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Paris (the city)

904 words

The first thing that pops on people's mind when talking about Paris is probably the city of fashion where many famous branded goods are produced, as well as the city where many world famous artists lived in and numerous great pieces of art and historical sites located, including the Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci. Undoubtedly, Paris lives up to its reputation as one of the most mesmerizing cities in the world. It is a destination for millions of tourists each year and ranked number one for the most visited city in the world.¹ The significance of this vivid city is often placed in just art and culture but little do people know that it is also important politically as it served as a place for the French Revolution to take place which brought about remarkable transformations to France itself as well as other countries around the world.

The French Revolution was a radical liberal movement against the conservative French monarchy from 1789 to 1799. There are various causes which contributed to the onset of the French Revolution. Before the French Revolution took place, French women enjoyed no economics or civil rights. The French peasants were denied basic human rights. In addition, the bourgeoisie or the middle class had to suffer unequal treatment as they were heavily taxed while the nobles and churches paid only tiny amount. Certainly,

¹ "Paris." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 22 Jan 2012.
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris>>

there was an inequality between different classes in the French society. Also, due to the rigid rule of the absolute monarchy, the French people were discontent with the fact that their hard earned money was used in financing war rather than for the social development of their country. These had led to resentment towards the monarchist regime as it was clearly unjust to the French people. Moreover, the inefficiency of the state in managing cost of wars had even worsened the situation which also deterred the growth of the economy. Another cause is concerned with religion as the nobles and leaders used Christianity as a means to gain power and take control over people.² Eventually, these causes led to dissatisfaction among the people who desperately needed changes. Therefore, the French Revolution set off when a mob raged the Bastille prison in Paris and forced the guards to hand over the weapons and bullets that were stored there to them. The guards refused and the mob then captured the prison, thus proving that power resided with the people.³ The days of the ancient regime were over.

Although the French revolution seemed to be a failure due to the guillotine and death of thousands, it indeed had far-reaching results. The political and administrative system of France has been completely altered. The strict and rigid rule of the absolute monarchy and the feudal obligations were replaced by democratic republic which entails elected institutions and the principle of equality before law. Such consequence allows the French people to

² "Causes of the French Revolution." *Country Facts*. 1 Feb 2012.
<<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/france/causes-of-the-french-revolution/1004>>

³ "Storming of the Bastille." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 28 Jan 2012.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storming_of_the_Bastille>

have the rights to vote and more freedom of expression.⁴ Many positive instances such as the abolishment of the tax system, which gave the common people both financial and social support, as well as an opportunity to participate actively in the economic decisions of their country.

Not only did the French Revolution impact France, it also affected its neighbouring countries as well as other parts of the world. Another consequence in which the French Revolution had brought about is associated with cultural aspect. The French Revolutionary government implemented the use of the metric system which influenced and spread to other countries around the world.⁵ Currently, only three countries in the world include the United State of America, Myanmar and Liberia do not use the metric system.⁶ A more noteworthy outcome of the French Revolution was the spread of French culture by Napoleon through the Great French War. This can be seen primarily in fashion and customs. The Great French War allowed the French fashion to expand rapidly throughout Europe. French fashion has affected the runway even in a contemporary sense to a large extent. The world of modern fashion is predominantly occupied by French, mostly Parisian clothiers including Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Dior and Hermes.⁷

⁴ "French Revolution." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 28 Jan 2012.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_revolution>

⁵ Michael Padbury. "Effects of the French Revolution." *Helium where knowledge rules*. 3 Feb 2012. <<http://www.helium.com/items/192963-effects-of-the-french-revolution>>

⁶ "Metric system." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 3 Feb 2012.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metric_system>

⁷ "French fashion in Paris." *Paris Digest*. 4 Feb 2012.
<<http://www.parisdigest.com/menus/fashion.htm>>

Without Paris, there is no doubt that the French Revolution and its consequences did not occur. Paris acted as a place for the French Revolution to take place which ultimately developed into a major transformation within France. Such transformation had changed people's life in France drastically. In addition to the local influence of the French Revolution, it also has a considerable impact internationally from that period of time until today. Paris would not have achieved its renowned reputation as one of the world's best cities⁸ filled with extraordinary places to visit and art works to appreciate if the French Revolution did not allow independence in France. For that reason, the French Revolution in Paris is considered to be the most important contribution to mankind.

⁸ "City Mayors: Best cities in the world." *City Mayors*. 8 Feb 2012.
<http://www.citymayors.com/features/quality_survey.html>