

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Pierre Gaston

Researcher

Paris

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6850146>

Published Date: 17-July-2022

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a revolution or process of great importance, it is the revolution par excellence, due to:

- It takes place in the most populous country in Europe at the time, except for Russia.
- It was a mass revolution.
- This is the revolution that reached greater radicalism.
- It was a complete revolution, going through a series of stages or moments, which began with what was called the Revolt of the Privileged, passing through a bourgeois moment and leading to a republic whose greatest radicalism was obtained by the Jacobin period, from From this moment, it rotates its contents, moderating to end up in the Napoleonic Empire.
- It is the only revolution that aims to export the ideas, principles or alternatives that have given rise to the revolution.
- It will later serve as a model for the movements that are developed.

2. PREVIOUS FRAMEWORK

SOCIETY: The specific situation in France and certain sectors will be decisive in the outbreak of the process. France is the most typical model of the Ancien Régime monarchy, its clash with the emerging economic blocs will be transcendental. We are interested in analyzing what type of society exists, we are interested in the concerns, demands or reasons for discontent of the different sectors and what ideology drives these sectors. Finally it is necessary to know him because of this revolution.

It is a classical monarchy more defining than those that exist throughout the continent. It continues to maintain the features coined by Louis XIV - "THE STATE IS ME", absolutely in force. To a large extent, it continues to be based on a series of social sectors: • **NOBILITY:** It is a class that is based on privilege and wealth, being based on a possession system - land ownership. Manorial. • **CLERGY.** • **MIDDLE SECTORS:** Bourgeois enriched by trade, manufacturing and liberal professions. Dynamic, growing numerically speaking. They have acquired a certain economic weight, but they are not recognized at the political level, nor the possibility of participating in the public life of the state. • **BUREAUCRACY:** At the service of the state, in development and growth. They constitute a social sector enriched and independent of the state itself, even constituting a certain danger to it. • **PEASANTS:** Important and numerous mass made up of legally free people but who, however, are in a situation of dependence on a man to whom they owe a series of jobs. • **URBAN MASS:** In the cities there is or exists a large popular mass, which generally speaking are precarious and depend for their subsistence on an abundant and cheap supply of staple food. Many of these social sectors could be said to be potentially revolutionary, because many of these have their own claims, demands, some of which will play a definitive role in the course of the revolution. • **NOBILITY:** This is a minority, made up of about 400,000 people out of a total population of approximately 23,000,000 inhabitants. This class continues to enjoy important privileges, they control certain wealth. But in a certain way they have been marginalized within the political tasks, government responsibilities, that is, they have been removed from

the functioning of the government structure and real political activities. The only thing left to her as a charter of her own situation are her privileges and wealth, and she is not willing to give them up. This aristocracy has adopted a way of life with great expenses, sumptuousness, possibly to distinguish itself from other sectors, while at the same time they have carried out a mismanagement of their resources, their incomes are diminished. These problems will lead him to reinforce his own economic support by attempting to resurrect old privileges that were in disuse, he will try, after all, to reinforce the manorial - feudal system of land tenure to balance his economic support, in that diminished moment.

This will be of great importance because these attempts to reinforce their privileges will weaken the foundations of the state, causing more and more the annihilation of this class, in turn stirring up the popular sector, which will be more squeezed and pressured.

- **MIDDLE SECTORS:** They want socially and politically speaking to be allowed to have the leading role that they think is their own due to the importance that they are having in other sectors.

The peasants want to free themselves from the servitudes that diminish their possibility of development and subsistence or maintenance.

The urban sectors seek a government that guarantees them that abundant, cheap supply that guarantees their subsistence. In the case that we will analyze the situation that will cause the process to explode, it will be the economic factors, the bankruptcy of the public treasury, fundamentally motivated by the economic effort that has been carried out in the wars that have taken place during the eighteenth century, being the The straw that breaks the camel's back was the participation, interested, in the North American war of independence and not so much what was made clear to him at a certain moment, that is, the excessive pomp of the monarchy. The collaborators of Louis XVI raised the possibility of imposing a tax that would be assumed by all the citizens of the country, including the privileged sectors, in addition not only that everyone pay but also that they be progressive (Turgot).

- **IDEOLOGY:**

- **PRIVILEGED SECTORS:** They have an ideology that would be within the most typical conservatism, maintain current principles and schemes and prevent any type of change or transformation.

- **POPULAR SECTORS:** In these previous moments there is no ideology, clear and programmed project. The only thing they want is to get rid of burdens and ensure their modus vivendi, there is no clear and defined political project

ALTERNATIVE: Ideology based on the rationalism of the 17th century promoted by a series of thinkers, among which Rousseau and Montesquieu stand out. The ideological project promoted by these thinkers would be in a social contract, recognition of rights and freedoms of men, national sovereignty and division of powers - Liberalism.

