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Eng. II Hon. Per. 3
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Research Paper Outline

How did the lives of the French Peasants affect their support of the French Revolution?

- I. Everyday life
 - A. Conditions
 - B. Government
 - C. Opportunities
- II. Family life
 - A. Education
 - B. Country life
 - C. City life
- III. Work life
 - A. Farming
 - B. Apprenticeship

+15

you're in a rut -
first Russian peasants
first French

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Final Outline/Thesis

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The poor circumstances of the French Peasants in family, work, and everyday life, led them to revolt against the French King and support the French Revolution.

- I. Everyday life
 - A. Conditions
 - 1. Land taxes
 - 2. Living costs
 - B. Government
 - 1. Debt
 - 2. Law
 - 3. Judges
 - C. Opportunities
 - 1. Drought
 - 2. Riots
- II. Family life
 - A. Country life
 - 1. Land ownership
 - 2. Peasant allotment
 - B. Education
 - 1. Literacy
 - 2. Books
 - C. City life
 - 1. Crime
 - 2. Prostitution
- III. Work life
 - A. Farming
 - 1. Owned Land
 - 2. Rented Land
 - B. Factory
 - 1. Wages
 - 2. Hours

Order of importance from most important to lesser important. Importance is based on how much the peasants valued, or needed, or were concerned about most.

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Final Draft

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Taxes, Land, and Bread: Too Much, Too Little, and Too Late

Before the French Revolution, starting in the year 1789, the peasants were stuck with little land and poor living conditions. The king, and the wealthy landowning aristocrats, dictated the peasants' daily lives, including the aspects of land ownership, working conditions, taxes, and even, bread prices. Their lives were filled with the repetitiveness of farming, paying taxes, and bread shortages. At times, various groups of people tried to make changes for the impoverished peasant, but none were long-lasting. With the cost of living rapidly rising and the working wages only slowly increasing, the poverty-stricken peasants needed to find a way to improve their lives. The growing dissatisfaction of the peasants, the majority of the population, led them to rebel against the people who controlled their lives. The poor circumstances of the French peasants in family, work, and everyday life, led them to revolt against the French king and support the French Revolution.

The French peasants faced a lifetime of taxes from the government, and unlike the aristocrats, they were unable to use influence to escape taxation. Taxes for peasants were widespread and included "paying taxes to the king, taxes to the church, taxes and dues to the lord of the manor, as well as numerous indirect taxes on wine, salt, and bread" (Kreis [✓]The Originsⁿ). At times, the peasants paid another tax to escape the corvée, or forced labor which was only forced upon the peasants. For most peasants, nearly half of their meager income was used to pay for the many taxes imposed (Durant 936). However, taxes were not the only way the peasants suffered financially; between 1771 and 1789, the cost of living rose sixty-five percent. To make

atters even harder for the peasant, the wages of a common farm laborer, the majority of peasants, rose sixteen percent during the same time period (Kreis The Origins). Both the rising costs of living and the low wages contributed to miserable masses of people who were nearly starving.

The harvest of 1788 and 1789 was small due to droughts, and famine swept through France. The south of France was hit especially hard, and "only the charities distributed by the government and the clergy kept half the population from starving" (Durant 931). This harvest was not the only incident of poor harvests; previously in 1774, another poor harvest was collected. The price of grain soared and many peasants even believed prices were purposely held high for profits. Protests followed and the riots became known as the "Flour War" (Fraser 134). Throughout 1788 and 1789, the peasant was constantly worried about the price of bread and the short supply. In August 1788, half of the peasant's income was used on bread and a year later that amount had risen to eighty percent (Kreis The Moderate Stage). Bread and flour transporters were being attacked on their way to Paris, and peasants were becoming increasingly hostile and violent.

Smooth
integration of
facts!

