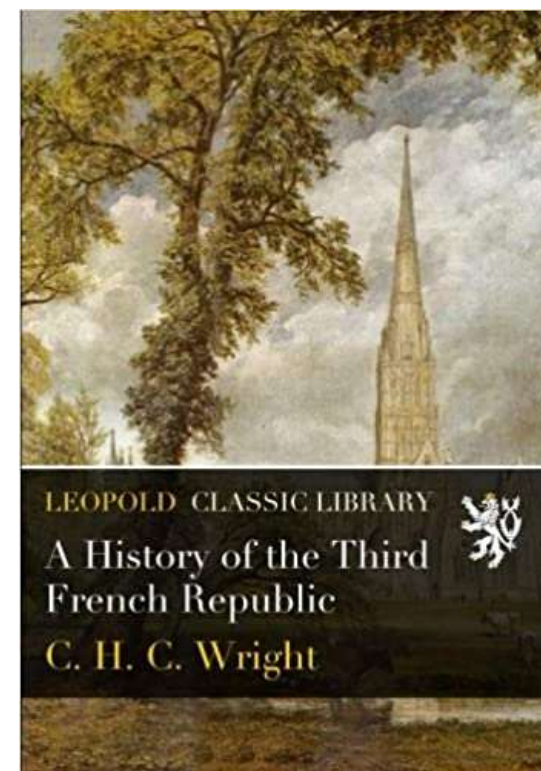
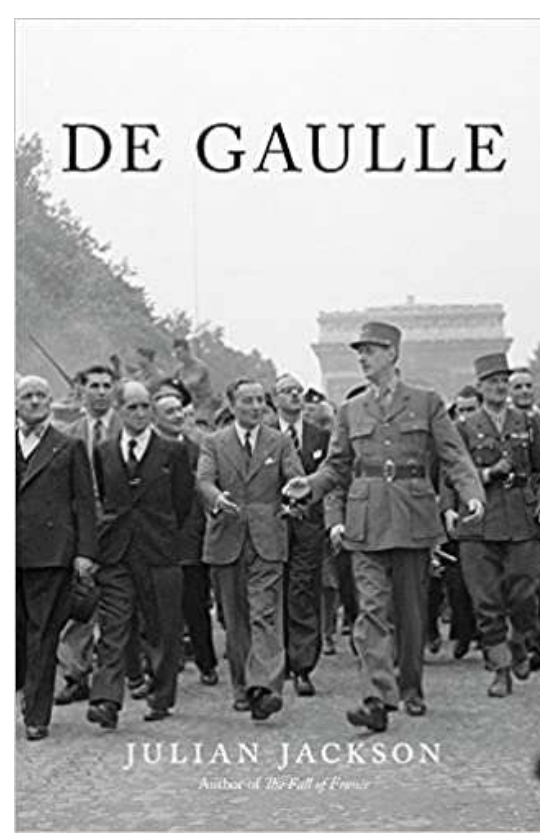
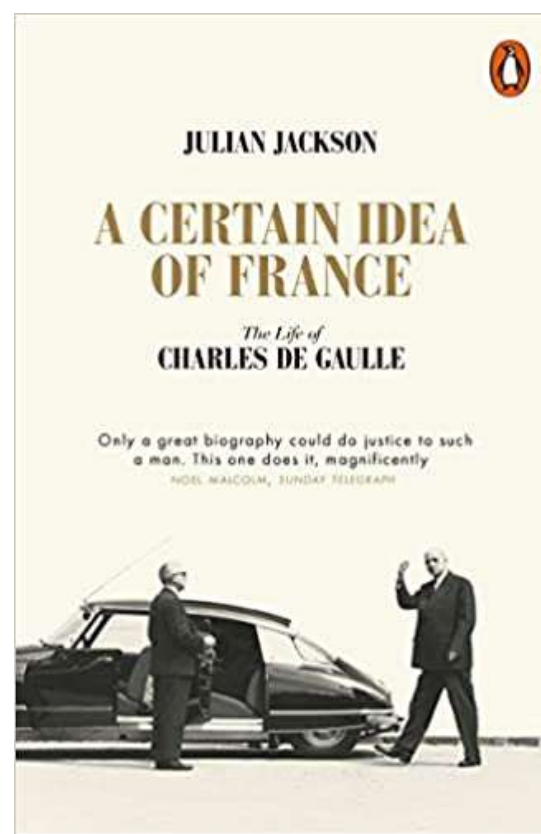
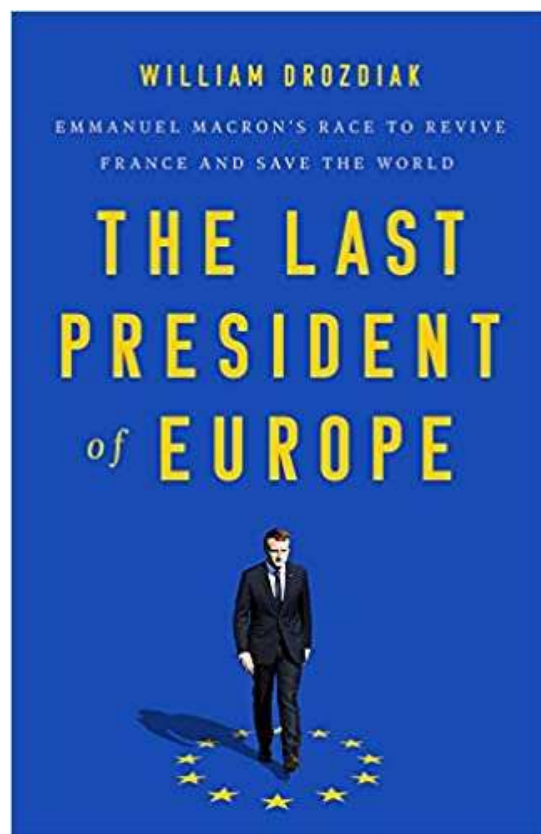


