

History B356 Midterm Review

“The prince need render account of his acts to no one. ‘I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not on an evil thing for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?’ [Eccles. 8:3-4]” Without this absolute authority the king could neither do good nor repress evil. It is necessary that his power be such that no one can hope to escape him, and, finally, the only protection of individuals against the public authority should be their innocence.”

Bossuet, *Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture* (1709).

“There are wars in which the people only take an interest because of their submission to the King, but this war is of a different nature. It is the English nation which, by unanimous agreement, has attacked our nation to deprive us of something that belongs to all of us.”

Elie Fréron, *L'Année littéraire [The Literary Year]*, (1756).

“What happened in my *parlements* of Pau and Rennes is of no concern of my other *parlements*. I have acted with regard to these two courts as my authority required, and I owe an explanation to no one.... The magistracy does not form a body nor a separate order among the three orders of the kingdom. The magistrates are my officers, responsible for carrying out my royal duty of rendering justice to my subjects, a function that ties them to me personally and that will always render them praiseworthy in my eyes.”

Louis XV in *lit de justice* (March 1766).

“The prisoner in the Bastille is surrendered to total silence, to a void existence more cruel than death since it does not exclude grief, but in fact causes it... With no resources, with no diversions but his own thoughts or alarms, the state prisoner is given over to the most bitter sentiments that can agitate a heart. Abandoned to all the horrors of listlessness, of inaction, he is daily aware of the approaching end of his existence.”

Simon-Henri Linguet, *Memoirs of the Bastille* (1783).

“‘Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, only obey!’ A republic could not dare say such a thing. Here is shown a strange and unexpected trend in human affairs in which almost everything, looked at in the large, is paradoxical. A greater degree of civil freedom appears advantageous to the freedom of mind of the people, and yet it places inescapable limitations upon it.”

Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment* (1784).

“It is not possible in the nation to find a place for the caste of nobles. I know that there are countless individuals whose infirmities, incapacity, incurable laziness, or the weight of bad habits render strangers to the labors of society. ... But the worst possible arrangement would be where not just isolated individuals, but a whole class of citizens should take pride in remaining motionless in the midst of general movement, and should

consume the largest part of the products without bearing any part in its production. The noble order is not less estranged from the generality of us by its civil and political prerogatives.”

abbé Sieyes, *What is the Third Estate?*

“At a time when the law will be common for all and when the division of France into departments and districts has not yet been decided, I do not think it necessary to ask for a special decision about the judicial and administrative organization of your town. It still hasn’t been decided how many divisions and sub-divisions there will be in Normandy, nor which cities will be the capitals; it is possible that there will be six separate departments, with nine districts in each (and nine cantons in each of those). Normandy’s large population requires these divisions. To all appearances, it seems that the Perche and the Thimerais, as well as part of French Vexin, will be united with our province....”

Thomas Lindet, letter to municipal officials in Bernay, November 1789.

“My Brother, Everything happens at once and we make no progress. The division in the Assembly is striking: the room is like a battlefield where two opposing armies face off. They have been equal, but the opposition is shrinking. They win small victories but they lose the big battles. For instance, yesterday they got one of theirs, the scheming abbé de Montesquiou, elected president of the Assembly but the same day, after the most raucous debate we have had, we provisionally suspended payment on all pensions worth more than 3000 *livres*. They will be paid up to that amount, and up to 12,000 *livres* if the pension holder is over seventy. No pension, salary, or honorarium will be paid to those who have left the country.”

Thomas Lindet, letter to his brother, January 1790.

“The section, gathered in the number of more than 600 citizens, considering the dangers that face the fatherland... Considering that Louis XVI has lost the confidence of the nation, that the constituted powers have no force other than public opinion, and that the expression of this opinion is a strict and sacred duty of all citizens; Consequently declares to all its brothers [the other sections] that it no longer recognizes Louis XVI as King of the French...”

Registers of the Mauconseil Section, July 31, 1792.

“A mass of sabers, pikes, and bayonets rushed at us from all sides... our brave guards swooped us back into the Assembly. There, the valiant *sans-culottes* had appeared at the rail and demanded to speak. They explained to us that the sovereign people, making use of that sovereignty, had charged them to tell us of its respect ... and that we were the only constituted authority. There was no other authority in existence.”

Michel Azema, member of the Legislative Assembly, letter.

“A trial for Louis XVI! Louis has already been deposed for his crimes. He called the French people rebels and he called for the support of his fellow tyrants. Victory and the people have decided that he alone was the rebel. He cannot be judged, he has already been condemned.”

Maximilien Robespierre, speech to the National Convention.

“This was the most terrible day I ever saw. As a good citizen, I went out early with a green and white cockade in my hat, as the city had ordered—but I was immediately warned to take it off and get a red and blue one. I found myself at the *Hôtel de Ville* [City Hall], where the square was filled with an enormous crowd, nearly all armed... I heard someone cry “To the Invalides!” [veterans’ hospital and home] and in an instant thousands of men headed that direction, returning two hours later with cannons and many rifles. [In the afternoon], the decision to take the Bastille having been reached, this ancient fortress was taken for the first time ever in little more than two hours.”

Jean George Wille, *Memoirs and Diary* (published, 1857).

“Many years before the French Revolution, men who called themselves Philosophers conspired against the God of the Gospel, against Christianity... The grand object of this conspiracy was to overturn every altar where Christ is adored... This school soon combined with a conspiracy against kings ... [and joined that ancient sect known as the Freemasons] who only initiate the chosen of the elect into the secret of their unrelenting hatred for Christ and kings.”

abbé Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* (1797).

“In this lay her glorious error, her touching and sublime weakness: the Revolution, it must be confessed, commenced by loving everything. She loved even her enemy, England. She loved, and long she strove to save, royalty, the keystone of the abuses which she had just demolished. ... This universal sympathy which, at first, made her adopt and indiscreetly mingle so many contradictory elements, led her to inconsistency,—to wish and not to wish, to do and undo, at the same time.”

Jules Michelet, *History of the French Revolution* (1847).

“The ultimate cause of the French Revolution of 1789 goes deep into the history of France and of the western world. At the end of the eighteenth century, the social structure of France was aristocratic...having originated at a time when land was almost the only form of wealth and when the possessors of land were the masters of those who needed it. ... Meanwhile, the growth of commerce and industry had created, step by step, a new form of wealth, mobile or commercial wealth, and a new class, called in France the bourgeoisie...”

Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution* (1939).

Events for the chronology exercises

18th of Brumaire, Year VIII

Assembly of Notables meets

Battle of Valmy

Bonaparte put in charge of Army of Italy

Brunswick Manifesto

Civil Constitution of the clergy

declaration of a Republic

Directory begins

execution of Louis XVI
Flight to Varennes
France declares war on Austria and Prussia
Great Fear
Law of Suspects
Legislative Assembly begins meeting
Louis XVI convokes the Estates-General
Louis XVI forced to put on "liberty bonnet"
Marat killed in his bathtub
Maximum abolished
National (Constituent) Assembly begins meeting
National Convention begins meeting
ninth of thermidor, Year II
Parlement of Paris recalled from Troyes
privilege "abolished"
purge of the Girondins
storming of the Bastille
Tennis Court Oath
the tenth of August
Vendée erupts into civil war
What is the Third Estate? published
women's march from Paris to Versailles