

# Aim #6: Why did the French Revolution turn radical?



[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain

# Political Spectrum

(French Revolution)

Jacobins

The Plain

Girondists

Royalists



Radicals  
(Today)

Liberal

Moderate

Conservative

Reactionary

● Favours  
extreme  
change

Favours  
some  
change

Favours  
minor  
change

Keep as is

Return to  
past  
traditions

# Radical Stage (1792-94)

## PROCLAMATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

22 September

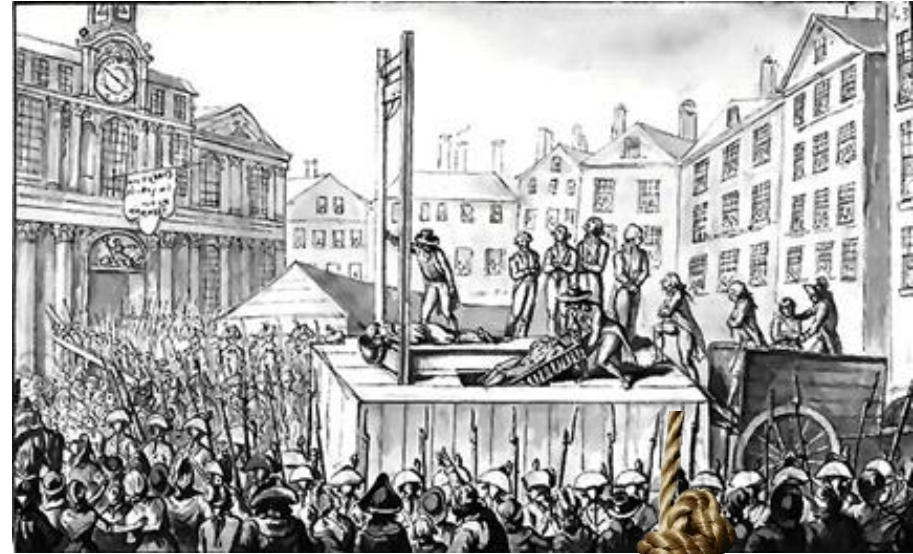
1792



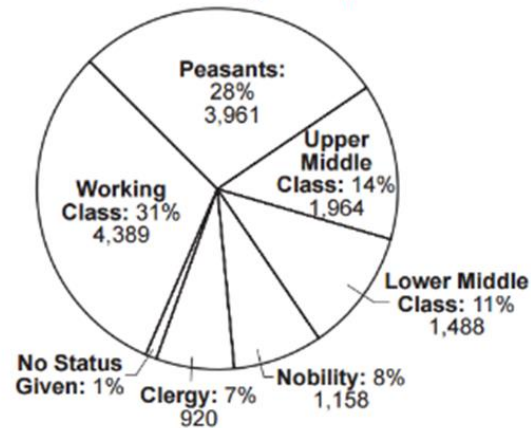
Assignat from the 1792 issue: 400 livres



# Radical Stage



Executions During the Reign of Terror



“...government in revolution are at once *virtue and terror*: virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible”

**SQ 9:** What occurred during the Radical Revolution Stage of the French Revolution? To what extent did this stage of the revolution help the French people meet their revolutionary goals?

Based on what you have learned, complete the task below.

**Task 1**

Event	How did this event help the French people meet their revolutionary goals?
1. April 1792: France declares war on Austria, Prussia, Britain, Holland, and Spain	
2. January 1793: Louis XVI is executed	
3. March 1793: Robespierre leads Committee of Public Safety and the Reign of Terror begins	
4. July 1794: Robespierre is executed and the Reign of Terror ends	

**Task 2**

1. Based on what you've learned so far, was the French Revolution successful? (Circle One)

YES	SOMEWHAT	NO
-----	----------	----

2. Explain using evidence.

3. How has your evaluation of the French Revolution's success changed since the last stage you studied? Why?

# Radical Revolution Stage: 1792-1794

→ Directions: Using the image and text below, respond to the questions.

**April 1792:** France **declares war** on Austria, Prussia, Britain, Holland, and Spain



[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain.

