

1: French Revolution - Wikipedia

In other words, Lefebvre argues, the French Revolution, which would destroy the French nobility, was ultimately set in motion by the French nobility. Second came the bourgeois revolution. What became known as the Revolution of 1789 was, at its core, a social struggle, a "class war," according to Lefebvre.

The French revolution had a profound effect on the economic, political and social upgradation in France. The revolution transformed the existing monarchical hierarchy of France into a rigid social hierarchy. The revolution significantly altered the French society. The period from 1789 to 1799 is called as the period of the French revolution. The economic factors included malnutrition in certain segments of the population, due to the increased prices of consumable goods. The other factors included aspirations for social, political and economic equality. The French revolution started in the year 1789 with the convocation of the Estates-General. During the French revolution, the feudalistic society was completely abolished. At that time, the social classes were divided into three groups called as estates. The first estate was of clergy, the second estate was of nobility and the third estate consisted of other classes and individuals such as peasants, merchants, lawyers, artisans and industrial workers etc. The clergy were associated with the French Catholic church, which maintained a diverse range of powers. The clergy were further divided into lower clergy and upper clergy. The members of this class generally worked as village priests. This particular class was filled by the abbots and bishops. They owned a significant percentage of land in France. The members of the upper clergy class were associated with different types of jobs. They operated various educational institutions and healthcare centres. In addition, they also provided relief to the poor at the time of need. The Second Estate The second estate was another privileged estate, represented by the Nobility. The individuals of this class held the highest position in the army, government and the churches. They collected timely rents from the peasants. They were involved in various respected professions like banking, insurance, finance and manufacturing etc. Two levels of nobility were prevalent in the French revolution social hierarchy such as the Nobility of the Sword and the Nobility of the Robe. The Nobility of the Sword: This class carried more prestige. They served their King. The Nobility of the Robe: They were also prestigious but lesser than that of the Nobility of the Sword. The Third Estate The third estate was at the bottom of the French revolution social hierarchy and consisted of the bourgeoisie, peasants and the artisans. The bourgeoisie class was relatively wealthy and was comprised of merchants, intellectuals, bankers, manufacturers, doctors, engineers and lawyers. The peasants were not financially strong and they rented land of the nobility for agriculture and other purposes. French Revolution Social Hierarchy was last modified:

2: The Coming of the French Revolution : Georges Lefebvre :

The French Revolution (French: Révolution française French pronunciation: [ʁe.vɔlysjɔ̃ˈzjɔ̃] fʁɑ̃ˈsɛzjɔ̃ˈzjɔ̃) was a period of far-reaching social and political upheaval in France and its colonies that lasted from until

The non-aristocratic members of the Third Estate now represented 98 percent of the people but could still be outvoted by the other two bodies. In the lead-up to the May 5 meeting, the Third Estate began to mobilize support for equal representation and the abolishment of the noble veto – in other words, they wanted voting by head and not by status. While all of the orders shared a common desire for fiscal and judicial reform as well as a more representative form of government, the nobles in particular were loath to give up the privileges they enjoyed under the traditional system. Tennis Court Oath By the time the Estates-General convened at Versailles, the highly public debate over its voting process had erupted into hostility between the three orders, eclipsing the original purpose of the meeting and the authority of the man who had convened it. On June 17, with talks over procedure stalled, the Third Estate met alone and formally adopted the title of National Assembly; three days later, they met in a nearby indoor tennis court and took the so-called Tennis Court Oath serment du jeu de paume , vowing not to disperse until constitutional reform had been achieved. Within a week, most of the clerical deputies and 47 liberal nobles had joined them, and on June 27 Louis XVI grudgingly absorbed all three orders into the new assembly. The Bastille and the Great Fear On June 12, as the National Assembly known as the National Constituent Assembly during its work on a constitution continued to meet at Versailles, fear and violence consumed the capital. Though enthusiastic about the recent breakdown of royal power, Parisians grew panicked as rumors of an impending military coup began to circulate. A popular insurgency culminated on July 14 when rioters stormed the Bastille fortress in an attempt to secure gunpowder and weapons; many consider this event, now commemorated in France as a national holiday, as the start of the French Revolution. The wave of revolutionary fervor and widespread hysteria quickly swept the countryside. Revolting against years of exploitation, peasants looted and burned the homes of tax collectors, landlords and the seigniorial elite. Drafting a formal constitution proved much more of a challenge for the National Constituent Assembly, which had the added burden of functioning as a legislature during harsh economic times. For instance, who would be responsible for electing delegates? Would the clergy owe allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church or the French government? Perhaps most importantly, how much authority would the king, his public image further weakened after a failed attempt to flee the country in June , retain? This compromise did not sit well with influential radicals like Maximilien de Robespierre , Camille Desmoulins and Georges Danton, who began drumming up popular support for a more republican form of government and for the trial of Louis XVI. On the domestic front, meanwhile, the political crisis took a radical turn when a group of insurgents led by the extremist Jacobins attacked the royal residence in Paris and arrested the king on August 10, The following month, amid a wave of violence in which Parisian insurrectionists massacred hundreds of accused counterrevolutionaries, the Legislative Assembly was replaced by the National Convention, which proclaimed the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the French republic. On January 21, , it sent King Louis XVI, condemned to death for high treason and crimes against the state, to the guillotine; his wife Marie-Antoinette suffered the same fate nine months later. In June , the Jacobins seized control of the National Convention from the more moderate Girondins and instituted a series of radical measures, including the establishment of a new calendar and the eradication of Christianity. They also unleashed the bloody Reign of Terror la Terreur , a month period in which suspected enemies of the revolution were guillotined by the thousands. Many of the killings were carried out under orders from Robespierre, who dominated the draconian Committee of Public Safety until his own execution on July 28, Over 17, people were officially tried and executed during the Reign of Terror, and an unknown number of others died in prison or without trial. Executive power would lie in the hands of a five-member Directory Directoire appointed by parliament. Royalists and Jacobins protested the new regime but were swiftly silenced by the army, now led by a young and successful general named Napoleon Bonaparte. By the late s, the directors relied almost entirely on the military to maintain their authority and had ceded much of their power to the generals in the

