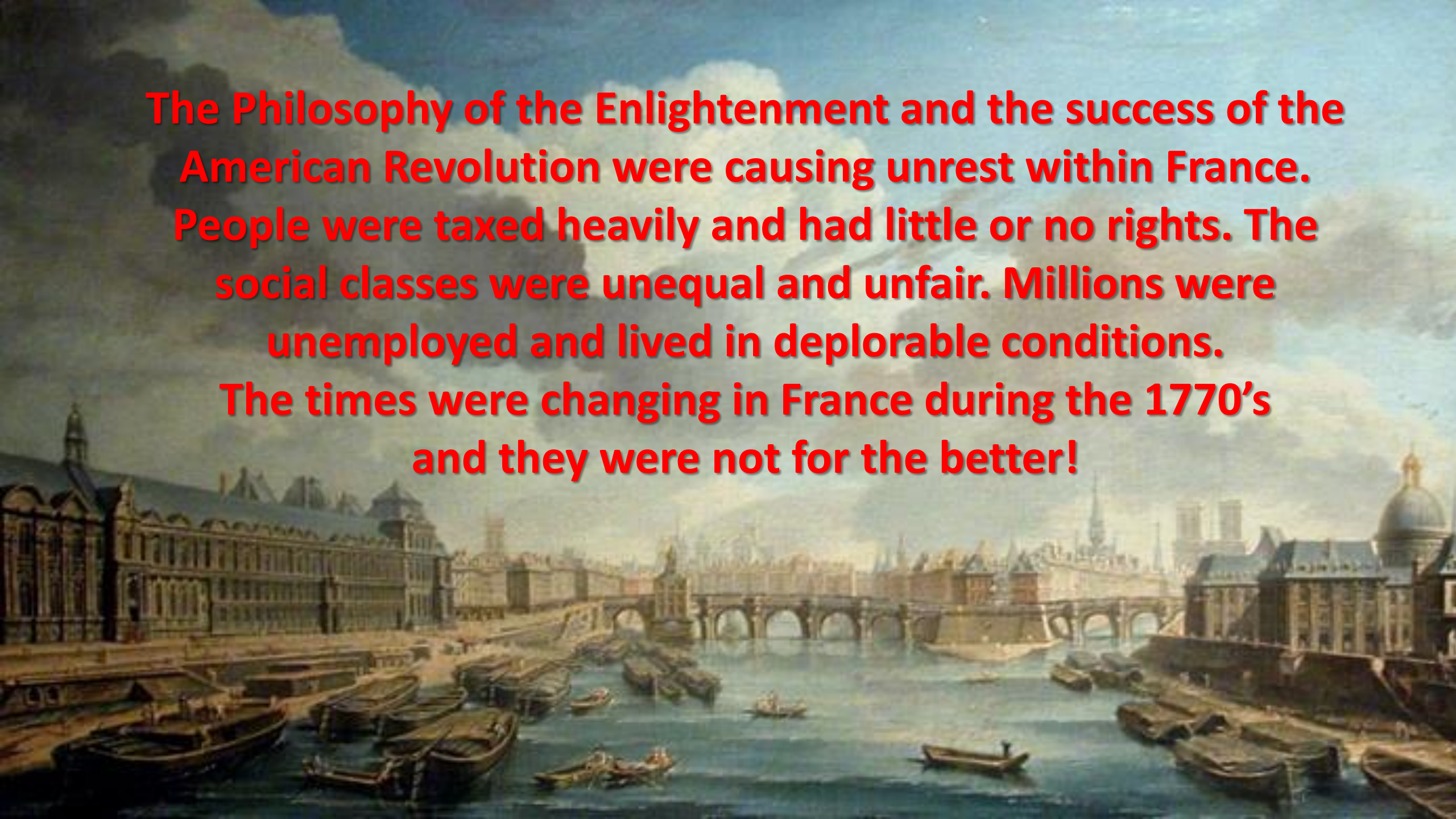


The French Revolution

A Concise Overview



The Philosophy of the Enlightenment and the success of the American Revolution were causing unrest within France. People were taxed heavily and had little or no rights. The social classes were unequal and unfair. Millions were unemployed and lived in deplorable conditions. The times were changing in France during the 1770's and they were not for the better!