The “Yellow Vests” (*Gilets jaunes*)

The French
democracy in crisis





.....
The **rejection of the elites**
Calls for a democracy closer
to the “people”

The “Yellow Vests”
movement: a **violent**
movement



Extreme violence
Hate statements
Death threats on social media
A ministry attacked
Antisemitism & homophobia

NOTHING democratic about
the “Yellow Vests” movement





Symbolic violence: a guillotine in a country that abolished the death penalty



.....

Numerous references to
the French Revolution
(the storming of the
Bastille, the women's
march on Versailles and
the *Marseillaise*)

Symbols of a people who was
determined to be heard



A movement full of contradictions

1 December 2018: the Arc de Triomphe
vandalized

The moulding of the *Marseillaise* desecrated



A large crowd of people, many wearing bright yellow vests, are gathered in a dark setting. In the background, a car is engulfed in intense orange and yellow flames. Several individuals in the crowd are holding up their smartphones to capture photos or videos of the scene. The overall atmosphere is one of civil unrest or protest.

Calls to storm the Elysée
Palace

But the president of the
Republic was duly elected
(universal suffrage)

The “Yellow Vest” movement:
the latest example of the
tumultuous relationship
between the French and
democracy

.....

The Age of Enlightenment
(18th century): a
democracy can only be a
direct democracy

Direct democracy: all laws
and policies are determined
and accepted by the people
themselves



The key reference:
the Athenian
democracy



Democracy: the government of
the people by the people or
citizens

The “people” does not coincide
with a whole population

Universal suffrage excluded
women in France until 1944!



DU CONTRAT
SOCIAL;
OU
PRINCIPES
DU DROIT
POLITIQUE.

Par J. J. ROUSSEAU, Citoyen
de Geneve.

Dicamus leges. Faderis aequas
Æneid. XI.

Edition Sans Cartons, à laquelle on a ajouté
une Lettre de l'Auteur au seul Ami qui lui
reste dans le monde.

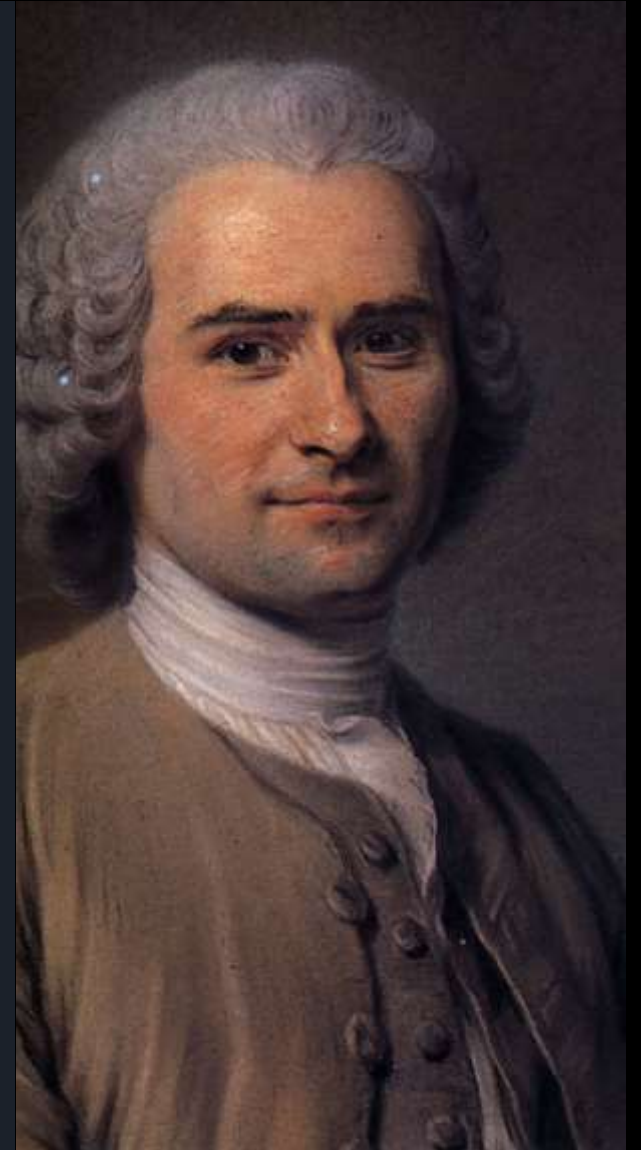


A AMSTERDAM,
Chez MARC - MICHEL REY.

M. DCC. LXII.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

*“The deputies of the people
are not and cannot be its
representatives; they cannot
conclude anything definitely.
All law that the People himself
has not ratified is null; this is
not a law”*



DU CONTRAT
SOCIAL;
OU
PRINCIPES
DU DROIT
POLITIQUE.

