

REPUBLICAN FRANCE

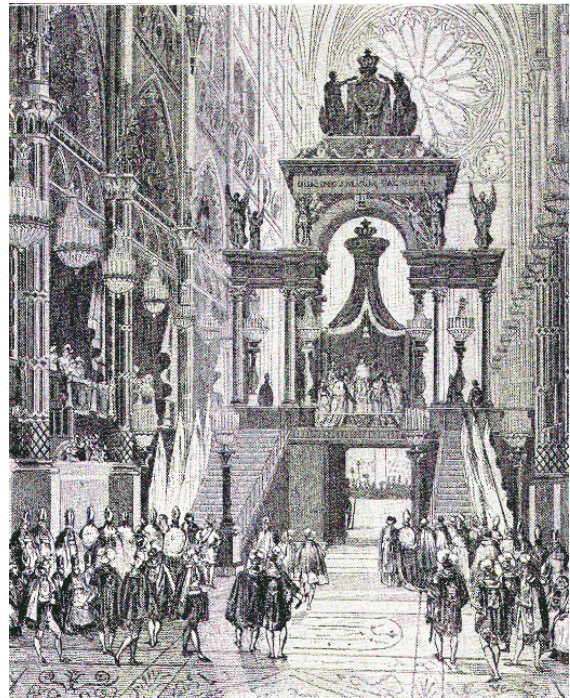
1815 TO 1914

RESTORATION OF LOUIS XVIII TO FIRST WORLD WAR

ERA SUMMARY – REPUBLICAN FRANCE

The Restoration and Republic period of France lasted 100 years, from the fall of Napoleon to the First World War. During this period, the French people deposed two kings and one emperor, established two republics and suffered through several periods of general anarchy. France was rich and prosperous in many ways, and the 19th century saw enormous advances in science, industry and commerce, but this prosperity only increased class resentment and political strife. The political factions in France during this time were strongly opposed to each other in issues of both religion and government philosophy. Although the conservative monarchist party was often willing to make concessions to moderate Republicans, the left wing Republican faction constantly agitated for radical wealth redistribution and the abolition of religion. The leftward drift of French politics, therefore, was only disrupted by periodic episodes of revolutionary violence which reminded the populace of the horrors of anarchy and the viciousness of a politicized mob.

The Restoration—After the collapse of Napoleon's empire, Louis XVIII, the brother of the deposed Bourbon king, was restored to the throne. The Restoration was never popular, but the French monarchy might have survived if it had a more capable and prolific leader. The "Royalist" party in France was composed largely of faithful Catholics who opposed the anti-clerical, atheistic influence in the Republican Party and saw the monarch as a necessary protection for Christianity. Unfortunately, neither Louis XVIII nor his brother Charles X was an effective leader, and worse yet, neither produced a promising heir to the throne. In the best of circumstances the Royalist party would have had difficulties, but due to the lack of a compelling claimant for the throne, their cause appeared hopeless. After only fifteen years, the Revolution of 1830 provided an opportunity for the Republicans to take charge.

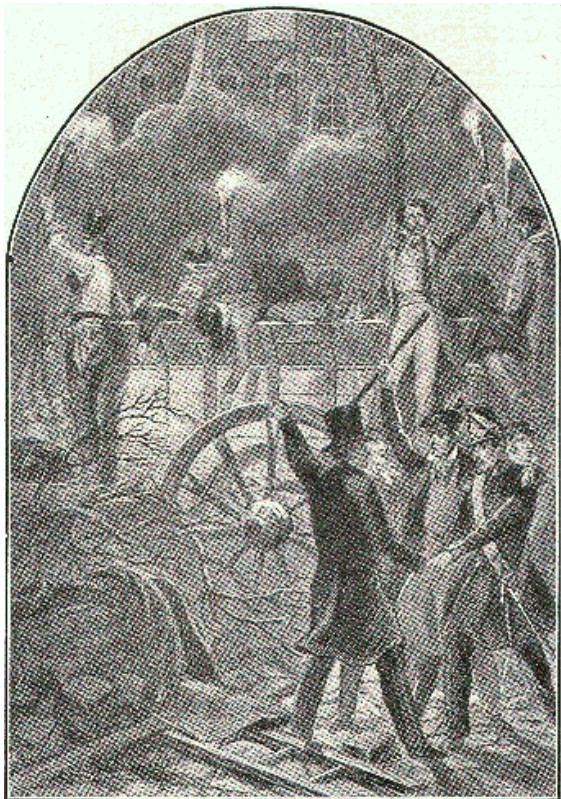


CORONATION OF CHARLES X

Since the time of the French revolution, the Republican Party had been composed of both conservative constitutionalists, such as Lafayette and the Girondists, and left-wing fanatics who pandered to the discontented mob and advocated a form of communism. Both royalists and

