other things, limiting the franchise to men of property. The sans-culotte movement is subsequently repressed.

1799 November 1799, Napoleon's coup d'etat.

A Short list of Consequences of the Revolution

- The creation of modern democratic republicanism (overthrow and de-sacralization of monarchy; establishment of representative government on a more or less broad franchise).
- The establishment of the concept and model of modern revolution.
- The strengthening of the central state.
- The emergence of the nation-state.
- The strengthening of the propertied middle class or bourgeoisie as a part of the social and political elite.
- Preservation of noble as well as peasant property; accumulation of much new property by the bourgeoisie through the purchase of national lands—lands confiscated from the Church and emigres who left France during the Revolution.
- The creation of a revolutionary tradition centered on the belief that revolution was a means for bringing progressive change and further extension of popular participation and popular sovereignty.

- French Rev. exemplifies late 18th c. political transformations aimed at advancing equality and political liberty.
- As stated in the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen: popular sovereignty = theoretical basis of liberty; equality meant equal rights and equal treatment under the law.
- In practice, equality limited and political participation was expanded to the propertied but not consistently to working men; not at all to women.
- Mass uprisings were important in forcing change. 🔊
- French Revolution became the classical model for modern revolutions.
- Liberal and national political ideals of the Revolution would spread through Europe in the 19th century. 🔊

Visual evidence: representations of the French Revolution in print images and paintings

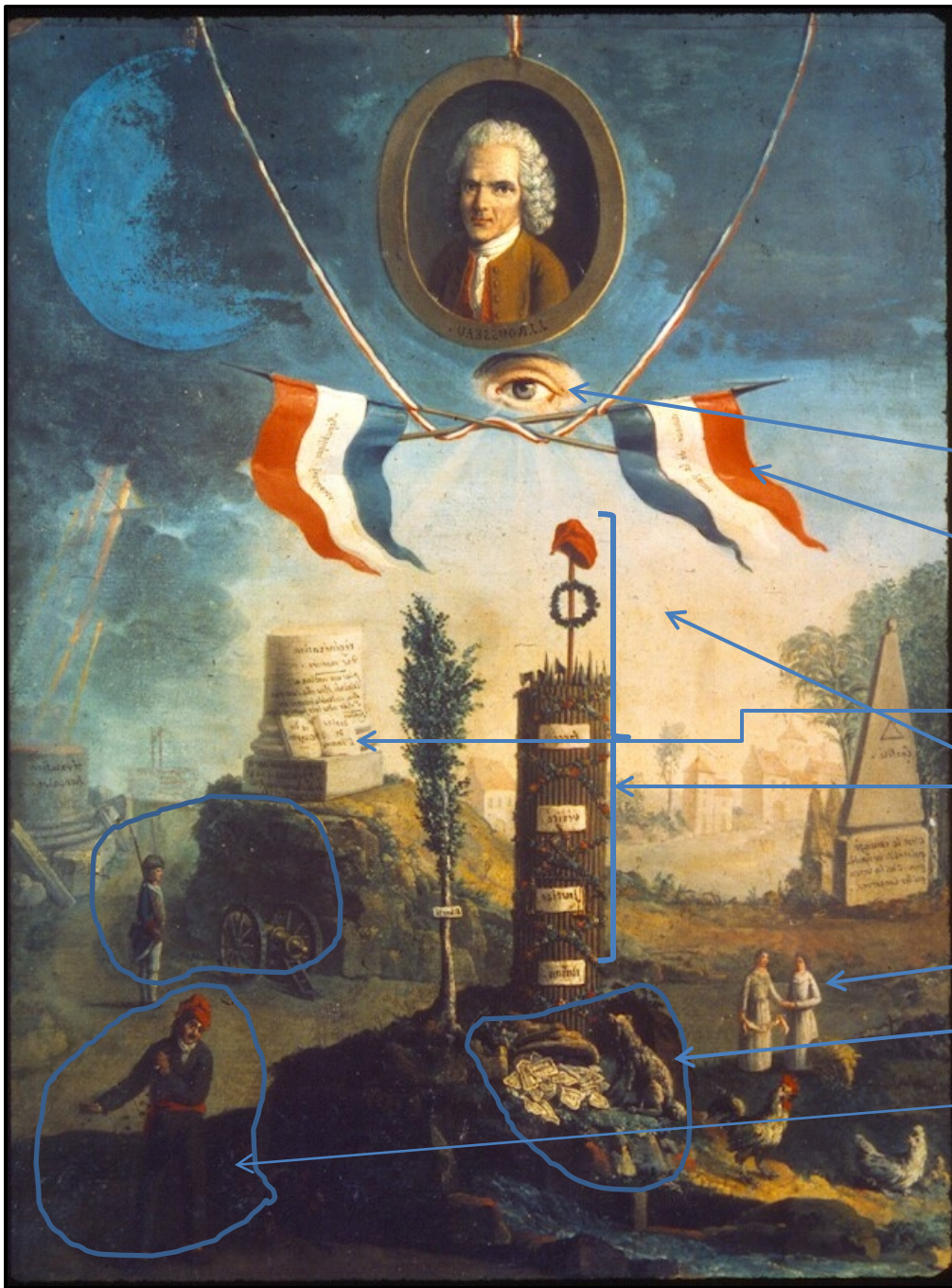
Rousseau and the Symbols of the French Revolution