Par J. J. ROUSSEAU, Citoyen
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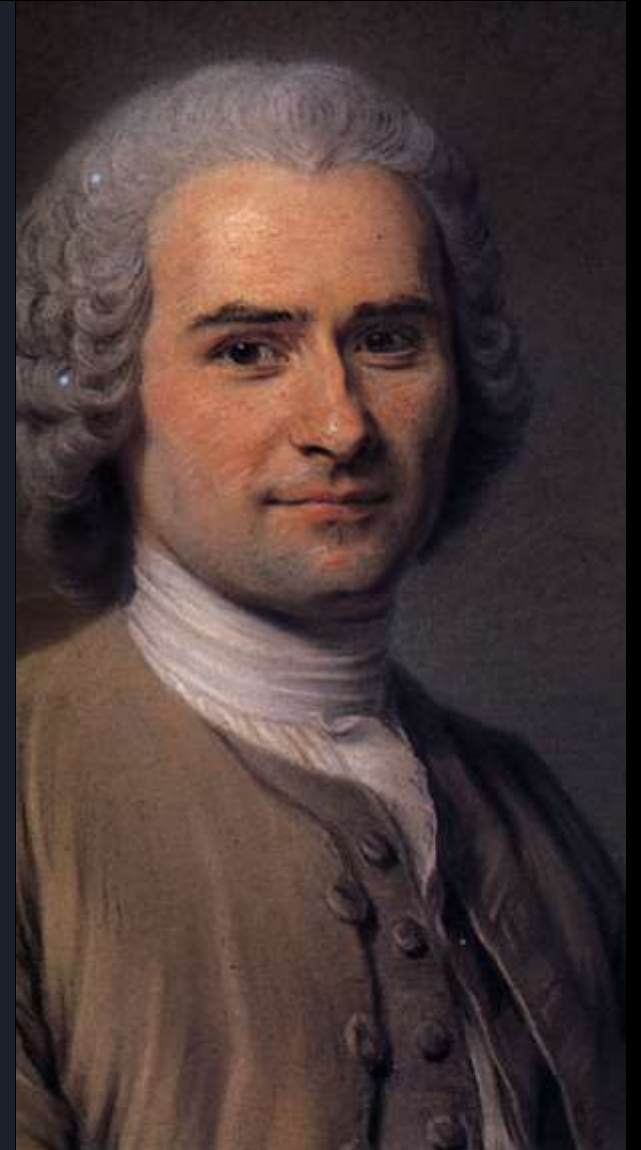


A AMSTERDAM,
Chez MARC - MICHEL REY.

M. DCC. LXII.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

*“The English people thinks
himself as free; it is mistaken,
it is only free during the
election of the members of
Parliament; as soon as they
are elected, it becomes a
slave, it is nothing”*



*“Wherever the people
fails to manifest its
will, but by its
representatives...
freedom is
annihilated
(Robespierre)”*

The same Robespierre
who eliminated the
popular movement to
govern!

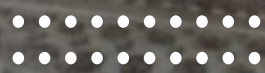


The People: what definition?

