
history 2nd Kanti study sheet for the test on the 11/12/2010

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version:

1.1

publish date:

11/11/2010

FRENCH REVOLUTION

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INFO

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STUDY PART
FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE

YOU CAN LIST THE MAIN EVENTS OF THE REVOLUTION

May 5 1798	Estates-General meets after not meeting for 175 years
June 17 1789	3rd estate calls himself the national assembly
June 20 1789	tennis court oath
July 14 1789	storm of Bastille (symbol of the revolution)
August 5-11 1789	National Assembly decrees abolition of feudalism.
August 26 1789	National Assembly decrees Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen
October 5-6 1789	Parisian women went to Versailles -> King returned to Paris
June 21 1791	National Assembly completed the first constitution
September 3 1791	introduction of the first constitution
August 10, 1792	the national assembly decided to strip the king of his power → king went to prison
September 21 1794	abolition of monarchy
1793-1794	reign of terror
January 21 1793	king was executed
July 28, 1794	execution of Robespierre
November 9, 1799	Napoleon Bonaparte was named as the First Consul (man with the power)

YOU KNOW THE CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

France still practiced feudalism in the 18th century. The nobles and clergy enjoyed special privileges. For example they did not have to pay taxes. The common people did not have power and freedom in politics. They worked hard and had to pay heavy taxes, so they had really problem with survive (for example not enough food). The nobles and clergy could outvote the common people easily though the Estates General was always not called by the king, who ruled as an absolute monarchy. The common people became discontented with the privileged classes.

BANKRUPTCY OF THE GOVERNMENT

Louis XIV had spent too much. His successors did not cut down expenses. Louis XVI also failed to improve the financial situation. He dismissed ministers who tried to introduce financial reforms. By 1789, the government was bankrupt.

INFLUENCE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

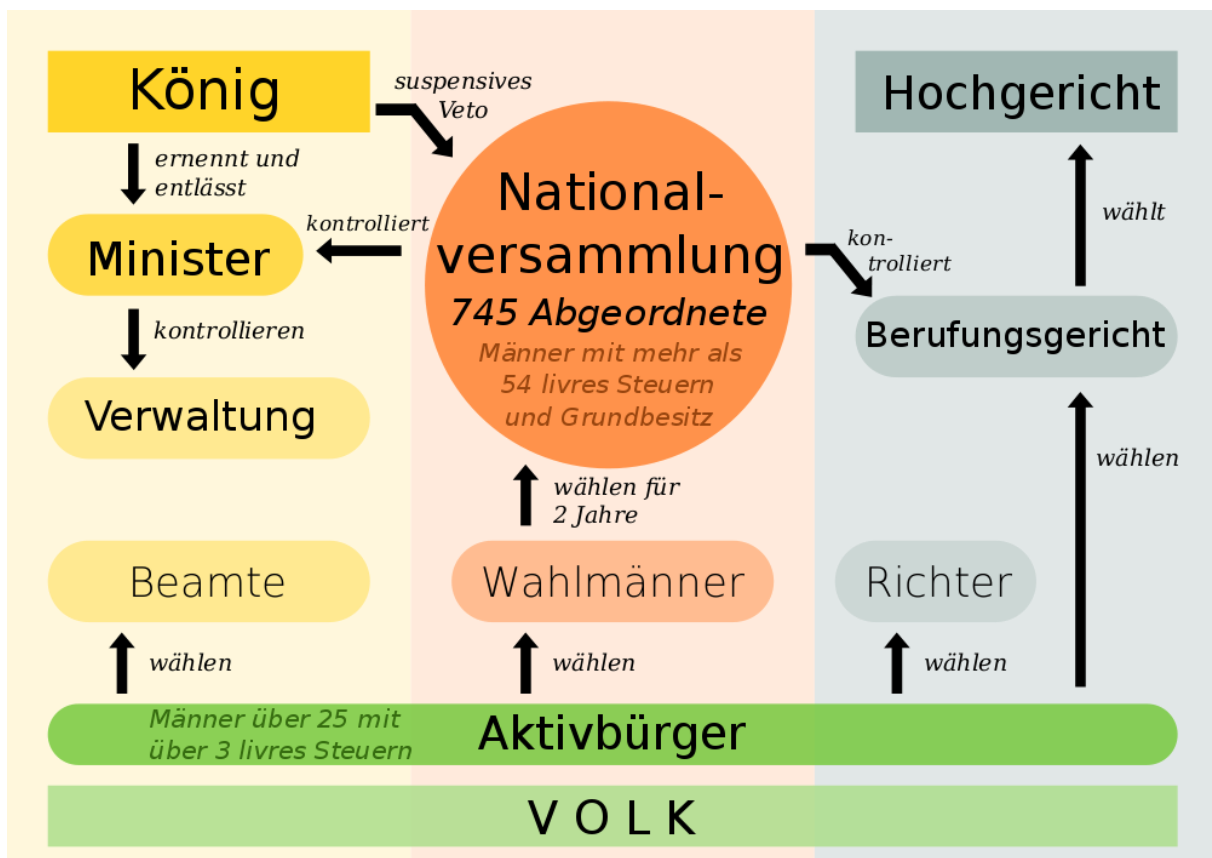
The ideas and writings of Enlightenment thinkers became widespread. The French people were inspired to go against their king.

