

They also profited from the Slave Trade and even desired that slavery be expanded to the newly acquired territory.

It can be argued that the Men referred to in US constitution were Men of Property, as only those who held property were given all of the promised rights.

Still, the most important **contribution of American Revolution** was its contribution to ideas of Liberty, Equality, Fundamental Rights, Nationalism and anti-colonialism. The idea of equality with no special privileges to Nobility was radical at a time when much of the world was under Feudalism, where the Nobles were the prominent class. The idea of no taxation on property, which flowed from the Right to Property, was also novel in those times. Thus American Revolution was a revolution in ideas and system of Polity and it impacted the future events, the most prominent of them being the French Revolution of 1789.

7. French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars

The French Revolution was a product of the dysfunctional society characterized by Feudalism.

7.1. Reasons behind French Revolution

7.1.1. Three Estates

The society of 18th century France was divided into three classes or estates. The Clergy was the first estate, the Nobles were the second estate and the third estate, which formed the majority of population, included the middle classes, the artisans, the city workers and the peasants.

The Clergy was the largest landowner in per capita terms. The Nobility had a monopoly on all the important official positions in the government service, the army, and other public offices. However, the Clergy and the Nobles did not pay any taxes and did no productive work.

The Peasants formed 80 per cent of the population. Within the peasants, there were further subdivisions in the form of landowner peasants, tenants and landless laborers. The **landowner peasants** formed a very minute percentage. The **tenants** had to pay 2/3rd of their produce in rent. The **landless laborers**, on the other hand, lived on paltry wages. Although no one was a serf technically, forced labor still existed as a feudal privilege of the lord, and was put into operation frequently, especially for public works.

The middle classes were the educated people like writers, doctors, civil servants and richer people like merchants. Though economically middle classes were important, they enjoyed very little social prestige and political rights in the society. The Artisans and city workers also lived a miserable life of poverty. They enjoyed no rights at workplace and couldn't shift jobs without certificate of good conduct by the employer.

The Third Estate did not have voting rights. On the other hand, the Clergy and the Nobles did not pay any tax and the tax burden was solely borne by the Third Estate. This was a major source for the grievance of people.

7.1.2. Unpopular Monarchy & financial troubles

King Louis XVI was an inefficient ruler with poor intelligence. The people hated his wife Marie Antoinette who interfered in the appointments of officials. The King also showed favoritism in appointing officials (nepotism). Under King Louis XVI, France was in financial trouble due to costly wars like the Seven Year War. The American Revolution had pushed France to bankruptcy as France had aided the Americans against Britain. The irony was not missed by the people of France. While France supported the American Revolution (which aimed self-rule, liberty, equality and democracy for the people), the way the Monarchy ruled in France was an anti-thesis to the ideas that formed the foundation of the American Revolution.