

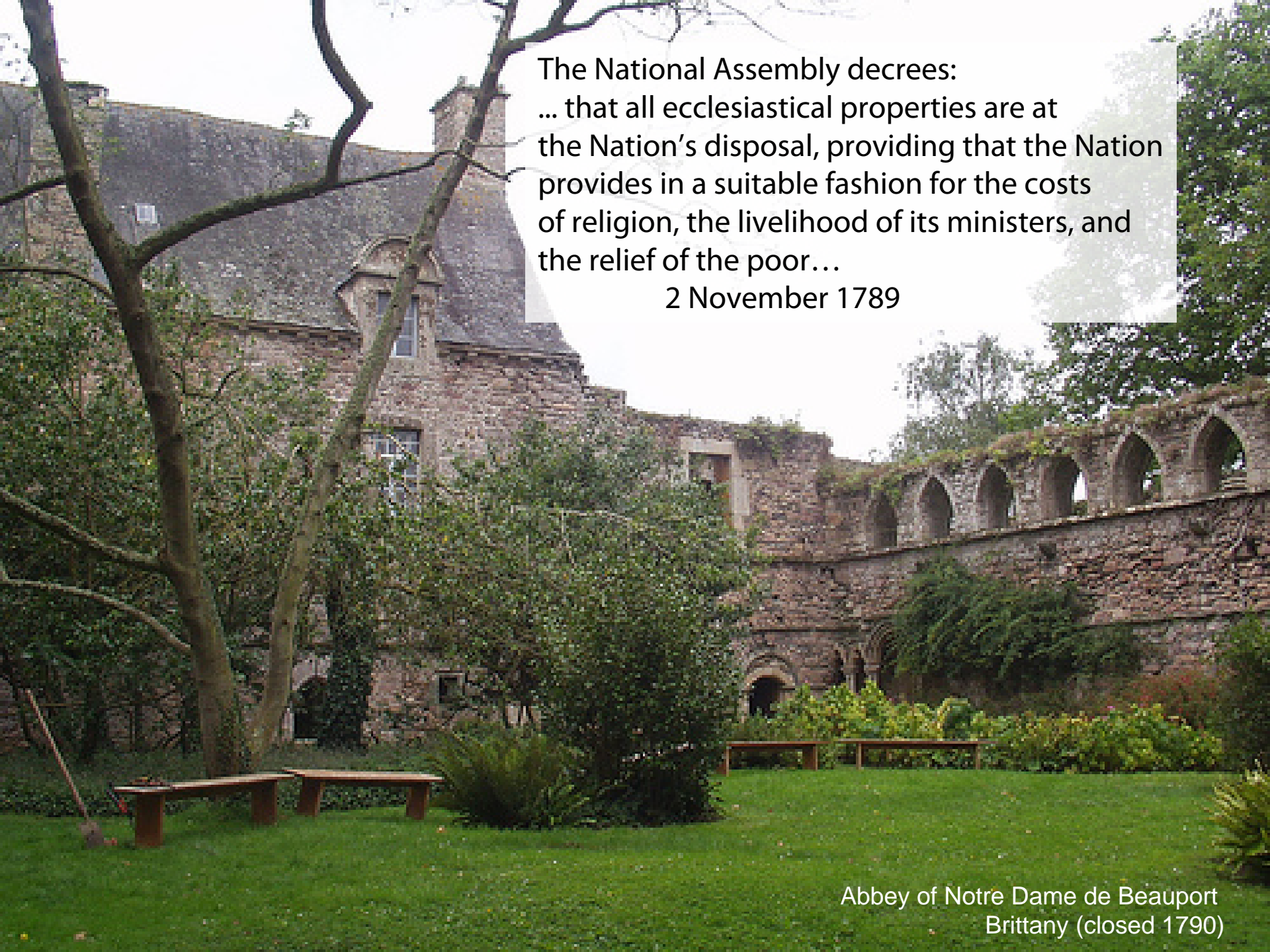
Liberty, Equality, and Property



Liberty, Equality, Property

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights...
2. The purpose of all political associations is the preservation of the natural rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression....
13. For maintenance of public authority and for expenses of administration, common taxation is indispensable. It should be apportioned equally among all citizens depending on their capacity to pay....
17. Property being an inviolable and sacred right, no one may be deprived of it except when public necessity, certified by law, obviously requires it, and on the condition of a just compensation in advance.