field.

3: The coming of the French Revolution, / | Arlington

The Coming of the French Revolution remains essential reading for anyone interested in the origins of this great turning point in the formation of the modern world. First published in , on the eve of the Second World War, and suppressed by the Vichy government, this classic work explains what.

Background[edit] During the reign of Louis XVI , France faced a major economic crisis , caused in part by the cost of intervening in the American Revolution , and exacerbated by a regressive system of taxation. The king initially opposed this development, but was forced to acknowledge the authority of the assembly, which renamed itself the National Constituent Assembly on 9 July. The commoners had formed the National Guard , sporting tricolore cockades cocardes of blue, white and red, formed by combining the red and blue cockade of Paris and the white cockade of the king. These cockades, and soon simply their colour scheme, became the symbol of the revolution and, later, of France itself. The Palais-Royal and its grounds became the site of an ongoing meeting. The rank and file of the regiment, previously considered reliable, now leaned toward the popular cause. The Parisians generally presumed that the dismissal marked the start of a coup by conservative elements. Crowds gathered throughout Paris, including more than ten thousand at the Palais-Royal. Camille Desmoulins successfully rallied the crowd by "mounting a table, pistol in hand, exclaiming: This very night all the Swiss and German battalions will leave the Champ de Mars to massacre us all; one resource is left; to take arms! The French regiments included in the concentration appear to have been selected either because of the proximity of their garrisons to Paris or because their colonels were supporters of the reactionary "court party" opposed to reform. That night, rumors spread that supplies were being hoarded at Saint-Lazare, a huge property of the clergy, which functioned as convent, hospital, school and even as a jail. An angry mob broke in and plundered the property, [17] seizing 52 wagons of wheat, which were taken to the public market. That same day multitudes of people plundered many other places including weapon arsenals. The Royal troops did nothing to stop the spreading of social chaos in Paris during those days. The officers of the French Guards made ineffectual attempts to rally their men. The rebellious citizenry had now acquired a trained military contingent. As word of this spread, the commanders of the royal forces encamped on the Champ de Mars became doubtful of the dependability of even the foreign regiments. He also commented in retrospect that the officers of the French Guards had neglected their responsibilities in the period before the uprising, leaving the regiment too much to the control of its non-commissioned officers. On the morning of 13 July the electors of Paris met and agreed to the recruitment of a "bourgeois militia" of 48, men [17] from the sixty voting districts of Paris, to restore order. On the morning of 14 July , the city of Paris was in a state of alarm. The commandant at the Invalides had in the previous few days taken the precaution of transferring barrels of gunpowder to the Bastille for safer storage. The regular garrison consisted of 82 invalides veteran soldiers no longer suitable for service in the field. A analysis of the Bastille dimensions showed that it did not tower over the neighborhood as was depicted in the paintings but was more of a comparable height to other buildings in the neighborhood. A breakdown of occupations included in the list indicates that the majority were local artisans, together with some regular army deserters and a few distinctive categories such as 21 wine merchants. The negotiations dragged on while the crowd grew and became impatient. A small party climbed onto the roof of a building next to the gate to the inner courtyard and broke the chains on the drawbridge , crushing one vainqueur as it fell. Soldiers of the garrison called to the people to withdraw but in the noise and confusion these shouts were misinterpreted as encouragement to enter. The crowd seems to have felt that they had been intentionally drawn into a trap and the fighting became more violent and intense, while attempts by deputies to organise a cease-fire were ignored by the attackers. A substantial force of Royal Army troops encamped on the Champ de Mars did not intervene. A letter offering his terms was handed out to the besiegers through a gap in the inner gate. His demands were refused, but de Launay nonetheless capitulated, as he realised that with limited food stocks and no water supply [31] his troops could not hold out much longer. He accordingly opened the gates to the inner courtyard, and the vainqueurs swept in to liberate the fortress at 5: De Launay was then stabbed repeatedly and died. It was a chilling and a horrid sight! Shocked and disgusted

