

# Sons of Liberty in the American Revolution

The Sons of Liberty was a secret political organization in the American Colonies that protested against British taxes and laws before the American Revolution. By the time the revolution began, there were chapters of the Sons of Liberty in all [thirteen colonies](#). The Sons of Liberty formed out of a number of smaller protest groups in 1765 in response to the Stamp Act. The first group was likely formed out of the "Loyal Nine" in Boston with other groups soon forming in New York and Connecticut. The name comes from a speech made in the British Parliament by Irishman Isaac Barre. He referred to the American colonists as "sons of liberty" when arguing against the passage of the Stamp Act.

The Sons of Liberty had to arrange secret meetings or they might get arrested by British soldiers. They had informal gatherings at local taverns such as the Green Dragon Tavern in Boston. More formal meetings were held at night. In Boston, they met under an elm tree in Hanover Square that was called the "Liberty Tree." In New York, they would signal the location by building a tall pole called a "Liberty Pole."

The first major action of the Sons of Liberty was to protest the Stamp Act. They took direct action by harassing the stamp tax distributors who worked for the British government. The distributors became so scared of the Sons of Liberty that many of them quit their jobs. They also gathered in large groups and protested in the streets. Their protests worked and the tax was soon repealed by the British government.

The most famous action of the Sons of Liberty was the [Boston Tea Party](#). In protest to a tax on tea, several members boarded trade ships in Boston Harbor and tossed their tea into the water. This act was a major event leading up to the Revolutionary War.

The Sons of Liberty attracted members from all walks of colonial life such as lawyers, dockworkers, farmers, doctors, tavern owners, traders, and publishers. Some of the more famous members include Samuel Adams (who is often considered the founding member of the Sons of Liberty), John Adams, Benedict Arnold, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, Joseph Warren, and Paul Revere.

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New-York



*Statue of George III demolished*

# French Revolution

## What was the French Revolution?

The French Revolution was a period of time in France when the people overthrew the monarchy and took control of the government.

## When did it take place?

The French Revolution lasted 10 years from 1789 to 1799. It began on July 14, 1789 when revolutionaries stormed a prison called the Bastille. The revolution came to an end 1799 when a general named Napoleon overthrew the revolutionary government and established the French Consulate (with Napoleon as leader).

## The French Estates

Before the French Revolution, the people of France were divided into social groups called "Estates." The First Estate included the clergy (church leaders), the Second Estate included the nobles, and the Third Estate included the commoners. Most of the people were members of the Third Estate. The Third Estate paid most of the taxes, while the nobility lived lives of luxury and got all the high-ranking jobs.

## Revolutionary Government

The French Government was in constant turmoil throughout the revolution. At the start of the revolution, representatives from the Third Estate established the National Assembly where they demanded that King Louis XVI give them certain rights. This group soon took control of the country. They changed names over time to the Legislative Assembly and, later, to the National Convention. After the Reign of Terror, a new government was formed called the Directory. The Directory ruled until Napoleon took control.

## Reign of Terror

The darkest period of the French Revolution is called the Reign of Terror which lasted from 1793 to 1794. During this time, a man named Robespierre led the National Convention and the Committee of Public Safety. He wanted to stamp out any opposition to the revolution, so he called for a rule of "Terror." Laws were passed that said anyone suspected of treason could be arrested and executed by guillotine. Thousands of people were executed including Queen Marie Antoinette and many of Robespierre's political rivals.

## Political Clubs

Many of the new political ideas and alliances of the French Revolution were formed in political clubs. These clubs included the powerful Jacobin Club (led by Robespierre), the Cordeliers, the Feuillants Club, and the Pantheon Club.

## Outcome

The French Revolution completely changed the social and political structure of France. It put an end to the French monarchy, feudalism, and took political power from the Catholic church. It brought new ideas to Europe including liberty and freedom for the commoner as well as the abolishment of slavery and the rights of women. Although the revolution ended with the rise of Napoleon, the ideas and reforms did not die. These new ideas continued to influence Europe and helped to shape many of Europe's modern-day governments.



# French Revolution



# The Enlightenment and Galileo

Galileo was born in Pisa, Italy where he grew up with his brothers and sisters during the Italian [Renaissance](#).

Galileo was an accomplished musician and an excellent student. At first he wanted to become a doctor, so he went to the University of Pisa to study medicine in 1581.

While at university, Galileo became interested in physics and mathematics. One of his first scientific observations was with a lamp hanging from the ceiling in the cathedral. He noticed that despite how far the lamp swung, it took the same amount of time to swing back and forth. This observation didn't agree with the common scientific principals of the day.

In 1585, Galileo left the university and got a job as a teacher. He began to experiment with pendulums, levers, balls, and other objects. He tried to describe how they moved using mathematic equations. He even invented an advanced measuring device called the hydrostatic balance.

