

The French Revolution 1789



Bastille 14 July 1789



Background to French Revolution

Ancien Regime – 18th C French feudal system

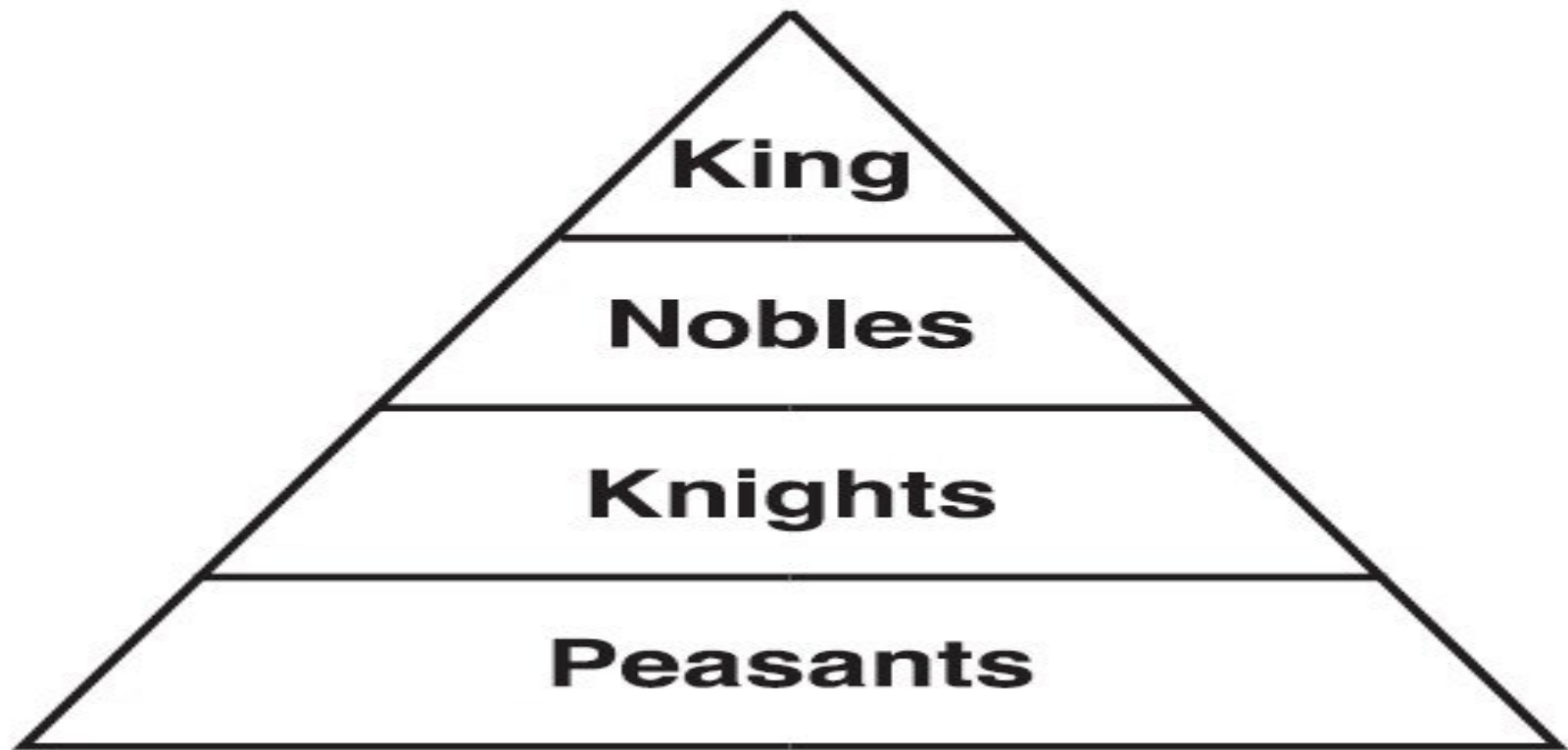
KING

CATHOLIC CHURCH HIERARCHY

NOBLES

Ancient Regime

European Feudal System



French workers and especially the peasants were burdened with heavy taxes and financed the state

The **Third Estate** i.e. professionals and business people became angry at having to pay so much tax and having no influence in return

Beginnings of Revolution

EQUALITY sought by THIRD ESTATE
influenced by writers such as:

Voltaire and Rousseau

American revolution encouraged French

Poor harvests + rising food costs of
1787 – 1789 – starvation

King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette



At Versailles in the Royal Court
remained a centre of wealth and
extravagance

Versailles Palace



King Louis XVI

He needed more taxes from the people to pay for French involvement in America

Meeting of Estates General in 1789

One man one vote rejected – so that Third Estate could not win

National Assembly formed by Third Estate

They demanded a fairer France and reforms

The Revolution Begins

Rumours that Louis XVI would use army to
crush National Assembly

July 14th 1789 a mob stormed the Bastille
Prison seeking weapons to defend the
National Assembly

