**NOBILITY OF BLOIS: SAMPLE ONE**

1. **Identify two examples of the notion of liberty expressed in this representation:**
2. *That no citizen should be exiled, arrested or held prisoner without a proper trial or court appearance.*
3. *Freedom of speech in the press.*
4. **Identify two examples of the notion of Equality expressed in this representation:**
5. *All men have the right to happiness.*
6. *Equal taxation for all citizens.*
7. **By quoting from the representation, and using your own knowledge, explain why the cahier de doleances came to be drafted.**

*By August 1788, the France faced bankruptcy due to its costly involvement in the American War of Independence (1775-83) and an ageing and archaic tax system. King Louis XVI and finance minister Calonne needed the Assembly of Notables (1787) to support loan applications and the Paris Parlements (1787-88) to support necessary tax reforms. Both noble bodies had defied the King’s requests to pass financial reform laws, respectively, on the grounds that such changes must be approved with the consent of all three estates. The only body that could approve such reforms was the Estates General, that last met in 1614. In the eyes of the Nobility of Blois, the health of the nation required an end to the tax “exemptions it (had) enjoyed.” Although suspicious of this ‘aristocratic revolution’ after the issue of voting by head or by order angered many, the Third Estate would be given a voice for the first time in 175 years. For liberal nobles such as the Nobility of Blois, “happiness ought not be confined to a small number of men.” On 8th of August 1788, King Louis XVI announced the meeting of the Estates General for May the following year. All three estates were given the opportunity to draft and submit their cahiers, or list of grievances by province. By January 1789, each estate began submitting their desires for change to the government.*

1. **Explain to what extent the representation presents a reliable view of the range of grievances in France of the ancien regime up to May 1789**.

*This document provides a reliable insight into the views of liberal Nobility. As anticipated by the actions of the Assembly of Notables (1787), many in the Nobility were willing to challenging the existing order and request not only a reduction of their privileges, but also the willingness to “*contribute to the public needs in proportion with other citizens”. The suppression of the corvee reflects a popular view of many estates to abolish the burden of this duty. The ‘Society of Thirty’ - a ‘conspiracy of well intentioned men’ also reflected these grievances, many of who were liberal nobles.

*However this representation is not reflective of all cahiers of the more conservative sections of the Second Estate elsewhere in France. While many expressed support for tax reform, there was significant resistance to the reduction of privileges, especially when considering the issue of voting at the Estates General, as many of the 1st and 2nd Estate were in favour of voting by order, rather than by head. In addition to this, the document does not reflect the more immediate needs of peasants who requested an abolition of segnuiral hunting rights and border taxation.*

*Marxist historians like Rude and Soboul were highly critical of 2nd Estate Cahiers and saw them as an extension to attempts “extend their own power in the noble revolts of 1787-8” and thus, would be quick to challenge the reliability of the Noblity of Blois. However, this source accurately reflects the revisionist view the ‘aristocrats were the first revolutionaries’. However a broad view of the cahiers reveals variations depending on the demand. As Markof states “On issues of taxation, seigneurial rights and payments to the Church, the peasants were consistently the most radical. The nobles the least.” Additionally, as Peter Jones states, the cahiers of the Third Estate are not necessarily reliable as they were sometimes “brow beaten” by the model created by the ‘Society of Thirty’.*

**NOBILITY OF BLOIS: SAMPLE TWO**

***“By quoting from the representation, and using your knowledge, explain why the Cahiers doleances came to be drafted in 1789”***

*In the years leading to the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789, the French economy faced a number of crises.  Firstly, Frances finances were in turmoil.  The American War of Independence (1778-83) cost the government over 1060 billion livre and in 1788 left them with a deficit of 126 million livres, causing Louis XVI to declare bankruptcy in Aug. 1788.  Secondly, the government finances, along with the bad harvests of 1788, put strain on the French people, especially the poorer members of the Third Estate.  With bread prices rising to 14-15 sous a loaf, equating to 80% of a peasants income.  Thirdly, with the government on the verge of bankruptcy, Calonne proposed a reform strategy that involved equal taxation for each Estate.  The Assembly of Notables of 1787 refused suggesting only the Estates-General could approve new taxes.  For liberal nobles such as the Nobility of Blois, “happiness ought not be confined to a small number of men.” Finally, when the Parlements of Paris were ‘exiled’ for refusing Briennes reforms in 1787, and Louis XVI’s lit de justice “it is legal because I will it” caused an aristocratic revolt and the Day of Tiles (7 June 1788).  The King had no choice but to declare the meeting of the Estates General for May 1789 requiring a list of cahiers to be drawn up by each estate. (225)*

***“Explain to what extent the representation presents a reliable view of the range of grievances in France of the ancien regime up to May 1789. Refer to other views in your response.”***

