

Causes of the French Revolution

Political
Economic
Social

Who was involved in the French Revolution?

What were the main causes?

Would you say that the French Revolution was caused by the poor rising up against the noble aristocracy?

Social Class System was too rigid and out of date.

1. Clergy
2. Nobility
3. The Third Estate
 - Bourgeoisie
 - Sans Culottes
 - Peasants
 - Women
 - Jews
 - Protestants



Economic Problems

A. Louis XIV Wars left France in debt.

B. The Seven Years War during Louis XV reign

France lost territory in North America and in India

The defeat left the monarchy bankrupt.

New taxation seemed necessary to get France out of debt so it could build a better navy to compete with England.

C. The American Revolution

The French monarchy was officially bankrupt.

A monarchy supporting a republic?

Younger members of the aristocracy (like Lafayette)

became officers in the French Army but they were fond of American republicanism. When the revolution broke out in France, they were not very enthusiastic resisters.

The Taxation System in France was inadequate to meet expenses. (gee that sounds familiar!)

Direct Taxes:

a) *taille* (personal in north, land in south)

b) *vingtieme* was assessed as a war tax during the War of the Austrian Succession and it was doubled and tripled during the Seven Years War. Why were they paying a war tax during a peaceful decade? (that's a good question!)

c) *capitation* was a household tax levied on all including the nobles. There were 21 different levels of taxation.

More Economic Problems

The GABELLE was the worst because it was taxed as an excise or luxury, but it was really a necessity in an era without refrigeration.



Salted Meat
Salt helps the human body
hold water.

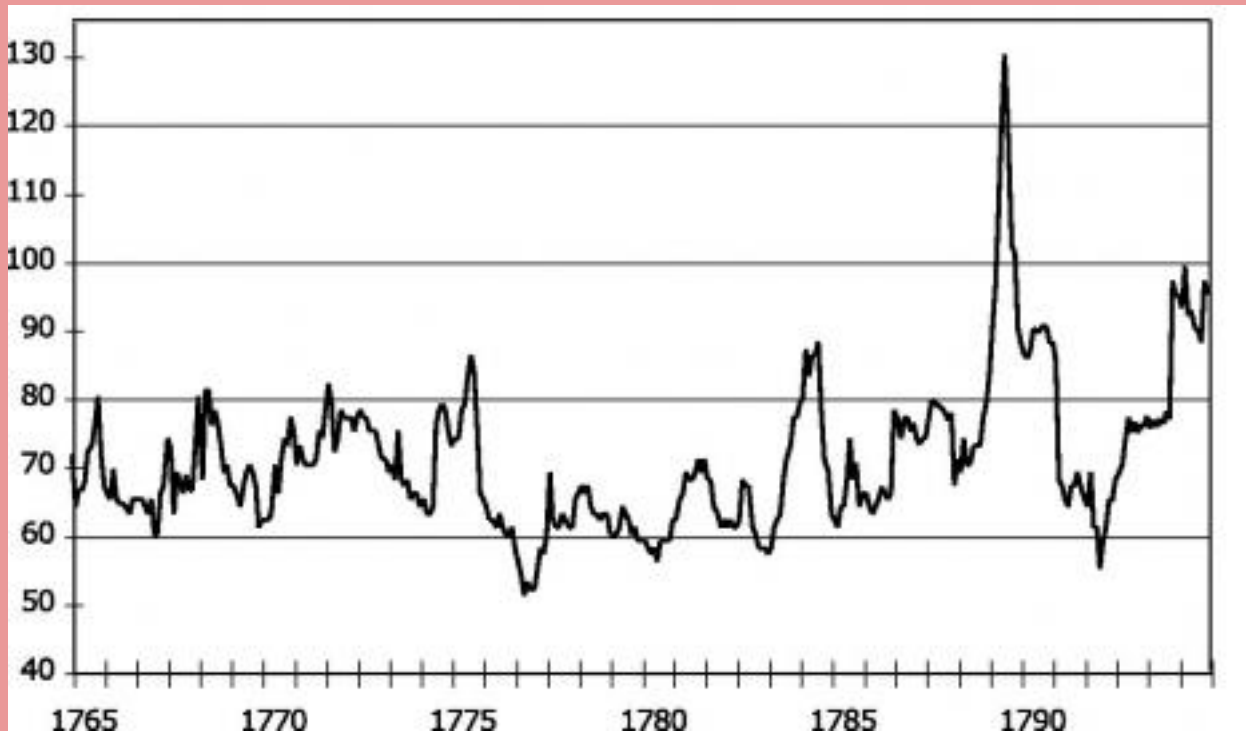
Tax Farmers collected indirect taxes. The Fermier Genereaux contracted with the monarchy to collect taxes. In a bad year, the monarchy made its money, but in a good year, the tax collectors made LOTS of money. People hated them.



Bread prices were really unstable and in 1789, really high!

Bread was a staple crop in France. They ate it every day, all three meals.

In 1788-89 the wheat crop was poor because of drought. This drove up the prices.



Marie Antoinette's Hamlet





Political Issues Surrounding the Monarchy

Louis XVI



Marie Antoinette (of Austria)



Political Problems

Louis XVI: "I just want to be loved."

Calling for the Cahiers
(Abbe Sieyes: What is the Third Estate?)

Calling the Estates General

Organization of the Estates General becomes controversial.

