

The French Revolution

1789-1791



*It was the best of times,
it was the worst of times,
it was the age of wisdom,
it was the age of foolishness,
it was the epoch of belief,
it was the epoch of incredulity...*

-- Charles Dickens
A Tale of Two Cities

The French Monarchy: 1775 - 1793



Marie Antoinette & Louis XVI





Marie Antoinette and the Royal Children

Versailles:

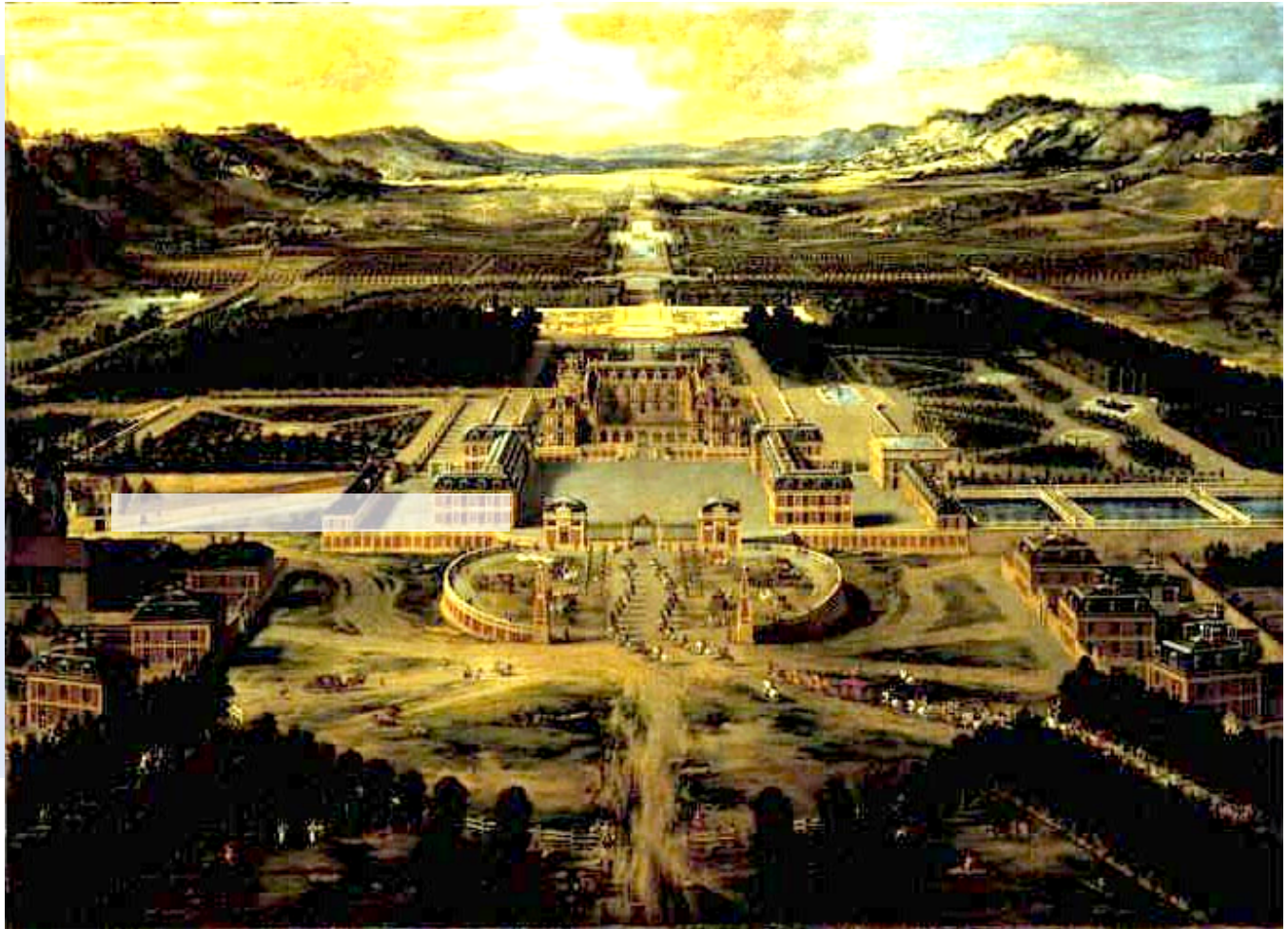
Home of the "Sun King"



Versailles Statistics

- e 2,000 acres of grounds
 - e 12 miles of roads
 - e 27 miles of trellises
 - e 200,000 trees
- e 210,000 flowers planted every year
 - e 80 miles of rows of trees
- e 55 acres surface area of the Grand Canal
 - e 12 miles of enclosing walls
- e 50 fountains and 620 fountain nozzles
 - e 21 miles of water conduits
- e 3,600 cubic meters per hour: water consumed
 - e 26 acres of roof
 - e 51,210 square meters of floors
 - e 2,153 windows
 - e 700 rooms
 - e 67 staircases
 - e 6,000 paintings
- e 1,500 drawings and 15,000 engravings
 - e 2,100 sculptures
- e 5,000 items of furniture and *objects d'art*
- e 150 varieties of apple and peach trees in the Vegetable Garden

Louis XIII's Old Chateau



Versailles Today



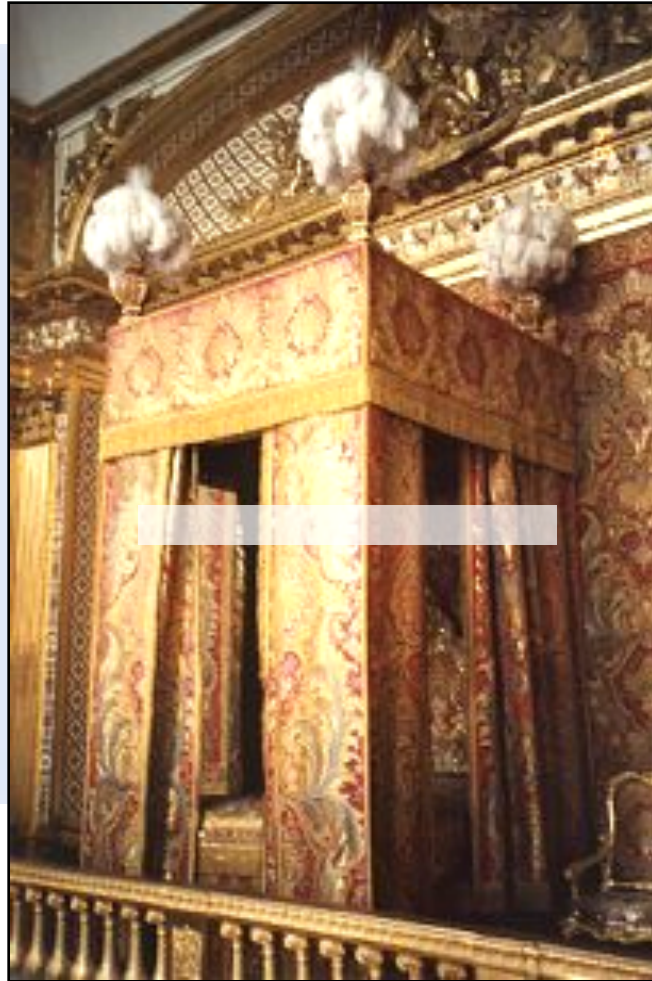
Chateau de Versailles



Louis XIV's Chapel



The King's Bed



The Queen's Bed



Marie Antoinette's Boudoir



Marie Antoinette's "Peasant Cottage"



