

Essay on french revolution

Sociology, Poverty



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Introduction

This was social and political turmoil that has lasted from 1789 to 1799. It happened during the reign of King Louis XVI who borrowed heavily such that, by 1789, France was bankrupt as the king borrowed funds to support the wars. One group was oppressed as it was highly taxed leading to the segregation and the formation of the National Assembly. The fact that the National Assembly could not address the economic issues, radical elements developed.

The revolution occurred in three phases: The moderate phase which was characterized by the segregation of the third estate and protests in the streets by its followers who were mainly merchants, peasants and businessmen, radical phase that reigned from 1792 to 1795. The king had been ruled out and there was fear that there would be foreign invasion. The king who had tried to exile was caught and executed. Third was a counter-revolutionary phase, which was from, 1795 to 1815 where order and stability was attained. A constitution was formulated. Napoleon was chosen to lead the army and France in general.

Causes

The French society had divided itself into three grouping known as estates. The first consisted of clergy; this was made up of the Catholic Church which had a lot of riches, controlled about 10% of the land and was exempted from taxes, second of nobility; they held judicial, military and administrative positions in the country as well as controlled 30% of the land and the third had merchants, businessmen and peasants. The third estate felt that they were being patronized and subjected to unequal rights than the others. This made them form their organization referred to as the National Assembly that pledge to defend the peasants. This went against the king, Louis XVI. Taxes that were meant to be levied so as to recover the debt that the king had taken were imposed on the third estate while the other two were exempted. Their segregation from the king's territory resulted to war as the king authorized his army towards the third estate.

Another contributing factor in the revolution was that the country had unmanageable debts that were as a result of the king's wars that were present. This made the government create a means of recovering revenues for financing the debt. This resulted to exorbitant taxation that was directed to the peasants and merchants.

Other minor causes of the revolution are the increased gap between the poor and the rich. This contributed to the formation of the National Assembly in an aim to defending the poor. The middle class was neglected, yet they were developing rapidly. Each group had one voting right, but the third estate was neglected this privilege hence prompting for their segregation and division from the kings rule.

Effects

The revolution resulted in shortages and an increase in prices of the food which lead to high malnutrition cases of the people. This increased cases of diseases and death. Food importation was also hindered by the poor transportation infrastructure.

The result was the abolishment of the monarchy era and the country was declared a republic. The control was taken over by Napoleon. King Louis, who had tried to escape from the country, was caught and executed. The aristocratic people who ruled with the king were arrested while others flew away from the country.