conservative republicans opposed the radicals but they differed regarding matters of religion. By 1830 republicans saw an opportunity to transition to a constitutional monarchy. Louis Philippe, a second cousin of King Charles, was not the legitimate heir. However, he was from the Royal family, a committed republican, and a friend of Lafayette. Both men had spent considerable time in America and were great fans of the Constitution, so when Lafayette proposed Louis Philippe to replace the deposed Charles X, he was accepted by both monarchists and republicans.

Revolution of 1848—Thiers and Guizot were highly competent ministers and for nearly twenty years the constitutional monarchy under Louis Philippe was relatively stable. The first secular public schools in France were established, and several other reforms of government were made. The government ministers, who remembered the horrors of the Reign of Terror, were careful to restrict the vote to men of property. This naturally caused grumbling and reduced the legitimacy of the government, but it was thought to be a necessary safeguard. When the Revolution of 1848 broke out however, the rioters insisted on democratic reforms and deposed the Royal family once and for all.



REVOLUTION OF 1848: MARTYRS OF LIBERTY.

The Revolution of 1848, which occurred not only in France, but throughout Europe, was likely coordinated by secret societies and outlawed political organizations. In France, the outbreak was worst in Paris and the city suffered under riot and anarchy for several months. Eventually a military government was imposed, with the promise of democratic elections. At the same time a French army was sent to Italy to put down the radical government that had taken over the Papal States.

Napoleon III and the Second Empire—Although Napoleon's rule ended in disaster for France, he was still remembered as a capable and charismatic leader who had brought unity and glory to the country. To many Frenchmen, he combined the most important reforms of Republicanism with strong executive leadership, and though irreligious himself, he was at least nominally supportive of the Catholic Church. The Bonapartist party, therefore, was popular throughout the 19th century in France, and when popular elections were finally held

Napoleon III, the nephew of the great general, was able to get himself elected as president with a large majority of votes. The chaos and anarchy that preceded Napoleon III's election was a

reminder of how difficult democratic government was for France, so within a few years Napoleon had himself elected emperor, with a great outpouring of popular support.

While Napoleon III tried to keep peace in Europe, his reign involved a considerable amount of military intervention overseas. After battling Algerian pirates France gained control of Algeria, Tunis, and Morocco in Africa. In Asia, she joined forces with England during the second Opium War, and also gained colonies in "Cochin china", now Vietnam. In the Middle East, she opposed Russia's expansion by allying with Britain and Turkey, and helped develop the Suez Canal in cooperation with Egypt. And in Mexico, France tried to establish an empire under Archduke Maximilian but was eventually forced to withdraw by the United States. Napoleon's only major foray into European politics involved supporting Sardinia in her war to drive Austria out of Northern Italy. His involvement in Italy was controversial, however, so he withdrew French troops at the first opportunity.

Franco Prussian War and the Commune of Paris—Unfortunately for Napoleon III, the downfall of his empire was being carefully planned by Bismarck, the Prussian master-strategist. By clever alliances and diplomatic manipulation, Bismarck was able to provoke three European wars between 1864 and 1870, each of which dramatically increased Prussian territory and influence. In 1870 he turned his attention to France, manipulated Napoleon III into declaring war, and vanquished the French within a few months, and demanded territory and over a billion dollars in "reparations". France was utterly humiliated, Napoleon was captured and forced to resign, and his government was in shambles. The Prussians surrounded Paris, but since there was no legitimate government in place, France could not even manage to surrender. Eventually Thiers, a well-respected statesman of the Louis Philippe era, was able to put together a temporary government capable of signing a peace agreement. He was forced to borrow an enormous amount of money and pay off the war indemnity before German soldiers left France.