The **Constitution of 1791** established a new government that set up a limited monarchy instead of an absolute monarchy. In June 1791, King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette along with their children attempted to escape Paris in disguises, however, they were caught and brought back to France. By 1792, European monarchs were concerned that the revolution could spread to their countries. When the **émigrés**, former members of the nobility and **anti-revolutionaries**, arrived in the neighboring countries, they told stories about the chaos of the revolution. The king of Prussia warned the revolutionary French government that if the revolution spread to their country then they would declare war. Other European monarchs made similar threats. France did not want to wait to be attacked so the revolutionary government declared war on Austria in April 1792. They then went on to declare war on Prussia, Britain and other European monarchs.

Adapted from [Source](#), [Source](#), and [Source](#)

1. What did the Constitution of 1791 accomplish for the French revolutionaries?

2. How did King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette respond to these changes? Why

3. Why were European monarchs concerned in 1792?

4. Why did the revolutionary French government declare war on European monarchs?

# January 1793: Louis XVI is executed

Watch the [French Revolution - The execution of Louis XVI \(49:20- 1:00:00\)](#) documentary and respond to the questions below.

1. What problems did the National Convention face? How did this problem impact how revolutionary leaders began to treat suspected traitors within France?

2. What happened to over 1,000 people suspected of being traitors?

3. What did Robespierre want to focus on? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What did Danton want to focus on? \_\_\_\_\_

5. "With so many able-bodied men leaving for the frontlines, Paris is left defenseless, its jails bursting with political prisoners. An unsettling fear floods the city. The growing mass of prisoners may be impossible to contain. Marat puts out a bloodthirsty call for revolutionary citizens to descend upon the prisons and slaughter all inside." Why do you think Marat made this suggestion?

6. How did Marat spread his ideas? What Renaissance technology allowed him to spread his ideas?

7. What event encouraged revolutionaries to follow through with Marat's plan?

8. Describe what the revolutionaries did to the prisoners.

9. How many people were killed during the September massacre?

10. Which nation was critical of the September massacre?

11. Robespierre realized that the massacre went too far and that the revolutionaries need a leader. He comes forward. What is the first decision he made as the new leader of the revolutionaries?

12. According to the historian, Robespierre said, "You have to kill the king so the revolution can live." What does this sentence mean? What does this reveal about the extent French revolutionaries were willing to go to achieve their goals?

13. On January 28, 1793, what is decided about King Louis XVI?

14. How do revolutionaries respond to the execution of King Louis XVI?

1. List the objects, people or places you see in the image.
2. Describe the action in the image.
3. In the title, who are the “Crowned Jugglers” and why are they referred to in that way?
4. Why is Louis XVI’s blood referred to as “impure”?
5. What message does this image send to counterrevolutionaries within France?
6. What message does this image send to revolutionary sympathizers within France?
7. What message does this image send to other European monarchs?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR THE CROWNED JUGGLERS

MATIERE A REFLECTION POUR LES JONGLEURS COURONNES.



Let impure blood water our furrows.

qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons.

Quand le tyran est tombé sous le glaive des Loix, ce grand acte de justice a consacré l'Assemblée nationale la représentation Royale, et orné la République. Il imprime son grand caractère à la convention, scellée de la main divine de la constitution Française. Ce fait est un titre qui sera factice, éphémère et illusoire, si elle n'est la conséquence et le résultat de la convention demeurée invariable dans ses principes de la Liberté et de l'Égalité de la volonté. Repris de la Plume de Maximilien Robespierre.

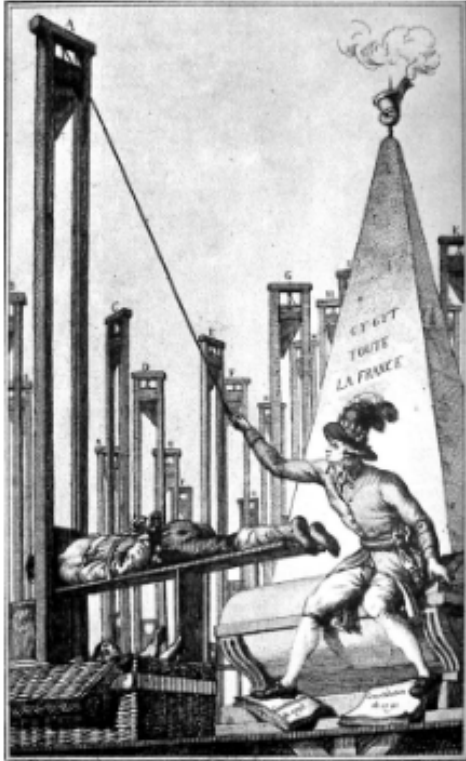
Monday 21 January 1793 at quarter past ten in the morning.

