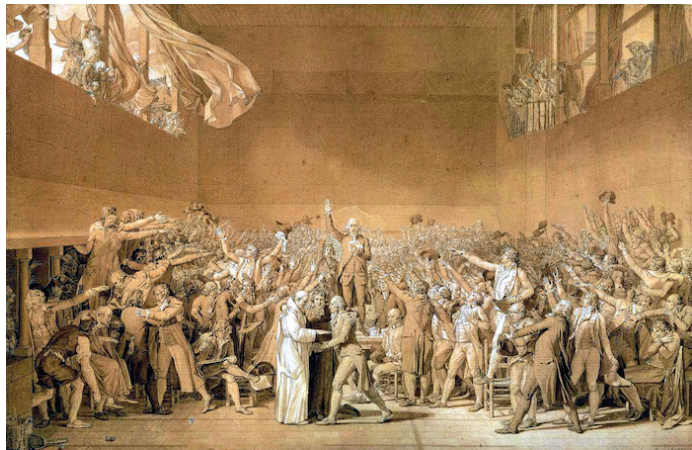


## F. The French Revolution (1789-99)

1. The *Reformation and Religious Wars* there was no more religious unity in Europe, and history was dominated by the strongest monarchies, especially France.
2. France was the first country whose monarchy became “absolute,” and whose absolute power produced absolute corruption and a rebellion against kingly power. The symbol of this kingly power was the palace of Versailles, the greatest symbol of monarchical power in history, built for Louis XIV.
3. When the people has been taxed to their limit by Louis XIV, and then by his heirs Louis XV and Louis XVI, the monarchy became bankrupt.
4. The commoners refused to pay more taxes, and decided to try to force new laws on the king in 1789.
5. When the king summoned the army for his protection, the people of nearby Paris panicked and attacked *the Bastille*, a prison in the center of Paris, to seize its weapons and free the prisoners.
6. The violence of the uprising of the commoners against their oppressive monarchy was made worse by an invasion of France by its neighboring kings, who were worried that their own people might copy the French people.
7. The leaders of the revolution created the “Committee of Public Safety,” and executed the king using the guillotine! The committee’s leader was a man named Robespierre, and as long as he was in charge, France suffered a “Reign of Terror”. Anyone who criticized Robespierre was executed. It went on for months, until Robespierre himself was arrested and executed, just as he had done to so many others.
8. After the death of Robespierre, the Revolution seemed to have no great leaders left. Many people now wished for the return of the monarchy but a military officer named Napoleon Bonaparte prevented the return of monarchy.
9. He created a new government called the Consulate, and made himself “First Consul” (like the leaders of the Roman Republic). By winning many battles he became so popular that the people agreed to make him “Emperor of the French.” For the time being, the Revolution against monarchy had failed. It had produced a new monarchy. But as we know, Napoleon was eventually defeated...



This aerial view of the palace of Versailles helps us appreciate the power of the French monarchy. The chateau has 2300 rooms!



This sketch of the *Oath of the Tennis Court* by Jacques-Louis David captures the moment when the French people first rejected monarchy and tried to create a new government.