The National Assembly decrees:
... that all ecclesiastical properties are at
the Nation's disposal, providing that the Nation
provides in a suitable fashion for the costs
of religion, the livelihood of its ministers, and
the relief of the poor...

2 November 1789

Abbey of Notre Dame de Beauport
Brittany (closed 1790)

Property ownership central to Revolution, 1789-1792.

Sieyes, *What is the Third Estate?*

active vs. passive citizens

First Estate's property was not sacred, however.

Why?

With what consequences?

Conclusion: revolution in this period is not necessarily *led by* a "bourgeoisie" but it solidifies legal categories (such as private property) generally considered central to modern, "bourgeois" society.



"This too great weight can only be bad for you,
We must, gentlemen, we must take it from you."

It is not sufficient to show that privileged persons, far from being useful to the nation, cannot but enfeeble and injure it; it is necessary to prove further that the noble order does not enter at all into the social organization; [it is] a burden upon the nation

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.

What is the Third Estate?

abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès

January 1789



Jean-Baptiste Greuze,
Indolence (1757).

... dependency makes men untrustworthy...
Who does not know that servants are more harsh and bold to defend their masters' interests than the masters themselves? [*this does not mean, however, that the Third Estate includes no intelligent or courageous members*] ...Look at the *available* classes of the Third Estate; like everyone else, I call "available" those classes where some sort of affluence enables men to receive a liberal education, to train their minds and take an interest in public affairs.

Such classes have no interest other than that of the rest of the People...

abbé Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?* (January 1789)



Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, 1748-1836

Natural and civil rights are those *for the defense of which* society is formed; and political rights, those *by which* society is formed. It would be better and more clear if we called the first *passive* rights and the second, *active* rights.

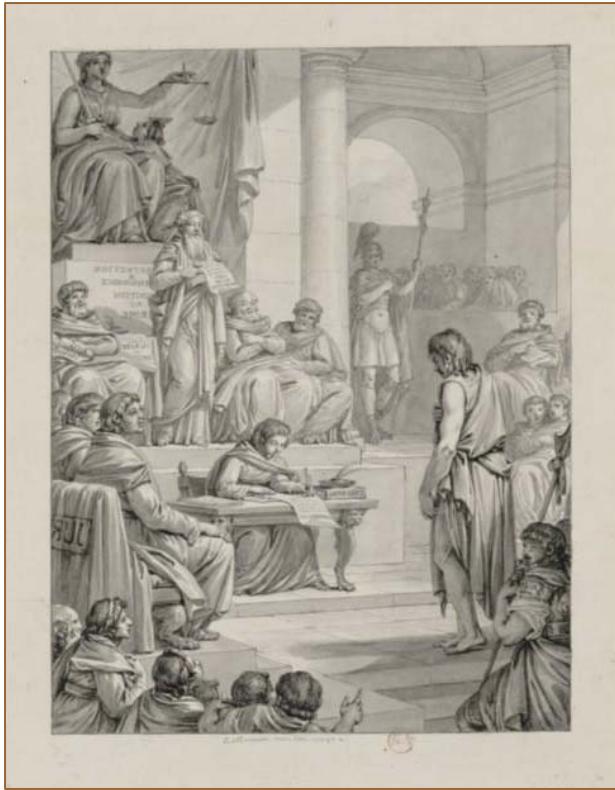
All the inhabitants of a country must enjoy *passive* rights... they all have a right to protect themselves, their property, etc. ... But all cannot be *active* citizens. Women, at least in our current state, children, foreigners, and in general those who contribute nothing to the public order must not have an active influence... All can enjoy the advantages of society, but those who contribute to the public good are truly the stockholders of the great social enterprise...

