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| Enlightenment philosophes influenced the French Revolution to a great extent by challenging the idea of a “God-given right” to nobility. In document one, Marie Antoinette writes a letter to her mother a year before her Coronation as Queen. She marvels at how enthusiastic the peasantry is to her arrival in a time when Peasants are taught that nobility have earned their position and are given the right to their power by God. However, enlightenment ideals begin to make the peasantry question this philosophy, eventually leading to multiple uprisings and the French Revolution. This same argument is furthered by document 2, a political cartoon detailing how the clergy and nobility were able to control the peasantry in the three Estates that decided taxing. The document illustrates the peasantry class reaching for a gun in revolt, once again proving my argument that enlightenment ideals made the peasantry question whether it was fair to continue to let nobility, less than 5% of the population, control the peasantry. These overbearing taxes decided in the three Estates made it so that taxes were raised for peasants to the point that one loaf of bread could cost a whole month's salary. The political cartoon draws parallels to the tennis court oath, in which the third estate of the peasantry finally started to question the ideals that let the nobles hold their power. The tennis court both was highly influenced by the ideals of Montesquieu, and his theory of the separation of powers. In addition, John Locke's tabula Rosa taught that everyone was born as a blank slate, so why should nobility have more right to power, wealth, and luxury compared to the peasantry? In addition, in document 5, Arthur young also marvels at the large gap between nobility and peasantry in France. This is the gap that will eventually push The French peasantry to put into effect enlightenment ideas and revolt, once again proving the argument that enlightenment ideas affected The French Revolution to a great extent. |