at this scene, [we] retired immediately from the streets. Their officer, Lieutenant Louis de Flue, wrote a detailed report on the defense of the Bastille, which was incorporated in the logbook of the Salis-Samade and has survived. The caption reads "Thus we take revenge on traitors". The king first learned of the storming only the next morning through the Duke of La Rochefoucauld. The vicomte de Noailles apparently first brought reasonably accurate news of the Paris events to Versailles. In accord with principles of popular sovereignty and with complete disregard for claims of royal authority, the people established parallel structures of municipalities for civic government and militias for civic protection. Both held official positions under the monarchy. The demolition of the fortress itself, the melting down of its clock portraying chained prisoners, and the breaking up of four statues were all carried out within five months. From this moment we may consider France as a free country, the King a very limited monarch, and the nobility as reduced to a level with the rest of the nation. Washington displayed it prominently at government facilities and events in New York and in Philadelphia until shortly before his retirement in Pieces of stone from the structure were sent to every district in France, and some have been located. In popular culture[edit] This section appears to contain trivial, minor, or unrelated references to popular culture. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. July An annual reenactment of the Storming of the Bastille was held at the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia , hosted by the Bearded Ladies a cabaret troupe. Traditionally a Marie Antoinette reenactor declares "Let them eat cake" and is promptly beheaded by the mob. The year tradition was ended in Les Amants de la Bastille , stage musical whose main characters are split up during the early stages, then reunited during the storming of the Bastille. Bastille Day was a song written in by the progressive rock band Rush about the siege, and was included on their album Caress of Steel.

4: French Revolution - HISTORY

The Coming of the French Revolution was certainly a pleasurable and enlightening read on the Revolution of Lefebvre's book stands as a classic among history books on the French Revolution. It is a history book "a strand of well-researched essays" the type of book that transforms a layman into an expert among laymen.

However, in depth, it can be analyzed that it was in specific the bourgeoisies that contributed the most to the coming of it due to inequalities that they faced at every aspect when it can be also argued that it is in fact not the class conflict that was necessary for the triggering of the French Revolution, countering the quote, because bourgeoisies were not everyone who had oppositions to the governmental system. Financial and economic crisis that France experienced was one of the major reason for the coming of the French Revolution on In the process, the class conflict between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie was imminent. These increased tax targeted the Third estate which included the farming peasants, city laborers as well as the growing bourgeoisie. French taxation system in late eighteenth century, considerate of the income level of the subjects, required the most earning to pay more tax. This property chained the high earning bourgeoisies. It is not to say that farmers or other laborers were not burdened by the tax, they were also in economic crisis. However, the bourgeoisies were the most affected by the national debt and the most suffered. Furthermore, the bourgeoisies consisted of merchants and artisans had to pay extra taxes such as patents and tariffs besides the main income tax and church tax as the new Controller-General suppressed guild system. On the other hand, the second estate, consisted of aristocracies were mostly exempt from tax. The political and social discrimination that the bourgeoisie class had to face also triggered the French Revolution of Bourgeoisie class was an economically growing social group. However, given their position being the Third Estate, they were never treated equal to the nobles or the priests. Grain price as well as the bread price soared up the sky. Ironically, with the inflation, the wage of the workers stagnated. Because of this economic phenomenon, peasants did suffer. However, the most suffered were the city laborers, the artisans, and the merchants. The merchants had to suffer the high inflation barriers when trading with foreign countries as well as within France and the artisans had to suffer the decrease in demand for their works. This hardship that the Third Estate city residents had to bear was undermined by the nobles. Furthermore, their constant desire for political suffrage shows the class conflict that bourgeoisies had to endure. Louis XV was considered to be an enlightened despot for his legislative reforms: This form of Parlement, more so than Parlement of Paris was subservient, creating central judicial system and merit based bureaucracy which in turn suppressed the hereditary nobles. Also, the Declaration of Rights of Men and Citizen directly shows the ideals that bourgeoisies wanted, grant of citizenship and political freedom according to payment of tax. However, it was not only the class conflict between the bourgeoisie class and the aristocracy that was essential for the coming of the French Revolution of Given that France during the 18th century was financially and politically unstable due to the past monarchs, not only the bourgeoisies but also political groups from other social classes expressed their opposition towards the government. At the midst of the establishment of political inequality between the estates, it was at the Assembly of Notables that the idea of calling for the assembly of the Estate-General was first thought of. This shows how not only the third estate and the bourgeoisies themselves but also the nobles of the second estate were in some way aligned to make political equality. It is not to say that they expanded the concept of equality to their general lives, but they made efforts to include the third estate members at deciding over a major issue, taxation. Furthermore, a lot of individuals from the second estate took part in radical reforms and revolutions itself. Marquis de Lafayette was a French general commonly known for his accomplishments in the American War of Independence. However, when he returned from the battle field, he dived into another one by leading the march towards Versailles in Although it is does not directly show the cause for revolution, it elaborates on the spirit of the revolution of , that the third estate is not the single entity that broke out into war: Additionally, numerous clergies were in line with the revolution. To conclude, the class conflict between the bourgeoisie class and the aristocracy was an essential component in causing the French Revolution of The social, political inferiority that the bourgeoisies endured created the long fuse triggered by the economic burden. However, viewing from another

COMING OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1789. pdf

perspective that many activists were from other classes, show how the class conflict might not have been a necessity. However, it was the bourgeoisies that contributed the most to the coming of the revolution of which can be analyzed that, for the specific revolution of to happen, the class conflict was necessary.

