



Dr. Blosa Science

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The Science Foundation College
Uganda East Africa
Senior one to senior six
+256 778 633 682, 753 802709
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The National Assembly of the French Revolution 1787 to 1799

Question

What were the achievements and failures of the National Assembly in the course of French revolution 1787 to 1799?

The National Assembly was the first revolutionary government of the French Revolution and existed from June 14th to July 9th in 1789. The National Assembly later evolved into the legislative Assembly on September 30, 1791

Achievements of the French National Assembly (1789 – 1791)

The **French National Assembly (1789-1791)** achieved several significant milestones during the early years of the French Revolution:

1. **Abolition of Feudalism:** The National Assembly abolished feudal privileges, serfdom, and class privileges, marking a major step towards social equality.
2. **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen:** Adopted on August 26, 1789, this document laid out the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and became a cornerstone of modern human rights.
3. **Constitution of 1791:** The Assembly drafted and adopted the first written constitution of France, establishing a constitutional monarchy and limiting the king's powers.
4. **Division of France into Departments:** The Assembly reorganized the administrative divisions of France, replacing the old provinces with departments to create a more uniform and efficient system.
5. **Confiscation of Church Property:** The Assembly seized church lands and properties, which were then sold to raise funds for the revolutionary government.
6. **Civil Constitution of the Clergy:** Passed in July 1790, this law brought the Catholic Church in France under state control and required clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the state. The power of the Catholic Church was reduced in the process.
7. **Reforms in judicial system:** The National Assembly instituted new legal reforms, such as election of judges and ended illegal arrests and imprisonments.

8. **The National Assembly introduced the freedom of worship:** Initially on the Catholic religion was acknowledged by the monarchy
9. **Replacement of Ancient regime flag:** The National assembly replace the White Ancient Flag with a revolutionary tri-color flag blue, white and red.
10. **The national Assembly transformed the 1789 revolutionary militias into National Guard.** The National Guard replaced the royal Guard. The National Guard become the national army.

Failures of the French National Assembly (1789 – 1791)

The **French National Assembly (1789-1791)** had several notable failures during its tenure:

1. **Economic Challenges:** Despite efforts to address France's financial crisis, the Assembly struggled to stabilize the economy. The national debt continued to grow, and inflation remained a problem.
2. **Social Unrest:** The Assembly faced significant social unrest, including the Great Fear (a period of peasant riots) and the Women's March on Versailles. These events highlighted the Assembly's inability to fully control or address the grievances of the lower classes.
3. **Political Divisions:** The Assembly was often divided along ideological lines, with radicals pushing for more extensive reforms and conservatives seeking to maintain traditional structures. This internal conflict hindered the Assembly's ability to enact cohesive policies.
4. **Failure to Address Rural Concerns:** The Assembly's reforms were often more beneficial to urban and educated citizens, particularly the bourgeoisie, while rural populations continued to face hardships. This disparity contributed to on-going discontent and resistance.
5. **King's Resistance:** King Louis XVI's resistance to the Assembly's reforms, including his attempted escape to Varennes, undermined the Assembly's authority and led to increased radicalization.
6. **The 1791 constitution established by the National Assembly denied the French masses the right to vote.** Voting was allowed only to men of 25 years and above who were able to pay tax. This violated the French Revolutionary Ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.
7. **The National Assembly put a ban on trade unions and declared strikes unlawful.** This was unfortunate because it worsened the working and living conditions of employees. It made the National Assembly unpopular.
8. **The national Assembly promoted people with little or no experience in administration.** This bred chaos in leadership.

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