

# Was Robespierre more a success than a failure as a revolutionary leader?

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Introduction to Robespierre: Robespierre was a French lawyer, politician and one of the most influential figures of the French- Revolution. Influenced by 18th century philosophes such as Rousseau, he was a capable articulator of the beliefs of the left-wing bourgeoisie. Successes: Gained support of the majority: He gained the title “ incorruptible”. Particularly interested in the rights of man and revolutionary virtue. Earned his reputation in the Estates General as a defender of the poor. He genuinely believed that the people of France were good and was therefore capable of achieving social and public well being in France.

While the Constituent Assembly was preoccupied with drawing up a constitution, Robespierre turned from the assembly of lawyers and wealthy bourgeoisie to the people of France. He was very successful in voicing out his ideas for the Declaration of the Rights of man and constitutional provision. In the Jacobin Club, he found a sympathetic audience among the intelligent artisans and small shopkeepers who became members of the club. His fanaticism won him supporters; his singularly sweet and sympathetic voice gained him hearers; and his upright life attracted the admiration of all Establishment of the Republic:

Robespierre’s main ideal was to ensure the virtue and sovereignty of the people. He disapproved of any acts which could be seen as exposing the nation to counter-revolutionaries and traitors, and became increasingly fearful of the defeat of the Revolution. He instigated the Terror and the deaths of his peers as a measure of ensuring a Republic of Virtue

Establishment of the National Convention - to sweep away the enemies

Supported execution of Louis " For Louis I have neither hate, not love.

I only hate his crimes" Destruction of the Girondists - Maxim Isnard,

Girondist, spoke about counter-revolution and on 2nd June, a crowd of

armed men from the Commune of Paris arrested 32 deputies from the

convention Reign of Terror: After Robespierre was elected to the Committee

of Public safety (a revolutionary tribunal), he earned a dominant position after

the fall of the monarchy and declared " It is time to horrify all the

conspirators" The terror acted against real and suspected enemies of the

revolution and extended into every corner of France. Victims were mostly the

aristocracy, bourgeoisie and members of the clergy but also included

members of other classes. In all, perhaps 40, 000 people were executed.

Leadership of War was decisive: A revolutionary war must be waged to free

subjects and slaves from unjust tyranny, not for the traditional reasons of

defending dynasties and expanding frontiers.

Failures: Short-term rule (1793-1794) Enemies were paralysed briefly: Cecile

Renault, woman who tried to murder Robespierre and other politicians who

opposed him for being a dictator and associated with Danton's death " the

blood of Danton chokes him" Socio-religious and economic policies weren't a

success