2 definitions

1. The population of a territory or country (*populus* in Latin)
2. Those opposed to the elites (*plebs*)

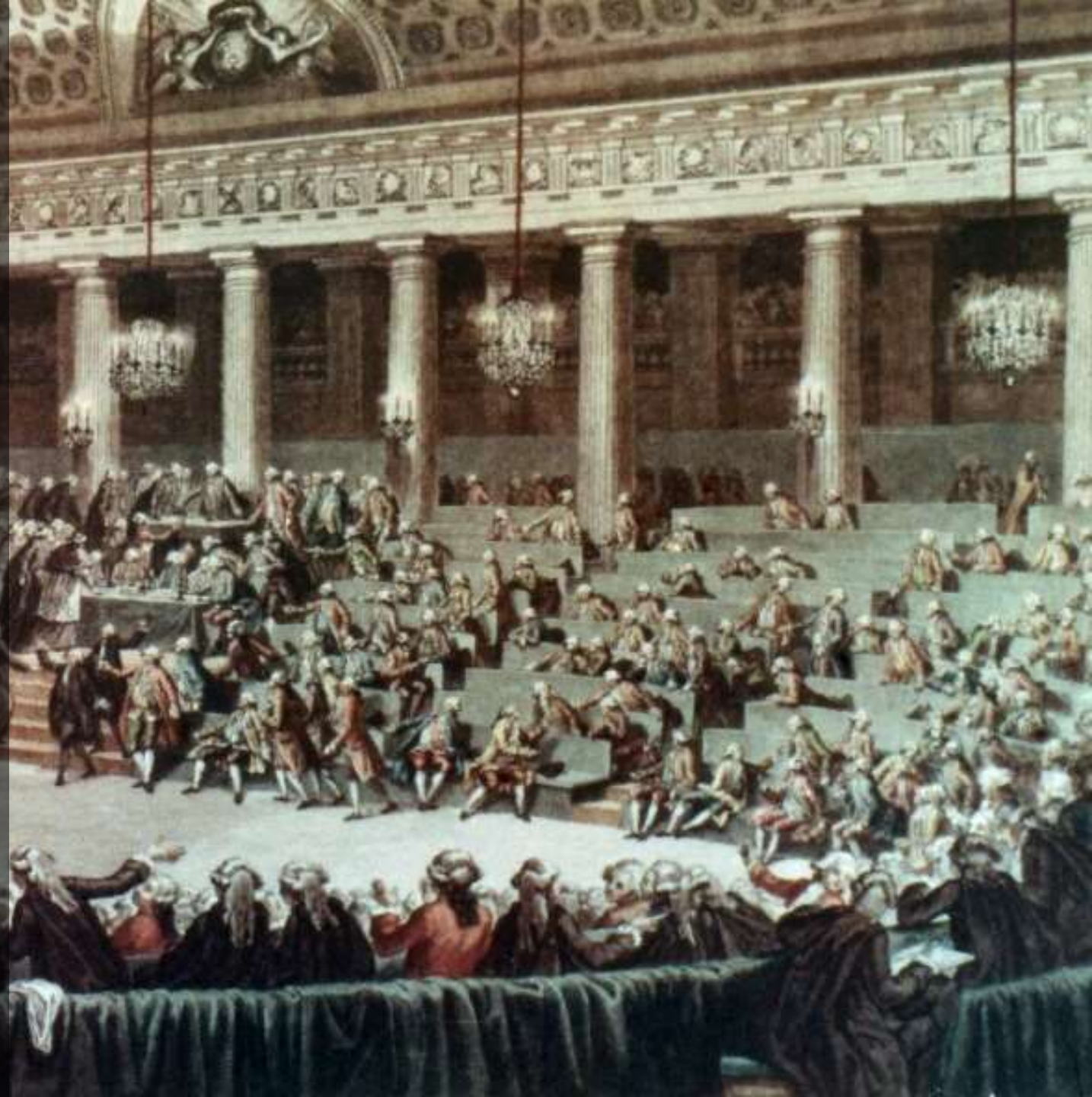


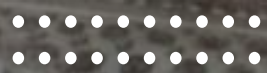


The National Constituent Assembly (1789-1791): a representative democracy

