

Political Developments of the 19th Century - France

Franco-Prussian War

- Reasons for French Defeat
 - o Napoleon III went to war with Prussia
 - Without allies
 - o Prussian Armies moved quickly in Northeastern France
 - French troops slowly mobilized
 - Speed and ability of the Prussians made up for better French rifles and machinery
 - o Fortress of Metz was cut off from the rest of France by the Prussians
 - They also cut off Marshal Marie-Edme de MacMahon
 - Who tried to relieve Metz
 - French retreated to the town of Sedan near the Belgian border
 - The Prussians surrounded and captured the emperor
- **Louis Adolphe Thiers**
 - o Served as Orleanist Prime Minister
 - 1830's
 - o Wanted to establish a very conservative republic monarchy
 - With Bismarck's help at the end of the war
 - Provisional government negotiated with Bismarck
 - Wanted an armistice
- **Siege of Paris**
 - o September 4, 1870
 - Paris was proclaimed a republic
 - Provisional government formed
 - o Napoleon III allowed by Prussians to leave for exile in Britain
 - Prussian army surrounded Paris
 - Hunger
 - Dogs, cats, zoo animals all eaten
- **Fall of 2nd Empire**
 - o 10 days after German Empire established
 - Bismarck and Thiers signed an armistice
 - French lost Alsace and most of Lorraine to new German Empire
 - o French voters elected National Assembly (monarchist dominated)
 - Job was to make peace with Prussia and establish a new government
 - National Assembly officially elected Thiers as chief executive of provisional government
- Treaty of Frankfurt
 - o May 10, 1871
 - Thiers' provisional government agreed to pay large indemnity
 - Prussian troops stay in Paris, until indemnity was paid off
 - Versailles (Bourbon Monarchy) chosen as temporary capital by National Assembly
 - After the siege, wealthy Parisians who left Paris returned
 - Landowners wanted back rents be paid immediately
 - o Angered renters who were mostly workers



The Third Republic

- Established after Franco-Prussian war
 - o Republic is government without a king
 - o Not liked by French
 - Demanded as a requirement by Bismarck
- National Assembly
 - o Dominated by Monarchists
 - French blame monarchists for signing of the treaty

- The Paris Commune

- o Created in 1871
 - o Radicals who HATE government
 - Revolted versus National Assembly
 - National Assembly associated with Treaty of Frankfurt
 - Wanted to save the Republic and get rid of Monarchists
 - Communards
 - Rebels
 - Workers
 - Socialists
 - o Second siege of Paris
 - Civil war
 - Communards vs. Government
 - Prussian siege
 - Bright red posters on the walls of capital “Paris Commune”
 - Commune defended Paris
 - Leaders were Jacobins, socialists (French Revolution), moderate republicans
 - Communards were democratic-socialist activists in the 2nd Republic
 - Auguste Blanqui
 - Revolution from small cell of determined men seizing power
 - Some were anarchists
 - **Bloody Week**
 - May 21, 1871
 - Thiers’ Versailles government troops flooded Paris
 - o “bloody week” followed
 - o Army blasted through barricades
 - o 25,000 Parisians died
 - o “In Paris, everyone was guilty”
- Political Structure after Civil War
 - o Political structure
 - Legislative house
 - Chamber of Deputies
 - o Lower house
 - o Elected by Universal Male Suffrage
 - Senate
 - o Upper house
 - o Picked by local government officials
 - President
 - o Picked by legislature



- Very powerful figurehead
- Cabinet
 - Picked by president
- Premier
 - Prime Minister
 - Held all real power
- Weaknesses
 - Many enemies
 - Monarchists
 - Catholics
 - Military
 - Too many political parties
 - 12 major parties
 - Led to formation of coalitions
 - In order to get a majority
 - Very shaky
 - 50 different coalitions in first 50 years
 - Scandals and corruption
 - **Boulangier Affair**
 - Boulangier
 - General
 - Monarchist
 - Wanted stronger army
 - Had a plot to overthrow government
 - Whipped up bitterness against Germans
 - Take back Alsace and Lorraine
 - Plot discovered
 - Accused of treason
 - Fled and killed himself
 - Panama Canal Crisis
 - Financial crisis
 - French company building canal went close to bankruptcy
 - News of bribes made to government for contract
 - People lose lots of money
 - Blame the government
 - **Dreyfus Affair**
 - 1894
 - Jewish Captain in military
 - Not a lot of Jews in the military
 - Accused of giving military secrets to Germany
 - Anti-Semitic frame up
 - Wave of anti-Semitism
 - Really innocent
 - Convicted
 - Found real traitor
 - Ferdinand Esterhazy
 - Catholic monarchist
 - Government refused to reopen the case



- Worldwide indignation
 - Government pardoned Dreyfus in 1906
 - Sharpened divisions in France
 - Anti-Dreyfusards
 - Army and the church
- Slow reforms
 - Very very slow change
 - Weakened the Catholic church
 - Many schools closed
 - Stopped government salaries
 - Social reforms
 - Twelve hour days
 - Limits in child labor
 - Free public elementary schools
 - Social welfare and health insurance
 - French Union for Women's Suffrage
 - Use legal methods to work for women's suffrage
 - Jeanne-Elizabeth Schmahl
 - **Zionism**
 - Movement among Jews to create a Jewish homeland
 - Theodor Herzl