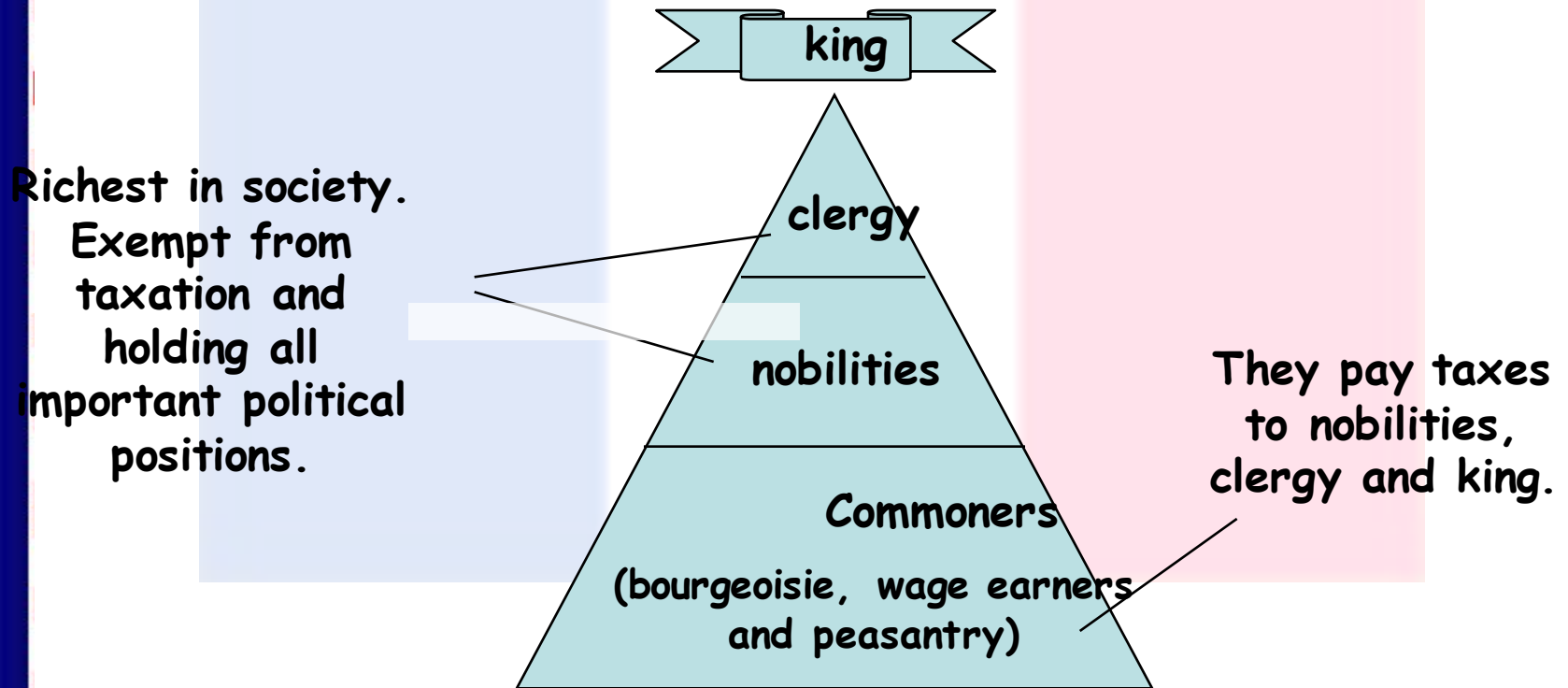
Marie Antoinette's "Peasant Cottage"



French Society before 1789

France was an absolute monarchy.

The population was divided into three estates. The society is like a regular pyramid.



The Three Estates



The Estates System

- French people were divided into 'estates' according to their status
- Unequal in size and power
- First and Second Estates had many privileges that were used to the disadvantage of the Third Estate

The First Estate

- **The Clergy** (About 130, 000 people)
- Distinctive clothes and spiritual duties
- Huge difference between the humble parish priests, monks and nuns and the bishops, archbishops and cardinals, who came from the ranks of nobility
- Very influential
 - Catholic Church governed the daily lives of most people
- Privileges
 - Had their own law courts
 - Did not have to pay certain taxes

The Second Estate



The Second Estate

- **The Nobility** (Between 120 000 and 350 000 people)
 - King, Queen, Princes, Dukes, Marquises, Counts, Viscounts, Barons, Knights
- Owned around a fifth of the land in France
- Most powerful out of the three estates
- 4000 court nobility (those who could afford the high cost of living in Versailles) > Noblesse de robe (legal and administrative nobles) > Remainder (various states of prosperity)
- Privileges:
 - Right to carry a sword
 - Special treatments in law courts
 - Did not have to do military service
 - Exemption from taxes (greatest privilege) → Exempt from the *taille*

The Third Estate

- **Majority of the population** (About 27 million people)
- Greatest proportion was peasantry
- Remainder was made up of the bourgeoisie (middle class) and urban workers
- Haute bourgeoisie (wealthy merchants and tradesmen) vs. Petite bourgeoisie (small shopkeepers and craftsmen)
- Bourgeoisie: Relied on skill rather than physical labour for income
- E.g. Doctors, Lawyers, Non-noble official holders, Financiers, Traders, Teachers, Artists and Master Craftsmen
- Wealthiest of bourgeoisie → Merchants and traders who made vast fortunes out of France's overseas trade

The Third Estate

- Rose in wealth and numbers
- Felt that their power and wealth should in some way be reflected in the political system
- Few privileges
- Increased financial burden and growing resentment of feudal system → Long-term cause of French Revolution
- Obligations:
 - Required to do unpaid labour service
 - Had considerable feudal dues
 - Had to pay many taxes
- Urban workers (sans-culottes): Small property owners and artisans
- Worsening economic situation caused considerable resentment among urban dwellers and contributed to the long-term causes of the Revolution



- 1) Identify the people in the cartoon. What is the cartoonist trying to convey?
- 2) Do you think the sources are reliable in what they depict? Explain your answer.
- 3) Give both pictures a suitable title.

Imagine you are a member of
(state who you are) either

- i) First Estate
- ii) Second Estate
- iii) Third Estate.

Write a journal entry to describe
how your life in France is like
during the Ancien Regime. You may
also want to have illustrations in
your entry.

Causes of The French Revolution

1. Socio-Economic Inequality : 3 Estates System & Social Immobility
2. Problems with Absolutism : King Louis XVI & Marie Antoinette
3. Enlightenment ideas : Impact of the Philosophes & their ideas
4. Economic Problems : recurring budget deficits & failure to undertake fundamental reforms
5. Disastrous foreign policy : The seven year war & the American War of Independence
6. Financial & Economic Crisis of 1783 - 1788

Problems with Absolutism : King Louis XVI & Marie Antoinette

- 1. What is absolutism? (absolute monarch)
- 2. How is it different from democracy?
- 3. To what extent was absolutism a myth?
- 4. To what extent was the French Revolution caused by King Louis XVI & Marie Antoinette's own doings?
- 5. Do you think there's a place for the monarchy now? What purpose does it serve? Should it be abolished?

- What was the political system in France like before 1789?

Political Structure

- Almost all of Europe governed by monarchies by 17th century.
 - England the exception.
- Growth of absolute monarchies and erosion of local power.
 - Greater concentration of political control in the hands of the monarchs and the bureaucratic structures created.

Government under the Old Regime: The Divine Right of Kings

- Monarch ruled by **divine right**
 - God put the world in motion
 - God put some people in positions of power
 - Power is given by God
 - No one can question God
 - No one can question someone put in power by God
 - Questioning the monarchy was blasphemy because it meant questioning God

What the King Did

Appointed the *Intendants*, the “petty tyrants” who governed France’s 30 districts

Appointed the people who would collect his taxes and carry out his laws

Controlled justice by appointing judges

Controlled the military

Could imprison anyone at any time for any reason (blank warrants of arrest were called *lettres de cachet*)

Levied all taxes and decided how to spend the money

Made all laws

Made decisions regarding war and peace

Political Structure

- Monarchy as “Theater” to display monarchical wealth, power and largesse.
 - Moved residence from centre of Paris to suburb of Versailles.
 - Built the most opulent palace ever for an European monarch.

What are the differences between absolutism & democracy?

What are the benefits and limitations of absolutism?

Absolutism vs. Democracy

Absolutism	Democracy
Monarch has absolute power	Government is based on will of the people
Monarch combines political and religious power through divine right	Separation between church and state
Rulers selected by family line	Leaders selected by popular vote
Subjects must accept and obey authority of monarch	Citizens have the right to question or criticize government
Government exists for its own sake; people exist to serve monarch	Government exists to serve the people

To what extent was the
French Revolution Revolution
caused by King Louis XVI &
Marie Antoinette's own doings?