The Oath of the Tennis Court, June 20th 1789: the opening of a revolutionary situation with “dual sovereignty.”

Taking of the Bastille, July 14, 1789: the first act of the popular revolution

Deconstructing the sacred body of the king and monarchical sovereignty

Conflicting views of the popular revolution and the *sans-culottes*



Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Symbols of the Revolution.

- Rousseau represented as the author of the *Social Contract* and the philosopher who promoted 1) the “democratic constitution” based on popular sovereignty and liberty as participation in political decision making 2) natural sentiments and values against the corrupting influences of urban society.
 - The eye of vigilance is a symbol from the Free Mason movement, to which many revolutionary leaders belonged.
 - Other symbols are those of the French Republic:
 - the tri-color flags above the principles of "Love of Country" and "French Republic;"
 - an altar dedicated to the rights of man and guarded by a soldier and a canon;
 - the fisc of pikes surmounted by the red bonnet and adjacent to the tree of Liberty.
 - The rising, glowing light in the foreground suggest the regeneration of social justice;
 - two figures hand in hand represent the sign of unity,
 - a dog, symbol of faithfulness,
 - a horn of plenty complete the picture
 - a *sans-culotte* (working man who supported the Republic).
- Painting by D. Jaurat, c. 1794

Procession to the Opening Meetings of the Estates General in Versailles, 4
May 1789



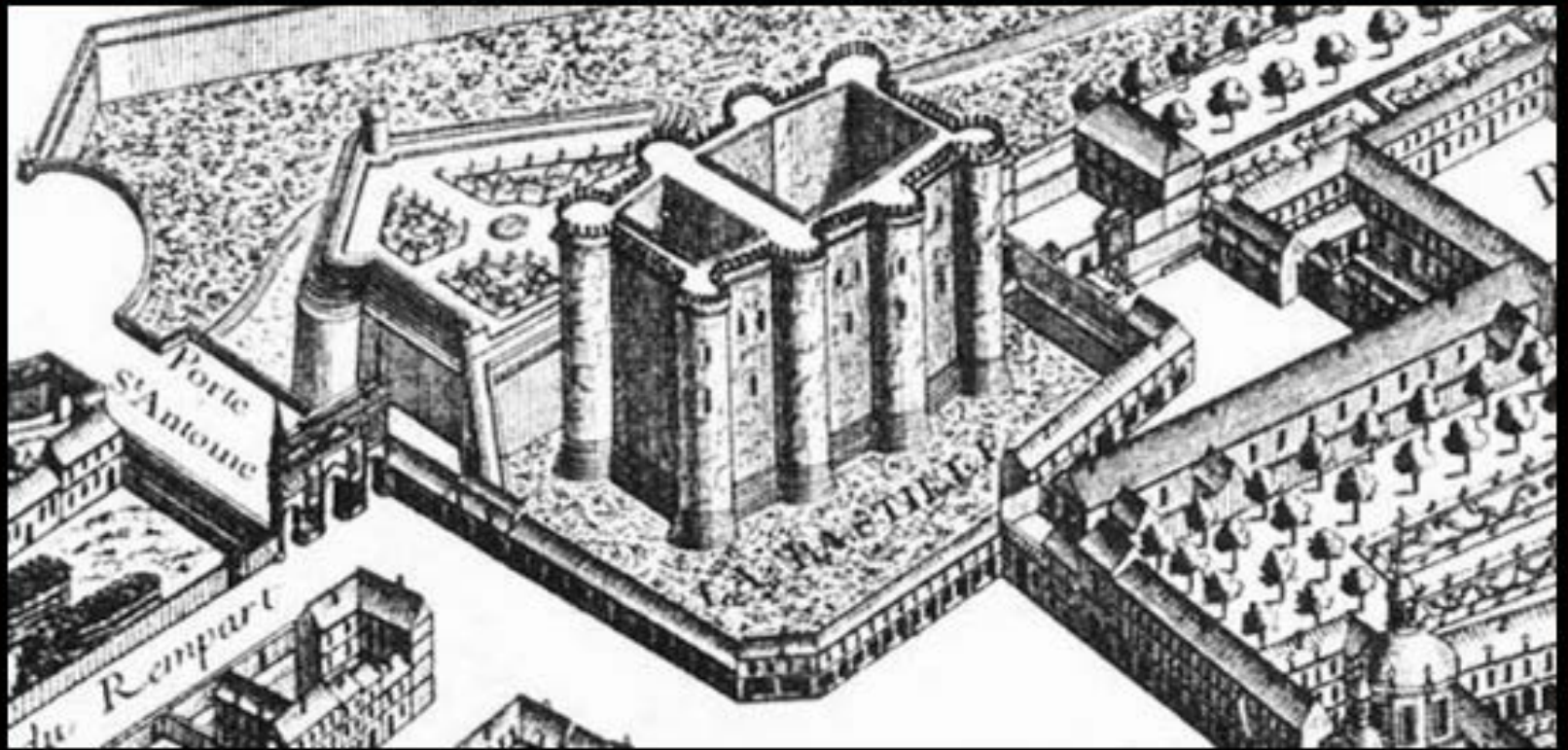
Oath of the Tennis Court, June 20, 1789, by Jacques-Louis David