During the time of Galileo, there weren't really "scientists" as we know them today. People studied the works of the classical philosophers and thinkers such as Aristotle. They didn't run experiments or test out the ideas. They just believed them to be true.

Galileo, however, had different ideas. He wanted to test the principals and see if he could observe them in the real world. This was a new concept to the people of his time and laid the foundation for the [scientific method](#).

Galileo's experiments made some people angry, however. They didn't want the traditional views to be questioned. In 1592, Galileo moved from Pisa to the University of Padua, where he kept experimenting and discuss new ideas. He was adamant that knowledge was power.

Copernicus was an [astronomer](#) who lived in the early 1500s. He came up with the idea that the [Sun](#) was the center of the universe. This was very different from the current belief that the Earth was the center. Galileo began to study Copernicus' work and felt that his observations of the planets supported the view that the Sun was the center. This view was highly controversial.

In 1609, Galileo heard of an invention from Holland called the [telescope](#) that could make far away items appear much closer. He decided to build his own telescope. He made great improvements to the telescope and began to use it to view the planets. Soon Galileo's version of the telescope was used throughout Europe.

Galileo made many discoveries using his telescope including the four large moons around [Jupiter](#) and the phases of the planet Venus. He also discovered sunspots and learned that the Moon was not smooth, but was covered with craters.

As Galileo studied the planets and the Sun, he became convinced that the Earth and the other planets orbited the Sun. In 1632, he wrote a book called the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*. In this book he described why he thought the Earth orbited the Sun. However, the powerful Catholic Church considered Galileo's ideas as heresy. At first they sentenced him to life in prison, but later allowed him to live at his home in Tuscany under house arrest.

Galileo continued to write while under house arrest. In his later years he became blind. He died on January 8, 1642.

# Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution took place in 1917 when the peasants and working class people of Russia revolted against the government of Tsar Nicholas II. They were led by [Vladimir Lenin](#) and a group of revolutionaries called the Bolsheviks. The new [communist](#) government created the country of the Soviet Union. Before the revolution, Russia was ruled by a powerful monarch called the Tsar. The Tsar had total power in Russia. He commanded the army, owned much of the land, and even controlled the church.

During the period of time before the Russian Revolution, life for the working class people and the peasants was very difficult. They worked for little pay, often went without food, and were exposed to dangerous working conditions. The aristocrat class treated the peasants like slaves, giving them few rights under the law and treating them almost like animals.

A major event leading to the Russian Revolution took place on January 22, 1905. A large number of workers were marching to the Tsar's palace in order to present a petition for better working conditions. They were fired upon by soldiers and many of them were killed or injured. This day is called Bloody Sunday. Before Bloody Sunday many peasants and working class people revered the Tsar and thought that he was on their side. They blamed their troubles on the government, not on the Tsar. However, after the shootings, the Tsar was perceived as an enemy of the working class and the desire for revolution began to spread.

In 1914, World War I began and Russia was at war with Germany. A huge Russian army was formed by forcing working class and peasant men to join. Although the Russian army had great numbers, the soldiers were not equipped or trained to fight. Many of them were sent into battle without shoes, food, and even weapons. Over the next three years, nearly 2 million Russian soldiers were killed in battle and nearly another 5 million were wounded. The Russian people blamed the Tsar for entering the war and getting so many of their young men killed.

The people of Russia first revolted in early 1917. The revolution began when a number of workers decided to strike. Many of these workers got together during the strike to discuss politics. They began to riot. The Tsar, Nicholas II, ordered the army to suppress the riot. However, many of the soldiers refused to fire on the Russian people and the army began to mutiny against the Tsar.

After a few days of riots, the army turned against the Tsar. The Tsar was forced to give up his throne and a new government took over. The government was run by two political parties: the Petrograd Soviet (representing the workers and soldiers) and the Provisional Government (the traditional government without the Tsar).

Over the next several months the two sides ruled Russia. One of the main factions of the Petrograd Soviet was a group called the Bolsheviks. They were led by Vladimir Lenin and believed that the new Russian government should be a Marxist (communist) government. In October of 1917, Lenin took full control of the government in what is called the Bolshevik Revolution. Russia was now the first communist country in the world.

After the revolution, [Russia](#) exited World War I by signing a peace treaty with Germany called the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The new government took control of all industry and moved the Russian economy from a rural one to an industrial one. It also seized farmland from landholders and distributed it among the peasants. Women were given [equal rights](#) to those of men and religion was banned from many aspects of society.

From 1918 to 1920, Russia experienced a civil war between the Bolsheviks (also called the Red Army) and the anti-Bolsheviks (the White Army). The Bolsheviks won and the new country was called the USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republic).