A New King and Queen in 1774



Louis XVI was only 19 and his bride, Marie Antoinette was only 15 at the time when he became king. The arranged marriage to the Austrian royalty was unpopular with the French people. They ignored the French people, led a lavish life and spent the nation's taxes. She became known as "Madame Deficit."

The Divided Social Structures of France



There were three separate classes that were known as the Three Estates

First Estate – the Church
Second Estate – the Nobles
Third Estate – Everyone Else

The First Estate

The Roman Catholic Church



They paid little or no taxes, only 2% of their total income!

They owned 10% of the land in France and provided education and welfare relief to the poor. The clergy were both rich and poor.

139 Bishops, 25,000 monks, 40,000 nuns, 50,000 lower clergy

There were wealthy abbots and members of the aristocracy who lived off wealthy church lands

There were poor parish priests who lived like peasants

The Second Estate

The Nobles

They inherited their titles and their wealth came from land ownership

Approximately 35,000 people

Only 2% of the population but owned 20% of the land

They paid little or no taxes

Some members of the nobility were poor but did have the privileges

Most were wealthy and enjoyed their privileges



The Third Estate

The Common People



Anyone who was not a member of the First or Second Estate was a member of this class.

There were 24,500,000 (98% of the total population) and were divided into three groups:

Bourgeoisie – Professional people, merchants and artisans

Workers – cooks, servants and those who earned low wages and had high unemployment

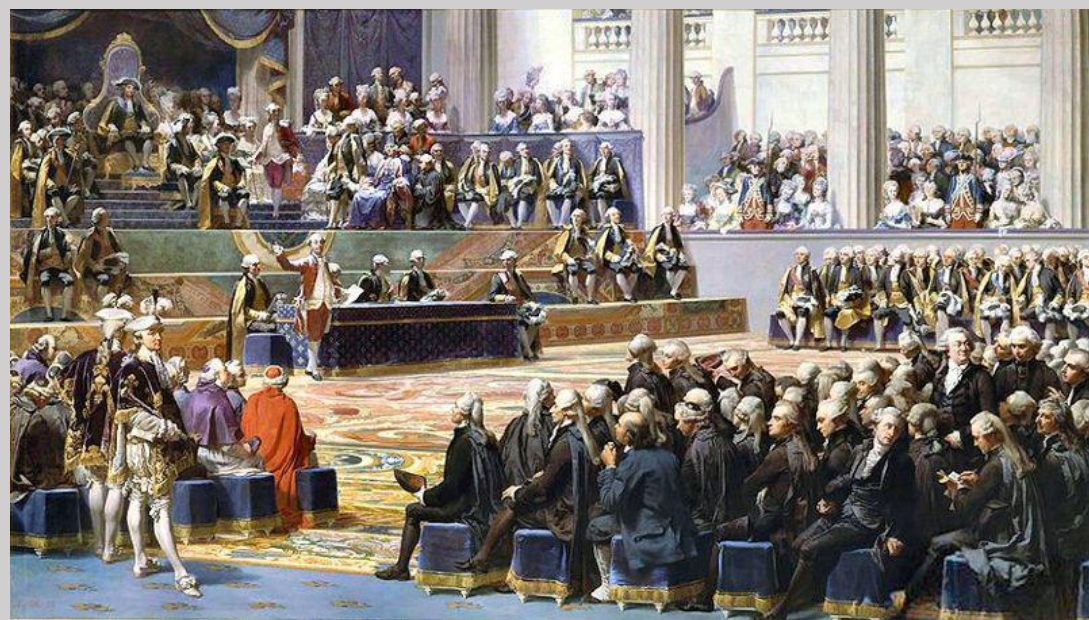
Peasants – 80% of the Third Estate and mostly poor farm workers (serfs).

