

Marie Gouze and the French Revolution

Instructions: Read the background. Answer the questions below.



Background: The *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* was mainly written by Marquis de Lafayette, with some ideas and help from Thomas Jefferson, who was in France at the time. It was then debated and approved by the **French National Assembly** in 1789. The document was created during the French Revolution to explain the basic rights all people should have. Even though it said “all citizens” are equal, women were not given the same rights, like voting or participating in the government. By leaving women out, French leaders supported the idea that political power and full citizenship belonged only to men.

Marie Gouze was an important woman during the French Revolution. She believed strongly in fairness and equality, especially for women. At a time when women had very few rights, she wrote plays, letters, and essays to make people think differently. Her most famous work was the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen*, where she argued that women should have the same rights as men, including the right to vote and be part of the government. Many people in power didn’t like her ideas because they challenged the tradition of the culture that men should be in leadership. Marie Gouze continued to speak out anyway, even when it became dangerous. During the violent period called the Reign of Terror, she was arrested for her political opinions. A tribunal, operated under the influence of Maximilien Robespierre, executed political critics during the Reign of Terror. Sadly, she was executed, but her bravery and her fight for women’s rights are remembered today. Her ideas helped inspire future movements for equality around the world.

1. What was the purpose of *the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*?

2. Why do you think Marie Gouze felt it was necessary to create *the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen*?

3. How do we see the impact Marie Gouze and people like her in the world today?

Answers

1. What was the purpose of *the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*?

The document was created during the French Revolution to explain the basic rights all people should have in life. Yet, it excluded women from rights men would receive, such as participating in the government.

2. Why do you think Marie Gouze felt it was necessary to create *the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen*?

She was concerned that women were not getting the rights they deserved too. Therefore, she created this document.

3. How do we see the impact Marie Gouze and people like her in the world today?

In today's world, in France and various places, women have risen up to demand equal rights. Marie Gouze and others laid the foundation for women to champion equality for themselves.