



SOCIAL CLASSES AND EMERGING GENDER RELATIONS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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WHAT WAS THE FRENCH REVOLUTION?

- The French Revolution was a period of radical, political and social change in France that began in 1789 and ended with the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. The French citizens demolishes the political landscape and redesigns it. The monarchy and feudal system institution was ended by the revolution.

OLD REGIME- 18th CENTURY

Classes of People

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graph TD; A[Classes of People] --> B["[ Privileged Class ]"]; A --> C["[ Underprivileged Class ]"]
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[Privileged Class]

did not pay taxes and were treated well

[Underprivileged Class]

paid taxes and were treated poorly

FURTHER CLASSIFICATIONS

THREE ESTATES

FIRST ESTATE



CLERGY

SECOND
ESTATE



NOBILITY

THIRD ESTATE



COMMONERS



FIRST ESTATE- CLERGY

PRIVILEGES:

- Enjoyed high prominence in a Catholic society, controlled religion, education and charitable institutions.
- The Church was more materialistic than spiritual because of the Bishop's greed for wealth and power.
- Collected the Tithe (Church tax).
- Catholic faith held honored position of being the state religion.
- Owned 20% of the land.

Exemptions:

- Paid no taxes.
- Subject to Church law rather than civil law.



SECOND ESTATE- NOBILITY

PRIVILEGES:

- Collected taxes in the form of feudal dues.
- Controlled military and state appointments.
- Owned 20% of the land.

EXEMPTIONS:

- Paid no taxes.

THIRD ESTATE: COMMONERS

PRIVILEGES: None.

BURDENS:

- Paid all taxes.
- Tithe (Church tax)
- Octrot (tax on goods brought into the cities)
- Carvee (Forced road works)
- Capitation (Poll tax)
- Vingtieme (Income tax)
- Gabelle (Salt Tax)
- Taille (Land Tax)
- Feudal Dues

ROLE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES:

New Socio Economic Category:

- Wealthiest Segment of Society, ability to generate new ideas.
- Professors, lawyer, doctors, businessmen, bankers, etc.
- Convince others that no group in the society should be given special rights, rather everyone should be recognized for their merits.
- Promoted ideas of liberty, equal law, equal chances for all.
- Philosophers such as John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau advocated for a society built on liberty, equal laws and equal liberty for all.
- Locke attempted to disapprove the notion of the monarch's divine and absolute authority in his 'Two Treaties of Government'.
- Montesquieu proposed distribution of authority between the legislative, executive and judiciary in his 'Spirit of Laws'.
- These ideas were debated and discussed in salons and coffee houses. The revelation that Louis XVI planned to increase taxes in order to lower the state's expenses, sparked outrage and protests against the privileges system.



BEFORE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: **CONDITIONS OF WOMEN**

- All women of the Third Estate were classed as passive citizens. They didn't have the voting powers. They sold flowers and vegetables at the market. They were employed as domestic servants in the houses of prosperous people, most women did not have access to education or job training. Their wages were lower than that of men.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION:

Salons and Societies

- Ideas about education, class and individual rights were discussed in the evening gatherings in Paris high society called Salons.
- These gatherings were established before the revolution and were often hosted not by distinguished man but by their fashionable wives. They were called 'Salonnières'.
- Platform for the hosts to exert influence outside domestic households.



WOMAN'S OF THE REVOLUTION:

Olympe De Gouges [1748-1793]

- Appealed for women's political rights.
- Dramatist and a vocal opponent of slavery.
- Published 'The Declaration of the Rights of Women'.
- Declaration did not receive much acceptance.
- Persecuted by the government in 1793.



Mary Wollstonecraft [1759 - 1797]:

- Advocate of women's rights.
- Published "A vindication of the Rights of woman? [1792]
- Argued that woman are not naturally inferior to men but appear to be only, because they lack education.
- Suggested that man and woman should be treated as rational beings.

Charlotte Corday [1768 - 1793]:

- Assassinated revolutionary and Jacobin leader Jean Paul Marat.
- Corday felt that the Jacobine were too radical and she wanted to save the Revolution by eliminating their most popular leader.
- She changed the way women were viewed during the Revolution.
- Guillotined .

Etta Palm:

- Petitioned for education and legal rights for women.

Claire Lacombe:

- Organized a club of Revolutionary Republican Citizens.



WOMEN'S PETITION TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY [1789]:

- All the privileges of the males were permanently abolished throughout France.
- The female's will always enjoy the same liberty, advantages, rights and honors as the male's .
- In the household, both male and female should enjoy same authority.
- When a soldier has compromised French honor, he will no longer be degraded by making him wear women's clothing .
- Female's can be appointed as Magistrates.



WERE THE DEMANDS OF THE WOMEN FULFILLED?

- Men and women were equally eligible to inherit property.
- Divorce legalized (Women could choose to end a marriage).
- Educational System was created for both boys and girls .
- Women were given equal wages as men.
- But, women in France won the Right to vote in the year 1946 .
- Women were also allowed to hold open bank accounts under their own name.
- Women were allowed to practice laws.

CONCLUSION:

The French Revolution was not only a crucial event considered in the content of western history, but was also, perhaps the single most crucial influence in British intellectual, philosophical and political life in the 19th Century. We see the influence of women in the revolution and how they ended the long followed old regime and made a better society for themselves. Women began the Revolution as villains and walked out as heroes and the stage was set for the feminist movement.