King Louis XVI

❖ King Louis XVI more concerned with his own interests than in the interests of the State and Court

❖ Led an extravagantly expansive lifestyle with his Queen, Marie Antoinette-Palace of Versailles

❖ Marie Antoinette held great power over Louis. She stood in the way of his proposed reforms by talking him out of it e.g She had talked him into firing Turgot who may have been able to prevent the revolution through his economic reforms

❖ Spent large sums of money on the Seven Years' War and American War of Independence

-put France in serious debt and bankruptcy

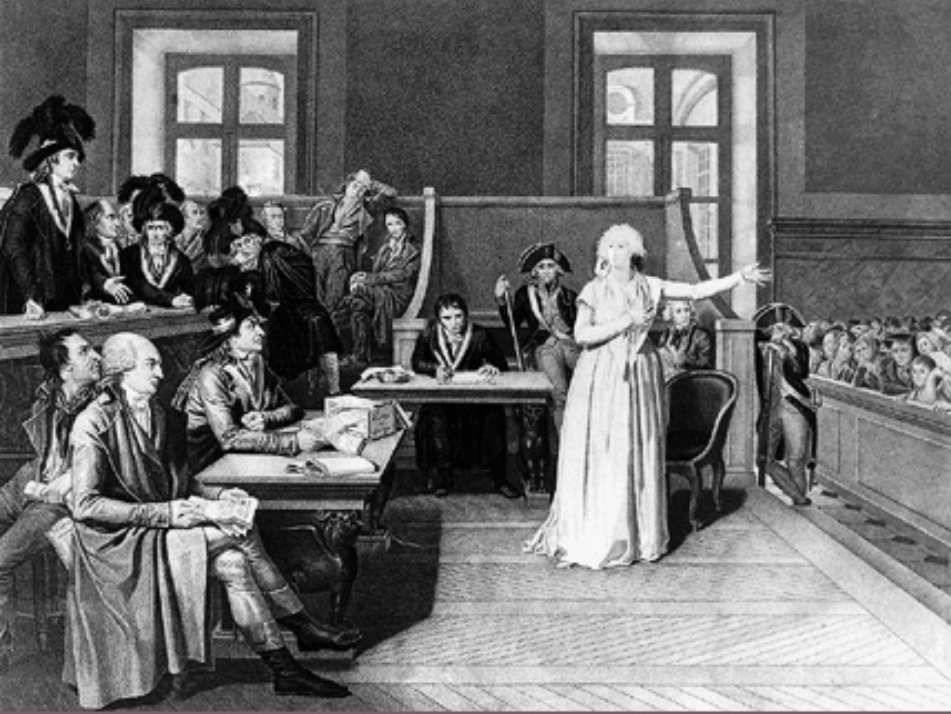
- What happened to King Louis XVI & Marie Antoinette in the end?

Louis was tried (from December 11, 1792) and convicted of high treason before the Legislative Assembly. He was sentenced to death by guillotine by 361 votes to 288, with 72 effective abstentions.



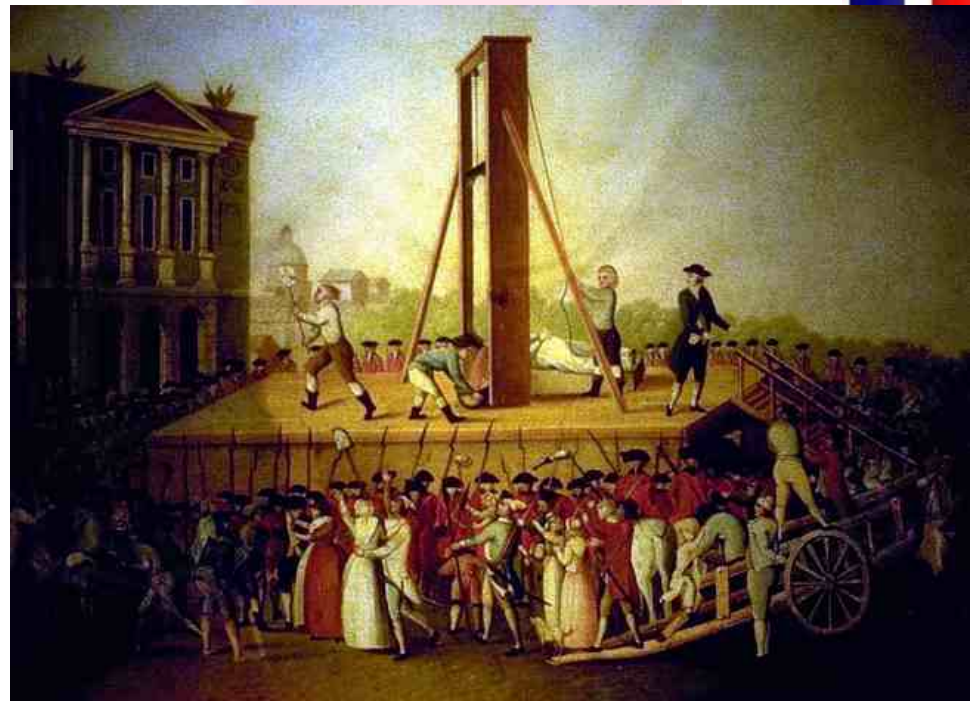
Stripped of all titles and honorifics by the egalitarian, Republican government, Citizen Louis Capet was guillotined in front of a cheering crowd on January 21, 1793.