"The Tennis Court Oath at Versailles by Jacques-Louis David"

The opening of a revolutionary situation

Royal prison of the Bastille in eastern Paris



Plan of the Bastille

Painting commemorating the taking of the Bastille, July 14, 1789



Louis XVI in sovereign dress



The beginning assault on Louix XVI

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity
EXPLORING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



"Long Live Liberty"

Cartoonists extrapolated more and more on a new Louis as the Revolution went along. Here, a rather rumpled King, dressed more like a shopkeeper than a monarch, opens a cage to let liberty out. Many scholars argue that the King was already desacralized as much as a couple of decades before the Revolution. Still Louis is associated with liberty here, and this treatment was mild compared with the personal attacks and the execution that would follow.

Source: mfr 90.46.59



Louis portrayed as a sot, with pot belly, and a bottle of wine. The image has Louis say "long live the Nation"

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity
EXPLORING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



"Louis Rides a Pig"

Equestrian skills were expected of a monarch. But portraying the King mounted on a pig was most unflattering. Linking royalty to animals was a theme that emerged after the flight to Varennes.

The Royal Family as Barnyard Animals

Caricature of the return of the king and queen following their attempted escape and capture at Varennes, June 1791



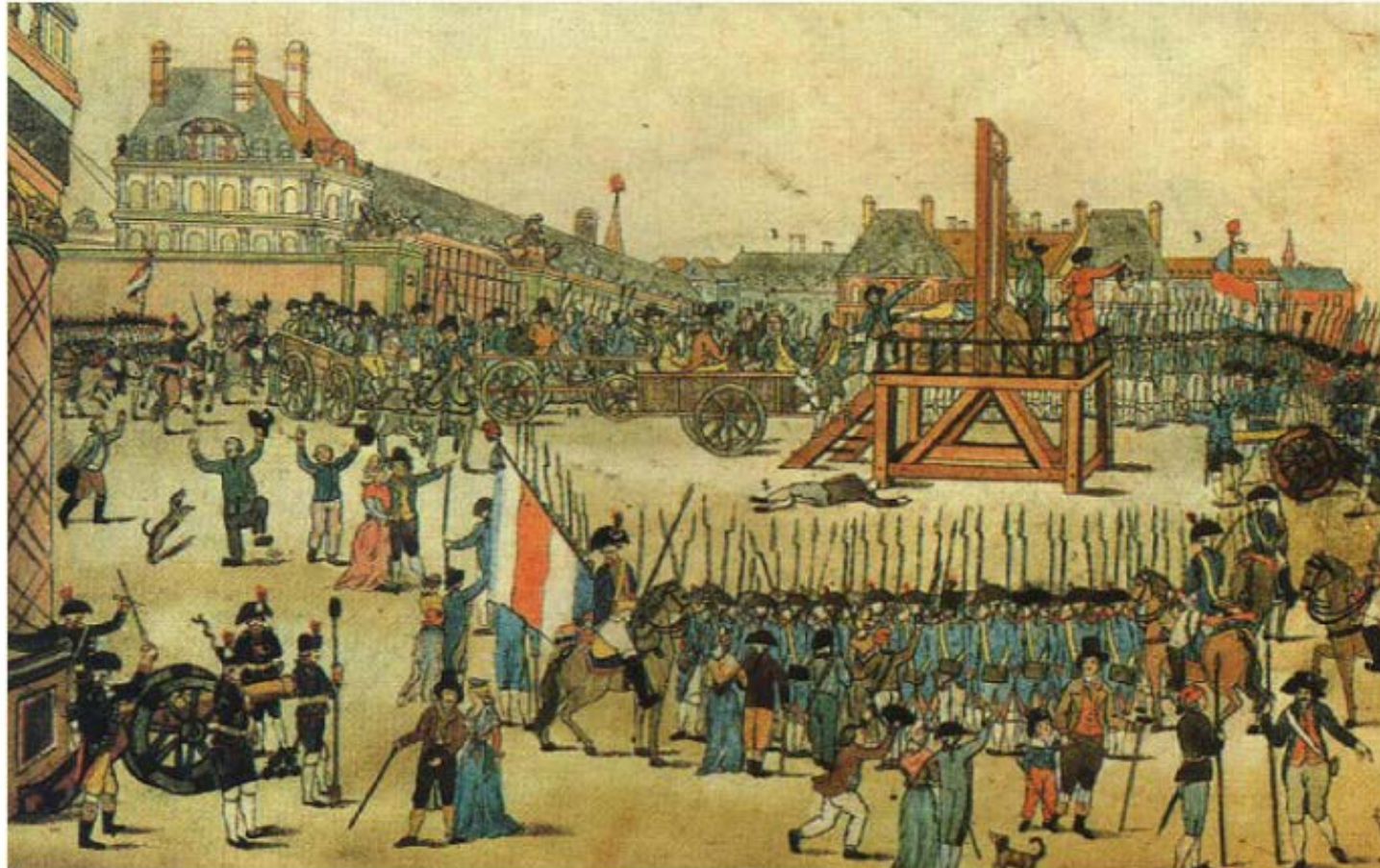
Louis XVI as a pig under the control of the Revolution, represented by a figure in bourgeois dress with the revolutionary colors, Blue, White, and Red



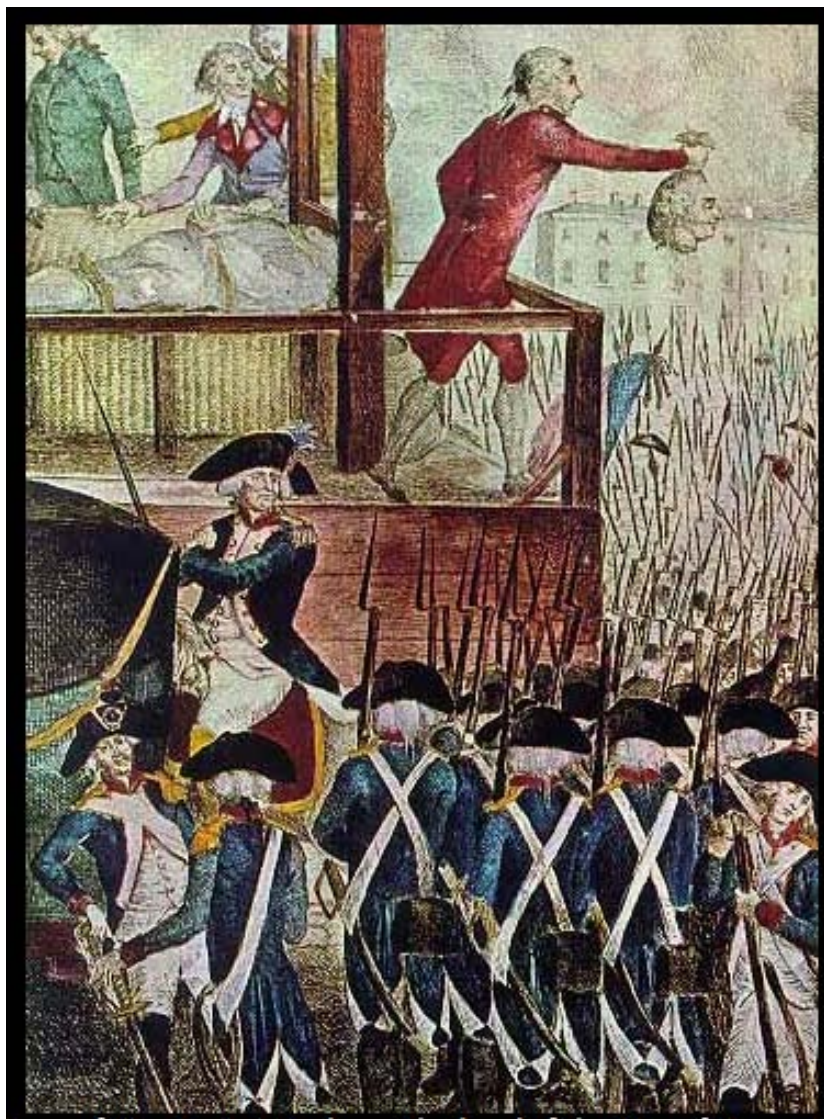
CAPTION: Ah! This cursed animal, it's caused me so much trouble to fatten up. It's so fat and mean that I'm going back to the market [to get rid of him] because I don't know what else to do.

