**Ch. 19 – Background to the French Revolution**

*FQ: What were the long-range and immediate causes of the French Revolution?*

***Revolution***: a fundamental change in the political and social organization of a state.

**Four characteristics of revolution include:**

1. Dissident elites
2. Mass frustration
3. Shared motivation
4. State crisis

**Social structure of the Old Regime**

* “Grounded in inequality of rights or the idea of priviledge.”
* Estates-general = the Three Estates
* First Estate, Second Estate, & Third Estate

**First Estate**

* Clergy
* Approx. population of 130,000
* Exempt from *taille* (chief tax)
* Income was half of the royal crown
* Divided into two groups; Aristocrats & Parish priests

**Second Estate**

* Nobility
* Approx. population of 350,000
* Owned 25-30% of land
* Two groups: Nobles of the Robe and Nobles of the Sword

**Third Estate**

* Commoners of society
* Peasants made up 75-80% of overall French population
* Skilled artisans, shopkeepers
* 8% -Bourgeoisie (middle class)

***Old order:*** the political and social system of France in the eighteenth century before the Revolution.

**Causes of the French Revolution**

* Long-range cause: Growing frustration with the monarchy’s inability to handle new social realities and problems.
* Immediate cause: near collapse of government finances.
* Other factors included:

-bad harvest of 1787-1788

-unemployment in cities

-rising food prices

-manufacturing depression

**Additional causes**

* 1778-1787 saw severe depression and loss of overseas markets as well as overproduction.
* Grain and wine prices dropped by 40-50%.
* Consumed by interest on national debt
* No central bank, relied on private loans unlike the Bank of England
* On the brink of financial collapse, the government called a meeting of the Estates-General (last time was 1614).

Ted Talk - French Revolution (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBn7iWzrKoI>

1. What questions challenged an entire nation during the upheaval of the French Revolution?
2. What cultural shift took place, leading up to the French Revolution?
3. What were the differences between each estate?
4. Why did the third estate break off from the other two?
5. What was the radical idea of the French Revolution?
6. Who were the Jacobins?

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