***“****The representation provides a reliable view of the grievances of the liberal nobility. While there were many liberal nobles, such as those in the Society of Thirty, desiring an end to “exclusive privilege”, from taxes and desiring equality for all citizens of France under the law, including personal liberties, there were many nobles that did not. These were the conservative nobles, who as McPhee points out sought a “wider political role for themselves”, while sharing power with elite members of the Third Estate. At the meeting of the Estates General, for example, when the nobility voted on the issue of voting by head or by order, they were claiming to be a separate estate. Both Rude and Soboul claim that while the aristocracy did revolt against the monarchy in 1787-1788 in the Assembly of Notables and Parlements, the clergy and nobility were making a “bid for an extension of power.” However, this initial push was then taken over by the rising bourgeoisie and common people. Simon Schama’s interpretations differ greatly stating the Assembly of Notables were the first revolutionaries and wanted to bring about “a more liberal political and economic regime.” Dylan Rees’ research also shows of “282 cahiers from the nobility, 90 reflected liberal ideas.” So while prominent nobles like Lafayette and Mirabeau were leaders of the revolution, the majority of nobles sought to defend their privileges. Furthermore, the Church, while divided on internal issues, sought to defend its monopoly on religion. Finally, the document does not reveal the peasants radical calls for an end to absolutism and seigneurialism, grievances Markoff points out the nobles rarely mentioned in their cahiers. (271)*

1. **Identify two different groups depicted in this representation:**
2. *Members of the First Estate (Clergy)*
3. *Members of the Third Estate (mostly bourgeoisie)*
4. **Identify two revolutionary ideas implied in this representation:**
5. *Representation in government of the Third Estate.*
6. *Defiance towards the monarchy and the separation of Estates.*
7. **By referring to the representation, and using your knowledge, explain the events that lead to the Tennis Court Oath on June 20, 1789.**

*From the time King Louis XVI announced the meeting of the Estates General for May 1789, he remained silent over the issue of voting by the three estates. Neither the First nor Second Estates supported voting by head as demanded by the Third Estate. From their arrival at the Hall of Mirrors on May 5 1789, the Third Estate were treated as second (or third) class citizens, unwelcome by the King’s court. However, the Third Estate refused to check the credentials of its’ members, creating a 3 week stalemate between themselves and the other two estates. During this time, the Third Estate deputies debated their place within the Estates General. Soon, leaders such as Bailly and Mirabeau began to emerge. For them, the Third Estate represented 96% of the people of France, and therefore were the true representatives of the people. During this time, the Third Estate decided to invite members of the First Estate to join them. In a narrow loss,133 to 114, the First Estate voted to remain separate from the Third Estate. The Second Estate also voted to remain separate. On the 13th and 14th of June 1789, a number of Clergyman decided to join the Third Estate. On 17th June 1789, the group of ‘commons’ announced themselves to be the National Assembly. As seen in the David’s representation, the First Estate were welcomed with open arms and to great applause. On June 20th, King Louis XVI denied the National Assembly its meeting place, instead announcing a royal séance outlawing the newly formed Assembly. That day, the National Assembly locked themselves on the famous Tennis Court in Versailles. All members bar one, took an oath to remain together until France had a constitution. This truly revolutionary moment is captured in the dramatic work of David’s “The Tennis Court Oath”.*

1. **Evaluate to what extent this representation is useful in explaining the role of the second and third estates in the French Revolution.**

*David’s “The Tennis Court Oath” is one of the most revealing, and therefore, useful explanations of the role of the second and third estate in the revolution. Here we can see the union made by the clergy and bourgeoisie to give France a constitution. In their absence, it is unclear during the Tennis Court Oath why the Second Estate still chose to separate themselves from the other two estates. As seen during the meeting of the Assembly of Notables and Parlements of Paris, historians remain divided over the nobilities true desire for power. We know they resented King Louis XIV and XV’s attempts to restrict their say in government. Marxist historians like Rude and Soboul believe the nobles main purpose was to “defend their own privileges.” Whereas revisionist historians like Simon Schama acknowledge the liberal cahiers of the Second Estate that called for an end to unequal taxation of each estate. Leaders such as Lafayette would come to join the cause of the revolution and Third Estate. On June 27th 1789, the nobility, including the King’s cousin Duc D’Orleans, and the Marquis de Lafayette, joined the rebels in the National Assembly. This was a truly revolutionary act. David’s Tennis Court Oath shows us at once, the division and unity that would define the relationship between the Second and Third estates during the revolution. While the revolution started as an ‘aristocratic revolution’ in the Assembly of Notables and Parlements of Paris, it soon became a ‘bourgeoisie revolution’, during the Tennis Court Oath.*