But the worst was yet to come. Without a legitimate government in Paris, the radicals formed a "commune", and presided over an orgy of violence, pillage, murder, and desecration. Not since the worst days of the Reign of Terror had France seen such mayhem. The National Guard had barely recovered from the German invasion before it was called to march on Paris and recapture it from their fellow Frenchmen. The Paris rioters took over fortifications and prepared to defend the city but once it was clear that the army would prevail, the leaders set fire to many of the city's most cherished monuments and assassinated hundreds of hostages. Once the French guard recaptured the city and saw firsthand the atrocities committed, they took horrible vengeance on the radical leaders and slaughtered thousands of suspected communists. Many were shot on site and those that survived either fled the city or were exiled.

The Third Republic—By the time the provisional government had retaken Paris, the radical republican element of the government was entirely subdued. An election for President was held and General McMahon, a highly respected conservative "Royalist" was selected. The president himself would have preferred to return to a constitutional monarchy but given the lack of credible heirs to the throne there was no alternative but to accept a Republic. McMahon's conservative leadership, combined with the suppression of radical political parties got the Third Republic off on solid footing.

Once the communist element of the political spectrum was purged, the major difference between "conservative" and "liberal" wings of the government regard the Republic's policies towards the Catholic Church. It was in this area that the policies of the Republic were most contentions over the following decades, and the anti-clerical wing of the Republic made steady progress in restricting the rights and privileges of the Church. Only four years after McMahon retired a "public school" bill was passed that prohibited many religious orders from teaching. Under the influence of Freemasonry and other anti-clerical organizations, Catholics in public office were spied upon and denied promotion. Finally, in 1905, the French passed a law completely separating the Church and State in France and at the same time placed all church properties in the hands of lay-organizations. This put an end to a great many Catholic institutions since the Pope insisted on independence in ecclesiastical matters. After the Great War a partial compromise was achieved; however, France remains today one of the most aggressively secular and anti-Catholic countries of Europe.



NAPOLEON III AND BISMARCK AT SEDAN

CHARACTERS – REPUBLICAN FRANCE

LAST KINGS OF FRANCE

- Louis XVIII of France** 1755–1824 French monarch restored to the throne after the collapse of Napoleon's empire. Brother of Louis XVI killed during revolution.
- Charles X** 1757–1836 Last French Bourbon King. Abdicated the throne during the Revolution of 1830.
- Louis Philippe** 1773–1850 French noble who with liberal sympathies. Proclaimed king after abdication of Charles X.
- Archduke Maximilian of Austria** 1832–1867 Archduke who was proclaimed Emperor of Mexico. Overthrown and executed by republicans.

BONAPARTISTS

- Napoleon III** 1808–1873 Nephew of Napoleon, elected emperor of France after revolution of 1848. Deposed after disastrous Franco-Prussian War.
- Eugene de Beauharnais** 1781–1824 Stepson of Napoleon, who accompanied him on all his early campaigns. Later Prince of Italy.
- Hortense de Beauharnais** 1783–1837 Step-daughter and sister-in-law of Napoleon Bonaparte, and mother of Napoleon III of France.
- Empress Eugenie** 1826–1920 Wife of Napoleon III and Empress of France. Influential figure in society and fashion as well as politics.

STATESMEN

- Leon Gambetta** 1838–1882 Radical Republican politician who came to prominence after the Franco-Prussian War. Served briefly as Prime Minister.
- Patrice MacMahon** 1808–1893 First elected president of the Third French Republic. Conservative popular with both Monarchists and Bonapartists.
- Adolphe Thiers** 1797–1877 Respected minister during reign of Louis Philippe, and chosen first president of the Third Republic.
- Francois Guizot** 1787–1874 Served as a minister to Louis Philippe. Influential in establishing Public education in France.
- Ferdinand de Lesseps** 1805–1894 French diplomat in charge of development of the Suez canal. His canal project in Panama failed with great loss.