They paid most of the taxes but lacked basic privileges and had little or no social status. Half of their income went to the nobles, 10% to the Church and additional taxes to the king.

Tax The Second Estate!

Louis XVI tried to raise taxes on the nobles. They resisted and called for a meeting of the **Estates-General**, an assembly of representatives from all three estates within France.

The Estates-General had not met for 175 years. On May 5, 1789 they met in Paris with the king presiding over the meeting.



The Meeting Ended in Turmoil!



Each estate had one vote. The king sided with the First and Second Estates. The Third Estate, mostly those from the bourgeoisie class rebelled. They took over and called themselves the **National Assembly** and vowed to form a new representative government in the name of the French people.

The Revolution had begun!

The Tennis Court Oath

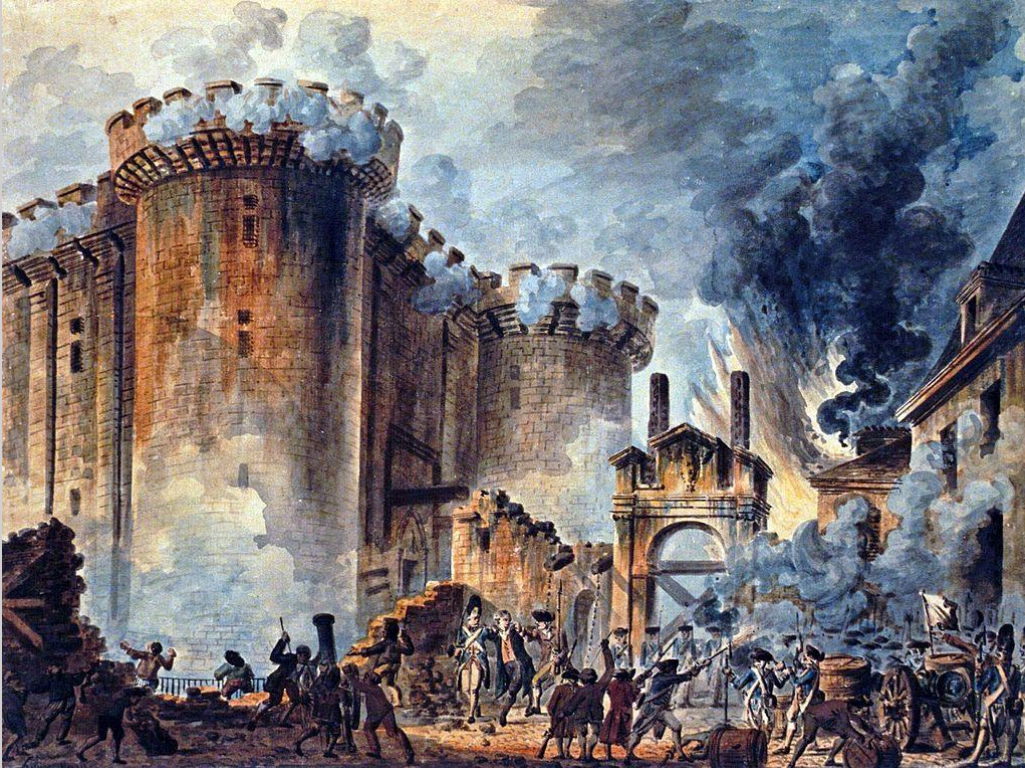
Three days later, Louis XVI locked out the National Assembly from their meeting room. The nearest meeting place was a **tennis court**.

They all took an oath to stay until a new constitution was written.

The king ordered his army of Swiss guards to occupy the streets of Paris because he could no longer trust the loyalty of his own soldiers.



The Storming of the Bastille



With the rumor of the foreign army, people in Paris began defending themselves.

