**San-Culottes**

****

Urban workers and peasants, whose name: literally, “without culottes,” the knee breeches that the privileged wore, signified their wish to distinguish themselves from the high classes. The mob mentality of the sans-culottes constituted the most radical element of the Revolution.

The appellation *sans-culottes* refers to their lower class status; [*culottes*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culottes) were the fashionable silk [knee-breeches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breeches) of the [nobility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_nobility) and [bourgeoisie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourgeoisie#In_France_and_French-speaking_countries), as distinguished from the [working class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_class) *sans-culottes*, who traditionally wore [*pantalons*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trousers#Modern_Europe), or trousers, instead. The *sans-culottes*, most of them peasants and urban labourers, served as the driving popular force behind the revolution. Though ill equipped, they also made up the bulk of the [Revolutionary army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolutionary_Army) during the early years of the [French Revolutionary Wars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolutionary_Wars).