5: George Lefebvre's The Coming of the French Revolution

The Coming of the French Revolution remains essential reading for anyone interested in the origins of this great turning point in the formation of the modern world. First published in , on the eve of the Second World War, and suppressed by the Vichy government, this classic work explains what happened in France in , the first year of the French Revolution.

A tower of used books by Jorge Royan Photo credit: Flickr Two book reviews in one issue? I remember taking a history class in grade nine when I was about fifteen. By the halfway point of the class, the textbook dealt with causality and history. What are the forces behind the trajectory of history? How and why does humanity abandon one era of history and enter a new one? In other words, what makes history go? The revolution or evolution of ideas—paradigm shifts. What, then, facilitated such a momentous change in the theatre of history as the French Revolution did? My grade nine history textbook would tell us that it was a paradigm shift. This shift we call The Enlightenment. Much more than that, the Revolution was a medley of material and metaphysical conditions: Lefebvre, born in northern France in , researched the Revolution for most of his life. By the mid-twentieth century, he was considered one of the leading authorities on the French Revolution in the world. Each revolution was constituted by its own demographics, its own goals, and its own methods of achieving those goals. And it was these four revolutions that worked, although fortuitously, in concert to put the French Revolution in motion. The consequences of these revolutions fostered many decades of uncertainty, war, and political turmoil in France. But the result, in retrospect, is unambiguously clear: The French Revolution signed the death certificate of the Old Regime. The four revolutions are as follows: The aristocracy saw a crisis in the French monarchy, and they pounced to seize more power for themselves. This included bolstering honorific privileges and exemption from certain taxes. Next, the bourgeois revolution. As capitalism was taking hold in eighteenth-century France, a formidable group of commercial traders and landowners were gaining power. The bourgeoisie used legislative and political maneuvers to fight for male suffrage, effectively demanding their own full participation in the political process. The remaining two revolutions were from the lower classes. There was the popular revolution, which occurred in the towns and cities throughout France. Mostly day-labourers and shopkeepers, who were hungry for cheaper bread and fed up with taxes, from which they were burdened the most, enacted these revolts. This revolution culminated in the insurrection of July 14, And the last revolution occurred in the countryside by the agrarian peasants. These peasants accounted for nearly three quarters of the population of France at the time. They fought for more access to farmland and forested areas. They also complained vehemently about the crippling taxes imposed on them by landlords and the clergy which took the form of the tithe, among others. Their contribution to the Revolution was to deal the final blow to the vestiges of feudalism that still existed in eighteenth century France. Lefebvre shows that this is exactly what the French Revolution was: And only one class ultimately prevailed: Their class war afforded us a society that is now the envy of most of the world: Posterity owes the revolutionaries of nothing but gratitude and congratulations.

6: The Coming of the French Revolution - Georges Lefebvre - Google Books

The Estates began their meeting at Versailles on May 5, and quickly entered into a power struggle. The Third Estate soon declared itself a "National Assembly" that was representative of the people.

His financial crisis forced the French monarch to reluctantly convene the Estates General in order to levy a new land tax that would hopefully solve his monetary woes. It had been years since the last meeting of this deliberative body that included representatives of three Estates: An allegorical depiction of the Revolution The Estates began their meeting at Versailles on May 5, and quickly entered into a power struggle. The Third Estate soon declared itself a "National Assembly" that was representative of the people. This new National Assembly expressed its desire to include the other two Estates in its deliberations but also made it clear that it was determined to move forward without them. Louis attempted to shut down the National Assembly, but on June 20 its members declared that they would not disband until they had written a new constitution for France. The tension increased, exacerbated by massive crop failures that led to a shortage of food. The fear spread that the king would retaliate with force. On July 14 the mob stormed the Bastille to obtain arms. The attack launched the nation down a pathway that would eventually lead to the destruction of the monarchy and the execution of Louis XVI. As tensions grew and violence erupted, Jefferson traveled to Versailles and Paris to observe events first-hand. This drew people to that spot, who naturally formed themselves in front of the troops, at first merely to look at them. The horse charged, but the advantageous position of the people, and the showers of stones obliged them to retire, and even to quit the field altogether, leaving one of their number on the ground. The Swiss in their rear were observed never to stir. This was the signal for universal insurrection, and this body of cavalry, to avoid being massacred, retired towards Versailles. July 13 The next day the States press on the king to send away the troops, to permit the Bourgeoisie of Paris to arm for the preservation of order in the city, and offer to send a deputation from their body to tranquillize them. He refuses all their propositions. The mob, now openly joined by the French guards, force the prisons of St. Lazare, release all the prisoners, and take a great store of corn, which they carry to the corn market. Here they get some arms, and the French guards begin to form and train them. The City committee determines to raise 48, Bourgeois, or rather to restrain their numbers to 48, July 14 Forced to meet on a tennis court, the National Assembly vows to continue meeting until they write a new constitution. June 20, On the 14th, they send one of their members Monsieur de Corny, whom we knew in America to the Hotel des Invalides to ask arms for their Garde Bourgeoise. He was followed by, or he found there, a great mob. The Governor of the Invalids came out and represented the impossibility of his delivering arms without the orders of those from whom he received them. De Corney advised the people then to retire, retired himself, and the people took possession of the arms. It was remarkable that not only the Invalids themselves made no opposition, but that a body of foreign troops, encamped within yards, never stirred. Monsieur de Corny and five others were then sent to ask arms of Monsieur de Launai, Governor of the Bastille. They found a great collection of people already before the place, and they immediately planted a flag of truce, which was answered by a like flag hoisted on the parapet. The deputation prevailed on the people to fall back a little, advanced themselves to make their demand of the Governor, and in that instant a discharge from the Bastille killed 4. The deputies retired, the people rushed against the place, and almost in an instant were in possession of a fortification, defended by men, of infinite strength, which in other times had stood several regular sieges and had never been taken. How they got in, has as yet been impossible to discover. Those, who pretend to have been of the party tell so many different stories as to destroy the credit of them all. They took all the arms, discharged the prisoners and such of the garrison as were not killed in the first moment of fury, carried the Governor and Lieutenant governor to the Greve the place of public execution cut off their heads, and set them through the city in triumph to the Palais royal. About the same instant, a treacherous correspondence having been discovered in Monsieur de Flesselles prevot des marchands, they seize him in the hotel de ville, where he was in the exercise of his office, and cut off his head. He went to bed deeply impressed. This according well enough with the dispositions of the king, he went about 11 o'clock, accompanied only by his brothers, to the States general, and there read to them a