On **July 14, 1789**, they attacked a prison and arsenal. The mob broke down the doors, freed the prisoners and stole the weapons.

This day is known as **Bastille Day** or French Independence Day

The Great Fear

Before long the rumors spread to the countryside. The Peasants attacked their nobles and burned their houses and fields.

The **Great Fear** was a time of social unrest when the French people feared the king's armies were going to kill them for starting a revolution. The panic also swept through the city slums and people barricaded themselves in their communities.



The Women's' Bread March



In October 1789, approximately 6,000 Parisian women marched 12 miles to the palace of Versailles in protest about the rising price of bread. They stormed the building and captured Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. It was the last time the king and queen would see their palace.

It was this event that the phrase **“let them eat cake”** was used by Marie Antoinette

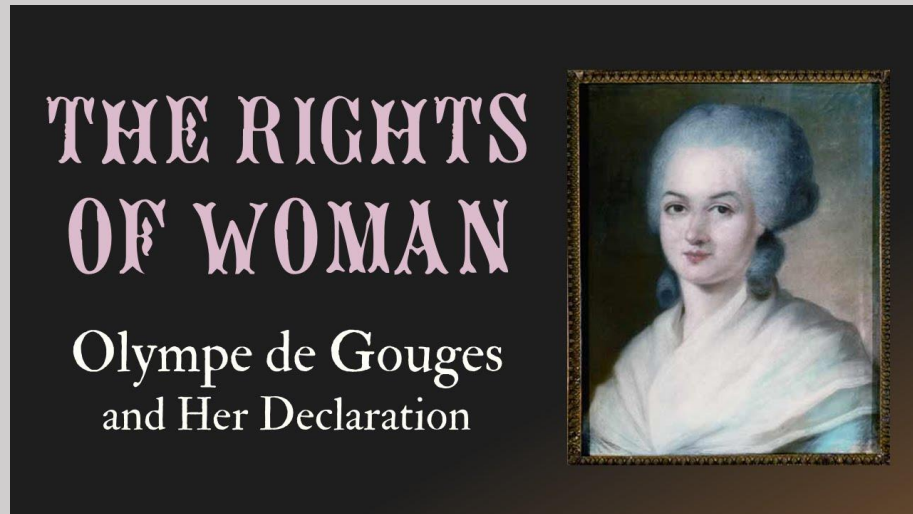
The Declaration of the Rights of Man

In fear for their lives, many nobles and clergy joined the National Assembly. With equal voting rights they then wrote **The Declaration of the Right of Man and of the Citizen**, for equal justice, freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

A slogan was created:
“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”



It did not apply to Women!



When Olympe de Gouges wrote **A Declaration of the Rights of Women**, she challenged the male authority. She was imprisoned and was eventually executed as an enemy of the French Revolution.

Church lands were Confiscated

The National Assembly took over the church lands and sold them to pay off the national debt. The Church no longer had its independence. The church and state were separated. The peasants did not approve of this rule. The king, queen and other noble tried to escape France but were captured and returned to Paris and held hostage.



The Legislative Assembly forms



After two years of debate, The National Assembly now called themselves the **Legislative Assembly**. In September 1791 they had a new constitution and a Limited Monarchy, reluctantly signed by Louis XVI. However, there was still a huge national debt and major food shortages. The people still wanted more!