Sieyès, "Introductory Comments," *Plan for a Declaration of Rights*

All citizens, whoever they are, have the right to aspire to all levels of office-holding. Nothing is more in line with your declaration of rights, according to which all privileges, all distinctions, all exceptions must disappear. The Constitution establishes that sovereignty resides in the people, in all the individuals of the people. .. If he who only pays a tax equivalent to a day of work has fewer rights than he who pays the equivalent to three days of work... then he who enjoys 100,000 *livres* of revenue should have 100 times as many rights as he who only has 1,000 *livres* of revenue.

Maximilien Robespierre, Speech opposing the distinction between active and passive citizens, 22 October 1789.

Active and Passive in the 1791 Constitution



“Justice holds the scales that equalize all citizens in the face of the law” (1791)

active citizen (4.3 million):
male

has taken civic oath

25 years old

fixed residence for one year

member of National Guard

pays tax equal to three days' labor

not a bankrupt, servant, or slave



passive citizen (2.7 million):

male

born in France of French father

born abroad to French father and took civic oath

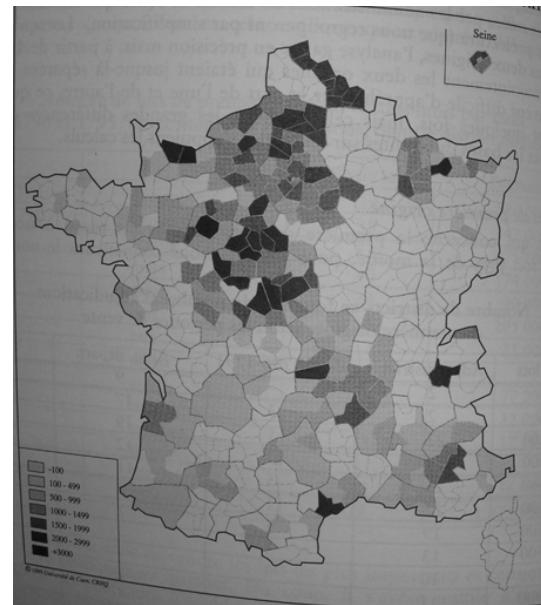
born in France of foreign father and lives in France

former French subjects who have returned from
exile (French Protestants) and taken oath

Shrinking Size of the First Estate, 1789-1795



Total clergy in 1789	169,500 (includes 55,000 nuns)
abdicate (i.e., renounce vows)	30,000 approximately
take civil oath	27,623
emigrate	24,500-40,000



Number of sales of “original” *biens nationaux*, by district, 1790-1795 (darker areas = more sales)

First Estate’s property was different, however.