The tyrant fell under the two-edged sword of the Laws. This great act of justice dismayed the aristocracy, vanquished royal superstition and it creates the Republic. It confers a great character on the national convention and makes it worthy of Frenchmen's trust... It was in vain that an audacious faction and insidious orators used all the resources of calumny, charlatanism, and chicanery; the courage of Republicans triumphed: the majority of the convention remained unshakable in its beliefs, and the genius of intrigue bowed to the genius of Liberty and the ascendancy of Virtue.

Extract from the third letter of Maximilien Robespierre to his constituents.

In Paris at Villeneuve, engraver rue Zacharie Saint-Severin, Maison du Passage, N°72.





The text at the bottom of the engraving reads (translated): "Robespierre, after having all the French guillotined, beheads the executioner with his own hand."

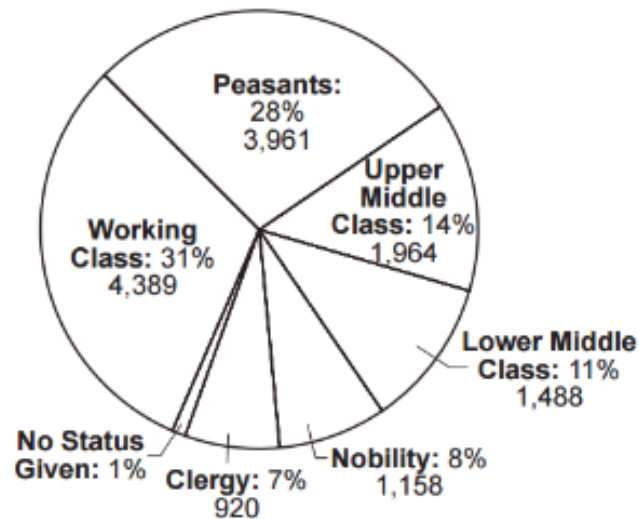
[Image](#) is courtesy of wikimedia commons and is public domain

## March 1793: Robespierre leads Committee of Public Safety and the *Reign of Terror begins*

The Committee of Public Safety was set up in 1793 to defend France against **internal** and **external** enemies. The original leaders of the Committee of Public Safety were replaced with more radical revolutionaries who were willing to defend the revolution at any cost. One of the most well-known new leaders was **Maximilien Robespierre** who led the **Reign of Terror**.

The **Reign of Terror** was a period from 1793 until 1794 when the Committee of Public Safety **suspended** rights leading to wide-scale **repression**. During this time, those suspected of being an enemy were executed by **guillotine**.

Executions During the Reign of Terror



Source: Dennis Sherman et al., eds., *World Civilizations: Sources, Images, and Interpretations*, McGraw-Hill (adapted) from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, August 2006.

1. Why did the Committee of Public Safety form?

2. Who was Maximilien Robespierre?

3. What was the purpose of the Reign of Terror?

4. According to the pie chart, which groups suffered the most during the Reign of Terror? Based on what you've learned about the goals of the French Revolution, why is this impact unexpected or surprising?

## Robespierre's Changes to the Government

... When he entered the Committee [of Public Safety], Maximilien [Robespierre] **persuaded** the other members to accept new procedures, to reorganize the clerical staff and to hold weekly meetings with the other Committee [of General Security]. The press, which, from intimate knowledge, the leader regarded as dangerous, was to be temporarily **deprived** of its freedom. Only when true **democracy** had been established would it be possible to allow journalists to have their say again! In all such decisions, the will and interests of the majority of citizens of France were both the pretext [alleged reason] and the inspiration. In other words: the government was to remain revolutionary until peace had been restored and all enemies put to flight...

