

The Outbreak of the Revolution

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Louis XVI called an assembly of the Estates General to pass his proposal to increase taxes on 5th May 1789. The 1st and 2nd estates sent 300 representatives each who were seated in rows facing each other on two sides, while 600 members of the 3rd estate had to stand at the back. The 3rd estate was represented by its most prosperous and educated members only while peasants, artisans and women were denied entry to the assembly.

Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote and same practice to be continued this time. But members of the 3rd estate demanded individual voting right where each member would have one vote. After rejection

of the proposal by the king, members of the 3rd estate walked out of the assembly in protest.

On 20th June, the representatives of the 3rd estate assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles where they declared themselves a National Assembly and vowed to draft a constitution for France that would limit the powers of the monarch.

→ Mirabeau, a noble and Abbe Sieyès, a priest led the third estate. ^{NATIONAL ASSEMBLY} ~~the~~ White Line

National Assembly was busy at Versailles drafting a constitution, the rest of France was in trouble.

Severe winter destroyed the food crops which resulted in increase in the prices. The bakers also hoarded supplies of breads for making greater profit. After spending hours in long queues at the bakery crowds of angry women stormed into the shops.

At the same time, the king ordered troops to move into Paris. On 14 July, the agitated crowd stormed and destroyed the Bastille. In the countryside rumours spread from village to village that the lords of the manors were on their way to destroy the ripe crops through their hired gangs.

Due to fear, peasants in several districts attacked the castle of nobles, looted hoarded grains and burnt down documents containing records of manorial dues. Large number of noble fled from their homes and many migrated to neighbouring countries.

Louis XVI finally recognised the National Assembly and accepted the constitution. On 4th August, 1789, France passed the law for abolishing the feudal system of obligations and taxes. The members of clergy were also forced to give up their privileges. Tithes were abolished and lands owned by the church were confiscated.