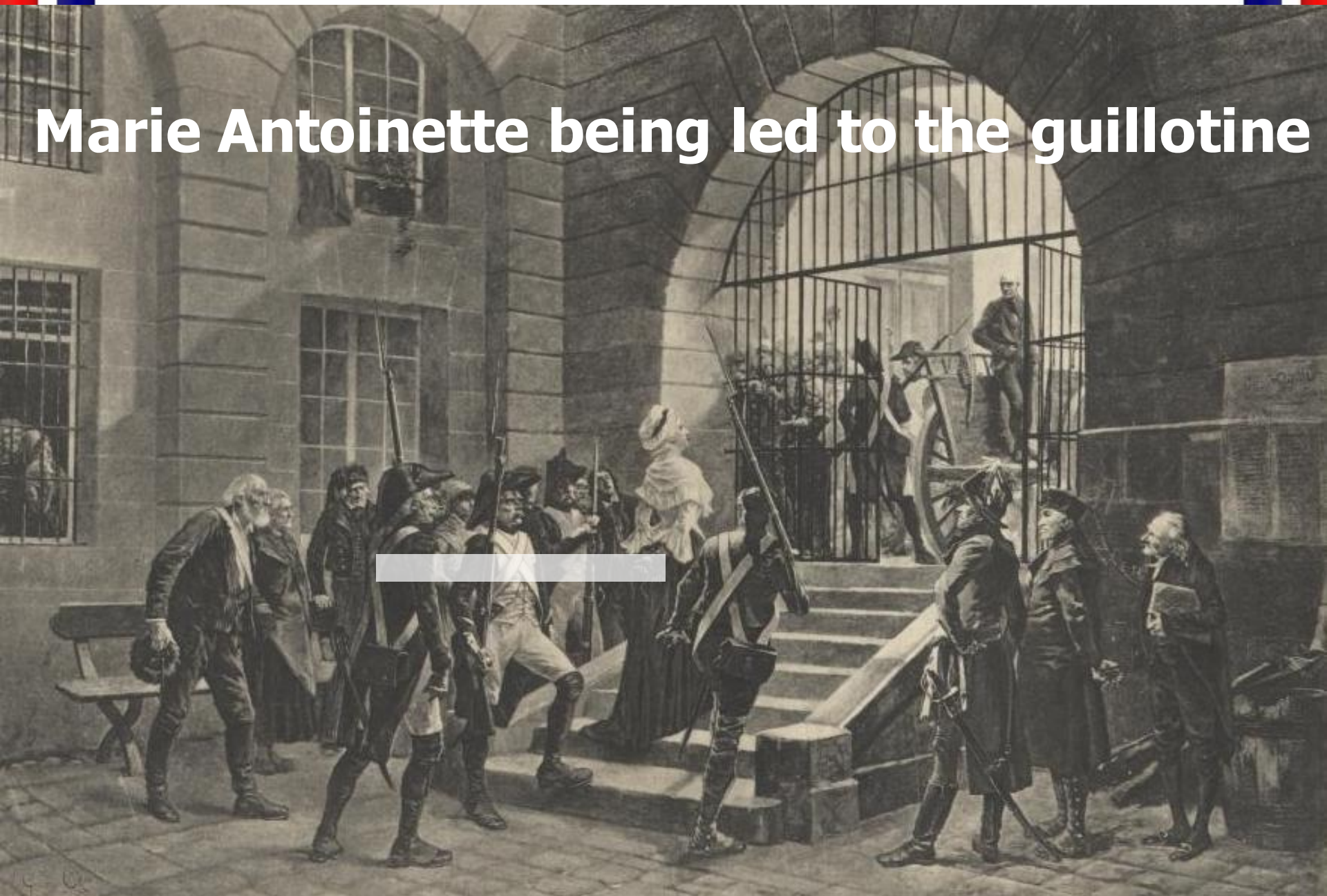


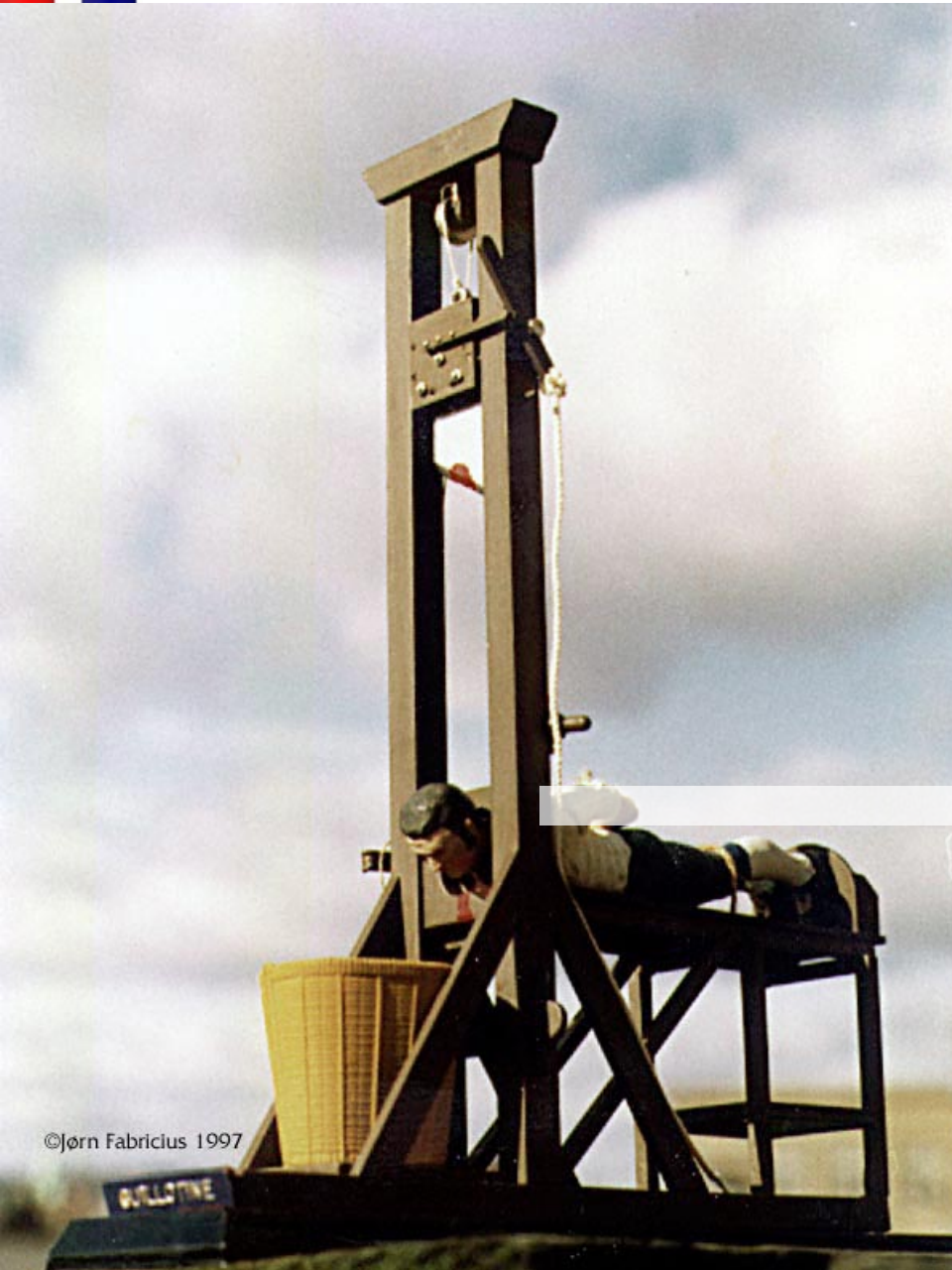
Seven months after the execution of the King, shortly after the declaration of "Revolutionary Government," the Convention turned to the rest of the royal family. Fearing that Marie Antoinette and her son, the nominal King, would provide rallying points for royalists within France and abroad, a Revolutionary Tribunal indicted Marie Antoinette and her children for treason.

Execution of Marie Antoinette at the Place de la Révolution"
Before the guillotine stands Marie Antoinette with Sanson, the same executioner who had dispatched her husband ten months before. The execution, like that of her husband, took place at the Place de la Révolution, recently renamed from Place de Louis XV (currently Place de la Concorde).



Marie Antoinette being led to the guillotine





The Guillotine was a cruel form of punishment of death during the French Revolution. The Executioner cranked the blade to the top, and a mechanism released it. The blade was heavy, with its weight made the fall and the slice through the neck, severing the head from its body. About 90% of beheadings were of the third estate, about 7% from the second estate and about 3% from the first estate.

©Jørn Fabricius 1997



In spite of its efficiency, an execution by guillotine was still a sickening spectacle. When the head was severed, blood poured from the body as the heart continued to pump. When it was used frequently (as it was during the revolution), the stench from the place of execution was horrible.

Although the guillotine is most closely associated with the French, the Nazis guillotined more people (20,000) than were killed during the French Revolution. Hitler considered it a demeaning form of punishment and used it for political executions in 1942 and 1943.

The last use of the guillotine was in 1977. Capital punishment has been abolished in France.

Should Monarchy be abolished?



Financial & Economic Crisis in France

- What were the fundamental weaknesses of the French economy before 1789?
- What were the Financial & Economic Crisis in France between 1783 - 1788? How did it happen?

Socio-Economic Data, 1789

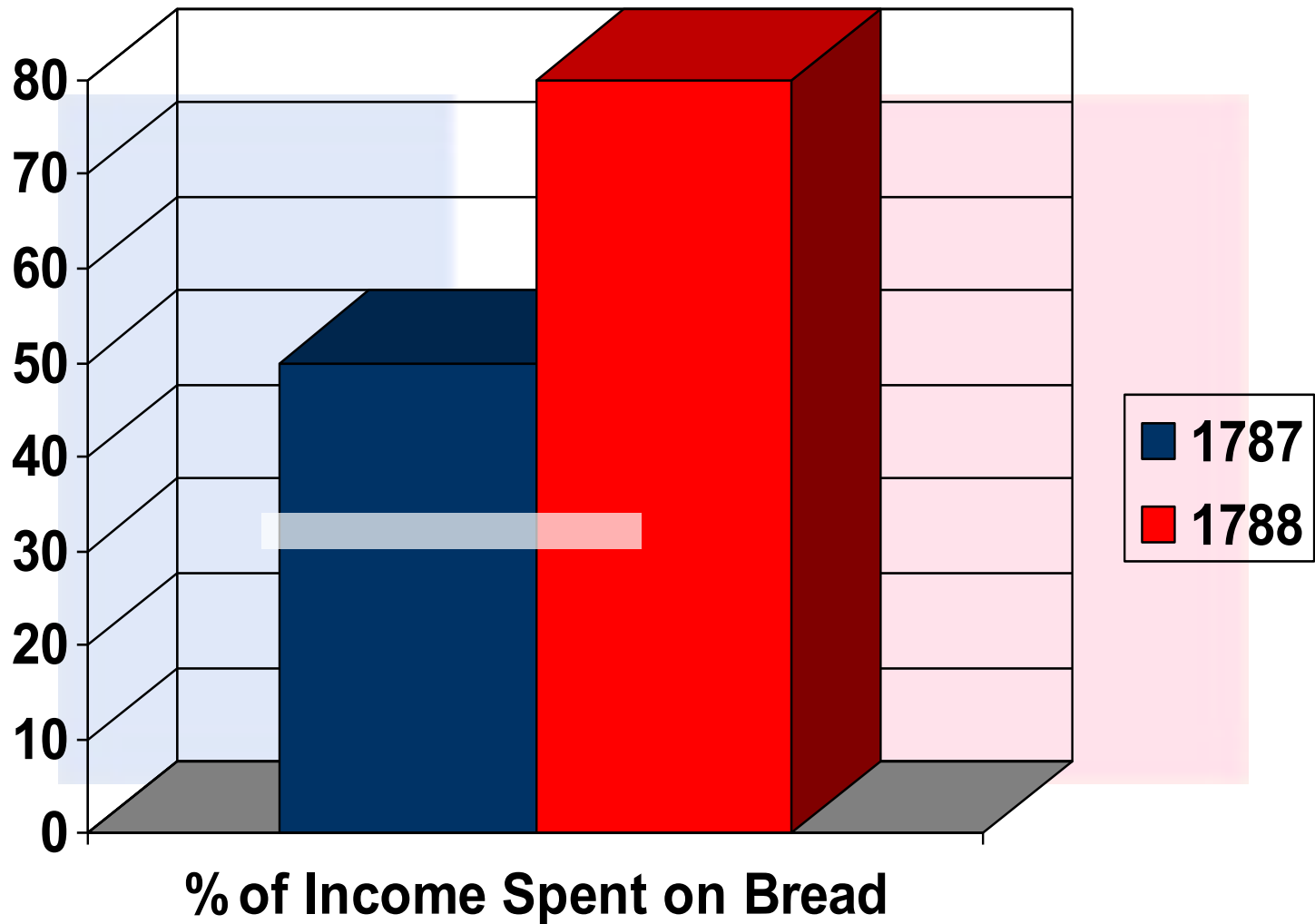
Land Ownership by Social Category on the Eve of the French Revolution

	Clergy	Nobility	Bourgeoisie	Peasantry
Land in France owned by each group	6–10%	20–25%	30%	40–45%
Each group as a percentage of the total population	2%	1.5%	8.4%	82–87%

How serious was the tension between the First, Second and Third Estate?