Source: John Laurence Carr, Robespierre: The Force of Circumstance, St. Martin's Press from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, January 2015

5. According to the excerpt above, what changes did Robespierre make during the Reign of Terror?

6. Did these changes support the ideals of the French Revolution or betray them? Explain.

## The Law of Suspects

This law, passed on 17 September 1793 [by Robespierre and the National Convention], authorized the creation of revolutionary tribunals to try those **suspected of treason** against the Republic and to punish those convicted with death. This legislation in effect made the penal justice system into the enforcement arm of the revolutionary government, which would now set as its primary responsibility not only the maintenance of public order but also the much more difficult and controversial task of identifying internal enemies of the Republic—such as “profiteers” who violated the Maximum [decree to fix prices]—and then removing them from the **citizenry**, where they might subvert [sabotage] the general will...

Source: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution, online site, a collaboration of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media and the American Social History Project from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, January 2015.

7. According to the excerpt above, what changes did Robespierre make during the Reign of Terror?

8. Did these changes support the ideals of the French Revolution or betray them? Explain.

**“On the Moral and Political Principles of Domestic Policy” a speech given to the Convention by Maximilien Robespierre, Feb. 5, 1794**

To found and **consolidate** democracy, to achieve the peaceable reign of the constitutional laws, we must end the war of liberty against **tyranny** and pass safely across the storms of the revolution: such is the aim of the revolutionary system that you have **enacted**. Your conduct, then, ought also to be regulated by the stormy circumstances in which the republic is placed; and the plan of your administration must result from the spirit of the revolutionary government combined with the general principles of democracy...

Now, what is the fundamental principle of the democratic or popular government—that is, the essential spring which makes it move? It is virtue; I am speaking of the public virtue which affected so many prodigies in Greece and Rome and which ought to produce much more surprising ones in republican France; of that virtue which is nothing other than the love of country and of its laws...

The whole development of our theory would end here if you had only to pilot the vessel of the Republic through calm waters; but the tempest roars, and the revolution imposes on you another task.

We must smother the internal and external enemies of the Republic or **perish** with it; now in this situation, the first maxim of your policy ought to be to lead the people by reason and the people’s enemies by terror.

If the spring of popular government in time of peace is virtue, the springs of popular government in revolution are at once virtue and *terror*: virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore [part] of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country’s most urgent needs...

Source: Maximilien Robespierre, speech to the National Convention, “On the Moral and Political Principles of Domestic Policy,” (excerpt), February 5, 1794. Reprinted with permission from Modern History Sourcebook, <http://www.fordham.edu/HALSALL/MOD/robespierre-terror.asp> from the NYS Social Studies Toolkit <http://www.c3teachers.org/inquiries/frenchrev/>

## **July 1794: Robespierre is executed and the Reign of Terror ends**

### **TIMETABLE, 1794**

... **July 27:** The Convention ordered the arrest of Robespierre and his friends. They were taken to Luxembourg. The jailer refused to lock them up. They left and went to the Town Hall to plan their next move. They could have beaten the Convention, but the Paris Commune did not help in time. They were declared to be outlaws and arrested again.

**July 28 (early morning):** The Convention made Robespierre and his friends outlaws and arrested them at the Town Hall. Now either Robespierre was shot, or he shot himself. He was wounded.

**July 28:** Robespierre and 21 friends went to the guillotine...

Source: Jane Shuter, ed., Helen Williams and the French Revolution, Raintree Steck-Vaughn (adapted) from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, January 2015.

