

PUBLIC CENTRAL SCHOOL - KHALISPUR
HANDOUTS ON HISTORY - CHAPTER: 1
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Part: 2

The Outbreak of the Revolution

Louis XVI lived in an wonderful palace the Versailles. The palace was huge and to maintain it huge amount of wealth was required. To increase the tax in the country the king had to hold a meeting and the consent of all estates i.e., clergy, nobility and the third estate was required.

On 5th May, 1789, Louis XVI organised a meeting of the three estates (Estates General) to pass proposals for new taxes. The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each and 600 representatives from third estate. Voting was conducted and as per rule 300 votes was counted as 1 vote. The concept of one vote one value was absent. After the voting was conducted the first and the second estate mixed their votes i.e., $\begin{array}{l} 300 = 1 \text{ vote [clergy]} \\ 300 = +1 \text{ vote [nobility]} \\ \hline 2 \text{ vote.} \end{array}$

And the 600 votes of the third estate was counted as 1 vote. This inequality in political

matter made the third estate to raise their demand of one vote one value. When the king rejected this proposal, members of third estate walked out of the assembly in protest.

Tennis Court Oath

As the demands of the third estate was not fulfilled, they assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles on 20th June, 1789. They declared themselves a National Assembly and took an oath to draft a constitution for France and to reduce the powers of monarch. The leader of National Assembly was Mirabeau and Abbe Sieyes.

As the National Assembly was busy at Versailles drafting a constitution, people in France were facing food shortages, bad harvest, food prices rose and the people stormed and destroyed the Bastille fort on 14th July, 1789. In the countryside, peasants in several districts attacked the residence of a king and burnt down documents containing records of manorial dues.