How far did social tension threaten the stability of the state?

The French Urban Poor



Financial Problems in France, 1789

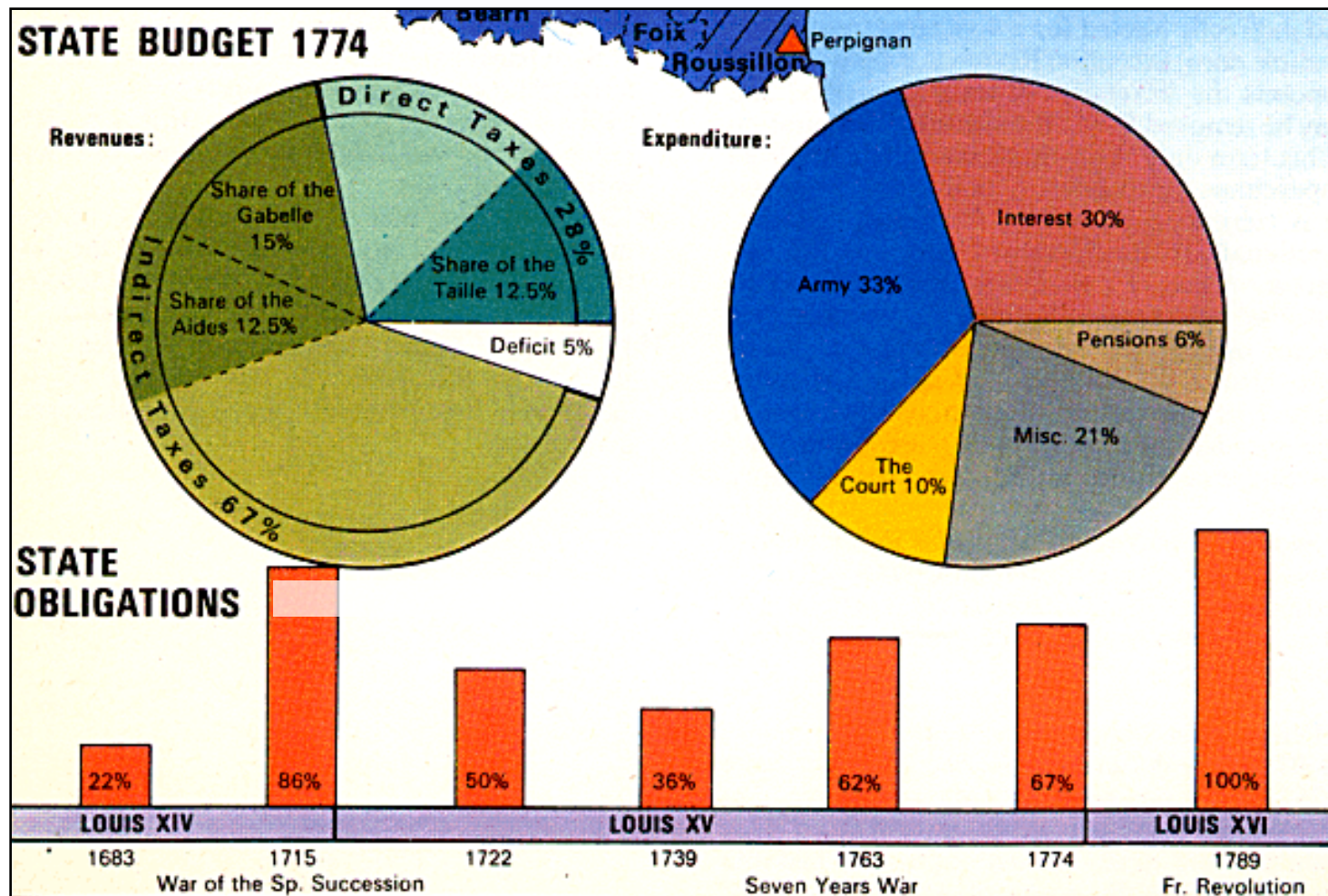
- **Urban Commoner's Budget:**

- Food 80%
- Rent 25%
- Tithe 10%
- Taxes 35%
- Clothing 20%
- **TOTAL 170%**

- **King's Budget:**

- Interest 50%
- Army 25%
- Versailles 25%
- Coronation 10%
- Loans 25%
- Admin. 25%
- **TOTAL 160%**

French Budget, 1774



What were the fundamental weaknesses of the French economy before 1789?

Where is the tax money?



How did the depression of the late 1770s increase France financial difficulties?

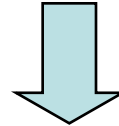
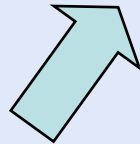
Inefficient taxation – only the Third Estate had to pay taxes. Nobles did not want to give up tax concessions.



King was insistent on not annoying nobility and declined tax reform.



Firing Finance Minister Turgot who wanted to stop the loan cycle. Replacing him by Neckers – loans scheme.

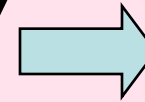


Debts and Bankruptcy of the Government



Over-ambitious and costly wars + extravagant spending on courts (Marie-Antoinette).

e.g. Seven Years' War with Britain drained France economically.
Involvement in the American Revolution was costly (mainly for revenge).



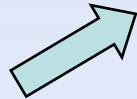
Heavier tax burdens on the Third Estate + inflationary pressure.

**Dramatic increase
in population.**



**Intense land hunger for
peasants resulted in their
worsening situation and
led to their drifting to
larger towns for job.**

**Heavy Tax
Burdens**



**Technological development
in industry.**

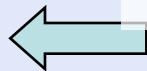


**Growth
of
industry
and town
life.**

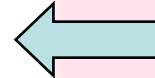


**Expansion of
business.
Bourgeoisie largely
profited, becoming
wealthier and more
powerful.**

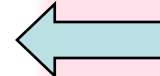
**Preferring
a uniform
tax
system.**



**Despise of tax
system. Could have
used tax to expand
business.**



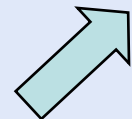
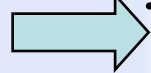
**Despise of aristocracy.
Resenting exclusion from
political and social status
which was merited by
their growing prosperity
and education.**



**Expansion in
Business**

**Agriculture
became less
productive. Poor
harvests resulted
in food shortage.**

**Costly Wars and
Royal Extravagance**



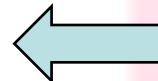
**Inflationary
Pressure**



**Affecting all social
groups but esp.
peasants and wage
earners. 90% of wages
spent on bread by
August 1789.**



**Nationwide revolt
against food
shortages and rising
prices – the “Great
Fear” of the
peasantry.**



**High level of
economic
dissatisfaction**

Long- and Short-term Causes

- Long-term causes
 - Also known as *underlying causes*
 - Causes which can stem back many years
- Short-term causes
 - Also known as *immediate causes*
 - Causes which happen close to the moment the change or action happens
- Example: A person is fired from his or her job.
 - Long-term cause(s): The person is often late to work and is generally unproductive on the job.
 - Short-term cause(s): The person fails to show up for work and does not call the employer.
- Key: One typically does not happen without the other. Events which bring important change (or action) need both long-term and short-term causes.