speech, in which he asked their interposition to re-establish order. Tho this be couched in terms of some caution, yet the manner in which it was delivered made it evident that it was meant as a surrender at discretion. The storming of the Bastille. The demolition of the Bastille was now ordered, and begun. A body of the Swiss guards, of the regiment of Ventimille, and the city horse guards join the people. The alarm at Versailles increases instead of abating. They believed that the Aristocrats of Paris were under pillage and carnage, that , men were in arms coming to Versailles to massacre the Royal family, the court, the ministers and all connected with them, their practices and principles. The foreign troops were ordered off instantly. July 16 Every minister resigned. The king came to Paris, leaving the queen in consternation for his return. The king landed at the Hotel de ville. There, Monsieur Bailly presented and put into his hat the popular cockade, and addressed him. The king being unprepared and unable to answer, Bailly went to him, gathered from him some scraps of sentences, and made out an answer, which he delivered to the Audience as from the king. How To Cite This Article:

7: The Beginning of the French Revolution,

The French Revolution had many long-range causes. Political, social, and economic conditions in France contributed to the discontent felt by many French people—especially those of the third estate.

Rising social and economic inequality, [14] [15] new political ideas emerging from the Enlightenment, [16] economic mismanagement, environmental factors leading to agricultural failure, unmanageable national debt, [17] and political mismanagement on the part of King Louis XVI have all been cited as laying the groundwork for the Revolution. French music, the partisans of both sides appealed to the French public "because it alone has the right to decide whether a work will be preserved for posterity or will be used by grocers as wrapping-paper". Reigning opinions are no longer received from the court; it no longer decides on reputations of any sort. After the British surrender at the Battle of Saratoga, the French sent 10,000 troops and millions of dollars to the rebels. Despite succeeding in gaining independence for the Thirteen Colonies, France was severely indebted by the American Revolutionary War. Poor harvests lasting several years and an inadequate transportation system both contributed to making food more expensive. Meanwhile, the royal court at Versailles was isolated from and indifferent to the escalating crisis. While in theory King Louis XVI was an absolute monarch, in practice he was often indecisive and known to back down when faced with strong opposition. While he did reduce government expenditures, opponents in the parlements successfully thwarted his attempts at enacting much needed reforms. The Enlightenment had produced many writers, pamphleteers and publishers who could inform or inflame public opinion. The opposition used this resource to mobilise public opinion against the monarchy, which in turn tried to repress the underground literature. Originally largely apolitical, Freemasonry was radicalised in the late 18th century through the introduction of higher grades, which emphasised themes of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Virtually every major player in the Revolution was a Freemason and these themes became the widely recognised slogan of the revolution. He could not be made an official minister because he was a Protestant. Faced with opposition from the parlements, Calonne organised the summoning of the Assembly of Notables. In response, the King announced the calling of the Estates-General for May, the first time the body had been summoned since 1789. This was a signal that the Bourbon monarchy was in a weakened state and subject to the demands of its people. It had last met in 1789. Elections were held in the spring of 1789; suffrage requirements for the Third Estate were for French-born or naturalised males, aged 25 years or more, who resided where the vote was to take place and who paid taxes. Strong turnout produced 1,200 delegates, including clergy, nobles and members of the Third Estate. The lands were controlled by bishops and abbots of monasteries, but two-thirds of the delegates from the First Estate were ordinary parish priests; only 51 were bishops. About a third of these deputies were nobles, mostly with minor holdings. Half were well educated lawyers or local officials. Nearly a third were in trades or industry; 51 were wealthy land owners. Many assumed the Estates-General would approve future taxes, and Enlightenment ideals were relatively rare. What is the Third Estate? What has it been until now in the political order? What does it want to be? The Third Estate demanded that the credentials of deputies should be verified by all deputies, rather than each estate verifying the credentials of its own members, but negotiations with the other estates failed to achieve this. The commoners appealed to the clergy, who asked for more time. They established the National Assembly and tried to pressure the aristocracy to spread their money evenly between the upper, middle and lower classes. They proceeded to do so two days later, completing the process on 17 June. Weather did not allow an outdoor meeting, and fearing an attack ordered by Louis XVI, they met in a tennis court just outside Versailles, where they proceeded to swear the Tennis Court Oath 20 June under which they agreed not to separate until they had given France a constitution. A majority of the representatives of the clergy soon joined them, as did 47 members of the nobility. By 27 June, the royal party had overtly given in, although the military began to arrive in large numbers around Paris and Versailles. Messages of support for the Assembly poured in from Paris and other French cities.

