**WHAT IS THE THIRD ESTATE**

**Abbe Emmanuel**-**Joseph Sieyes**

As an ambitious clergyman from Chartres, Abbe Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyes was a member of the First Estate. Yet Sieyes was elected deputy to the Estates General for the Third Estate on the basis of his attacks on aristocratic privilege. He participated in the writing and editing of the great documents of the early revolution: the Oath of the Tennis Court and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. The pamphlet for which he is immortalized in revolutionary lore was his daring "What Is the Third Estate?" Written in January 1789, it boldly confronted the bankruptcy of the system of privilege of the Old Regime and threw down the gauntlet to those who ruled France. In this document the revolution found its rallying point.

**1st. What is the third estate? Everything.**

**2nd. What has it been heretofore in the political order? Nothing.**

**3rd. What does it demand? To become something therein....**