

# The French Revolution Begins

Chapter 3 Section 1

# Focus Questions 3-1

- What are some of the major differences between the Second and Third Estate?
- What major economic crisis does France experience that forces it to consider to raise new taxes?
- What is unique about the bourgeoisie? What outside factors inspire them to challenge the king's authority?

# Causes of the French Revolution

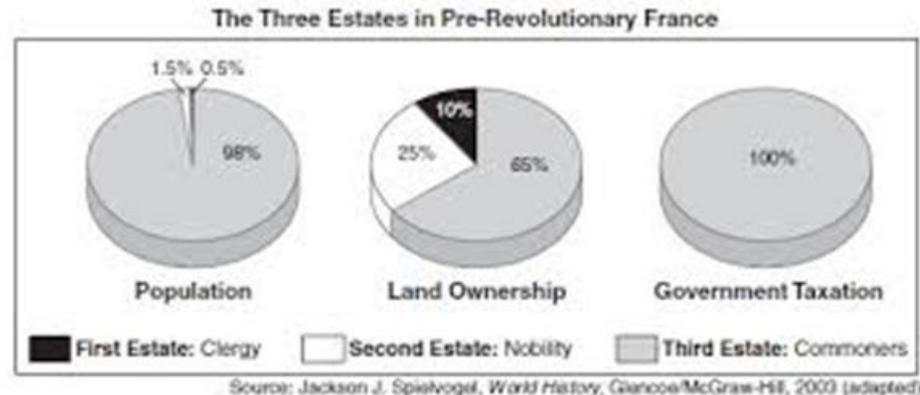
- **Social Factors:** The long range causes were found in the great inequality of French Society. Roughly totaling 26 million citizens.

The Three Estates: Social class system, determined by birthright, no social mobility.

- The First Estate: included clergy members of French society. Numbered roughly about 130,000 members. Owned 10% of the land.
- The Second Estate: included nobles, military personal, government officials, court officials, and numbered around 350,000 members. They controlled 25 to 30 percent of the land.

# Causes of the French Revolution

- Society
- The Third Estate was vastly different from the First and Second Estates.
- 75 to 80 percent of the Third Estate was made up of poor peasant farmers who controlled 35 to 40 percent of the land. At least half the peasants owned no land.
- Serfdom, required that peasants harvest noble crops for a certain number of days.



# Causes of the French Revolution

- Economic Factors
- Neither the First or Second Estates paid the taille, which was the chief tax. (direct taxation of citizens) Only the Third Estate paid this tax.
- Members of the Third Estate owed certain duties to the nobles. Duties consisted of taxes or fees for pressing grapes for wine or grinding flour.
- Kings monopolies on industries that did not allow for entrepreneurs to invest.
- Government restrictions on trade of imports and exports.

# Causes of the French Revolution

## Economic Crisis

- For a period of fifty years the French economy expanded with periodic crises.
- Bad harvests in 1789 and 1788 cause food shortages.
- Slowdown in manufacturing led to rising prices for both finished goods and food.
- Unemployment increased to 1/3 of the population, some reached crisis proportions.



# Causes of the French Revolution

- Political Factors
- King Louis XVI ruled under Absolute rule; giving the king power over all of France.
- No Parliament or representation of the people of France.
- Church and Government censorship of information.
- Restriction on individual rights.

# Causes of the French Revolution

## Government Factors

- The king spends enormous sums on court luxuries.
- Support to the American Revolution put the French budget into total crisis.
- Deficit Spending
- War with Great Britain on two fronts. (American and European Continent)
- The king calls the Estates General to hold a meeting to raise new taxes to help stabilize the crisis.



# Causes of the French Revolution

## Outside Factors

- The Enlightenment; introduced and challenged ideas about rights, the role of government, the structure of power (separation of powers) and questioned the existence of God.
- American Revolution: Declaration of Independence, established the Bill of Rights, implemented a new structure of government and applied principles of the Enlightenment.
- Glorious Revolution: will of the people is heard and transition of power is made without conflict.
- Industrial Revolution: brought new innovations, business ideas, increase in wages, access to goods and services for consumers, competition, and an increase in individual wealth.

# Dissent among the Bourgeoisie

- The Third Estate was also made up of individuals with education, wealth and occupation.
- This group included doctors, shopkeepers, public officials, journalists, merchants and lawyers.
- The Bourgeoisie made up the middle class of the Third Estate. These individuals had some wealth, owned land, and were educated.

# Dissent among the Bourgeoisie

- Bourgeoisie's were unhappy with the privileges held by the nobles.
- They were drawn to the ideals and principals of the Enlightenment and disliked the social system.
- Ultimately the dissatisfaction of these elite groups led them to oppose the absolute monarchy of Louis XVI.



Famille de la bourgeoisie en tenue de gala, vers 1780, d'après Joseph Verel