8: SparkNotes: The French Revolution (â€“): Brief Overview

A suggested list of literary criticism on History SparkNotes's The French Revolution (). The listed critical essays and books will be invaluable for writing essays and papers on The French Revolution ().

What was the French Revolution? The French Revolution was one of the most dramatic social upheavals in history. What he discovered startled him. When I came to gather all the individual wishes, with a sense of terror I realized that their demands were for the wholesale and systematic abolition of all the laws and all the current practices in the country. Straightaway I saw that the issue here was one of the most extensive and dangerous revolutions ever observed in the world. The revolutionary process started with open rebellion in the summer of â€” including the storming of the Bastille on July It would before long topple the absolute monarchy of Louis XVI, divest the nobility of their hereditary power, and completely undermine the political influence of the Catholic Church. This dramatic revision in French society unleashed a chaotic process of revolutionary advance and reactionary blowback. The forces of property were unwilling to stand idly by as their enormous privileges were threatened; they attempted to undo all the radical changes brought on by the revolution and restore the old social hierarchies even as the revolutionaries worked to cohere an entirely different kind of society based on more egalitarian ideals. What was France like before the revolution? The vast majority of people in France lived in destitution, with little chance of escaping their condition. Peasants were entirely at the mercy of the nobility, who had preserved much of the fundamental power relationship of feudalism. This led to near-universal poverty in the countryside. English agriculturalist Arthur Young remarked at the time: The poor seem poor indeed; the children terribly ragged, if possible worse clad than if with no clothes at all; as to shoes and stockings they are luxuriesâ€! One third of what I have seen of this province seems uncultivated, and nearly all of it in misery. What have kings, and ministers, and parliaments, and states, to answer for their prejudices, seeing millions of hands that would be industrious, idle and starving, through the execrable maxims of despotism, or the equally detestable prejudices of a feudal nobility? The urban population of artisans and journeymen laborers experienced similar hardship. Economic reorganizations in the kingdom threatened the apprenticeship system, jeopardizing the ability of craftsmen to control their own work. Day laborers â€” permitted to exist in the cities only when they could produce papers proving their employment â€” were stalked by royal police. At the same time, a wave of immigration brought dramatic demographic changes to Paris. The Catholic Church controlled by some estimates 8 percent of total private wealth. But in the years immediately prior to the revolution, a new class of financiers â€” generally upwardly mobile craftsmen or landholding peasants â€” began to grow in the cities, threatening to replace the nobility as the most decadent of social layers. Meanwhile, the kingdom was in the midst of a catastrophic financial crisis. Foreign financiers were recalling their debts, the harvest of was decimated by a drought and a series of hailstorms, and the free trade agreement brokered between France and Great Britain at the end of the Seven Years War flooded the French market with British textiles, ruining French garment production. Panicked about the financial crisis, Louis XVI squeezed the people even harder, demanding increased taxes from all layers of society. But there were rumblings of resistance, in the cities as well as the countryside. There has been visible insubordination among the people for several years now, and especially in the trades. Apprentices and lads want to display their independence; they lack respect for the masters, they form corporations [associations]; this contempt for the old rules is contrary to orderâ€! The workers transform the print shop into a real smoke den. And peasants, still expected to sacrifice even their most basic of foodstuffs as tribute to king and church, took matters into their own hands as famine loomed. The populace is so enraged they would kill for a bushel. What other solution but revolution? What happened on July 14, ? By claiming the fortress on behalf of the revolution, they sent a powerful message to the forces of old wealth that still dominated the kingdom â€” the upheaval in France would not be a simple legislative reorganization, but rather a social revolution. Hazan describes it this way: The storming of the Bastille is the most famous event in the French Revolution, and has moreover become its symbol throughout the world. But this glory rather distorts its historical significance. In this way, they helped transform what could have been a period of cautious reform