Long-term Causes of the French Revolution

Everything previously discussed

- Absolutism
- Unjust socio-political system (Old Regime)
- Poor harvests which left peasant farmers with little money for taxes
- Influence of Enlightenment *philosophes*

Also

- Influence of other successful revolutions
 - American Revolution (1775-1783)

Short-term Causes of the French Revolution

Bankruptcy

- Caused by deficit spending
- Financial ministers (Turgot, Necker, Calonne) proposed changes
 - But these were rejected
- Assembly of Notables voted down taxation for the nobility in 1787

Great Fear

- Worst famine in memory
- Hungry, impoverished peasants feared that nobles at Estates-General were seeking greater privileges
- Attacks on nobles occurred throughout the country in 1789

Estates-General

- Louis XVI had no choice but to call for a meeting of the ***Estates-General*** to find a solution to the bankruptcy problem
 - All three estates
- Had not met since 1614
- Set in motion a series of events which resulted in the abolition of the monarchy and a completely new socio-political system for France

Calonne – Finance Minister

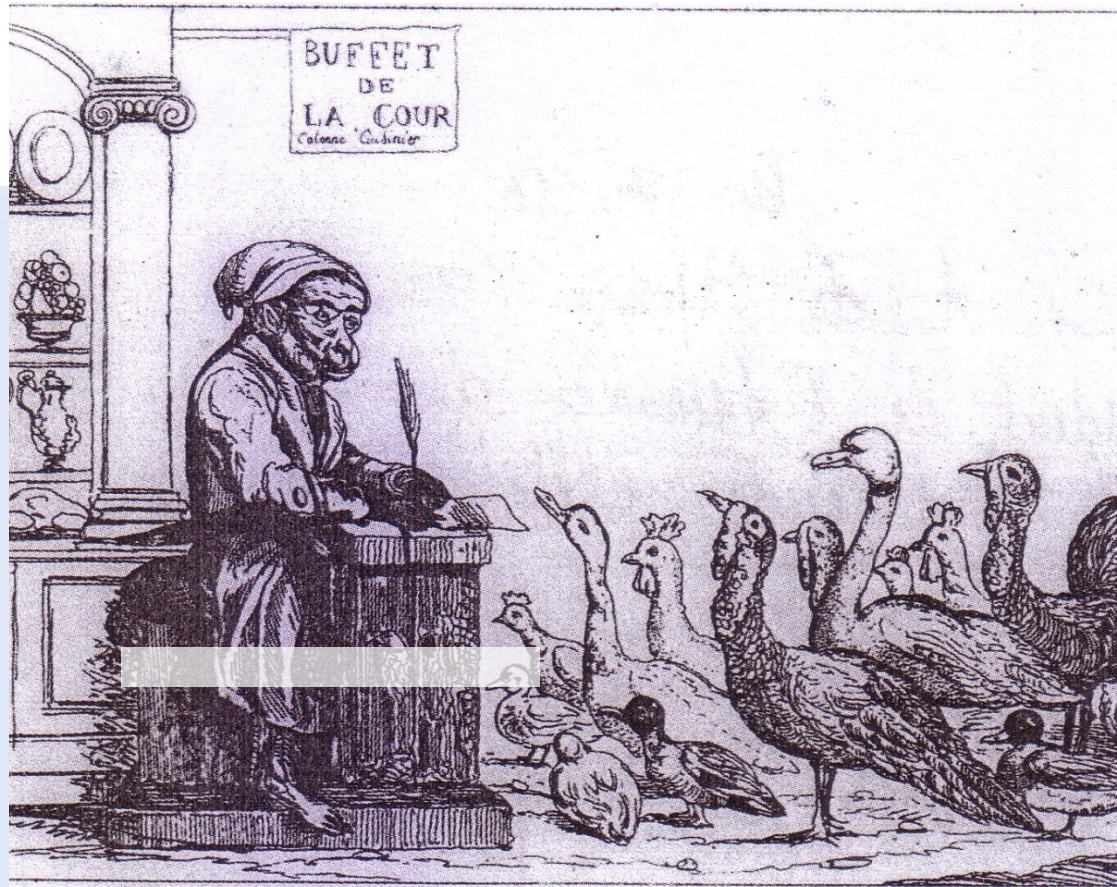
- *Warns the king of imminent bankruptcy*
- *Suggests to impose a land tax to be paid by all*
- *Abolition of temporary taxes such as capitation and vingtieme*
- *Abolition of corvee*
- *Reduction in taille*
- *Abolition of internal customs – allowing free trade in grain*

Assembly of Notables

- *Went to the Assembly of Notables hoping they would see his point of view and approve his plans*
- *They opposed his plans and him*
- *Paris Parlement - opposed the plan*

Why did it prove so difficult to solve the financial crisis?

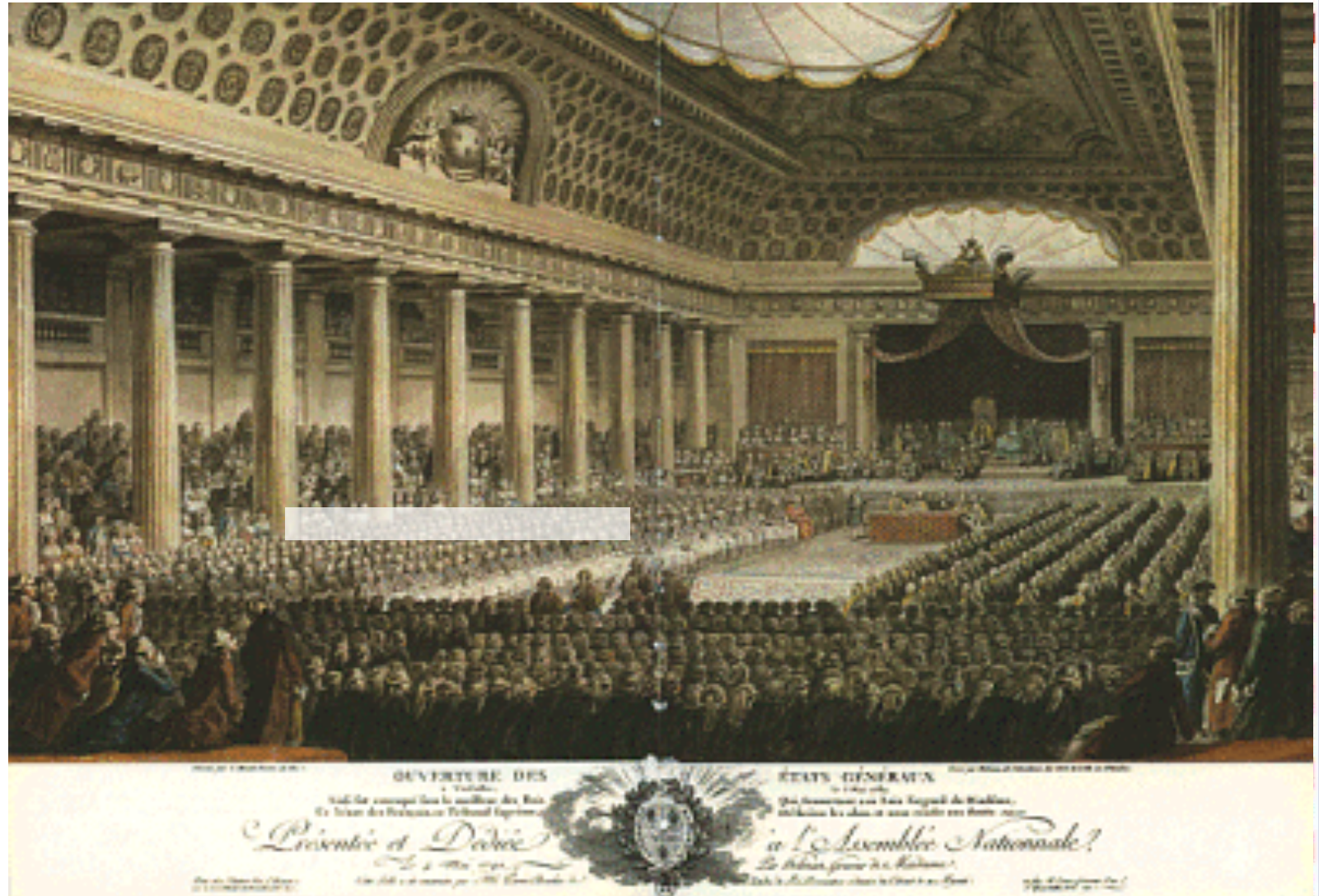
How successful did Louis respond to the problem faced?



‘My friendly nobles. I have called you here to ask with what sauce you want to be eaten?’ Reply: ‘We do not want to be eaten at all!’

Louis XVI attempted to tax the nobles.

The nobles forced the king to call a meeting of the Estates-General an assembly of delegates from each of the three estates.



