



AP[®] European History 2003 Sample Student Responses

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The Era of Rational Thought preceded the French Revolution and, in fact, influenced it to a great degree. Ideals of government, social orders, and religion stemming from the likes of philosopher such as Voltaire, ~~Montesquieu~~ Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Locke, can all be seen in the outline of French Revolution.

~~While~~ While the very temperment of the Enlightenment extended over the revolution, the ^{concepts} ~~ideas~~ of the social contract, state controlled church, and ^{division} ~~division~~ of powers within the government, had the ^{influence} ~~most impact~~ on the outcome of the revolution.

The social contract and its ^{stress on the existence} ~~emphasis~~ of natural rights stemming from John Locke and his treatise on Civil Government, could be seen as the very concept that sparked the revolution.

Members of the Third Estate felt it was ^{necessary} ~~needed~~ for them to be given equal representation so that they might attain liberty, and property. When they felt that the Estates General had denied them this right, they went on to form the National Assembly in 1789. The very first act of authority that they ~~performed~~ performed, was to issue a Decree eradicating feudalism and manorialism. Furthermore, ~~when~~ when in ~~late~~ late 1789, they issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, ~~they~~

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7

M-2

~~to~~ members of the National Assembly made sure to mention the natural rights that were guaranteed to them by the social contract. Members of the Third Estate had acted on their right to depose a repressive government.

Once the National Assembly had instigated mass revolt, they seized all the lands of the church.

In 1790, ~~the~~ the Civil Constitution of the clergy was issued, making the church fall under the jurisdiction of the state. Clergy were now to be paid by the state and be in support of the state.

~~Further~~ Further into the revolution, in H's radical stage, Robespierre would declare the Republic of Virtue, a secular state that attempted to ~~free~~ extricate France from the holds of the Gallean church. The revolution reflected ~~the~~ two shades of Enlightenment thought towards the concept of religion. While Robespierre had enacted his supreme skepticism through the republic of virtue, the National Assembly had ~~not~~ reflected Voltaire's concept of a state controlled church.

Lastly, and most importantly, the Enlightenment inspired ~~the~~ the ~~new~~ direction the new government took. When a constitution was finally drawn up in 1792, it took into consideration Montesquieu's

#7

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M-3

concept of the separation of powers. The new constitution called for ~~the~~ France to be headed by the executive power of the King, ~~who~~ who would be checked by the legislative Assembly which would be ~~the~~ a typical parliament.

The judicial system of France would have been placed under reforms. ^{With much enthusiasm, the} ~~French~~ French declared the First Republic on September 21, 1792. Though it came to face many alterations, the one consistency, ~~was~~ was the separation of powers. When the Directory came in to being and Napoleon rose to power, he too used the system of the separation of powers, disguising it as the Consulate system.

The Enlightenment and the ^{ideas} ~~ideas~~ regarding social, religious, and political situations that spawned from it, were very influential in the course of the French Revolution. Using the idea of Locke's natural rights and ~~interpreting~~ interpreting his concept of the social contract, the National Assembly formed the back bone of the revolution. A new government was instituted on the ~~idea~~ ^{idea} of Montesquieu's ideals of separation of powers and the church came under the control of state. The French Revolution is an ~~embodiment~~ embodiment of the ideals of the Enlightenment.

"Liberty, equality, and fraternity!" was the rallying cry of the French Revolution. Following the earlier American example, the French people shaped their revolutionary policies on the philosophies of the Enlightenment philosophes. The progressive thinkers of the Enlightenment influenced the French political, social, and religious systems until the time of Napoleon.

Even as the French wrote the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, they based ~~on~~ it on the American Declaration of Independence. They emphasized "Life, liberty, and Property," or Locke's most famous teachings, and set up the constitutional government with the separation of powers, a concept advocated by Montesquieu. They centered their revolutionary ideas around the "social-contract" philosophy of Locke, who stated that oppressed people should be free to overthrow an unjust government.

The social situation in France also changed during the revolution. Manorialism and serfdom was abolished, following the principles of Pousseau, who had his own "social contract." In it, he stated that it was ~~the~~ a natural right ^{to have} ~~of~~ economic freedom for all people. ~~His~~ His philosophy was exemplified in the works of Abbot Sieyès, who wrote the highly influential *What Is the Third Estate?* ~~The~~ The French Revolution also gave rise to Adam ~~Smith's~~ Smith's ^{concept} ~~concept~~ of laissez faire economics, and led to greater ~~pa~~

prosperity in capitalist France.

However, all the philosophies of the Enlightenment were not always accepted by the French revolutionaries. Church lands were seized and members of the clergy were forced to become ^{responsible} ~~part~~ ~~obligant~~ to the state and not to the pope. Although the revolution led to greater nationalism, it did not lead to a positive religious response. Many members of the clergy went into hiding and pious Catholics were horrified. Voltaire criticized institutionalized religion but ~~some~~ ^{many} felt revolutionaries had taken the issue of religion too far.

The revolution ^{ultimately} gave rise to ^{liberal} ~~the~~ ~~liberalism~~ and democratic ideals advocated by enlightenment philosophes, in which the people decided who was to govern them. However, the Enlightenment concept of progress was not enough to stop the dictatorship of ~~the succeeding emperor~~ Napoleon, who destroyed France's government, ~~the balanced power~~ which centered on the policies of the Enlightenment.