

The success of the french revolution history essay



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The French Revolution of 1789-1799 was moderately successful in its attempt to achieve its goals for the lower class of France. The French revolutionists aimed to obtain greater power for the Third Estate, to break the absolutism of the French monarchy and topple the aristocracy, introduce a constitution to limit the power of the upper class in the making of decisions for the country and for the lower class to have more power and freedom within the government and in their daily lives. In the first few years of the French revolution the upper class held a majority of the power within the country although their power was limited until the lower class began to revolt and become a force worth noticing. The French revolution succeeded in obtaining great power for the lower class, creating a constitution, limiting the power of the monarchy, giving the Third Estate great control over the populace of France and gaining rights and power for the lower class of France.

The French revolution was successful in obtaining more power and control for the Third Estate. At the start of the French revolution in 1789 the common French people united together to pursue their common goals. The Third Estate was a representative of the lower, middle and working class in the government, the First and Second Estates were delegates of the clergy and nobility. The storming of the Bastille forced King Louis XVI to give the Third Estate more power and attention. In 1789, on July 14th a mob of suppressed French commoners stormed the Bastille, France's largest prison and a representation of suppression of the lower class. The royalty was also captured and imprisoned in an attempt to threaten their continued position as the leaders of France. This event forced King Louis to act in order to

maintain control over the lower class. The third estate gained more power in the government, this was shown when the French constitution was introduced and forcefully accepted to reduce the power held by the aristocracy. This illustrated the French revolutions success in obtaining power and control in the government.

The French revolution was also successful in its struggle to achieve rights and freedom for the common populace of France. The absolute power of the French monarchy was beginning to collapse as the lower class attained more rights and privileges that allowed them to control their destiny in the government. By 1792 France was a radical democratic republic, granting them greater rule over their own populace. In 1790 the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was passed by the Third Estate, which was known as the National Assembly by this point. This newly introduced law limited the power of the church and made the government secular and separate from the church's influence. The Constitution of 1791 was introduced to dramatically limit the power of the monarchs and aristocracy in their contribution to the decisions of the government. The laws that were incorporated into the French government under the control of the National Assembly are a demonstration of the power they had obtained and the success of the French revolution in gaining rights and freedoms for the lower class of France.

Although the French revolution was successful in the aspect of obtaining rights for the lower class, it failed harshly in its attempt to topple the aristocracy at the beginning of the revolution. The September massacres occurred in 1792 and continued for a period of five days. Many prisoners of Paris were victims to the murders by the lower class. This massacre was

committed in fear of a revolt by the aristocracy. Although this was the result of this massacre as many of the lower class involved were punished by death. This attempt to overthrow and suppress the upper class was a failure for the French revolution. They acted out of fear and as a result were unable to obtain their goal of greater power over the aristocracy. This event was a failure for the French revolution.

The French revolution also failed to provide equality and freedom among the common people of France. In an attempt to frighten the enemies of the revolution and prevent counter-revolution the national assembly sentenced 20, 000-40, 000 people to death. This attempt to protect the power of the National Assembly, essentially the revolutionists, created disorder and mistrust amongst the people in 1793 to 1794. The National Assembly was unable to provide liberty for the people of France. Many of the lower class was sentenced to the guillotine due to the critique of the government. This event was also a failure in the French revolution as the lower populace of France did not experience freedom and equality after their long-term suppression but were made to follow the lower class that held power. Their aspiration to create a country without class or hierarchy was a failure as only a minority of the lower class held total power of the rest of the country, including the lower class that still had not obtained power.

The French revolution experienced success in 1793 in Vendee when the lower class suppressed the royalty of France that attempted to counter-revolt against the French revolutionists. Many of the upper class aristocracy including: mayors, judges, National Guardsmen, educationalists and priests were all involved in feeble attempts to regain control and power over France.

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The aristocracy was immediately and brutally extinguished as 45, 000 troops were sent out in a successful attempt to smother the weak revolution consisting of inexperienced, unarmed aristocracy. The upper class were easily defeated and the lower class regained control of the country. The French revolutionists were able to succeed in suppressing and demoralising the aristocrats attempt at a revolution to protect the lower class from losing power.

The French revolution instituted a law that allowed them to try people in court, suspected of treason against the republic. This attempt to reduce treason against the republic was a success as it filtered the potential traitors from the citizens of France and protected the common populace under the control of the lower class. In September of 1793 the National Assembly introduced the Law of Suspects in a victorious effort to protect the commoners within France. This law brought safety and assurance to the lower class, making this law successful in maintaining power for the lower class of France.

The French revolutions' attempt to give slaves more freedom and power was flawed as many aristocrats did not agree with the laws or completely dismissed the authority of the lower class. In February of 1794 slavery was abolished in all French colonies, many aristocrats in these colonies were discontented and as a result fled the islands to other countries that continued to allow slavery. This attempt to provide more power for the lower class failed as the slaves were not able to maintain the power that was given to them due to the aristocracy. This law was unable to be maintained and

was a failure in the French revolution in its attempt to give equal power and liberty to the lower class.

Another area in which the French revolution was unable to give the lower class power over their own daily lives was the exceedingly fluctuating prices of bread and rice. Bread and rice was the majority of the food in the peasants' diet, when prices increased the lower class inevitably suffered. The bread riots in 1795 were non-violent protests against the National Assembly as they were unable to maintain a stable price for bread. These riots were an illustration of the National Assembly's inability to provide the lower class with power and control over the food prices and by extension their own lives.

The French revolution failed in protecting the lower class and maintaining power for the lower class. In 1795-1799 the directory, a group of five members became France's administrators. This directory was introduced to obtain stability for France, although corruption began to permeate the system. The members of the directory manipulated laws and overturned electoral results that they disliked. The directory was unable to provide stability for the country and was incapable of protecting the republic and the people from war and corruption. The French revolution failed in this aspect to provide protection and constant power to the people of France.

The French revolution also succeeded when the revolution ended and Napoleon introduced his revolutionary dictatorship into the country.

Napoleon came into power in 1799 and introduced his ideals. The lower class of France was satisfied and protected with the introduction of Napoleon and his ideas.

The French revolution was successful in obtaining many of its goals. Although there were many failures throughout the French revolutions attempt to gain power, control and rights within France. The French revolution was unable to attain constant protection for the lower class, unchanging prices of bread and food for commoners, complete freedom and rights for slaves within the French colonies and equality and complete freedom for the common populace of France. The French revolution experienced many successes as well as many failures; although overall they were able to meet their prominent aims and goals for the common people of France making the French revolution a moderate success.