The Birth of Modern Democracies: Comparative Enlightened Revolutions

I. The European Enlightenment
II. Modernity and Democracy
III. Revolutions in America and France
The Enlightenment
1600-1800 in Europe

The application of reason to understand and control the natural world and the social order
Religious Versus Scientific/Rational Worldviews

**Religious**
- Faith
- God’s Law
- Obedience

**Scientific**
- Reason
- Natural Law
- Questioning
Enlightenment Beliefs

- Faith in science
- belief in natural law in the universe and society
- rationality of humanity
- reason over superstition
- human progress over time
- humanity’s control over nature
- Individual rights and public use of reason
The American Revolution

- American colonies revolt from British colonial control (1776).
- Economic causes.
- Social causes.
- Political causes.
- War for Independence from 1776-1783.
- Establish a constitutional government in 1787.
Boston Massacre, 1770

The Boston Massacre, March 5, 1770.

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We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed. That, whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such Principles and organizing its Powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.
The French Revolution

- Financial crisis of the French Monarchy of Louis XVI.
- Parlements and local Resistance.
- Calling of the Estates General.
Louis XVI
Parlements and Regional Resistance
Three Estates in the Estates General

First Estate: Clergy and Hierarchy of the Catholic Church

Second Estate: Nobility and Landed Wealth of the Nation

Third Estate: Commoners or the Rest of the Nation
Propaganda in France, 1788-1789
Revolution, Paris, 1789

- Estates General meets in May 1789 in Paris
- Third Estate outvoted 2 to 3 on most measures.
- June 17, 1789—Third Estate walks out
- Tennis Court Oath—National Assembly.
- July 14, 1789—Storming of the Bastille.
The Estates General: Paris, June, 1789
Tennis Court Oath, June, 1789
The Paris Crowd
Storming of the Bastille
July 14, 1789