# Paris Commune\* becomes Radical

August 1792



\*Georges Danton becomes one of the leaders

September Massacres -- violence in the streets of France

# PROCLAMATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

22 September

1792



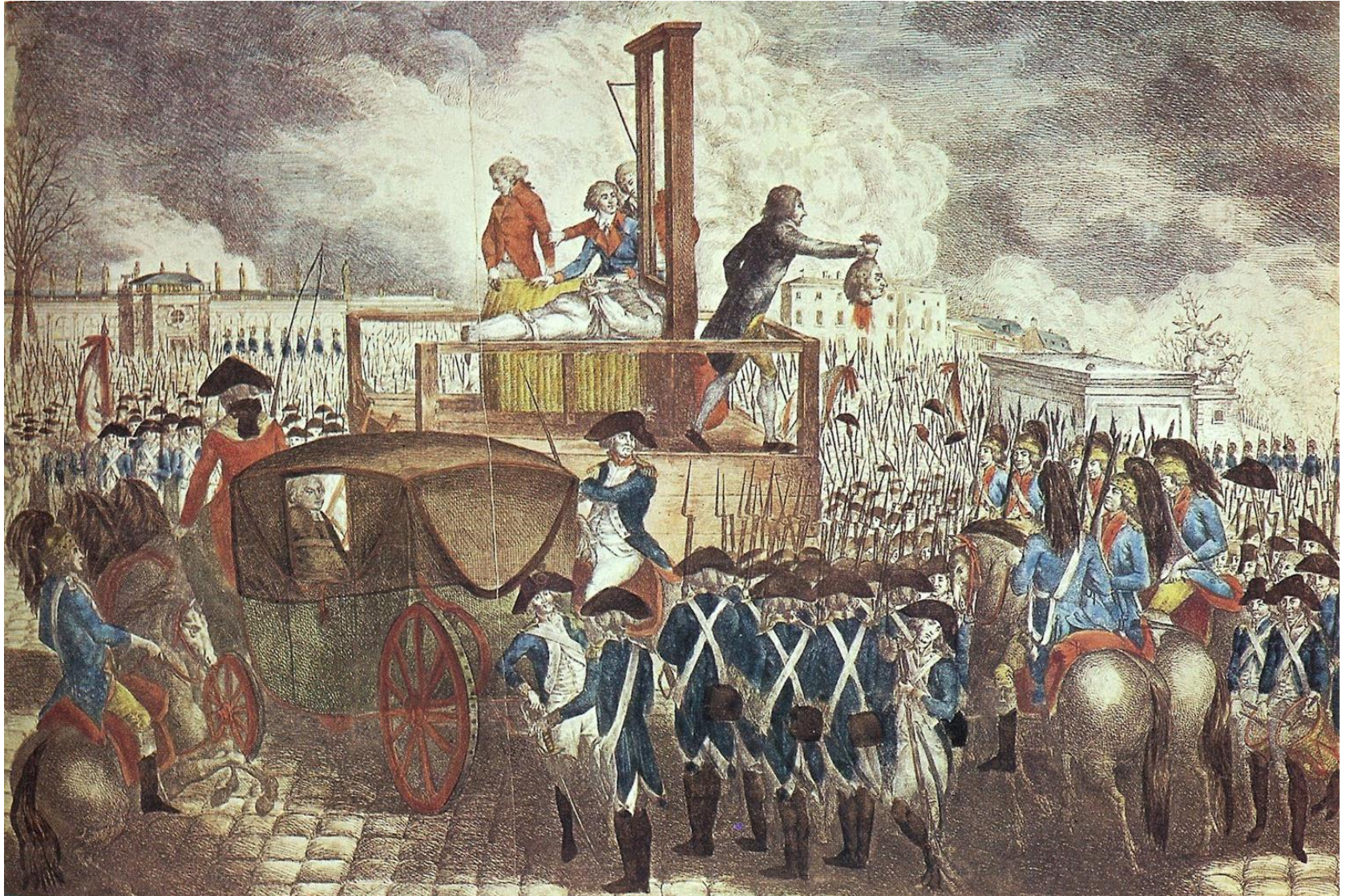
*Assignat from the 1792 issue: 400 livres*

The Monarchy is officially abolished and the French Republic is declared.

**Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite!**

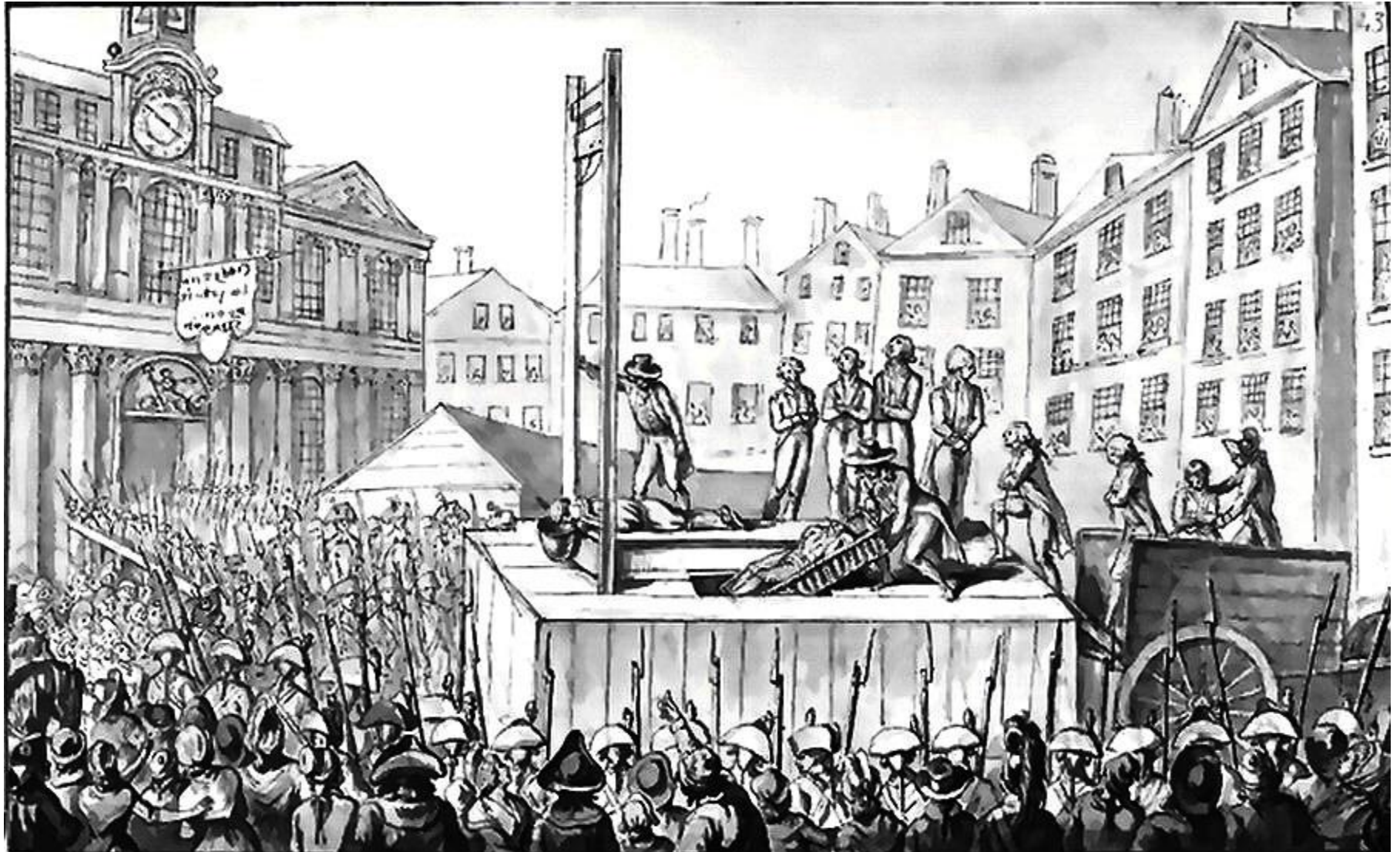


# Execution of Louis XVI - January 1793





# The Reign of Terror 1793-1794



# The Committee of Public Safety

From *September 1793 to July 1794*, the Committee of Public Safety was composed of the same men (with the exception of Marie-Jean Hérault de Séchelles, who was guillotined in April 1794), and it controlled France, dominating the National Convention and relying on the support of the Jacobins (radical democrats). Under its direction, harsh measures were taken against the alleged enemies of the Revolution, the economy was placed on a wartime basis, and mass conscription was undertaken.

# Levee en Masse - August 1793

“From this moment until that in which the enemy shall have been driven from the soil of the Republic, all Frenchmen are in permanent requisition for the service of the armies. The young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions; the women shall make tents and clothing and shall serve in the hospitals; the children shall turn old linen into lint; the aged shall betake themselves to the public places in order to arouse the courage of the warriors and preach the hatred of kings and the unity of the Republic.”

***Explain the historical context/circumstances that led to event(s) described in the document above.***

# Maximilien Robespierre - 1793



“If the spring of popular government in time of peace is virtue, the springs of popular government in revolution are at once *virtue and terror*: virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation [outgrowth] of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country's most urgent needs.”

What is Robespierre's purpose in writing this document?  
Who is his audience?

# The Execution of Danton & then Robespierre

