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Question

Analyze the socio-economic and political factors that led to the French Revolution of 1789. Discuss the key aspects and assess the long-term impact of the revolution on France and Europe.

Introduction:-

The French Revolution of 1789 was a pivotal event in European history that marked a significant turning point in the political, social and economic landscape of France and the wider European continent. The revolution was driven by a combination of socio-economic and political factors.

The tumultuous Birth of a New Republic: Exploring the French Revolution

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The French Revolution of 1789 stands as a pivotal moment in European history, a seismic shift that redefined the fabric of French society and reverberated across the continent.

Socio-Economic Discontent

The French Revolution erupted from a potent mix of inequality and enlightenment. The vast majority, peasants and workers that suffered under a brutal class system, were burdened by taxes and facing economic hardship. Meanwhile, the wealthy elite enjoyed privilege and fueled resentment. Ideas of liberty, equality and popular sovereignty, championed by thinkers like Voltaire and Rousseau. This volatile combination ultimately sparked the revolution.

3 social classes: clergy, nobles, masses

Emergence of middle class

Triple taxation

Political Gridlock and Royal Indecision :-

Adding fuel to the fire was the utter political paralysis of the Bourbon

Dysfunctional parlement

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monarchy. King Louis XVI is indecisive and lacking in leadership that proved incapable of tackling the mounting economic crisis. Attempts at fiscal reform met with stiff resistance from the privileged classes. The convening of the Estates-General in 1789 is a representative body not called since 1614 was intended to address financial woes but it quickly transformed into a platform for revolutionary aspiration.

Key Events and Phases

1) Cahiers de Doléances (1788-1789)

Local meetings were held throughout France where citizens from each estate (First, Second, and Third) documented their grievances and proposed reforms. This process gave voice to the widespread discontent and paved the way for Estates-General.

2) Convening of the Estates-General (1789)

King Louis XVI called upon the Estates-General that is an advisory body representing the clergy, nobility and commoners to address the financial crisis. However, voting was conducted by estate, giving the privileged First and Second Estates an unfair advantage.

3) Formation of the National Assembly (June 17, 1789)

Frustrated by the voting system that representatives of third state declared themselves a National Assembly and vowed to draft a constitution. They were joined by some members of the clergy and nobility signifying a break from traditional order.

4) Tennis Court Oath (June 20, 1789)

Fearing the king's attempts to dissolve the National Assembly, its members gathered at nearby tennis court and swore not to disband until they had established a constitution for France.

5) Recognition of the National Assembly by the king (June 23, 1789)

Faced with growing pressure, Louis XVI finally recognized the National Assembly as the legitimate representative body of France people.

6) Storming of the Bastille (July 14, 1789)

A mob of Parisian revolutionaries stormed the Bastille prison, a symbol of royal authority. This event marked the beginning of the armed phases of the revolution and became a powerful symbol of resistance against tyranny.

Add a map.

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7) Abolition of Feudalism (August 4, 1789)

The National Assembly abolished feudal rights and privileges, including forced labor etc. This act significantly weakened the power of the nobility and improved the lives of the peasantry.

8) Declaration the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (August, 1789) :-

The National Assembly adopted this influential document outlining the fundamental rights like liberty, equality and national sovereignty. It became a cornerstone of the revolution and inspired similar declaration around world.

9) Flight of king (June 20, 1791)

Fearing for his safety and in an attempt to regain control. Louis XVI attempted to flee France with family but was captured at Varennes.

10) Rise of Political Groups in the Legislative Assembly (October 1791 - Sep 1792)

The new Legislative Assembly saw the emergence of distinct political factions including Girondists and Jacobins.

11) Manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick (July 1792) :-

The Duke of Brunswick commander of Austrian and Prussian forces issued a threatening manifesto promising harsh if the France

harmful to royal family.
 12) Trial and Execution of Louis XVI

Following the establishment of the First Republic, King Louis XVI was put on trial for treason and condemned to death. His execution by guillotine on January 21, 1793.

Long term Impact of French Revolution

Rise of Nationalism

End of absolute Monarchy

Abolition of feudalism

Emergence of modern Democracies

Secularize & Religious form

Rise of the Bourgeoisie

Spread of Revolutionary Ideas

1) End of Absolute Monarchy ∴

The revolution toppled the France monarchy and established a republic, paving path for democratic ideals and representative government.

2) Emergence of modern democratic principles :-

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen codified notions of liberty, equality and national sovereignty to shaping modern conceptions of human rights and democratic governance.

3) Rise of Nationalism :-

The revolution fostered a strong sense of French national identity that had profound impact on European politics and contributed to the emergence of nation-state in the 19th Century.

4) Abolition of feudalism :-

The revolution dismantled the feudalism system and freeing peasants from oppressive burdens and paving the way for a more egalitarian society.

5) Secularization and religious reform

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy strained relations between the state and the Catholic Church that leading to increased secularization in French society.

6) Rise of the bourgeoisie :-

The revolution empowered the middle class who gained political and economic influence that contributing to the rise of capitalism and industrialization.

7) Spread of Revolutionary Ideas :-

The French Revolution became a symbol of resistance against oppression and inspired rebellions and revolutions throughout the world.

Conclusion :-

The French Revolution was a complex and bloody event fueled by socioeconomic inequalities, Enlightenment ideals and political struggles. Its legacy is multifaceted that leaving a lasting impact on France, Europe and the world's understanding of liberty, equality and path towards a more just society.