NOTABLE CITIZENS

- Alfred Dreyfus** 1859–1935 Jewish artillery officer falsely accused of treason. Subject of international anti-Semite scandal.
- Louis Pasteur** 1822–1895 Renowned scientist in bacteriology. Helped develop germ theory of disease and pasteurization process.
- Madame Curie** 1867–1934 A pioneer in the field of radioactivity, and first female winner of the Nobel prize in physics.
- Victor Hugo** 1802–1885 French novelist, known for classics such as *Les Miserables* and *Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

TIMELINE – REPUBLICAN FRANCE

RESTORATION: 1814-1848

- 1815 Napoleon defeated at Waterloo, sent into exile. Marshal Ney shot as a traitor.
- 1815 **Congress of Vienna**, led by Metternich redraws map of Europe; restores monarchies.
- 1815 Restoration of [Louis XVIII of France](#) to the throne. Bonaparte family exiled from France.
- 1821 Death of Napoleon in exile at St. Helena.
- 1824 Death of Louis XVIII. Charles X ascends to the throne of France.
- 1827 Algiers conquered by France.
- 1830 Revolution of 1830. Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, made king. A constitutional monarchy replaces the Bourbon line.
- 1832 Death of Napoleon II crushes hopes of Bonapartist party for a restoration of Empire.
- 1833 Public school established throughout France.
- 1842 Prince of Orleans dies unexpectedly, leaving Orleans succession in doubt.

SECOND REPUBLIC: 1849-1851, AND SECOND EMPIRE: 1852-1870

- 1848 Revolution of 1848. Chaos and Anarchy reign.
- 1849 [Napoleon III](#) is elected president of the Second republic. French troops sent to defend Rome.
- 1852 [Napoleon III](#) dissolves National Assembly and has himself "elected" as Emperor.
- 1853 [Napoleon III](#) marries Eugenie de Montijo, a French-Spanish commoner.
- 1853-56 France allies with England against Russian in the [Crimean War](#).
- 1856-60 **Opium War**.
- 1859 France drives Austria out of Northern Italy. **2nd War of Italian Independence**; Battles of **Magenta**, **Solferino**.
- 1862 French establish colony in "Cochin China" (modern-day Vietnam).
- 1861-67 French intervention in Mexico. Maximilian installed as Emperor, then deserted.
- 1869 Opening of Suez Canal.
- 1870-71 [Franco Prussian War](#). Napoleon III resigns.

THIRD REPUBLIC: 1870-1914

- 1871 Paris Commune.
- 1871 Thiers, representing Orleanist faction, becomes first president of provisional Republic.
- 1873 McMahon, representing monarchist faction, becomes second president of provisional Republic.
- 1875 French constitution is ratified.
- 1879 [Prince Napoleon](#), heir to the Bonaparte Monarchy, dies in Zululand.

- 1879 Grevey, representing republican faction, elected president.
- 1882 Jules Ferry Laws: Secular public schools.
- 1886 Statue of Liberty, designed in France, is presented as a gift to the United States.
- 1887 Carnot elected president.
- 1889 Eiffel Tower built for French World's Fair, on the anniversary of the French revolution.
- 1895 Favre elected president, representing the Liberal party.
- 1895 First trial of Alfred Dreyfuss.
- 1899 Second trial of Alfred Dreyfuss.
- 1904 Emile Combes anti-clerical scandal.
- 1905 Separation of Church and State. All Catholic buildings confiscated by the state.

RECOMMENDED READING – REPUBLICAN FRANCE

CORE READING ASSIGNMENTS *

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| Guerber - <i>The Story of Modern France</i> | Death of Louis XVIII to France in Our Day (19) |
| Macgregor - <i>The Story of France</i> | The Revolution of July to "The Man of Sedan" (4) |

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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|---|--|
| Birkhead - <i>Heroes of Modern Europe</i> | Napoleon III (1) |
| Upton - <i>Eugenie - Empress of France</i> | <i>entire book</i> |
| Upton - <i>Maximilian in Mexico</i> | <i>entire book</i> |
| Morris - <i>Nations of Europe and the Great War</i> | Ambition of Louis Napoleon (1) |
| Morris - <i>Nations of Europe and the Great War</i> | The French Republic (1) |
| Abbott - <i>History of Prussia</i> | France Invaded to The Commune (11) |
| Abbott - <i>Louis Philippe</i> | <i>entire book</i> |
| Abbott - <i>Hortense</i> | <i>entire book</i> |

SPECIAL INTEREST - MILITARY

- | | |
|---|--|
| Fraser - <i>Boys' Book of Battles</i> | Sedan (1) |
| Morris - <i>Nations of Europe and the Great War</i> | The Franco-Prussian War (1) |
| Morris - <i>Historical Tales - French</i> | The Franco-Prussian War (1) |
| Abbott - <i>History of Prussia</i> | France Invaded to The Commune (11) |

* *Level I and II Study Questions are based on Core Reading Assignments.*