The French government was not efficiently run and the peasants found much to be lacking in the leadership of their country. In August of 1774, there was "a deficit of 22 million livres [pound of silver] with a projected further 78 million to come" (Fraser 134). The country was deep into debt and bankrupt by 1789. The debts were not from recent times, but from nearly a hundred years before when France was in frequent war under the reign of King Louis XIV (Kreis The Origins). In France, a man could be thrown into prison without a fair trial at the order of the king, and there was no Parliament to hear complaints of the people or vote down bad government ideas (Cairns 28). However, the judges of France were usually "irremovable, unbribable, and just" (Durant 849). Before the year 1789, there were thirteen regions and each

only 100 judges

controlled by fifty to a hundred thirty men in the Parlement. These local judges, though, were hated by nearly everyone because they sometimes were responsible for fixing the price of bread, and they tried cases for theft, murder, sedition, and forgery. The king's assistants, or attendants, were hated even more because they enforced random taxes and arrested peasants without just cause (Kreis [✓]The Origins).

*Cereal
to present*

Land was always an important part of peasant life and there was never enough. The peasants needed land to farm and grow crops to eat and sell if they ever had a surplus. Peasants owned thirty to forty percent of the available land but mostly in small plots (Kreis The Origins). Even after being taxed because of the land they owned, peasants had to give their services to the landlords under the feudal system. They also had to pay the feudal lord after they sold land, even though the peasant had bought that land (Hallsall). Even peasants that were lucky enough to own their land did not have easy lives because of the "small size of their holdings." Less than forty percent of peasants that owned land actually owned the thirteen acres necessary to support a family (Durant 930). Historians estimate that during years of poor harvests, only ten percent of peasants lived above the subsistence level; the other ninety percent earned only enough to feed their families (Hunt). Owning land or renting land did not necessarily mean a family was wealthy, it only meant more taxes to the government or landlords.

Life in the city was no better than life as a farmer in the country. The close proximity of people led to dirty air and water, and people living in cities had shorter life spans (Hunt). The filthy and overcrowded slums led to desperate people who fell on crime to support themselves and possibly their families. Criminals that were caught faced harsh punishments including prison time, torture, hanging, or another type of death sentence. Prisons did not distinguish between hardened criminals, such as murderers, or petty criminals; they were all lumped together and left to die and rot (Cairns 25). Mentally ill people were locked up in institutions where the

Common belief was punishment and discipline would make them behave. Sometimes, the wealthy would even visit the institutions for entertainment, and to laugh at "the crazy antics of the patients" (Cairns 25). Guilds in the cities controlled the number of apprentices, journeymen, and stores set up by masters. In theory, becoming an apprentice and eventually a master could help move a peasant up the social ladder. However, masterships became hereditary and so few peasants were ever able to become apprentices and move themselves up in society through hard work (Hunt). Life in the countryside may have been difficult but at least the peasants did not have the crime or filth found daily in the cities.

In the cities and towns, peasants began working for wages and using the tools and materials of others. There are no exact records of the number of people working, but in Paris in 1789, an estimated 300,000 peasants worked for other people (Durant 933). They worked for long hours but received low wages, and workers were forbidden to organize themselves into groups. Between the years 1741 and 1789, "wages rose twenty-two per cent, prices sixty-five per cent" and working conditions became worse during the reign of Louis XVI (Durant 934). Although workers were forbidden to form unions, the peasants still went on multiple strikes saying prices were rising too quickly and wages were not rising quickly enough. All revolts were contained, and the leaders killed, so workers returned to their shops beaten (Durant 934). The strikes did not stop, and in 1786 peasants protested that even working eighteen hour days, they could not support their families. Peasants proclaimed that they were treated even "more inhumanly than domestic animals, for even these are given enough to keep them in health and vigor" (Durant 935). Between 1752 and 1789, fifteen similar riots and strikes occurred because of the unhappy peasants and their complaints of the horrid working conditions they faced.

The French peasants, from nearly the moment of their birth, faced a life of hard work. They had to endure famine, crippling taxes, and insufficient amounts of land. The cities were

safe places and in the countryside, the aristocrats owned most of the land. The peasants were
able to work hard to better themselves in the world; they just worked hard. Peasants believed
their king, if he knew the problems they faced, would listen to them and help out his less
fortunate subjects. When it became clear King Louis XVI would not help them, the peasants
revolted and rioted. With the French Revolution came hope of a better country with more rights
for the peasant people who made up the vast majority of French people.

do the paper cover this?

NC -/

Gualano

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