into a period of genuine revolution. Who were the sans-culottes? Most fundamentally, the sans-culottes were concerned with establishing a system of direct, local democracy which could guarantee a consistent price of for vital provisions – the poor craved the same food security as the nobles, and resented the profound difference between the bread consumed by rich elites and the bread available to common laborers. A popular uprising ejected Louis XVI from his final hiding place in Tuileries on August 10, – a tremendous victory for the armies of sans-culottes who descended en masse upon the king, accusing him quite rightly of treasonous collusion with foreign monarchies to squash the revolution at home. Following this victory, the sans-culottes formed the Insurrectional Commune and proposed a sweeping reform: In future the rich will not have their bread made from wheaten flour whilst the poor have theirs made from bran. For the sans-culottes, demanding lower food prices – not higher wages – was the intuitive response to the transition to wage labor. Often armed only with pikes – useful for parading the severed heads of food-hoarders or monarchists through the street, as was their habit – the sans-culottes did more than just pose a grave threat to the old hierarchies of the monarchy. They also forced formal revolutionary bodies like the Legislative Assembly to adopt more radical positions to meet the expectations of the unsatisfied and insurgent poor. Consistently denied the democracy and plenty promised by the revolution, the sans-culottes repeatedly took things into their own hands, driving the revolutionary momentum forward each time the bourgeoisie proved hesitant to further challenge the status quo. Whatever their particular class position, their contribution to the revolution was profound. But the often violent confrontations with the assemblies and established authorities were not the work of a stereotypical ideal: Sans-culotte is as sans-culotte does. Constant confrontation with the privileged, often violently and in the street, demanding a world in which food is easily available and democracy simple and direct – this orientation, more than anything else, makes a sans-culotte. Who were the Jacobins? Following the mass insurrection of the sans-culottes that effectively dissolved the monarchy and brought the armed bourgeoisie to power, European monarchies feared the French example would destabilize their power in their own countries. Austria took the side of the deposed regime, as did Prussia. Revolutionary France responded with declarations of war in . Meanwhile, the sans-culottes – having recently learned the power of armed mobilization – continued to make demands on the revolutionary government, threatening not only the old figures of the ancien regime but also the ascendant bourgeoisie. In response to this crisis, the Committee of Public Safety was formed as a bulwark against the aggression of the wealthy, both French and foreign. The Committee was convened under the leadership of the most militant section of the revolutionary bourgeoisie – the Jacobins. In the absence of political parties as we understand them today, the sans-culottes received their political education from revolutionary societies like the Jacobins, who produced newspapers and called gatherings where revolutionary propaganda was read aloud. The Jacobins would take it [a question booed by the conservative majority of the Assembly] up in their circular invitations or their papers; it was discussed by four or five hundred affiliated societies, and three weeks later addresses poured into the Assembly asking for a decree on a matter that had initially been rejected, but which the Assembly then accepted by a large majority, since public opinion had been matured by discussion. They saw their role as to strengthen and deepen the radical ideals of the Revolution while protecting it from attack. As Robespierre wrote in Though far fewer than the millions who lost their lives during the Napoleonic Wars, 17, people – counter-revolutionaries as well as dissident thinkers within the revolution – were executed by the guillotine. Tens of thousands more were killed without trial or died in jail – historian Timothy Tackett estimates a total death toll closer to 40, The legacy of this period is still much debated. But it is hard to dispute that the terror emerged in response to the urgent need for political and military defense. The old figureheads of the ancien regime were more than mere symbols of opulence or historical tyranny; many were active antagonists of the revolution, working to dismantle its progress and assassinate its soldiers precisely at the time when the revolutionary transformation was most vulnerable. Robespierre wrote in If the spring of popular government in time of peace is virtue, the springs of popular government in revolution are at once virtue and terror: It has been said that terror is the principle of despotic government. Does your government therefore resemble despotism? Yes, as the sword that gleams in the hands of the heroes of liberty resembles that with which the henchmen of tyranny are armed. Let the despot govern by terror his brutalized subjects; he is right, as a despot. Subdue by terror the

