

CAHIER

Third Estate of Carcassonne

1789

The third estate of the electoral district of Carcassonne, desiring to give to a beloved monarch, and one so worthy of our affection, the most unmistakable proof of its love and respect, of its gratitude and fidelity, desiring to co-operate with the whole nation in repairing the successive misfortunes which have overwhelmed it, and with the hope of reviving once more its ancient glory, declares that the happiness of the nation must, in their opinion, depend upon that of its king, upon the stability of the monarchy, and upon the preservation of the orders which compose it and of the fundamental laws which govern it:

Considering, too, that a holy respect for religion, morality, civil liberty, and the rights of property, a speedy return to true principles, a careful discrimination and due measure in the matter of the taxes, a strict proportionality in their assessment, a persistent economy in government expenditures, and indispensable reforms in all branches of the administration, are the best and perhaps the only means of perpetuating the existence of the monarchy:

The third estate of the electoral district of Carcassonne very humbly petitions His Majesty to take into consideration these several matters, weigh them in his wisdom, and permit his people to enjoy, as soon as may be, fresh proofs of that benevolence which he has never ceased to exhibit toward them and which is dictated by his affection for them.

In view of the obligation imposed by His Majesty's command that the third estate of this district should confide to his paternal ear the causes of the ills which afflict them and the means by which they may be remedied or moderated, they believe that they are fulfilling the duties of faithful subjects and zealous citizens in submitting to the consideration of the nation, and to the sentiments of justice and affection which his Majesty entertains for his subjects, the following:

1. Public worship should be confined to the Roman Catholic apostolic religion, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship; its extension should be promoted and the most efficient measures taken to re-establish the discipline of the Church and increase its prestige.
2. Nevertheless the civil rights of those of the king's subjects who are not Catholics should be confirmed, and they should be admitted to positions and offices in the public administration, without however extending this privilege—which reason and humanity alike demand for them—to judicial or police functions or to those of public instruction.
3. The nation should consider some means of abolishing the annates and all other dues paid to the Holy See, to the prejudice and against the protests of the whole French people....
7. The rights which have just been restored to the nation should be consecrated as fundamental principles of the monarchy, and their perpetual and unalterable enjoyment should be assured by a solemn law, which should so define the rights both of the monarch and of the people that their violation shall hereafter be impossible.
8. Among these rights the following should be especially noted: the nation should hereafter be subject only to such laws and taxes as it shall itself freely ratify.
9. The meetings of the Estates General of the kingdom should be fixed for definite periods, and the subsidies judged necessary for the support of the State and the public service should be voted for no longer a period than to the close of the year in which the next meeting of the Estates General is to occur.

10. In order to assure to the third estate the influence to which it is entitled in view of the number of its members, the amount of its contributions to the public treasury, and the manifold interests which it has to defend or promote in the national assemblies, its votes in the assembly should be taken and counted by head.
11. No order, corporation, or individual citizen may lay claim to any pecuniary exemptions.... All taxes should be assessed on the same system throughout the nation.
12. The due exacted from commoners holding fiefs should be abolished, and also the general or particular regulations which exclude members of the third estate from certain positions, offices, and ranks which have hitherto been bestowed on nobles either for life or hereditarily. A law should be passed declaring members of the third estate qualified to fill all such offices for which they are judged to be personally fitted.
13. Since individual liberty is intimately associated with national liberty, his Majesty is hereby petitioned not to permit that it be hereafter interfered with by arbitrary orders for imprisonment. . . .
14. Freedom should be granted also to the press, which should however be subjected, by means of strict regulations, to the principles of religion, morality, and public decency....
60. The third estate of the district of Carcassonne places its trust, for the rest, in the zeal, patriotism, honor, and probity of its deputies in the National Assembly in all matters which may accord with the beneficent views of his Majesty, the welfare of the kingdom, the union of the three estates, and the public peace.

James Harvey Robinson and Charles A. Beard, *Readings in Modern European History* (New York, 1908), I:248–251.