Format of the Legislative Assembly

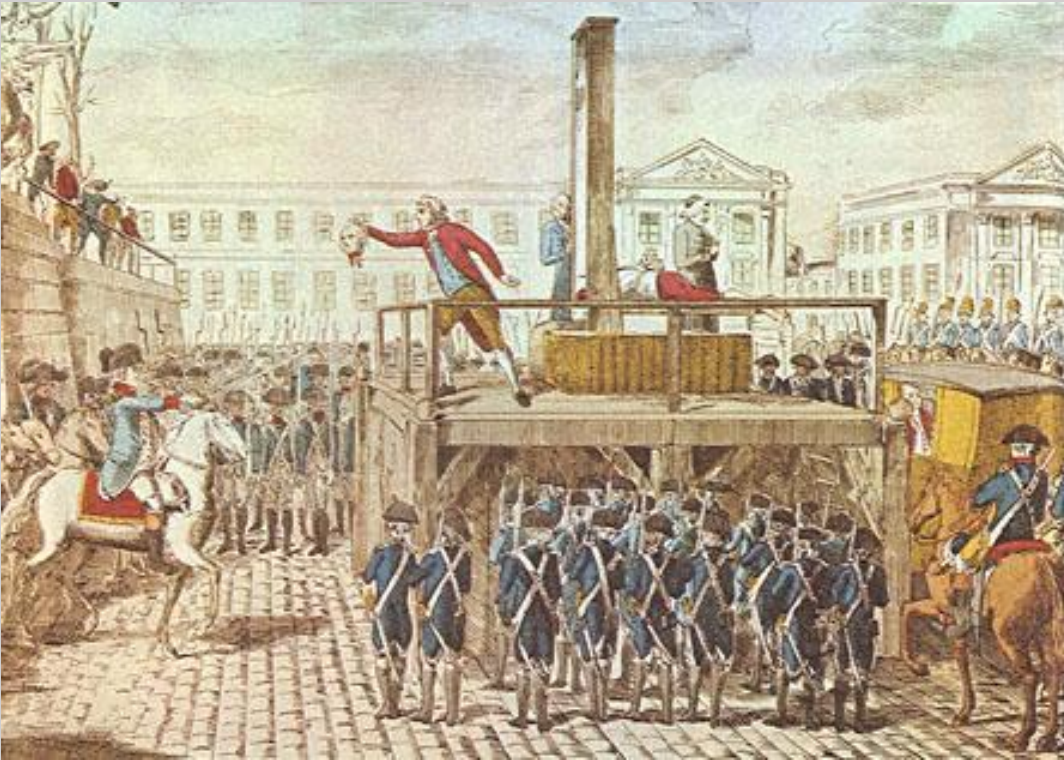
RADICALS	MODERATES	CONSERVATIVES
<p>The “Sans-Culottes” Those without knee breeches, they wore trousers. They sat on the left of the assembly. The LEFT WING [On The Left]. Most were Parisian wage earners. <u>Wanted:-</u> Greater voice Opposed Monarchy Sweeping Changes Lower taxes and food prices</p>	<p>The “Centrists” They sat in the center section of the hall <u>Wanted: -</u> Some changes in government but not as many as the radicals</p>	<p>The “Émigrés” The nobles and clergy and others who tried to flee France but returned. They sat on the right of the assembly. The RIGHT WING [On the Right]. They hoped to undo the revolution <u>Wanted:-</u> To keep the monarchy Only a few changes in the new government</p>

Chaos Reigns

In 1792, Austria and Prussia demanded Louis XVI be put back on the throne. The Legislative Assembly declared war on them! On August 10, 20,000 men and women invaded the Tuileries (the second royal palace), massacred the Swiss guard and put the king and queen in prison. For the next few days, mobs raided the prisons and killed any loyalists. The limited monarchy was over and a new government was to be elected.



The National Convention



This was the new government but they were controlled by radicals, both from the bourgeoisie and poor classes. One group, the **Jacobins**, led by **Jean Paul Marat**, brought Louis XVI to trial and found him guilty of treason. He was sentenced to death at the guillotine on January 21, 1793.

