**French Revolution Effects!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HITS THE STREETS: THE BASTILLE AND THE GREAT FEAR** On June 12, as the National Assembly (known as the National Constituent Assembly during its work on a constitution) continued to meet at Versailles, fear and violence consumed the capital. Though enthusiastic about the recent breakdown of royal power, Parisians grew panicked as rumors of an impending military coup began to circulate. A popular insurgency culminated on July 14 when rioters stormed the Bastille fortress in an attempt to secure gunpowder and weapons; many consider this event, now commemorated in France as a national holiday, as the start of the French Revolution. The wave of revolutionary fervor and widespread hysteria quickly swept the countryside. Revolting against years of exploitation, peasants looted and burned the homes of tax collectors, landlords and the seigniorial elite. Known as the Great Fear (“la Grande peur”), the agrarian insurrection hastened the growing exodus of nobles from the country and inspired the National Constituent Assembly to abolish feudalism on August 4, 1789, signing what the historian Georges Lefebvre later called the “death certificate of the old order.”

**THE FRENCH REVOLUTION’S POLITICAL CULTURE: DRAFTING A CONSTITUTION** On August 4, the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (“Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen”), a statement of democratic principles grounded in the philosophical and political ideas of Enlightenment thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). The document proclaimed the Assembly’s commitment to replace the ancien régime with a system based on equal opportunity, freedom of speech, popular sovereignty and representative government.

Drafting a formal constitution proved much more of a challenge for the National Constituent Assembly, which had the added burden of functioning as a legislature during harsh economic times. For months, its members wrestled with fundamental questions about the shape and expanse of France’s new political landscape. For instance, who would be responsible for electing delegates? Would the clergy owe allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church or the French government? Perhaps most importantly, how much authority would the king, his public image further weakened after a failed attempt to flee in June 1791, retain? Adopted on September 3, 1791, France’s first written constitution echoed the more moderate voices in the Assembly, establishing a constitutional monarchy in which the king enjoyed royal veto power and the ability to appoint ministers. This compromise did not sit well with influential radicals like Maximilien de Robespierre (1758-1794), Camille Desmoulins (1760-1794) and Georges Danton (1759-1794), who began drumming up popular support for a more republican form of government and the trial of Louis XVI.

**THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TURNS RADICAL: TERROR AND REVOLT** In April 1792, the newly elected Legislative Assembly declared war on Austria and Prussia, where it believed that French émigrés were building counterrevolutionary alliances; it also hoped to spread its revolutionary ideals across Europe through warfare. On the domestic front, meanwhile, the political crisis took a radical turn when a group of insurgents led by the extremist Jacobins attacked the royal residence in Paris and arrested the king on August 10, 1792. The following month, amid a wave of violence in which Parisian insurrectionists massacred hundreds of accused counterrevolutionaries, the Legislative Assembly was replaced by the National Convention, which proclaimed the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the French republic. On January 21, 1793, it sent King Louis XVI, condemned to death for high treason and crimes against the state, to the guillotine; his wife Marie-Antoinette (1755-1793) suffered the same fate nine months later.

Following the king’s execution, war with various European powers and intense divisions within the National Convention ushered the French Revolution into its most violent and turbulent phase. In June 1793, the Jacobins seized control of the National Convention from the more moderate Girondins and instituted a series of radical measures, including the establishment of a new calendar and the eradication of Christianity. They also unleashed the bloody Reign of Terror (“la Terreur”), a 10-month period in which suspected enemies of the revolution were guillotined by the thousands. Many of the killings were carried out under orders from Robespierre, who dominated the draconian Committee of Public Safety until his own execution on July 28, 1794. His death marked the beginning of the Thermidorian Reaction, a moderate phase in which the French people revolted against the Reign of Terror’s excesses. Over 17,000 people were officially tried and executed during the Reign of Terror, and an unknown number of others died in prison or without trial.

**THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ENDS: NAPOLEON’S RISE** On August 22, 1795, the National Convention, composed largely of Girondins who had survived the Reign of Terror, approved a new constitution that created France’s first bicameral legislature. Executive power would lie in the hands of a five-member Directory (“Directoire”) appointed by parliament. Royalists and Jacobins protested the new regime but were swiftly silenced by the army, now led by a young and successful general named Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821).The Directory’s four years in power were riddled with financial crises, popular discontent, inefficiency and, above all, political corruption. By the late 1790s, the directors relied almost entirely on the military to maintain their authority and had ceded much of their power to the generals in the field. On November 9, 1799, as frustration with their leadership reached a fever pitch, Bonaparte staged a coup d’état, abolishing the Directory and appointing himself France’s “first consul.” The event marked the end of the French Revolution and the beginning of the Napoleonic era, in which France would come to dominate much of continental Europe.

Using your notes, write down if you think the French Revolution changed society in a productive manner.