Louis gave into demands of
National Assembly

National Assembly

**Reduced power and influence of Church
and Nobility**

**Declaration of the Rights of Man and the
Citizen**

LIBERTE, EGALITE, FRATERNITE

Louis and Marie Antoinette tried to escape in
1791 but were arrested at Varennes

A New Constitution was drawn up reducing
Louis to a figurehead in a

Constitutional Monarchy

Other monarchs in Europe feared that these
ideas might spread

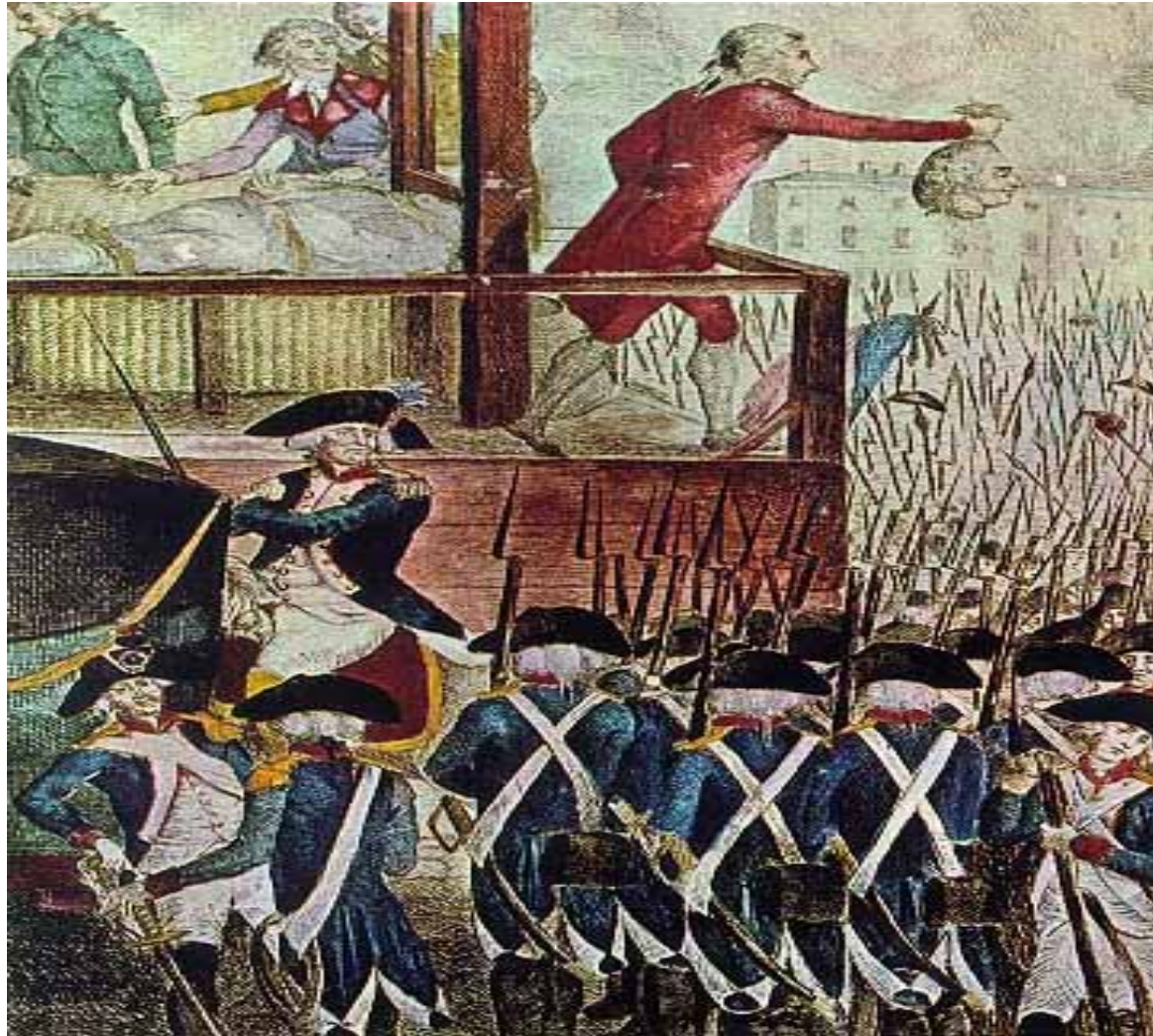
War between France and Austria in
April 1792

The Reign of Terror

Many nobles and churchmen killed as enemies of the Revolution

Louis was tried and convicted of treason and executed by **guillotine** in January 1793

Execution of Louis XVI



Jacobins led by **Maximilien Robespierre**

Sought more executions

Committee of Public Safety executed
thousands between 1793 – 1794

Marie Antoinette was executed in October
1793

Robespierre was arrested and executed in
1794

Results of French Revolution

The Directory ruled France after the Terror

Most of the main monarchies in Europe
opposed France

By 1800 great powers were given to army
generals such as Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon defeated in 1815 and monarch
was restored

Ancien Regime gone forever

Napoleon Bonaparte



Maximilien Robespierre

1758 - 1794

Background

Born arras and studied in Paris

– lawyer at age 23

Elected as a Third Estate delegate to the
Estates general in 1789

Joined Jacobins

Rose to prominence in 1792

The Reign of Terror

1793 - 1794

National Convention at end of 1792

Leader of new French Govt. in July 1793

Committee of Public Safety

Law of Suspects authority to imprison and execution enemies of Revolution on little evidence

Elected President of National convention in 1794

Deposed by his enemies he was arrested and executed in 1794



The death of Robespierre in 1794 ended the

Reign of Terror and France was ruled by a more moderate Directory until democracy was sidelined while France was ruled by army generals such as Napoleon from

1804 - 1815