[Marat was later beheaded, also as a traitor]

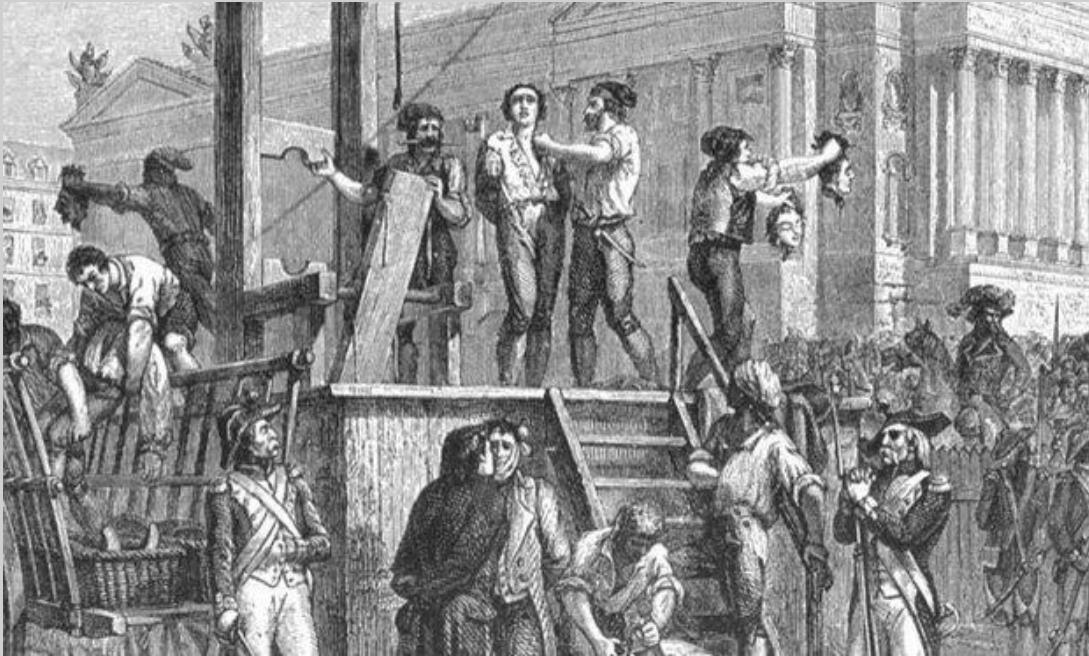
The War Continues

In early 1793, Britain, Holland and Spain joined Austria and Prussia in the war against France:
The First Coalition.

The Jacobins drafted over 300,000 French citizens (both men and women) between 18 and 40 to fight. The French army was over 800,000 but lost many battles.



The Reign of Terror



The Jacobins also had problems with peasants who protested against the execution of the king and priests. A new Jacobin leader, **Maximilien Robespierre**, led a “**Reign of Terror**” executing thousands publically and creating his “**republic of virtue**”: erasing any monarchy and nobility. He led the Committee of Public Safety, deciding who was an ally or who was the enemy?

The toll of the Reign of Terror

3,000 were executed in Paris, 40,000 more across France, most were peasants. His most famous victim was Marie Antoinette. In July 1794, the National Convention turned against Robespierre and ordered his execution. The people now chose only a few political changes and the reinstatement of a limited monarchy. Little had changed!



MARIE ANTOINETTE LED TO EXECUTION.

The Directory forms



In 1795, the moderate leaders of the National Convention wrote a new constitution. The powers were given to the upper middle class. An executive body of five men led France, **[The Directory]**. All were moderates, not revolutionaries.

