



From Deficit to Deluge: The Origins of the French Revolution

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From Deficit to Deluge takes stock of shifts in scholarly investigation of the origins of French Revolution. During the last decade, scholars have moved beyond "revisionist" historians of the 1970s, who highlighted the monarchy's degeneration into despotism, to explore related conflicts in the realms of finance, social relations, religion, diplomacy, the Enlightenment, and colonial policy. In this book, seven established authorities explore some of these critical intersections, and together they make clear the role that unresolved tensions in these realms played in the essentially political narrative told by post-Marxian revisionist historiography.

While each chapter of From Deficit to Deluge focuses upon one site of contention—fiscal, social, religious, diplomatic, ideological, and colonial—they all help to explain how long-standing structural problems of the Old Regime caused a fairly "normal" fiscal crisis to metastasize into a revolution. As the editors show in their introduction and conclusion, the growing democratization of politics sparked by the monarchy's clumsy efforts to solve the fiscal crisis put these wide-ranging problems at the epicenter of political debate, thereby sapping the foundations of royal authority and the social hierarchy.



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