TURGOT: Physiocrat, economist and representative of the middle sectors. He outlined a project that was intended to be a solution to the finance crisis. His proposal stipulated the effective exploitation of the land, freedom of trade and business, efficient administration and the abolition of social inequalities fundamentally in the tax issue.

What happens is that it was an unfeasible project, inapplicable in pre-revolutionary France because in order to have developed those approaches it was necessary to change the entire political framework and especially the social framework, with the consequent resistance of the high aristocracy.

In principle the monarchy does not seem bad, what is clear is that the monarchy was not willing to self-suicide, that is, take it to the ultimate consequences. What will make the process jump will be the resistance of the privileged sectors.

In 1787 the Assembly of Notables meets, which aims to establish a common strategy against this latent danger. It is based on temporary economic collaboration with the state, but in exchange for some compensation (a temporary aid is not the same as a regulatory tax), that is, its privileges will be reinforced. This must be considered in the context of the States General. The call starts from the Privileged, it is these sectors that incite Louis XVI to call these. But they had a calculation error because they ignored that the third estate constituted mainly by the bourgeois sectors would not accept the requests of the aristocracy idly. The traditional scheme was not maintained, they believed they had time on their hands and this was not the case.

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

Vol. 9, Issue 4, pp: (39-43), Month: July - August 2022, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

Between August 1788, in which the States General were convened and September 1789 with the declaration of the rights of man and citizens, certain events will take place that will spark the revolution.

In January 1789 among the many political pamphlets, there is one that is the famous text of the Abbot of SIEYES - WHAT IS THE THIRD STATE?. Basic and fundamental text that will open the way to a revolutionary process with deep implications.

3. REVOLUTIONARY FRAMEWORK

SIEYES TEXT ----- JANUARY 1789.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ----- JUNE 1789.

STORMING OF THE BASTILLE ----- JULY 1789.

BILL OF RIGHTS --- AUGUST 1789.

CONSTITUTION ----- 1791.

The representatives of the third estate decide to separate from the States General and constitute themselves in Assembly, later they will decide to constitute themselves in A.N CONSTITUENT.

From a revolution initially driven by the privileged sectors, we have fully entered into a classic bourgeois revolution, a revolution not only of the elites but also of the masses.

Although potentially different sectors were means. The mass of the people will participate as a fully active militant force. There has been a transmission of ideas from the bourgeois sectors to the masses of the people, specifically because the winter of 1788 had been very harsh with few harvests, this would lead to product shortages and price increases, setting in motion the cycle that affects firstly to the peasant and immediately to the urban sectors due to the scarcity and price increases, it also causes that in that economic precariousness it produces or generates a contraction of the market. The availability of money is minimal, which affects the commercial and manufacturing sectors - ECO SITUATION. DETERMINED. If a political approach had not taken place in parallel, there would have been popular riots (demanding food), however, it is this political situation in the country that will transform these marginal movements into direct participation in the process.

There is a proliferation of pamphlets, texts, club formation, this comes to join the call of the National Assembly that comes to capture the situation of the middle sectors, managing to instill, permeate ideas such as:

- Liberation from the tyranny exercised by the powerful.
- Belonging to a social group, the Nation.
- Freedom.
- Equality.

Usually when these types of riots took place, the protest, the violence was directed against the merchants and vendors. Now the popular protest or rejection is directed towards the king and the aristocratic nobility. There is an awareness of the populace. This movement will occur both in the city and in the countryside, producing within a period of three weeks - 1 month the dismantling of the stately system and the political framework, the structures in force until then collapse, a symbol of the mentalization of the population is the STORMING OF THE BASTILLE. It is the symbol of real oppression rather than the importance of the fact.

Thanks to this popular support, the representatives of the third state will go through stages (separation, national assembly, constituent assembly). But before the Declaration of Rights, a key text takes place in August, a clearer expression of the liberal ideology defined and supported by the bourgeoisie. Hierarchical estate society is rejected. This will not pose a democratic society, it is modeled who or who will be able to exercise power on behalf of the population based on their abilities.

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

Vol. 9, Issue 4, pp: (39-43), Month: July - August 2022, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

The constitution of 1791 enshrines the constitutional Monarchy, division of powers, recognition of freedom and equality, system of active and passive citizens. This bourgeois liberal model the mass has not obtained great privileges for the bourgeoisie the revolution is over, what is needed is to develop the new system.

The popular sectors will not be satisfied with this. Popular support has come in handy for the bourgeoisie. It has been used to achieve its goals. But it is not so easy for them to demobilize it. Taking into account that the economic situation has not passed. The popular sectors continue to be combative, putting forward a series of demands that go beyond what the bourgeoisie was willing to give.

- ELITE GOES TO THE PEOPLE.
- PEOPLE RESPOND.
- SOCIAL CLAIM.
- OVERFLOW OF THE FRAMEWORK OPPORTUNITIES OR CONCESSIONS.

