

French society of 1789



What was wrong with French Society in 1789? After the death of Louis XV, his grandchild Louis XVI was appointed to rule over the people but his lack of ability to rule like a liege over the country plunge France into chaos, directing France towards a Revolution; The French Revolution.

In France the French society was divided into three estates; The First Estate consisted of Clergy which had a population of 100, 000 people, Second Estate consisted of Nobility which had a population of 400, 000 people and Third Estate which was the last, consisted of the Bourgeoisie, wage earners and peasantry, simply put they were categorized commoners, they made up 90% of France. There was a major problem with this society division. The First and Second society enjoyed privileges that were unaffordable by the Third class.

This locus caused the First and Second estates to manipulate and abuse the power bestowed unto them whilst the Third estate went through hardship to ensure their survival. It was known that France was already in financial crisis after the struggle to claim America, instead of it affecting the whole of France; it was evident that it only affected the Third estate since they lack all the luxuries and the common rights of men. Hunger struck like never before and disease was prone to every commoner.

And this is what fueled the French Revolution, the unavailability of common rights upon every commoner, great level of inequality and inhumane injustice in the system. One of the major reasons to what fueled the French revolution was the callous behavior the First and Second estate exhibited towards the Third Estate. Most men in the nobility and clergy estates did not

hesitate to find any way to ensure the suffering of the commoners. The first and second estate had the advantage of paying no taxes at all and gaining daily survival needs without pulling out a penny.

On the other hand the third estate had to pay high taxes and intolerable feudal dues from the little they had to first and second estate, leaving them a very trifling amount to survive. The upper estates used the Third estates for their own selfish gratuitous reasons; in source a, there is an illustration of a noble and a clergy sitting on top on an old frail man, a peasant, with a caption 'one hopes this will end soon': this illustration show how baseless the upper estate used their power over the third estate.

What the illustration symbolizes the inhumane injustice showed towards the third estate. The tone and the words used in the caption shows the misery and offended feelings the peasants carried every day. Linking the illustration to the caption, the meaning drawn out of it is, no matter the appearance of the commoners situation the upper classes found every way to make sure that they were the one enjoy the fruitful side of life whilst the third estate went through the devilish side without a choice.

The commoners have had enough of the cruelty in their system and were hoping for a drastic change for the better. Furthermore the yearly income earned by a commoner showed how hard it was to survive, a commoner would earn 200 livres or less in a year making it 16. 7 livres a month with this, they ended up paying imbalanced taxes and feudal dues whereas a clergy will earn 50, 000 livres a year which is 250 times what a commoner

would earn per year or even less with the addition of taxes and feudal dues paid to them by the commoners.

This showed how terrible life was for someone living in the third estate; they had only little to live and survive on, this sent them through hunger without any hesitation (a family could sleep for night on an empty stomach) or diseases without any cure. Some even had no shelter or chattels to prove their existence in the country. What even made it worse was their inordinate increase of population per month. The next was the level of inequality in the society.

It is known that man is born free with no natural authority over others since everyone was born with the right to life, the right to be happy and freedom; force does not give anyone that right. The power to make laws belongs to the people and only to the people. However the third estates were deprived of these rights, whereas they had no freedom of speech to shout out their opinions and their situation to the French government had no right to live since their lives were controlled by the French government and had no reason to be happy.

The third estates had no access to these rights because they lacked the access to one important feature in life and this was choice; they to do whatever parliament placed before them without any discrepancy. Nothing was done to change the state of the country; Parliament had not been called since 1614 this lessened the chance of justice finding its way to change the inhumane act in the system. In conclusion France's main reason to why an

awfully drastic change had been invited was because of the ineptitude of their leader and the unstable nature of the country.