

Absolute Monarchy and National Regeneration

Scandals, Loans, and Taxes



Enlightenment Sociability
bourgeois public sphere

cafés

print media

learned academies

freemasonry

the Salon

Great Chain of Being
absolutist public sphere

God

King

clergy

aristocracy

other people

animals

plants

minerals

Reform and Crises in France, 1760s-1787

Monarchy as an agent of change and reform

war and early forms of nationalism

universal taxation

attempted liberalization of the grain trade

Crises of the 1770s-1780s

desacralized monarchy?

costs of participation in American war

rising interest rates

Diamond Necklace Affair

Both culminate in the Assembly of Notables, 1787

1715-1815: The Second Hundred Years' War?

War of Spanish Succession 1701-1714 700,000 total casualties

War of Austrian Succession 1740-1748 450,000

Seven Years' War 1756-1763 550,000
(in Europe; maybe twice that, total)



View of the Prussian Encampment on the Plains of Lonwenborg, drawn from Life hand-colored engraving (1760)

Monarchy as agent of change: war and state-building



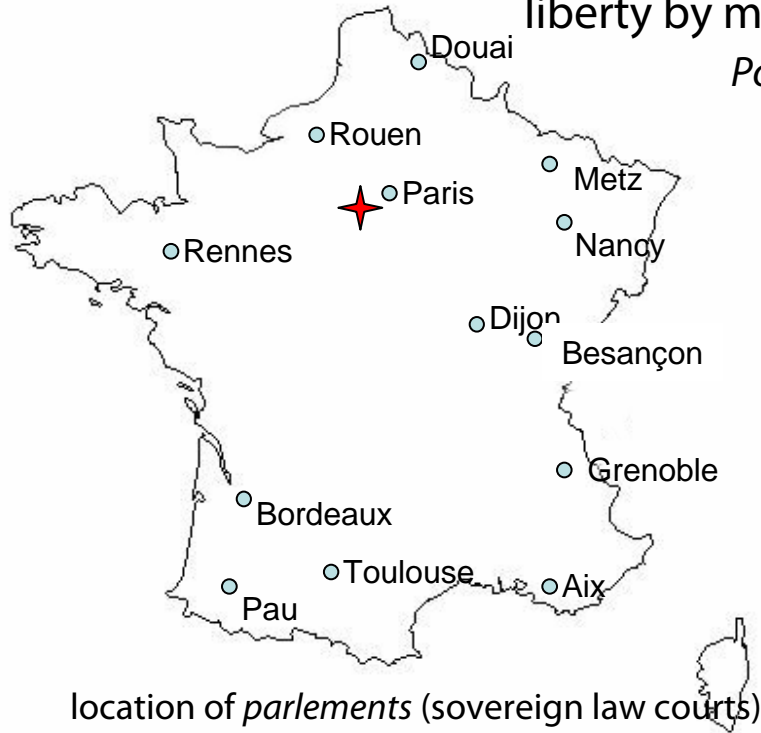
F-Hubert Drouais, *The Count of Vaudreuil* (1758)

“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* (1756).

“A citizen’s control over his possessions is naturally unlimited;
... taxation strikes a heavy blow against citizens’ legitimate
liberty by making the right of property into an illusion.”

Points of Protest, agreed by the Parlement in Rouen (1763).



one wing of the *parlement* building in Rouen

Monarchy attempts change: *parlementaires* resist universal taxation

“They have called themselves the representatives of the nation, the indispensable interpreters of the king’s public will, and the watchmen over the government’s administration . . . We owe it to the good of our subjects and to the interests of the magistracy itself, even more than to the interest of our royal power, to halt the development of these dangerous innovations. . . God alone has granted us our crown. The right to make the laws by which our subjects must be guided and governed belongs to us alone, without subordination or division. . .”

Louis XV to the *parlements* (1770).

1771 Chancellor Maupeou establishes new “superior councils” and refuses to deal with *parlements*

1774 Louis XV dies of smallpox

1774 Louis XVI crowned; re-instates *parlements*; appoints Turgot

1776 *parlement* of Paris refuses to enregister Turgot’s reforms (abolish guilds; free trade in grain. etc.)



“Louis XVI comes to the throne and restores the *parlements*”
ivory and wooden fan, around 1775.

Monarchy attempts change: from the “Maupeou coup” to Turgot

A desacralized monarchy?



Antoine Callet, *Louis XVI, King of France and Navarre* (1779).

sacre sacred
coronation



F. Boizot, *My Lord the Crown Prince [future Louis XVI] Plowing a Field* (1769), detail.

Image (mis)management: Louis XVI



Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie Antoinette, with a Rose* (1783).



Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, and her Children* (1789).

Image (mis)management: Marie Antoinette



Image (mis)management: Marie Antoinette



- 1776 Turgot fired; Necker appointed
- 1778 France enters American Revolution
- 1781 Necker's *Compte rendu* (Account) shows surplus in "ordinary" budget; finances war by borrowing (8.3% average annual cost)

Louis L. Boilly, *The Marquis de Lafayette in the Uniform of a Captain in the Duke of Noailles's Regiment* (1788)
[the Duke of Noailles was his father-in-law]

sordid scandal (sex and money)

Queen was *not* involved

What does it tell us about Court life?

What does it tell us about what people *thought* they knew about life at Court?



The Cardinal de Rohan



The Diamond Necklace (reproduction)

Credits

1. Palais Royal gardens, Paris. Built in the 1620s-1630s as the residence of Cardinal Richelieu (advisor to Louis XIII) the buildings and gardens later passed to the Orléans branch of the French royal family (hence the name). In the late 1770s, the duc d'Orléans began to rent out sections of it to retail businesses (cafés, restaurants), small theatres, and gambling halls, making it something like a very upscale eighteenth-century mall or perhaps a mini version of Las Vegas; photo credit unknown
5. F-Hubert Drouais, *The Count of Vaudreuil* (1758), oil on canvas, 2.25 x 1.6 meters; original in National Gallery (London) , photo from www.photo.rmnm.fr *Année littéraire* cited in David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), p. 90.
6. Rouen Parlement *remontrances* cited in Michael Kwass, *Privilege and the Politics of Taxation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.184-185; Palais de Justice, Rouen, photo RLSpang
7. King to *parlements*, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/350/> ; fan (Louvre Museum), www.photo.rmnm.fr
8. Antoine Callet, *Louis XVI, King of France and Navarre* (1779), oil on canvas, 2.78 x 1.96 meters, Versailles; and Boizot, *The Crown Prince Plowing* (1769), engraving, BNF; photos www.photo.rmnm.fr
9. Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie Antoinette with a Rose* (1783); Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, and her Children* (1789); oil on canvas, 2.7 x 1.95 meters; www.photo.rmnm.fr
10. Manufacture de Sèvres, 1788 [cow china]; chairs by Georges Jacob (1787); www.photo.rmnm.fr
11. Boilly, *Lafayette in the Uniform of a Captain in the Duke de Noailles's Regiment* (1788); www.photo.rmnm.fr
12. reproduction of "the diamond necklace" and engraving of the Cardinal de Rohan; www.photo.rmnm.fr