**How Did the Enlightenment Influence the French Revolution?**

The state was the main initiator of the enlightenment that led to the French revolution. While the main cause of the French Revolution was radical enlightenment, political, social, cultural, financial, and economic factors also played a prominent role (Israel, 2013). According to Censer (2019), French Revolution is a product of tilting the social scale to the bourgeoisie, penetration of the revolution concepts from Paris to provinces and villages, and the minority's anticipation of new ideas and principles before 1750. Enlightenment ideas such as peasant involvement in government matters and religious changes led to secularization and republican government, which impacted French Revolution.

**Transformation of Government**

The enlightenment ideas played a crucial role in French Revolution as they transformed the widely accepted concept of government from a monarchy to a republic. In essence, peasants became more interested and involved in government affairs and politics than before (Chartier, 1991). As a result, peasants demanded a centralized state characterized by a government that was more accountable to the people. They used pamphlets, images, and songs deemed hostile to authorities to enhance their course. According to Carlyle (2019), the idea of a state and the need for improved democratic space encouraged long-term changes that weakened the established traditional systems in France. The growth of the collective political consciousness resulted in increased rebellion against authority. Consequently, the resulting revolts mainly targeted state fiscal exactions by introducing new rights to tax merchandise circulation and stringent regulations relating to tax collection.

The revolts focused on promoting direct political involvement in that provinces and villages stood firm in rejecting the king's representatives charged with enforcing monarchical fiscal exactions at the local level. According to Censer (2019), tax rebellions and revolts against any form of dictatorship exhibited by the traditional leadership played a critical role in government transformation. In some cases, the various techniques used to rebel were primarily characterized by brutal vengeance and open violence. However, Cole and Symes (2020) argue that revolts reversed the layout of rebellions in that anti-seigneurial tussles increased in the eastern part of the country, where there were few uprisings.

On the other hand, protests against the royal fiscal policy, desire for religious reform, and remonstrance regarding the operational status of offices and justice were among the peasants' expectations. The principal factor that enlightened peasants and encouraged the transformation of the government from a monarch to a republic was royal taxation. As a result, peasants created the Third Estate and established the Tennis Court Oath, which led to the creation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen to protect human rights (Hesse, 2018). The National Assembly wrote the document to reference enlightenment that gave more power to citizens and was used to outline a set of rules to follow after overthrowing the government. Thus, the enlightenment ideas transformed the administration from a monarchy to a republic.

**Dechristianization and Secularization**

Dechristianization and secularization led to the French Revolution since the enlightenment changed people's thoughts about the church. Chartier (1991) indicates that the antireligious sentiments were vehement and widespread among the French. The antireligious ideas spread to all classes in the country, undermining Christianity's power and breaking the old hierarchies, authority, and power that radically branded the revolution in its establishment. Chartier (1991) adds that disengagement from old faith was the switch of the usual religious nature to new values and expectations that made the French Revolution distinctive. Consequently, enlightenment made citizens develop a critical approach towards the church as they became awake enough to know when they were being led in the wrong direction.

The church's power was significantly reduced when people started questioning the church. Chartier (1991) states that Sunday Mass gathered a few parish members after the enlightenment, and all members did not attend all the time. Notably, the church attendance varied enormously from season to season, and the yearly confession and Holy Communion duties were not strictly adhered to. Although the enlightenment ideas led to dechristianization, many people continued to observe Sunday practices and Paschal duties (Pinkney, 2019). However, secularized Christians ignored the church's teachings and ethics and neglected the institutions. Other forms of enlightenment that contributed to dechristianization include church divisions and the weakening of the parish (Pinkney, 2019).

Furthermore, the state established a clergy oath supporting the Civil Constitution, and all priests were required to swear allegiance to France. Chartier (1991) argues that the acceptance of the Civil Constitution contributed to increased secularization. Thus, the enlightenment made the church lose its power over the people. As a result, the National Assembly took power, which impacted the French Revolution.

**Conclusion**

The enlightenment was an influential factor that changed the history of France. It saw a change of government that gave the French more political power. Also, enlightenment made the church lose most of its traditional control such that it could not influence people similarly. Furthermore, the establishment of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen gave people rights to security, liberty, press, property, and freedom of speech and religion. The document enhanced the enlightenment concept that impacted the French Revolution. Therefore, French Revolution would not have succeeded without enlightenment since the country would have maintained a monarchy.

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