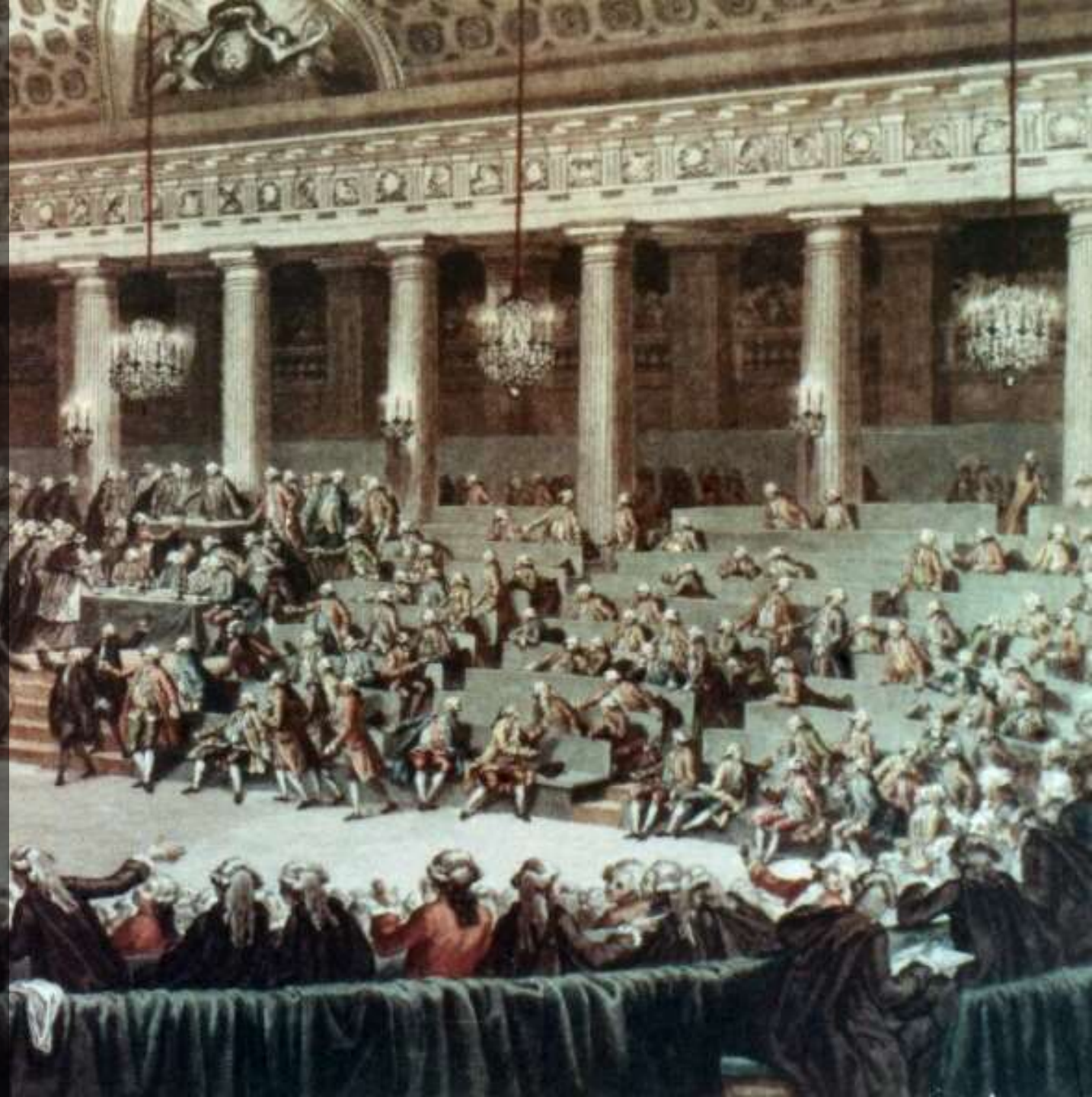
Direct democracy impossible

Representative democracy: the citizens abandon their political power to their elected representatives



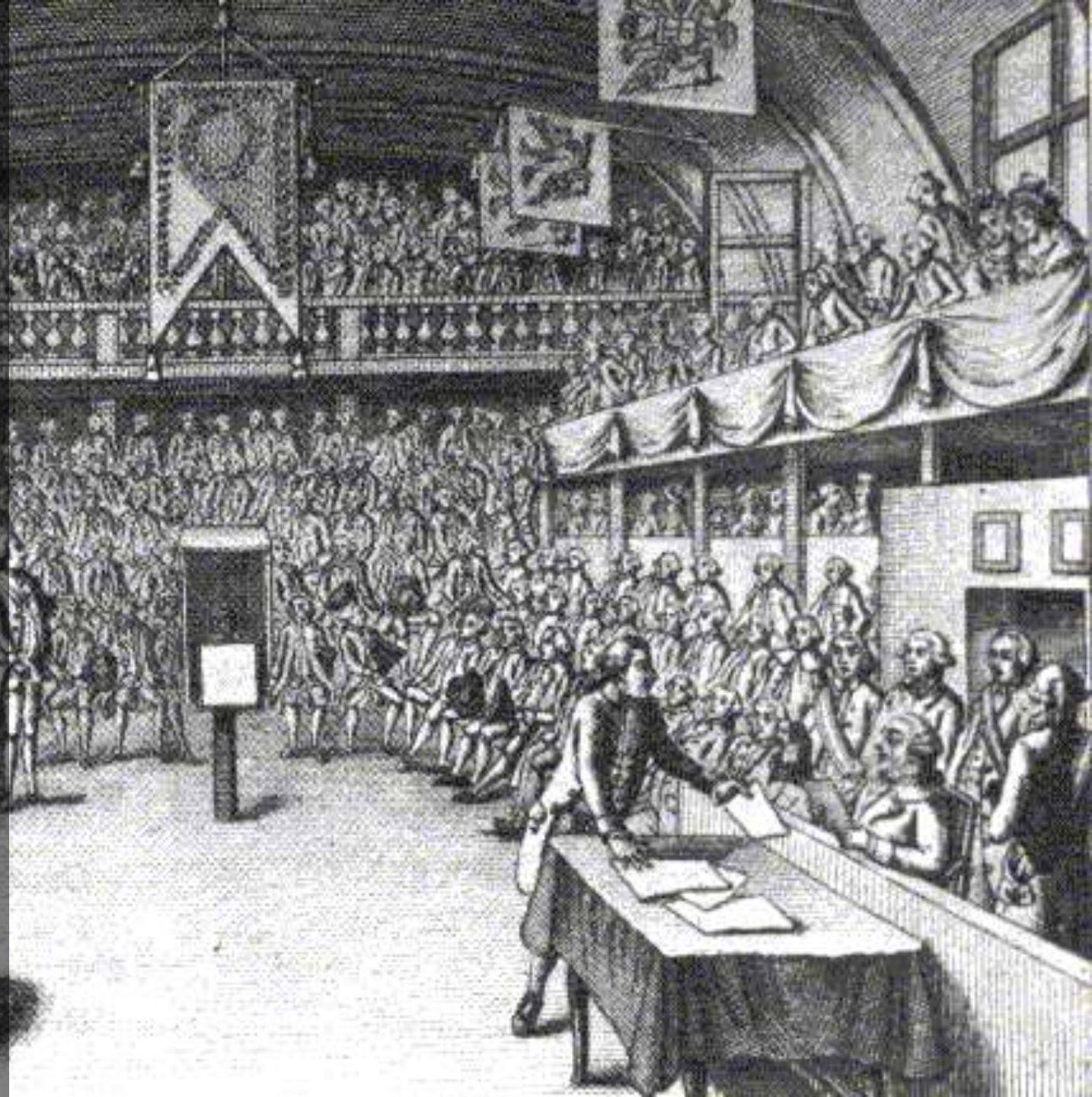


A representative
democracy can only truly
be democratic if
associated with the
universal suffrage



