

Robespierre

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Robespierre, Hand of Liberty

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The question is, when do the rights of society supercede the rights of the individual?
If the rights of society come first, and the individual's rights can be taken away for the
greater good of society...(17)

NOTES

- 1) **bloody hand**: Robespierre was the leader of France during the tumultuous early years of the French Revolution. He is associated with the Terror, in which more than 20,000 people were executed during a spasm of political violence.

- 2) **Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**: These are the core values and national rallying cry of the French Revolution and France. By overturning a monarchy and feudal society, the French Revolution began a new period in western history of the expansion of political power to a larger number of people in republics or liberal democracies. Feudal societies were dying and business-oriented nations were born.

- 3) **Old Regime**: The Old Regime was the French monarchy, whose kings were supported by the landowning feudal aristocracy and the church.

- 4) **Estates General**: At the beginning of the Revolution, the new revolutionaries called for a meeting of the major groups of French society, known as estates. For the first time, the 3rd Estate, made up of people other than church or nobility, had a share of power. The rising business class was taking a place of power in France.

- 5) **Tennis Court Oath**: On June 20, 1789, representatives of the third estate, who had been without political power, pledged to form a permanent legislative body, which became the French National Assembly.

- 6) **1789**: The year the French Revolution began. It ended in 1799 with the dictatorship of Napoleon.

- 7) **Bastille**: Bastille was a fortress symbolizing the old regime; it was stormed by revolutionaries during the early period of revolution.

- 8) **Jacobins**: Jacobins were a radical leftist political group of the French Revolution, led by Robespierre.

- 9) **Montagnards**: Montagnards was another name for the radical members of the Jacobin party, named “Mountain Men” because their deputies sat in the highest seats of the chamber of the National Assembly.

- 10) **National Convention**: The first National Assembly of the revolution (1789-91) tried to set up a government in which the king shared power with the Assembly in a constitutional monarchy, but failed. The National Convention, formed in 1792, formed a republic and deposed King Louis XVI

- 11) **Radicalization**: In 1790 the revolution radicalized, dividing sharply into right and left. It was a time of bitter political battles, great uncertainty and rapid change.

- 12) **The Terror**: The revolutionary government faced economic crisis and was pressed by strong opposition bordering on civil war. In 1793, in a crisis of emergency and extremism, over 20,000 were executed.

- 13) **The Directory**: The Directory served as executive branch during the later revolutionary period.

- 14) **Committee of Public Safety**: The CPS served as the executive branch of government during the Reign of Terror (1793-4).

- 15) **Supreme Being**: High deity in a new religion promoted by Robespierre as a replacement for Catholicism. It was called the Cult of the Supreme Being.

- 16) **guillotine**: A mechanical device with a dropping blade used to behead victims during the Terror.

- 17) **individual rights**: The French Revolution valued the common good of society and equality foremost, which led to a devaluation of individual rights as seen in The Terror.

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