Meeting of the *Estates-General*: May 5, 1789

- Voting was conducted by estate
 - Each estate had one vote
 - First and Second Estates could operate as a **bloc** to stop the Third Estate from having its way
- ◊ First Estate + ◊ Second Estate - vs. - ◊ Third Estate
- Representatives from the Third Estate demanded that voting be by population
 - This would give the Third Estate a great advantage
- Deadlock resulted

**First
Estate =
1 Vote or
130,000
Votes**

**Third Estate = 1
Vote or
25,000,000 Votes**

**Second Estate =
1 Vote or
110,000 Votes**

Representative Government for France

**The meeting
of the
Estates-
General
began with
arguments
on how to
count votes.
In the past
one vote was
cast for each
estate.**

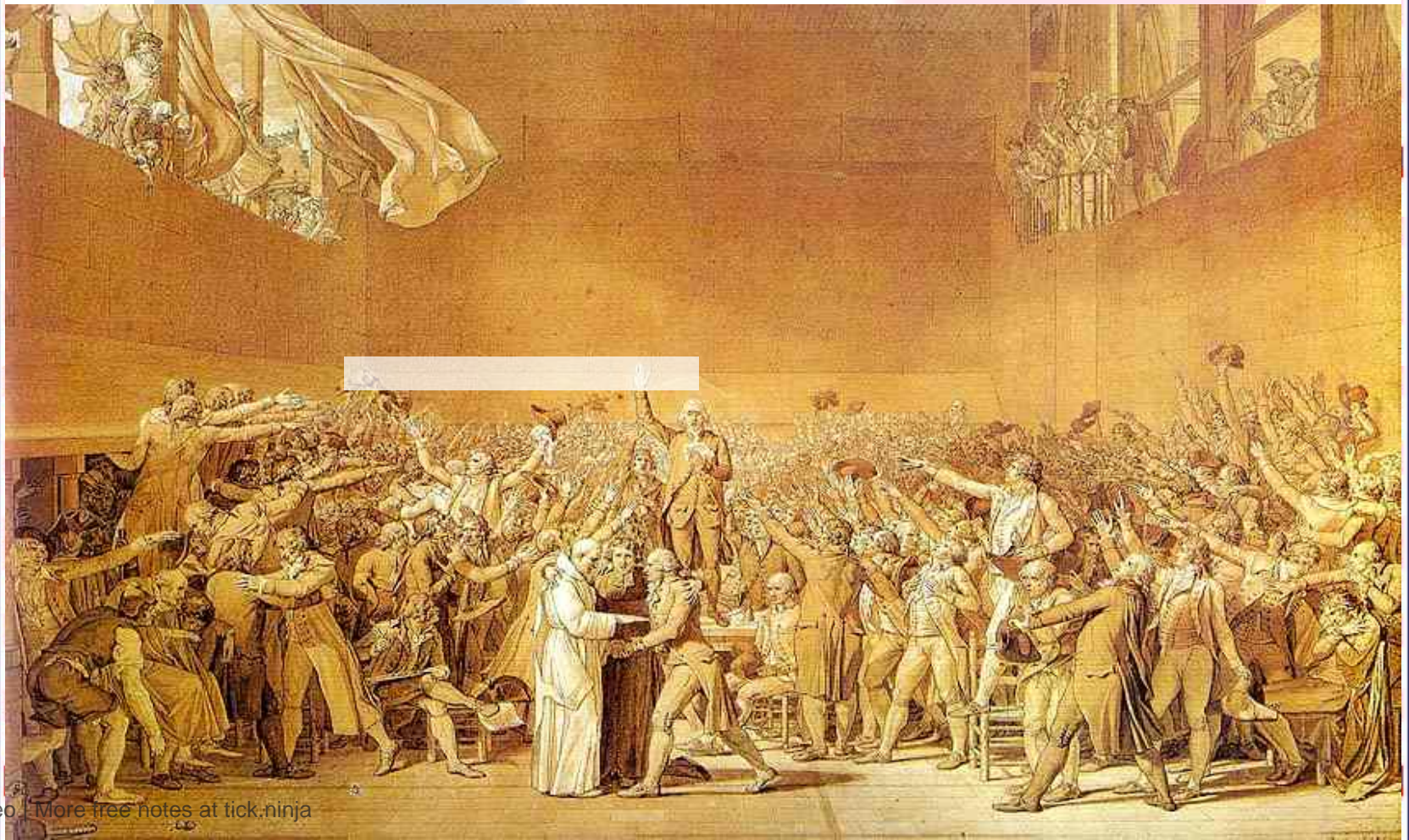
**The third estate
now wanted each
delegate to have a
vote. They broke
with the others
and voted to
rename
themselves The
National Assembly.**

**The members
of the National
Assembly
claimed to
represent all of
the people. The
king disagreed.
The 3rd Estate
delegates were
locked out of
their meeting.**

The Dawn of the Revolution

June 20, 1789: During a meeting of the Estates General, a problem arose about the voting procedure. Angered by the disagreement, Louis XVI locked the 3rd Estate out of the meeting during which time they reconvened in the tennis courts at Versailles.

This is where they took the Tennis Court Oath-not to leave until a constitution was created. This started the beginning of the political French Revolution. Notice the fluttering curtains representing the winds of change.



Louis XVI was worried by the action of the Third Estate and threatened to dissolve the Estates General after the tumultuous events surrounding the Tennis Court Oath. Rural and urban uprisings throughout France at this time saved the Third Estate from the King's intervention. The most famous of these uprisings is the Fall of the Bastille, which occurred on July 14, 1789.

- Declaration of the Rights of Man
 - Drafted by Marquise de Lafayette
 - French AND American war hero
 - All citizens are to be guaranteed the rights of "liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression"
 - Similar to both Declaration of Independence and U.S. Bill of Rights
 - France = Constitutional Monarchy



DÉCLARATION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DU CITOYEN

Décreté par l'Assemblée Nationale dans les séances des 20, 26, 27 et 28 août 1789, et accepté par le Roi

PRÉAMBULE

LES représentants du peuple Français constitués en assemblée nationale, considérant que l'ignorance, l'oubli ou le mépris des droits de l'homme ont été les seuls causes des malheurs publics et de la corruption des gouvernements, ont résolu d'exposer dans une déclaration solennelle les droits naturels, inaliénables et sacrés de l'homme, afin que cette déclaration, constamment présente à tous les membres du corps social, leur rappelle sans cesse leurs droits et leurs devoirs ; afin que les actes du pouvoir législatif et ceux du pouvoir exécutif, pouvant être à chaque instant comparés avec le but de tout gouvernement politique, en soient plus respectés ; afin que les réclamations des citoyens, fondées désormais sur des principes simples et incontestables, servent toujours au maintien de la constitution et du bonheur de tous.

EN conséquence, l'Assemblée nationale reconnaît et déclare, en présence et sous les auspices de l'Éternel, les droits suivants de l'homme et du citoyen :

ARTICLE PREMIER.

LES hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits ; les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité commune.

II.

Les droits naturels et inaliénables de l'homme sont la liberté, la propriété, la sûreté, et la résistance à l'oppression.

III.

Le principe de tout souveraineté réside essentiellement dans la nation ; nul corps, nul individu ne peut exercer d'autorité qui n'en émane expressément.

IV.

La liberté consiste à pouvoir faire tout ce qui ne nuit pas à autrui ; les droits de l'homme ne sont que ceux qui assurent aux autres membres de la société la jouissance de ces mêmes droits ; ces bornes ne peuvent être déterminées que par la loi.

V.

La loi n'a le droit de défendre que les actions nuisibles à la société ; tout ce qui n'est pas défendu par la loi ne peut être empêché, et nul ne peut être contraint à faire ce qu'elle n'a point fait.

VI.

La loi est l'expression de la volonté générale ; tous les citoyens ont droit de concourir personnellement, ou par leurs représentants, à sa formation ; elle doit être la même pour tous, soit qu'elle punisse, soit qu'elle punisse ; tous les citoyens étant égaux à ses yeux, sont également admissibles à toutes dignités, places et emplois publics, selon leur capacité, et sans autres distinctions que celles de leurs vertus et de leurs talents.

VII.

Nul homme ne peut être accusé, arrêté, ni détenu que dans les cas déterminés par la loi, et selon les formes qu'elle a prescrites ; ceux qui sollicitent, arrêtent, ou font arrêter des individus, ou qui, sans motif légal, retiennent des individus, sont responsables envers eux ; mais, sans motif légal, il ne peut être arrêté, ni détenu que dans les cas déterminés par la loi.

VIII.

La loi ne doit établir que des peines strictement et évidemment nécessaires, et nul ne peut être puni qu'en vertu d'une loi établie et promulguée antérieurement au délit, et légalement appliquée.

IX.

TOUT homme étant présumé innocent jusqu'à ce qu'il ait été déclaré coupable, s'il est jugé indispensable de l'arrêter, toute rigueur qui ne serait pas nécessaire pour s'assurer de sa personne doit être sévèrement réprimée par la loi.

X.

NUL ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, mêmes religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l'ordre public établi par la loi.

XI.

La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'homme ; tout citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement, sans être tenu de répondre de l'abus de cette liberté dans les cas déterminés par la loi.

XII.

La garantie des droits de l'homme et du citoyen nécessite une force publique : cette force est donc instituée pour l'avantage de tous, et non pour l'utilité particulière de ceux à qui elle est confiée.

XIII.

Le droit de la force publique, et pour les dépenses d'administration, sont contributions communes et indépendantes ; elle doit être également répartie entre les citoyens en raison de leurs facultés.

XIV.

Les citoyens ont le droit de constater par eux-mêmes ou par leurs représentants, la nécessité de la contribution publique, de la contrôler librement, d'en suivre l'emploi, et d'en déterminer la quotité, la répartition, le recouvrement et la durée.