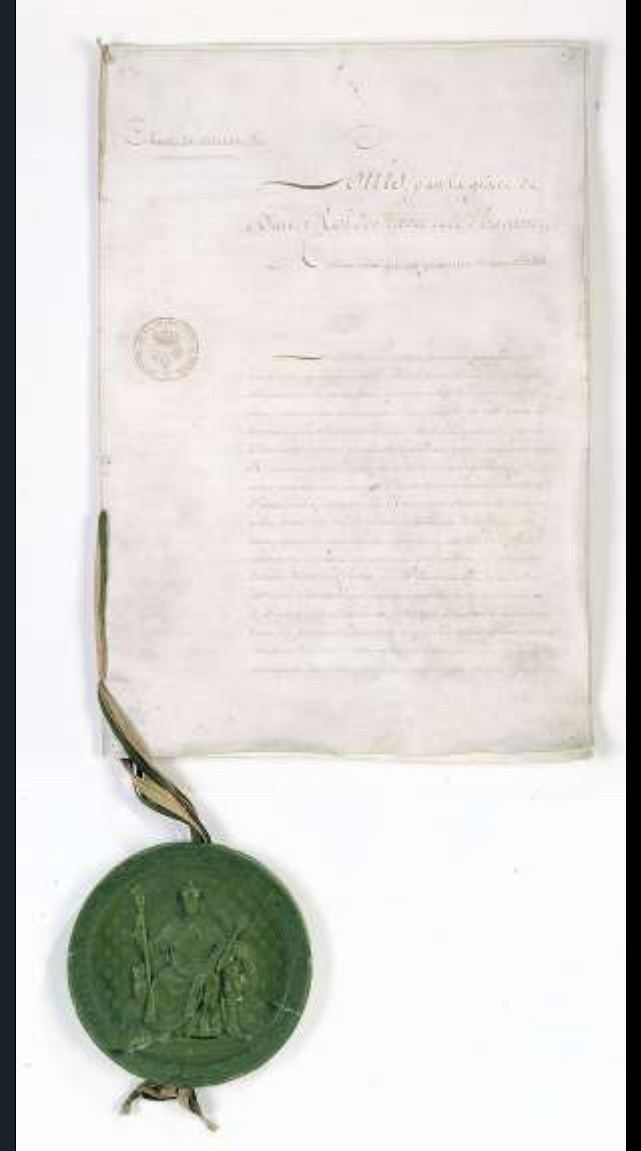
.....
Universal suffrage briefly
established in 1792
following the abolition of
the monarchy

Debates pertaining to the
universal suffrage
throughout the 19th century





1814: the Bourbon
Restoration and a
Constitution for France
(*Charte Constitutionnelle*)