Repeal of the Maupeau Reforms of Louis XV which had put restrictions on nobles by limiting the influence of the parlements.

Marie Antoinette was bad for PR

The Cahiers de doléances

August 1788-1789, "If only the king knew . . ."

"Our king, the best of all kings and father of a great and wise family, will soon know everything. All vices will be destroyed. All the great virtues of industriousness, honesty, modesty, honor, patriotism, meekness, friendliness, equality, concord, pity, and thrift will prevail and wisdom will rule supreme."

Why important?

- a. Involved the entire nation
- b. made it clear that there were many grievances everyone shared.
- c. both the privileged and the non-privileged identified the system of state bureaucracy as the main problem.

Calling the Estates General

Three Estates

First Estate

Second Estate

Third Estate

Each estate had one vote even though the third estate represented 96+% of the people in France.

Third Estate asked to double its numbers from 300 to 600 and to take a head count insted of a count according to estate.



The Third Estate was doubled! But . . .

But they still voted as a block!

Members of the nobility, the Abbé Sieyès and Count Mirabeau supported the Third Estate.

"What is the Third Estate? Everything! What has it been in the political order up to the present? Nothing!"

May 5, 1789 the Estates General Convened.

On June 17, voting by head instead of by estate was rejected. The deputies of the third estate reject the Estates General and form the National Assembly.

The Oath of the Tennis Court, June 20, 1789



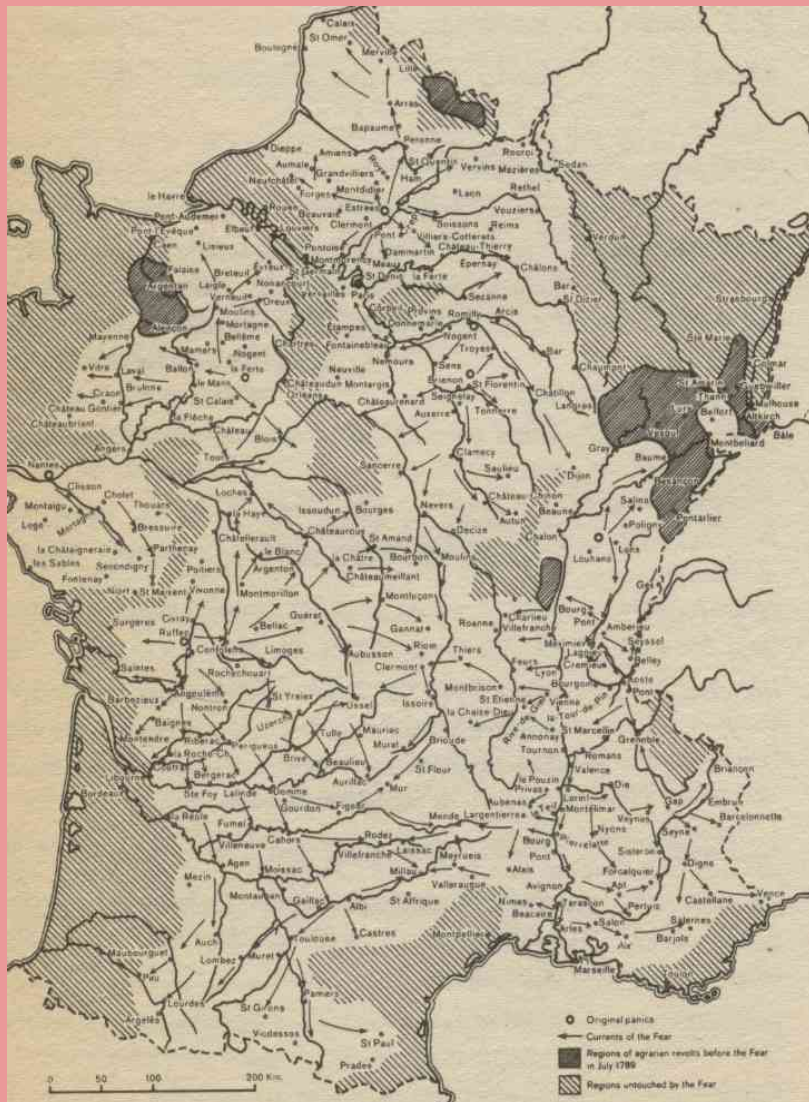
July 14, 1789 Storming of the Bastille



The Great Fear and the Night of August 4



August 4, 1789 the National Assembly threw its support behind the peasants.



With widespread fear that the violence in the countryside would spread, nobles renounced their feudal privileges.

Feudalism in France was abolished. This means that everyone is equal before the law.

Wow! That's revolutionary!

The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, August 26, 1789

Not a Constitution but a philosophical blueprint.

Combination of US Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights.

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité



Women's March to Versailles, October 4-6, 1789 6000 women



Marie Antoinette's Bedroom in Versailles



Louis XVI agreed to move to Paris and live at the Tuileries Palace.

Louis XVI was now captive to the revolution. He seemed willing to assume the role of a constitutional monarch which he had refused in September, only one month before.

In September, the National Assembly had voted that while the government of France is a monarchy,

"there is not authority in France that is above the law; that the King reigns only by virtue of the law and that it is only in terms of the law that he can demand obedience from his subjects."

In October, it looked like Louis XVI agreed.

Who was involved in the beginning of the French Revolution?

What were the main grievances?

Were the causes of the Revolution about one class attacking another? Did the poor "rise up" against the rich?