

More Causes of the French Revolution

International Factors

In the 1770's, King Louis XVI paid for French soldiers to help the Americans in their War of Independence from Britain. However, these soldiers came home infected with revolutionary ideas themselves: "The freedom for which I am going to fight inspires me and I would like my own country to enjoy such a liberty that would fit in with our monarchy, our position and our customs" – a French soldier in America

Economic Factors

By 1789, France was bankrupt. France was still paying off debts incurred by the wars of Louis XIV a hundred years before! The King was keen for the First and Second Estates to start paying taxes, but they refuse. So he started taxing the peasantry even more. They were very annoyed at this.



In this cartoon from the time, Louis is looking at the chests and asks "where is the tax money?" The financial minister, Necker, looks on and says "the money was there last time I looked." The nobles and clergy are sneaking out the door carrying sacks of money, saying "We have it."

Discuss: How does this cartoonist highlight economic, political AND social causes of France's problems?

Task 1: Document Analysis

Look at the primary source documents that show the prices of food and the wage of workers in 18th century France.

1. What impact did rising bread prices have on the budgets of even skilled workers like journeymen masons and locksmiths?
2. How might food prices have inspired agitation?

Task 2: Synthesis of Causes

3. Produce a flow diagram demonstrating & explaining how all of these factors are connected to each other.

A. Label each of the following causes as either Underlying / Long-Term, Intermediate / Medium-Term, or Immediate / Short Term

The Three Estates System	Enlightenment Ideals	The weaknesses of Louis XVI
Economic Factors	Marie-Antoinette	American Revolution

- B. Now produce your flow chart, with Long-Term causes leading to Immediate causes. Label the connections between each point with a short explanation of how they might influence / relate to each other.

Causes of the French Revolution Flow Chart