This situation will produce a first rupture in the leading front. A sector or group is not willing to go one step further, however another faction intends to get closer to the people, outline of what will be the Moderate bourgeoisie (Girondinos) and the Radical bourgeoisie (Jacobins)

The attitude of the king also influences, resistance and open conspiracy against the revolutionary government as well as the emigrated nobility will be decisive for the beginning of the counterrevolution.

At the height of 1791 - 92 there is more than one sector that wants war:

- The king and the nobility, that is, they want their privileges back.
- The European monarchies, not out of solidarity with Louis XVI, but as a self-defense mechanism against the spread of subversive ideas, survival.
- Moderate bourgeois sectors:
 - Ideological: The French revolution is the only one that was intended to be exported abroad, a universal vocation, the first step towards the liberation of the continent.
 - Practical: The problems that the new government has, the popular agitation and the economic problem.

You have to channel it. War would be a way of escape. This is initiated by France being defeated and occupied in 1792. The war will be the trigger for the monarchy to fall and the Republic to be established.

In the convention a series of ideological sectors are delimited of which the most characteristic will be the Girondins (right), Jacobins (left) and the plain. The majority falls on the right, made up of large merchants, provincial bourgeoisie and intellectuals among others. Its policy is based on internal moderation and extremely bellicose abroad, maintaining balance is difficult.

WAR:

- MOVEMENT OF RESOURCES.
- MOVEMENT OF CONTINGENTS.

It will produce rationing and precariousness. Effort that falls basically on the popular sectors. This will cause the fall of the Girondins and the rise of the Jacobins willing to accept the challenge of taking the revolution to its ultimate consequences.

Difficult situation not only because of the war, but also because of the realistic counterrevolutionary uprising, near civil/internal war.

The Jacobins will be able to restore internal order and redirect the external war, they will achieve it through TERROR. It supposes, therefore, an essential transformation of the state apparatus.

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

Vol. 9, Issue 4, pp: (39-43), Month: July - August 2022, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

- CONCESSIONS: They get the vote, control food mechanisms, get positions of political and administrative relevance among others.

- TERROR: State of exception. Difficult situation to maintain carried out by SAINT JUST and ROBESPIERRE.

The Jacobin government will begin to be harassed by:

- The moderate sectors that consider the turn inadmissible.
- Popular sectors that are beginning to tire of the continued effort that is being asked of them.

In 1794 the Thermidor Coup took place, a fundamental moment in the process because it meant the end of the radical revolution, promoting the moderation of the system, the aim was to establish economic development and political stability according to the model established in 1991. This meant the rupture between the two sectors (media and popular).

The thermidorians begin to be approached by different mobilizations and conspiracies (Babeuf - Equals) from the left and the right, having to face the established situation in the country. The output will be increasingly clear resources to the army. Which has been one of the careers that the Revolution has opened to middle sectors, allowing the promotion of people who came from lower strata - NAPOLEON. The army that is created with the revolution, this new army is born with an important component of Jacobinism, however, all those who have managed to ascend, are interested in preserving the situation, so it will become an important support of the Thermidorians. It is an effective, modern army that is obtaining triumphs outside of France. There comes a time when he conceives that the government is not strong and that it must be overthrown, carried out through the Coup de Brumaire, promoted by Napoleon. Successively, it will control larger plots of power and so on, eliminating scales or positions held by Thermidorians.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Napoleon means the end of the bourgeois Revolution, stagnation. The beginning of the development of the bourgeois system, that is, the consolidation of the system, institutions, and bourgeois-style legislation, with enormous force to this day.

Under the policy of the empire all this will be exported and implanted in many countries. There will be a rationalization of the European map as well as an expansive power of certain principles and institutions emanating from the revolution.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Clark, J. C. D., & Clark, J. C. D. (2000). *English society, 1660-1832: Religion, ideology and politics during the ancien regime*. Cambridge University Press.
- [2] Goodman, D. (1992). Public sphere and private life: Toward a synthesis of current historiographical approaches to the old regime. *History and theory*, 1-20.
- [3] Ramiro Troitiño, D. (2022). Helmut Kohl: The German Reunification and the Genesis of the European Union. In *The European Union and its Political Leaders* (pp. 219-231). Springer, Cham.
- [4] Ramiro Troitiño, D. (2022). Charles-Irénée Castel, Abbé de Saint-Pierre: The Role of Religion in the European Integration. In *The European Union and its Political Leaders* (pp. 17-27). Springer, Cham.
- [5] Ramiro Troitiño, D. (2022). Margaret Thatcher: British Strategy in the European Integration. In *The European Union and its Political Leaders* (pp. 207-218). Springer, Cham.
- [6] Roche, D. (1996). *The culture of clothing: dress and fashion in the Ancien Régime*. Cambridge University Press.
- [7] Salzmann, A. (1993). An ancien regime revisited: "Privatization" and political economy in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire. *Politics & Society*, 21(4), 393-423.
- [8] Troitiño, D. R. (2021). La «Década Digital» de la Unión Europea: desarrollos e impactos sobre su ciudadanía y economía. *IDP: revista d'Internet, dret i política*, (34), 1-14.