

French revolution human nature assignment

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BUSTER**

What is human nature? Are humans self-interested and savage or are we socially conscious and kind? The people of the French Revolution give us an answer to these questions. The French Revolution was a time of rebellion and revolution and provided an immense change to the country of France. The revolt was started by drought, rising prices, and increasing frustration with the government by the citizens of France. The rebelliousness followed the previous age of Enlightenment. Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes searched and discovered new ideas about the nature of people and the role of government.

Locke believed that every man was born with natural rights and will behave well as long as they have these. Hobbes on the contrary believed that we are all savage creatures who use violence to get our own way. Through events such as The Declaration of the Rights of Man and The Tennis Court Oath, John Locke's understanding of human nature can be judged as more accurate than that of Thomas Hobbes. The actions that the French people took during the Tennis Court Oath mirror Locke's beliefs about humanity.

In the Tennis Court Oath, the Third Estate challenged the awful monarchy of King Louis XVI by a pledge that they would not leave the tennis courts of Versailles until a new constitution that would meet the peoples needs was written. The Oath states, " that all members of this assembly immediately take a solemn oath never to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the realm is established and fixed upon solid foundations" (Tennis Court Oath). This event is completely related to Locke's beliefs that every man should have the right to revolt to acquire natural rights and freedoms.

In his Second Treatise on Government, John Locke wrote, “ upon the forfeiture of their rulers...the people have a right to act as supreme, and continue the legislative in themselves...as they think good” (Locke). Locke supported and encouraged people to understand that if a government was not treating them fairly or reasonably then the people have the right to form a new government that they like. The measures taken by the Third Estate supported the beliefs of Locke by taking over to get their natural rights. Locke was correct by predicting that people would do what they had to get their natural rights.

Locke’s beliefs that people only want their natural rights are supported in The Declaration of Rights of Man. The National assembly finalized the Declaration on August 26, 1789. The Declaration’s basis comes from Locke’s idea of individualism. In John Locke’s Second Treatise on Government, he states, “ Men being by nature all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this condition and subjected to the power of another without his own consent... these laws ought to be designed for no other reason than for the good of the people” (Locke).

John Locke believed that all people are born worthy and deserved natural rights. In the Declaration of Rights of Man, the initial article says, “ Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good” (Declaration of the rights of Man). The two documents are extremely similar. The intention of the Declaration of the Rights of Man was to make everybody happy with freedom and equality. Locke believed that all men are born free and equal, and the National

Assembly therefore included that thought it into the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

It is obvious from the text and spirit of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, that John Locke has the best understanding of human nature. The French Revolution was a time of rebellion and revolution that brought immense change to the country of France. When looking at the Tennis Court Oath and The Declaration of the Rights of Man, John Locke's thoughts and ideas are obvious. He believed that people should be free and shouldn't tolerate anything less. Locke was correct about people wanting their freedoms, as this was both the action and intent of the French, we can see that his beliefs of human nature were correct.

Government should be for the people and should never be unjust; but if a government is unfair to the people than Thomas Hobbes is correct that people reserve the right to revolt. This does not make them savage or self-interested it is just the people using their natural rights. Works Cited " Declaration of the Rights of Man - 1789 . " The Avalon Project. Yale Law School, n. d. Web. 28 Feb. 2010 . " The Tennis Court Oath. " Revolution. N. p. , n. d. Web. 28 Feb. 2010 . Locke, John. " The Second Treatise of Government. " 1689. The Potowmack Institute .