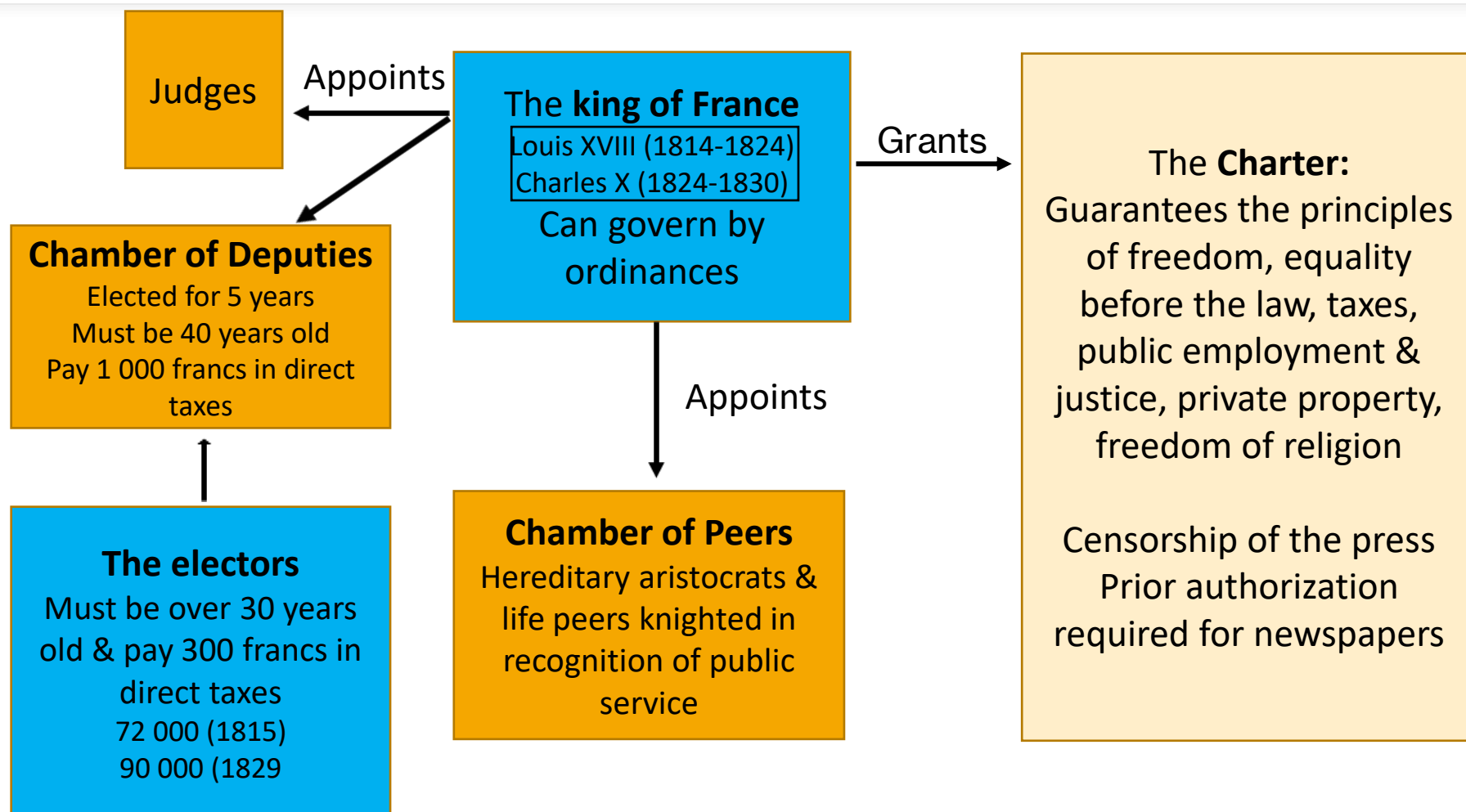


France introduced to the **parliamentary system**:

1. The right to petition the government
2. The right to amend proposed laws
3. The **collective responsibility** of ministers before the Chamber of Deputies (“responsible government”)

NO universal suffrage

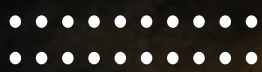
The Charter of 1814: a system based on a tax qualification





Charles X decided to govern by **ordinances**:

1. Censorship of the press re-established
2. the newly elected chamber dissolved
3. **reform of the electoral system**
4. New elections called for September 1830



The Revolution of 1830



Louis-Philippe (1830-1848)

Lack of reforms: growing
resentment towards his
political conservatism



Calls for **electoral reform**
ignored

22 February 1848: a campaign
of political banquets (public
reunions) outlawed



25 February 1848: proclamation of
the 2nd Republic



*Lamartine before the Hôtel de Ville, Paris, rejects the Red
Flag by Henri Felix Emmanuel Philippoteaux*



(Male) **universal suffrage**
(from 240 000 to 9 million
voters)

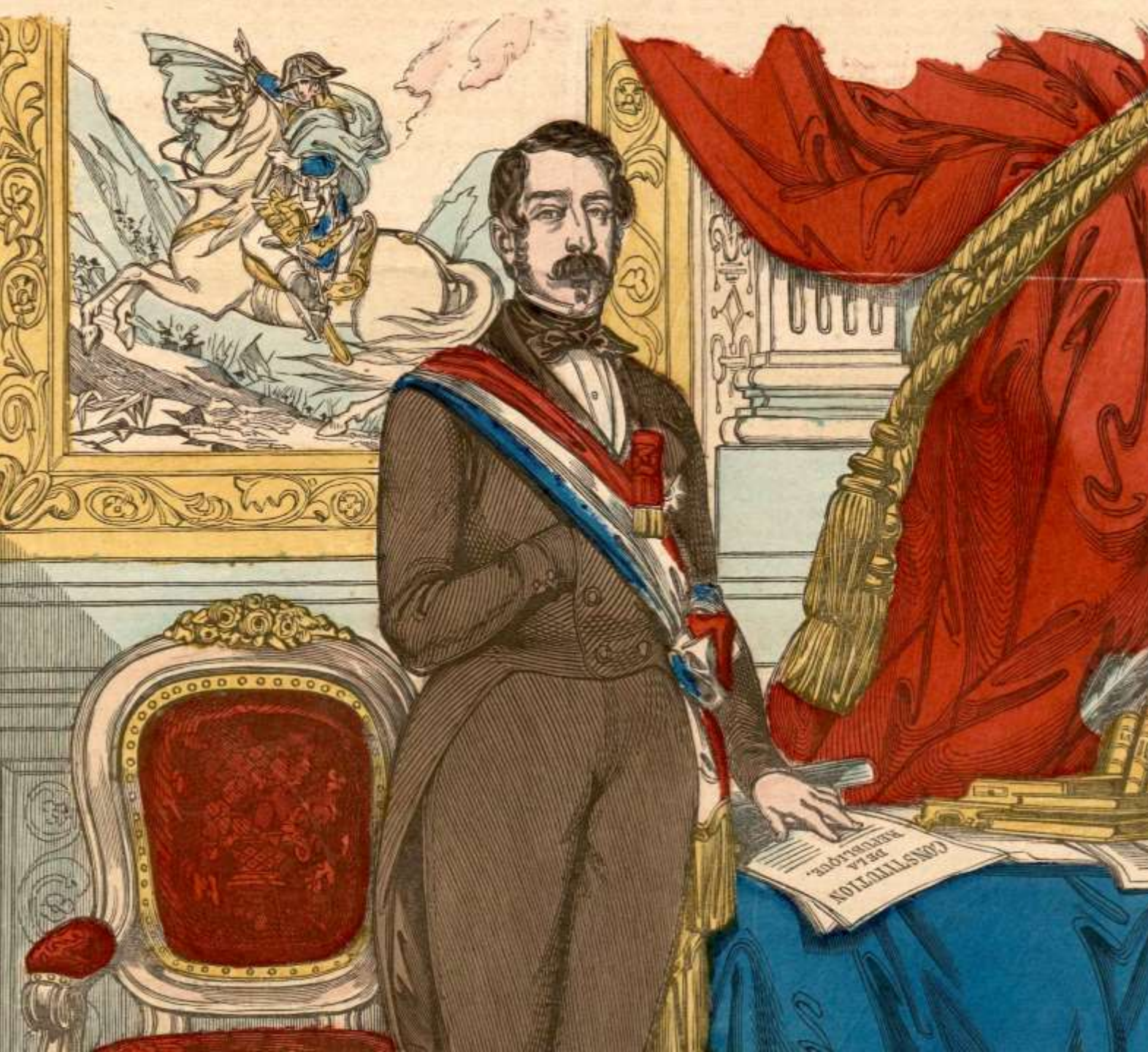
Universal suffrage: the
instrument of social peace
& stability?