enemies of liberty, and you will be right, as founders of the Republic. Is force made only to protect crime? And is the thunderbolt not destined to strike the heads of the proud? Indulgence for the royalists, cry certain men, mercy for the villains! One more thing seems nearly certain: With the benefit of hindsight, Engels wrote in a letter to Marx in that: These perpetual little panics of the French " which all arise from fear of the moment when they will really have to learn the truth " give one a much better idea of the Reign of Terror. We think of this as the reign of people who inspire terror; on the contrary, it is the reign of people who are themselves terrified. Terror consists mostly of useless cruelties perpetrated by frightened people in order to reassure themselves. Who ruined the French Revolution? By the summer of " five years after the summer of unrest that saw the convening of the Estates-General, the formation of the National Assembly, and the storming of the Bastille " the revolution was fragmented and Robespierre was increasingly isolated, left to occupy a left flank of the revolutionary leadership that was largely devoid of allies or support. Fearful of conspiracies against his life, Robespierre had argued for the execution of fellow revolutionary leaders like Hebert and Danton while presiding over the Committee for Public Safety. After a short-lived insurrection against the National Assembly " led by the Paris Commune, the assembly formed by the sans-culottes and their bourgeois allies after the victory at Tuileries two years earlier " Robespierre and his allies were arrested. The next day, they were executed by guillotine. A violent purge of the Commune followed. The interested professors of democracy, and the ancient partisans of aristocracy, were found to accord once more. Certain rallying cries that recalled the doctrines and institutions of equality, were now regarded as the impure howls of anarchy, brigandism, and terrorism. Eric Hazan, writing centuries later, is similarly pessimistic: What was brutally concluded with Thermidor is the incandescent phase of the Revolution, in which men of government, sometimes followed and sometimes driven forward by the most conscious section of the people, sought to change material inequities, social relations and ways of life. They did not succeed, to be sure. From this political context soon emerged Napoleon Bonaparte, and the revolution soon mutated into the Bonapartist state, built through war and empire abroad and aristocratic tyranny at home. How did the rest of Europe view the revolution? The insurrection of the sans-culottes and the liberalization of the French political system had profound effects on the surrounding monarchies. Predictably, the reaction of the monarchs was vastly different from the response of the masses. The monarchs of Austria and Prussia " including Leopold II , a relative of the French royals " took immediate interest in the popular unrest destabilizing their neighbor kingdom, even colluding with Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette to orchestrate an inter-kingdom war to weaken the constitutionalist state. After Louis XVI was prevented from fleeing the nation by angry peasants and evidence of his treason was discovered in Paris, the French people were so outraged they seized the Tuileries and deposed the king, sparking skirmishes with the neighboring monarchs. But common people in neighboring regions saw inspiration for their own liberation in the French popular struggle.

9: Historian: Georges Lefebvre

The French Revolution was a watershed event in modern European history that began in and ended in the late 1790s with the ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte. During this period, French citizens.

Years of feudal oppression and fiscal mismanagement contributed to a French society that was ripe for revolt. Noting a downward economic spiral in the late 1780s, King Louis XVI brought in a number of financial advisors to review the weakened French treasury. Each advisor reached the same conclusion—that France needed a radical change in the way it taxed the public—and each advisor was, in turn, kicked out. Finally, the king realized that this taxation problem really did need to be addressed, so he appointed a new controller general of finance, Charles de Calonne, in 1789. Calonne suggested that, among other things, France begin taxing the previously exempt nobility. The nobility refused, even after Calonne pleaded with them during the Assembly of Notables in 1788. Financial ruin thus seemed imminent. The Estates-General In a final act of desperation, Louis XVI decided in 1789 to convene the Estates-General, an ancient assembly consisting of three different estates that each represented a portion of the French population. If the Estates-General could agree on a tax solution, it would be implemented. However, since two of the three estates—the clergy and the nobility—were tax-exempt, the attainment of any such solution was unlikely. Moreover, the outdated rules of order for the Estates-General gave each estate a single vote, despite the fact that the Third Estate—consisting of the general French public—was many times larger than either of the first two. Feuds quickly broke out over this disparity and would prove to be irreconcilable. Realizing that its numbers gave it an automatic advantage, the Third Estate declared itself the sovereign National Assembly. Within days of the announcement, many members of the other two estates had switched allegiances over to this revolutionary new assembly. The Bastille and the Great Fear Shortly after the National Assembly formed, its members took the Tennis Court Oath, swearing that they would not relent in their efforts until a new constitution had been agreed upon. In the countryside, peasants and farmers revolted against their feudal contracts by attacking the manors and estates of their landlords. Shortly thereafter, the assembly released the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which established a proper judicial code and the autonomy of the French people. Rifts in the Assembly Though the National Assembly did succeed in drafting a constitution, the relative peace of the moment was short-lived. A rift slowly grew between the radical and moderate assembly members, while the common laborers and workers began to feel overlooked. When Louis XVI was caught in a foiled escape plot, the assembly became especially divided. The moderate Girondins took a stance in favor of retaining the constitutional monarchy, while the radical Jacobins wanted the king completely out of the picture. French leaders interpreted the declaration as hostile, so the Girondin-led assembly declared war on Austria and Prussia. Despite the creation of the Committee of Public Safety, the war with Austria and Prussia went poorly for France, and foreign forces pressed on into French territory. Enraged citizens overthrew the Girondin-led National Convention, and the Jacobins, led by Maximilien Robespierre, took control. Backed by the newly approved Constitution of 1793, Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety began conscripting French soldiers and implementing laws to stabilize the economy. But Robespierre, growing increasingly paranoid about counterrevolutionary influences, embarked upon a Reign of Terror in late 1793, during which he had more than 15,000 people executed at the guillotine. When the French army successfully removed foreign invaders and the economy finally stabilized, however, Robespierre no longer had any justification for his extreme actions, and he himself was arrested in July and executed. The Thermidorian Reaction and the Directory The era following the ousting of Robespierre was known as the Thermidorian Reaction, and a period of governmental restructuring began, leading to the new Constitution of 1795 and a significantly more conservative National Convention. To control executive responsibilities and appointments, a group known as the Directory was formed. French armies, especially those led by young general Napoleon Bonaparte, were making progress in nearly every direction. In the face of this rout, and having received word of political upheavals in France, Napoleon returned to Paris. With Napoleon at the helm, the Revolution ended, and France entered a fifteen-year period of military rule.

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