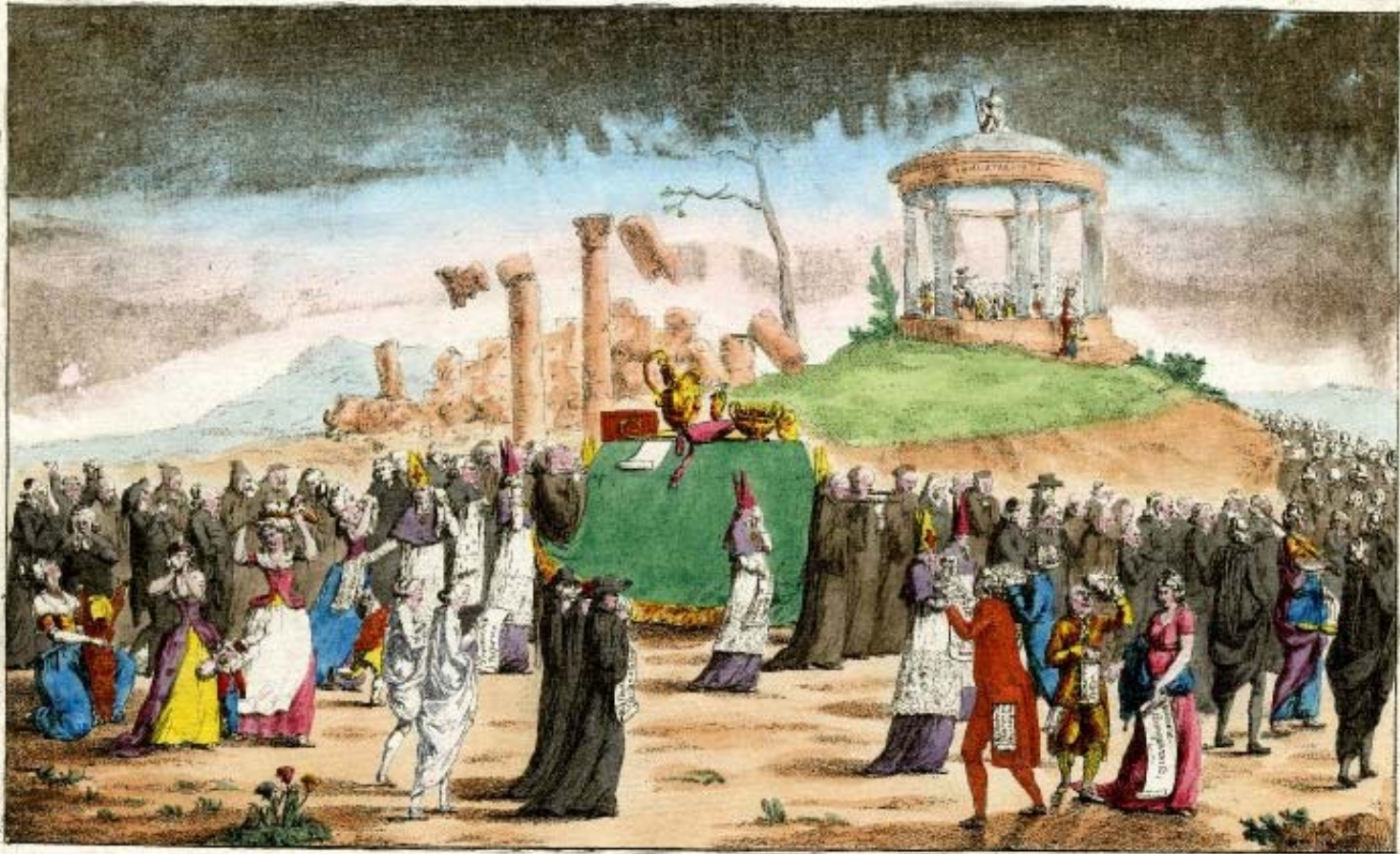


Autun Cathedral, Autun (Saone-et-Loire), France

It is obvious to me that the Church is not a property owner like other proprietors. For the properties it holds and which it cannot sell were given to it not for the use of individuals but to serve certain functions.

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord,
Bishop of Autun, Oct. 10, 1789.

First Estate's property was different, however.



RENDEZ DONC À CÉSAR CE QUI EST À CÉSAR ET À DIEU CE QUI EST À DIEU. selon S^t Mathieu Chap. 22.

L'Assemblée Nationale décrète le jour des Martyrs à 5h 6 1^{re} que les Biens Ecclesiastiques sont à la disposition de la Nation, à la charge de pourvoir, d'une manière convenable aux frais du Culte, à l'entretien de ses Ministres et au soulagement des pauvres sous la surveillance et l'instruction des Evêques. 2^e Dans les dispositions à faire pour subvenir à l'entretien des Ministres de la Religion, il ne pourra leur être assuré pour la dotation des Curés moins de 1200 non compris leurs loyers et les Jorains en dépendans ce 2. Novembre 1789.

“Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s,” (Matthew 22:21).

First Estate’s property was different, however.

Type of protest	% of protests	% districts in which occur
Anti-seigneurial	36%	41%
Religious	16%	33%
Subsistence	26%	56%
Wage conflicts	1%	4%
“panics”	13%	61%
Anti-tax	3%	19%
TOTAL number	4,689	83%

Rural protest in France, 1788-1793 (figures from John Markoff, *The Abolition of Feudalism*, 1996)



“Deliver us, o Lord, from game wardens”

liberty, equality, privilege, and property



Commitment to the idea of property meant:
no default on loan payments
venal office holders to be reimbursed
abolition of “privilege” only had limited
social or economic effects

increased the financial crisis

Who *does* want to buy a used church?

“They had it too long, we have to give them a trim”

With what consequences?

Land in a Form that Can Circulate?



assignat for 200 *livres* (summer 1790)

1 *livre*=20 *sous*

“fair” price for a four-pound loaf of bread, 8 *sous*

assignats were “assigned to” the sale of *biens nationaux* (national properties) for payment



“Republican” assignat for 50 *livres* (Dec. 1792)

With what consequences?

Liberty of Money, 1790-1792



bill from the Patriotic Chest of Bordeaux, good for six livres



bill from the Patriotic Chest of Bordeaux, good for 20 sous



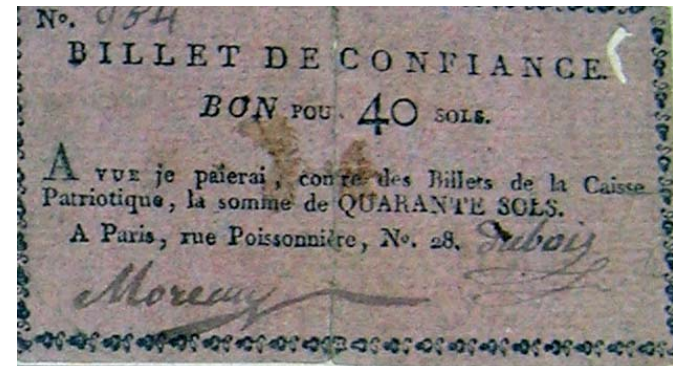
coupon for 10 sous, issued by Moliere Theater, Bordeaux



note for 25 sous, issued by the Paris "section" Quatre nations



bill from Municipality of Caen, for 20 sous



"confidence bill" for 40 sous issued by the Patriotic Chest of Paris

With what consequences?

Source Credits

1. Fontevraud Abbey, near Chinon (Indre-et-Loire); photo wikimedia.org
2. *Declaration of the Rights of Man* (1790-1791?); gallica.bnf.fr
3. Notre Dame de Beauport, near Saint-Brieuc (Côtes d'Armor); photo www.flickr.com/photos/lockigewockige
4. *This Too Great Weight* (1790?); gallica.bnf.fr
6. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Indolence* (1757), Wadsworth Athenaeum (Hartford, Connecticut); photo from <http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2003/genre/158-079.htm>
9. "Justice Holds the Scale," gallica.bnf.fr; "Active Citizen" card, www.histoire-image.org
10. Geography of the *biens nationaux*, map from Bodinier and Teyssier, *L'Événement le plus important de la Révolution* (2000)
11. Autun Cathedral, wikimedia.org
12. *Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's* (1790); gallica.bnf.fr
13. "Deliver us, O Lord, from game wardens," gallica.bnf.fr; data on uprisings from John Markoff, *The Abolition of Feudalism* (University Park, Penn.: Penn State University Press, 1996).
14. "You had it too long," gallica.bnf.fr
15. *assignats* photos from www.cgb.fr
16. locally produced paper moneys; all photos by RLSpang (collection of *billets* held by Musée de Normandie, Caen)