

### Introduction (Raid of the Bastille)

Date|Place 14 July 1789, Paris

**Reason** The king commanded troops to move into the city, rumors spread of them being commanded to attack the citizens. The citizens panicked and formed a peoples' militia of ~7000 men and women. They raided govt. buildings in search of arms.

**The Raid** Several hundred peoples marched to the eastern part of the city and stormed the fortress-prison, the Bastille where they hoped to find ammunition. The commander of the Bastille was killed and the seven prisoners held captive were released.

**Conclusion** The Bastille was hated by all as it stood for the despotic power of the king, the fortress was demolished and parts were sold in markets as souvenirs of its destruction.

I have mentioned this event in the starting as it is mentioned like this in the book. Please note that the events in the next columns happen before this and is not in complete chronological order.

(Taken from pg. no. 3 from India and the Contemporary World - Part I of NCERT 9th grade)

### Subsistence Crisis

**Reason** The population of France grew from around 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. This led to a shortage of foodgrains.

**Subsistence Crisis** Production of grains could not keep up with demand. Hence, the price of bread (which is the staple food for the majority) rose. But workers had fixed wages that didn't increase, this led to the gap in between the poor and the rich to increase. This is a subsistence crisis, something that was common in France during the Old Regime. ([Wikipedia Page For More Information](#))

A shorter column, but an important topic.

(Taken from pg. no. 5 from India and the Contemporary World - Part I of NCERT 9th grade)

### Increase In Taxes

**Royal Family** In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon royal family of France ascended to the throne. He was 20 years old and married to the Austrian princess, Marie Antoinette.

### Increase In Taxes (cont)

**Debt** The new king found the royal treasury to be empty. Long years of war and maintaining the place of Versailles caused this. Under Louis XVI, France helped the 13 American colonies attain independence from a common enemy, the British. This added >1 billion livres to a debt that had risen past 2 billion. Lenders who loaned the state money increased their interest fees to 10%. Hence, the govt. had to pay more of their budget on taxes.

**Increase In Taxes** To meet its regular expenses of maintaining an army, the court and running govt. universities, the state was forced to increase the taxes.

I've decided to split the second portion of the chapter into bits instead of just a singular column.

(Taken from pg. no. 4 from India and the Contemporary World - Part I of NCERT 9th grade)



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Not published yet.

Last updated 11th September, 2023.

Page 1 of 3.

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### Growing Middle Class And Philosophy

**Emergence Of Social Groups** Even if peasants and workers participated in revolts against taxes and food scarcity, they lacked the means to carry out full-scale measures that brought change. The 18th century saw the emergence of social groups termed the 'middle class'. They earned their income through overseas trade and from manufacturing goods like woollen or silk textiles brought by richer members of society. The third estate also included professions such as lawyers or administrative officials. All of these people were educated and believed a person shouldn't be privileged by birth and that one's social standing should depend of merit instead.

### Growing Middle Class And Philosophy (cont)

**Philosophical Ideas About Equality** These ideas of envisioning such a future was put forward for all by philosophers like Jean Jacque Rousseau and John Locke. In his *Two Treatises Of Government*, he sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the king. Rousseau carried the idea forward by proposing a social contract between the people and their representatives. Montesquieu in his *Spirit of the Laws* proposed a government similar to the USA, where power were divided among three divisions of the government, the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary. The American constitution with it's laws about equality and individual rights were an important example for philosophers like Montesquieu.

### Growing Middle Class And Philosophy (cont)

**Spreading Ideas** Such ideas were discussed extensively in salons and coffee shops and spread through books and newspapers. They were aloud in groups for the illiterate. The news that the king planned to impose further taxes angered the people against the system of privileges.

**Philosophy** - (In this context) A theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behavior.

**Envision** - Imagine as a future possibility; visualize.

This one is a bit long but it is very important.

(Taken from pg. no. 6 from India and the Contemporary World - Part I of NCERT 9th grade)

### Society Of Estates (Feudal System)

**The Division** French society was split into three estates, the Clergy, the Nobility, and the Working Class. The 3rd estate (the working class) was split into 2 parts, the upper-middle class and the lower-middle class. The upper middle class consisted of rich businessmen, educated people (lawyers, officials) et cetera. The lower-middle class consists of the peasants, landless labour, servants et cetera. [Wikipedia Article \(For Detail\)](#)



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Page 2 of 3.

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### Society Of Estates (Feudal System) (cont)

**Details and Privileges** This was part of the feudal system that dated back to the middle ages. French society before 1789 is referred to as 'Old Regime'. Peasants = 90% of population. Yet, a very small amount own the land they cultivate in. 60% of land = Nobles, the Church and rich members of the 3rd estate. The first two estates enjoyed privileges, most notable one being not having to pay tax. The nobles also enjoyed feudal privileges, they extracted feudal dues from peasants, peasants also had to work for the lord, like working in his house or fields, to serve in the army or to build roads. The Church extracted *tithes* from the peasants (1/10 of all agricultural produce), and finally, all members of the 3rd estate had to pay taxes. This included direct (*taille*) and indirect tax, the indirect tax were levied on everyday items like tobacco and salt.

I finished the society of estates here, it is a bit long but everything is crucial.

(Taken from pg. no. 4 from India and the Contemporary World - Part I of NCERT 9th grade)

### Outbreak Of The Revolution

Louis IX couldn't increase taxes without consulting the Estates General in France of the Old Regime. Only a monarch could call a meeting of the Estates General (Representatives of the three estates), the last time it was called was in 1614. On **5 May, 1784** Louis XVI called a meeting for it. A hall in the palace of Versailles was prepared. The 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> estate had 300 representatives each, seated, facing each other. The 600 members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate had to stand at the back (They were prosperous and educated members). Women, artisans and peasants weren't allowed, however their opinions were listed in ~40,000 letters which the representatives brought with them. Each estate usually had one vote and Louis XVI wanted to continue this, however, the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate wanted each member to have one vote, this idea was put forward by people like Rosseau in his book 'Social Contract'. The king rejected this and the members walked out in protest. The representatives viewed themselves as spokesmen for the entire nation. On **20 June**, they assembled in an indoor tennis court in Versailles, they declared themselves as the national assembly and swore not to disperse until they drafted a constitution. They completed the draft in 1791. They wanted to limit the powers of the monarch, they distributed the powers among the legislative, executive and judiciary. This made France a **Constitutional Monarchy**. To qualify as an elector and a member of the National Assembly, you had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers. **The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen** such as



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Page 3 of 3.

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