The success of the Americans to overthrow British rule encouraged the French to fight for their freedom.

OUTBREAK OF REVOLUTION 1789

When Louis XVI finally called the Estates General to solve financial difficulties, the Third Estate did not agree with the unfair system of the Estates General. They formed the National Assembly to make a constitution. People were afraid that the king would suppress the National Assembly. The hungry Parisians, who suffered from bad harvest, burst out their anger by attacking the Bastille prison (for political prisoners). The Fall of Bastille is a symbol for the start of the French Revolution. It spread out to other parts of France.

YOU KNOW THE FRENCH CONSTITUTION OF 1791



UNDERSTANDING

YOU CAN DIFFERENTIATE LONG-RANGE AND IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

IMMEDIATE

- Bad harvests
- Financial situation of the government
- Estates-General
- Increasing importance of the bourgeoisie

LONG-TERM

- King distributed offices to the bourgeoisie instead of the 2nd estate (to strip them off their power)
- Failure to make reforms
- Parts of the 3rd estates want to have more influence
 - A lot of them still live in poverty
 - Bourgeoisie would like to have more influence to politics

YOU CAN EXPLAIN THE RADICALIZATION OF THE REVOLUTION

- Nothing has changed (to good) for some people
- Un-happiness
- No land (peasants)
- No power anymore (nobles)
- For some it went too far – for some it's just started

YOU CAN EXPLAIN THE RESULTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

- Feudalism was abolished (August 4, 1789).
- Nobles, clergy, towns, provinces, companies, and cities lost their special privileges.
- The Assembly published the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (August 26, 1789) which stated that the individual and collective rights of the nobility, clergy, and commoners were equal.
- The National Assembly was legitimized (October 6, 1789).
- Legislation enacted in 1790 abolished the Church's authority to levy a tax on crops, cancelled special privileges for the clergy, and confiscated Church property.
- The government introduced a new paper currency.
- Royalist democrats and the National Party were the two new main parties of France.
- Political "clubs" in French politics were on the rise.
- King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette were arrested and later were beheaded.
- The Constitution of 1791 was signed by the king (they forced him to) and from then on France would function as a constitutional monarchy.
- Many people were beheaded on the guillotine because they were seen as counter-revolutionaries and therefore traitors (this is known as the Reign of Terror).

YOU CAN EXPLAIN THE GOALS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES IN THE REVOLUTION

NOT ALL FORCES HAD THE SAME IDEAS AND GOALS!

- To overthrow Louis XVI, the king of France and Navarre

- To destroy the Ancient regime unfair political system
- To write France a constitution (the declaration of the rights of men and citizen)
- To make France a republic
- To give more rights to the poorest French citizen (called the third estate)
- To free the poorest citizen from the pressures (moral and financial) of the two other estates (the Clergy and the Nobility)

INTERPRETATION

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EVOLUTIONARY AND REVOLUTIONARY PROCESSES

ADVANTAGES

EVOLUTIONARY

- Lasting longer
- Better embedded in the people

REVOLUTIONARY

- Quick
- Big impact on all

DISADVANTAGES

EVOLUTIONARY

- Slow
- Less impact on the main publicity

REVOLUTIONARY

- Might be a war

SHOULD THE FRENCH REVOLUTION BE CELEBRATED?

YES

- first step to democracy
- rights of men
- no longer absolute king
- rethinking of society's order

NO

- peasants still poor
- although privileges were abandoned for the nobles, the gap between 3rd estater's like the peasants and the bourgeoisie became bigger
- no "rights of women"
- finance problems were still existing
- terror

ATTACHMENTS

SOURCES

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