France and the Third Republic

The Foundations of the 3rd Republic and The Paris Commune

- A new National Assembly was elected in Feb. 1871, under the supervision of the Germans
  - Dominated by monarchists
  - Gave executive power to Adolphe Thiers
- Treaty of Frankfurt: Ended Franco-Prussian War
  - Alsace and Lorraine given to Germany
  - France ordered to pay 5 billion francs to Germany
  - Prussian troops were to occupy France until payments were made
- Parisians resented the Treaty and formed a new government for Paris - the Paris Commune (March 1871)
  - Largely consisted of radicals, socialists
  - Wanted Paris ruled separately from the rest of France
    - Favored gov. control of wages, prices, and working conditions
    - Opposed bourgeoisie, clergy and the aristocracy
  - May 1871 - National Assembly sent the military to disband the Paris Commune
    - Commune took high ranking Catholics hostage, and killed some
    - Thousands of commune members were killed in the fighting
    - 20,000 put to death and 40,000 arrested

The Third Republic

- 1873 - Monarchists disagreed on bringing back the Orleanist monarchy or the Bourbon Monarchy
- Ultimately decided on the childless Henri Bourbon, Duke of Chambord, and grandson of Charles X with Louis Philippe (Orleans), Duke of Paris, as his successor
- Count of Chambord, the Bourbon heir, refused to take the throne if the tricolor flag of the revolution was kept - demanded the return of the fleur de lis
  - Symbol of the revolution of 1789 and the Revolution of 1830, which had overthrown his family, and denied him his natural succession to the throne
- Monarchists continued to debate the future of the monarchy, taking no action
- Meanwhile, Thiers was kicked out of office for republican sympathy
- 1873 - A conservative was elected president by the Assembly - Marshal Patrice MacMahon
- Failure to choose a monarch led to the creation of a republic
  - President, elected by the two houses of the Assembly
  - Senate – chosen by Chamber of Deputies
  - Chamber of Deputies – elected through universal male suffrage
- Despite continued attempts to restore the monarchy, “opportunist republicans” continued to solidify the power of the republic
  - Mandated free public education (Ferry Laws) in 1881, weakening the power of the Church
- The republic survived despite opposition from monarchists, the Church, the wealthy, and the military, as well as scandals
  - In 1881, the Deputies voted to limit freedom of the press
  - French president Sadi carnot was stabbed to death by an anarchist (1882)
  - Popular political candidate General Georges Boulanger was on the verge of leading a political revolution in 1889, when he lost his nerve (Boulanger affair) (1887)
    - Showed the perilous existence of the Third Republic
  - The Panama Crisis (1892)
    - A company contracted to work on the panama canal suffered bankruptcy, costing investors millions of francs
    - As many as 500 politicians were bribed to withhold information about the $ status of the company
    - Caused many people to distrust politicians
  - Anarchist August Vaillant bombed the National Assembly (1893)
  - Selling of medals of honor to non-combatants
- Socialists, liberals, conservatives, republicans and monarchists all fought for control.
  - From 1871 to 1914, the majority party in the Assembly changed ~ every year
- Despite the constantly changing nature, it was the longest surviving government since the House of Bourbon, to the present

Dreyfus Affair

- 1894 - Captain Alfred Dreyfus (Jewish) was accused of passing military docs. to Germany
  - Sent to prison
- 1896 - Evidence of forgery of incriminating documents was found, but Dreyfus was left in jail
- Catholics, conservatives, royalists and anti-Semitic newspapers continued to blame Dreyfus
- Socialist, liberals and radicals demanded a new trial for Dreyfus, and famous writer Emile Zola claimed there was a conspiracy against Jews and Dreyfus
- In 1898 evidence of forgery became public
  - Dreyfus was convicted again by a military court
  - Dreyfus was immediately pardoned by Pres. in 1899
- Became a rallying point for all groups opposing conservative rule, divided country
- In 1905 socialists and leftists got laws passed, fully separating church and state
- Valois-Orléans (1498–1515)
- Valois-Angoulême (1515–1589)
- House of Bourbon (1589–1792)

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- Second Republic (1848–1852)
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