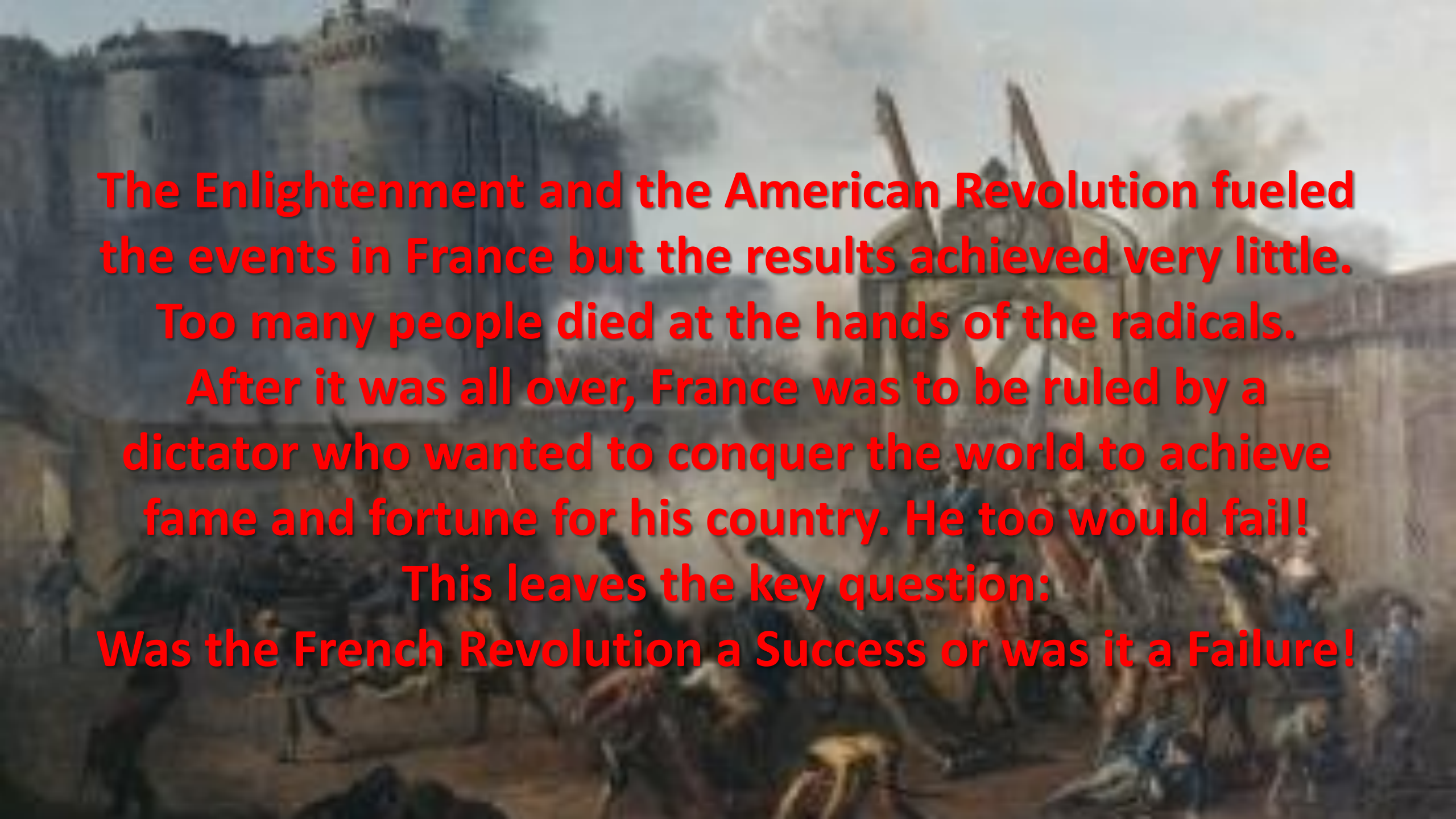
Despite being corrupt, France was at peace and there was law and order once again.

A hero emerges!

A young French General won a major battle against Austria. Peace treaties were signed with the other coalition nations and the war and revolution were over.

Little did the people know that this general, **Napoleon Bonaparte**, was to return to Paris, overthrow the Directory and establish his own dictatorship.





The Enlightenment and the American Revolution fueled the events in France but the results achieved very little.

Too many people died at the hands of the radicals.

After it was all over, France was to be ruled by a dictator who wanted to conquer the world to achieve fame and fortune for his country. He too would fail!

This leaves the key question:

Was the French Revolution a Success or was it a Failure!