XV.

La société a le droit de demander compte à tout agent public de son administration.

XVI.

TOUTE société, dans laquelle la garantie des droits n'est pas assurée, ni la séparation des pouvoirs déterminée, n'a point de constitution.

XVII.

LES propriétés étant un droit inviolable et sacré, nul ne peut en être privé ; si ce n'est lorsque la nécessité publique, légalement constatée, l'exige évidemment, et sous la condition d'une juste et préalable indemnité.

Question for Thought

Was the privileged classes responsible for the outbreak of the French Revolution?

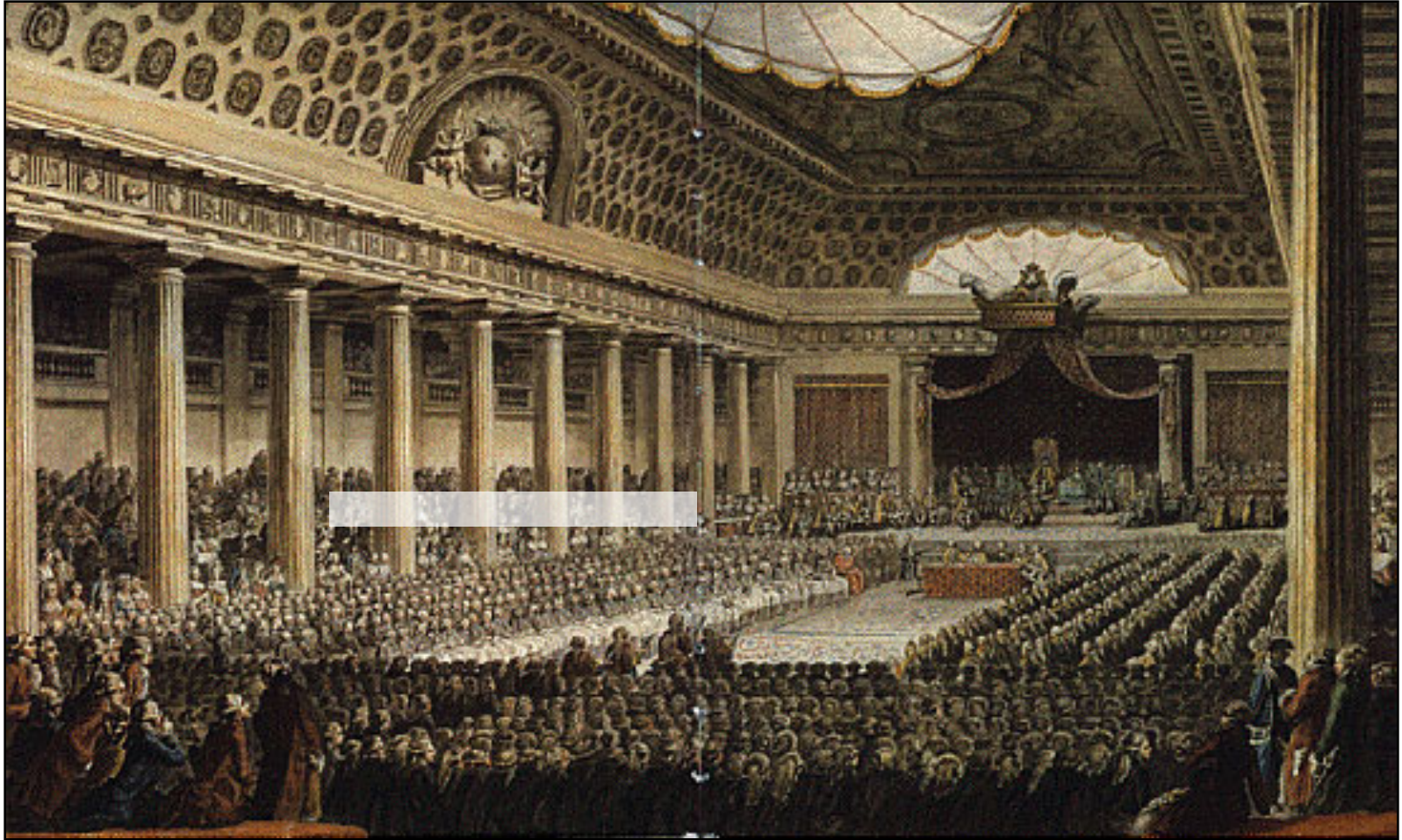
Some Talking Points

- They helped caused the problem since their wealth was not subjected to taxation.
- Provoked hatred of the groups below them in society.
- They used their position to resist attempts at change while demanding for their own ends, the meeting of the Estate-General which ironically gave voice to the Third Estate and ensured their own downfall.

Ancien Regime Map, 1789



Convening the Estates General May, 1789



Last time it was called into session was 1614!

Question for Thought

Was the Revolution a 'middle class' affair?

Say Something Significant

Choose a sentence-starter and make the most complex statement you can about the causes of the French Revolution.

Cause and effect:

“The main reason”

Pattern:

“Throughout the French Revolution people keep”

Turning point:

“Everything changed when”

Simple judgement:

“The smartest choice was”

Question?

Does the evidence support the view that by July 1789 there was 'a broad conflict between the privileged and unprivileged'? Explain your answer.

With what justification can it be claimed that there was a 'revolution from below' in France 1787 – 1789?

Question!

How important was the a) Revolt of the Notables and b) the Tennis Court Oath in bringing about the Revolution?

“The main cause of political revolution is poor leadership.” How far do you agree with this statement? Make use of your knowledge of the French and/or Russian Revolutions to substantiate your answer.”
(20 marks)

The Story of Mr. Brown's Car Crash

Mr. Brown was a busy man. He worked long hours running a small business and his wife often complained. To please her, he promised to take her away for the weekend of their wedding anniversary. As the anniversary approached, he had been particularly hard pressed and did not get his car serviced and worn tyre replaced. That Friday night he was late leaving for work, he was tired and to make matters worse, it was raining. Mr. Brown drove home as fast as he could but as he turned into the road where he lived, his neighbour's dog ran across the road. Mr. Brown braked hard, skidded and crashed into a gatepost. He was not hurt but his car was.

The Story of Mr. Brown Car Crash

Why did his car crashed?

What factors could explain this event.

The Story of Mr. Brown Car Crash

Conditional Factor: They do not make an incident inevitable but they make the outcome possible, increasing probable or likely to happen

E.g. state of the car and tyre, marriage

The Story of Mr. Brown Car Crash

Contingent Factor: Factors that trigger it, influence the timing, the way it happens and sometimes how serious it is

E.g. the rain, the dog, the speed he was travelling

“Must” Reads: Important Books & Pamphlets of the French Revolution

Emmanuel Sieyès *What Is the Third Estate?*
(1789)

Edmund Burke *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790)

Olympe de Gouges *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Citizen*
(1791)

Tom Paine *Rights of Man* (1791)

Mary Wollstonecraft *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)

Bibliographic Resources

« “Hist210—Europe in the Age of Revolutions.”
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/history/courses/europe1/chron/rch5.htm>

« “Liberty, Fraternity, Equality: Exploring the French Revolution.”
<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>

« Matthews, Andrew. *Revolution and Reaction: Europe, 1789-1849*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

« “The Napoleonic Guide.”
<http://www.napoleonguide.com/index.htm>

Answering the Question

- Answers need to address the question and to consider how the various reasons for the cause of political revolutions interact in the process of causation. Answers should have a clear stand on the statement provided. Students should not be merely listing the information without any attempt to answer the question. Such answers should be awarded a mark in Level 2.

Answering the Question

In the process of answering the question, students should consider broad categories of the causes of political revolutions. They need to address the reason given in the hypothesis that weak leadership lead to political revolutions, while also considering the other key factors such as the role of events, both long term and short term, as well as ideology.

Answering the Question

Student should avoid sweeping statements, arguments that cannot be proven and arguments made without using historical evidence. Students are allowed to make use of examples from either the French or Russian Revolution. They needn't make use of BOTH examples in their essays, and should not be penalized for only focusing on one specific revolution.

- Indeed, weak leadership did play a major role in political revolutions as seen in the context of the French and Russian revolutions. This is, however, not enough to cause a revolution. They require the other factors to dovetail at the right point in order to achieve the massive changes seen in the French and Russian revolutions. In order for a revolution to take place, it requires, besides a weak leader who is unable to respond to the needs of the people, strong and charismatic leaders who are capable of translating viable ideological alternatives to shape the discontent of the masses

Important

- Students answers should focus on developing a coherent argument based on the three broad factors. They should avoid narrating the causes, but find a way to explain their stand based on how the 3 different factors interact.