Popular print of the execution of Louis XVI, January 21, 1793

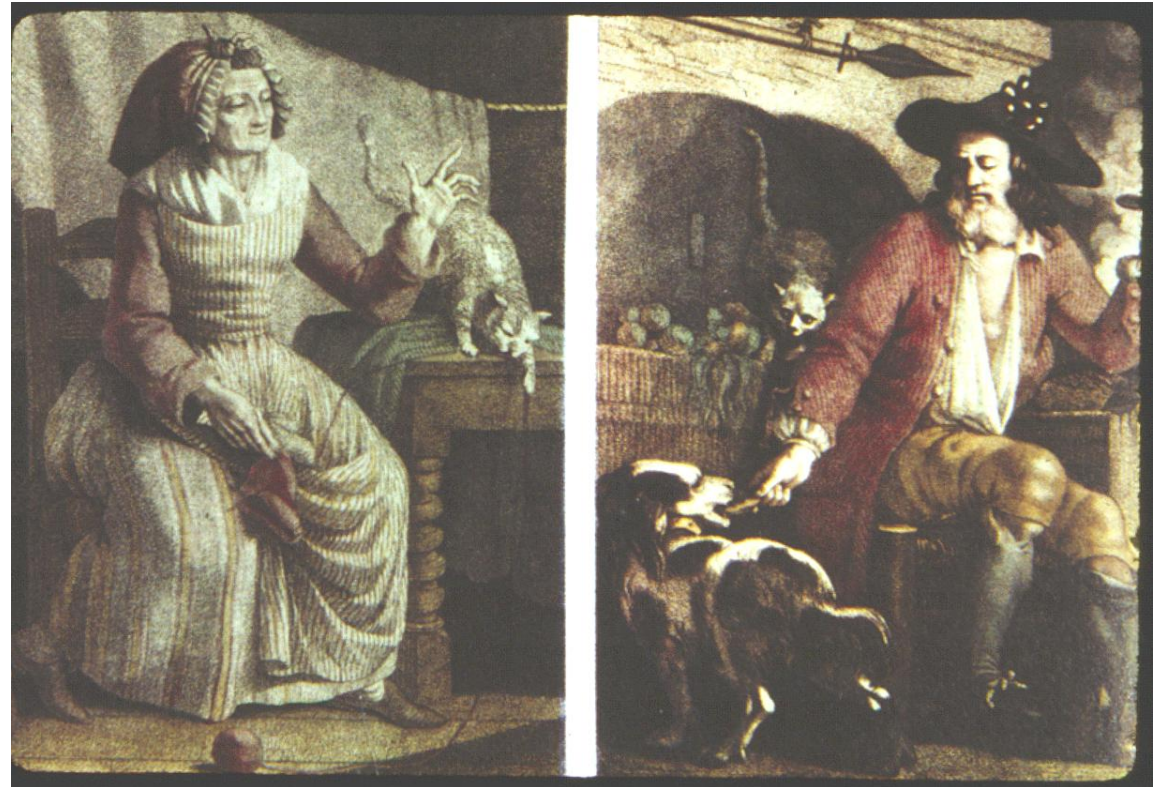
Execution of King Louis XVI



Showing the decapitated head of the king to the crowd.



The Good and Brave *Sans Culottes* of Paris—the rank and file of the popular movement—a positive representation



August 10, 1792: The Second Revolution and the Overthrow of the Constitutional Monarchy:
founding act of the First French Republic and the climactic scene in Renoir's "La
Marseillaise"



Climactic scene in
Renoir's "La
Marseillaise"



Invasion of the
Legislative Assembly:
popular demands for
the establishment of a
Republic

The Crude and Blood-thirsty *sans-culottes*, as portrayed in British caricatures—a hostile representation

