

Did female
activists have an
impact?



On the Barricades: the hidden history of women in the French Revolution

Were women
essential to the
revolution?



Did women's
rights improve?



Scan me

Background

- Ancien régime seen as corrupted and conquered by women (boudoir politics)
- Idea of virtue as central to revolution and republic – for women, this means chastity and obedience
- Language of revolution consciously excludes women and women's few outlets – the church, behind the scenes politics, aid clubs – all removed
- There were exceptions, philosophes who supported women's rights: Condorcet, Chaliier, etc

Aims and Methods

My aim is to present the lives and stories of these women, and to put them in the wider context of the time in which they lived. By doing so I hope to highlight that revolutions do not happen without women, and the most iconic and well-known revolution was not different.

- Focusing on pro-revolutionary women, especially those who campaigned for women's rights
- Trying to have a variety of women – rich/poor, educated/uneducated, Parisian/regional
- Using 6 women as a symbol of all revolutionary women
- Choosing women based on their actions, not on their relationship to men
- Primarily using sources written by women

Conclusions

- The Revolution limited women's rights: "women are now respected and excluded, under the old regime they were despised and powerful" (Olympe de Gouges)
- Some women did contribute – through their writings, their influence over men, and their societies, but they were shut out of official politics
- France was actually one of the last Western nations to give women the vote – to what extent was this institutional misogyny influenced/created by the Revolution?