June Days uprising in Paris following the closing of the “national workshops” (*Ateliers nationaux*) aimed at providing work to unemployed workers

Severe reaction (3 000 dead)

Louis-Napoleon seen as the only option to bring back
order & stability



December 1848: Louis-Napoleon elected president



“Today, the rule of the casts is over: one can only govern with the masses; one must therefore organize them so that they can express their will and discipline them so that they can be directed and enlightened as to their own interests”

Louis-Napoleon (1844)

From president to emperor

The Constitution: an incumbent president
unable to seek re-election

2 December 1851: a **coup d'état**

**A plebiscite (national referendum): 7.1 million
approved the coup**

2 December 1852 (the anniversary of
Napoleon's coronation) : the re-establishment
of the Empire





Louis-Napoleon: 3 successful
plebiscites

December 1851: to ratify
constitutional reforms

1852: to confirm the return of the
imperial monarchy

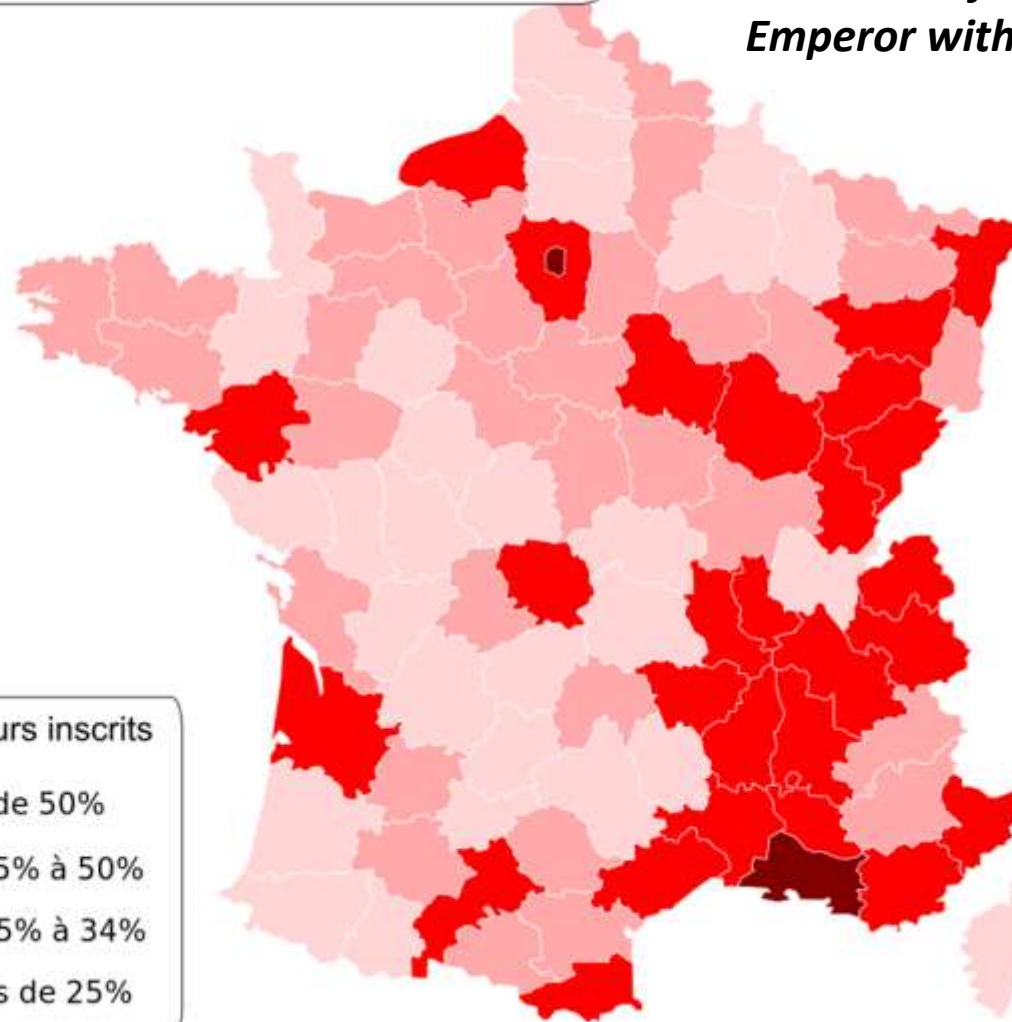
A triumph

Le vote non au plébiscite du 8 mai 1870

The question: *“the people approves the liberal reforms introduced by the Emperor with the help of government bodies...”*

7.4 million YES
1.5 million NO

“The Empire is stronger than ever”
(A Republican opponent)





4 September 1870:
proclamation of the
republic

18 March – 29 May 1871: The Paris Commune

The establishment of a **socialist**, revolutionary government in Paris



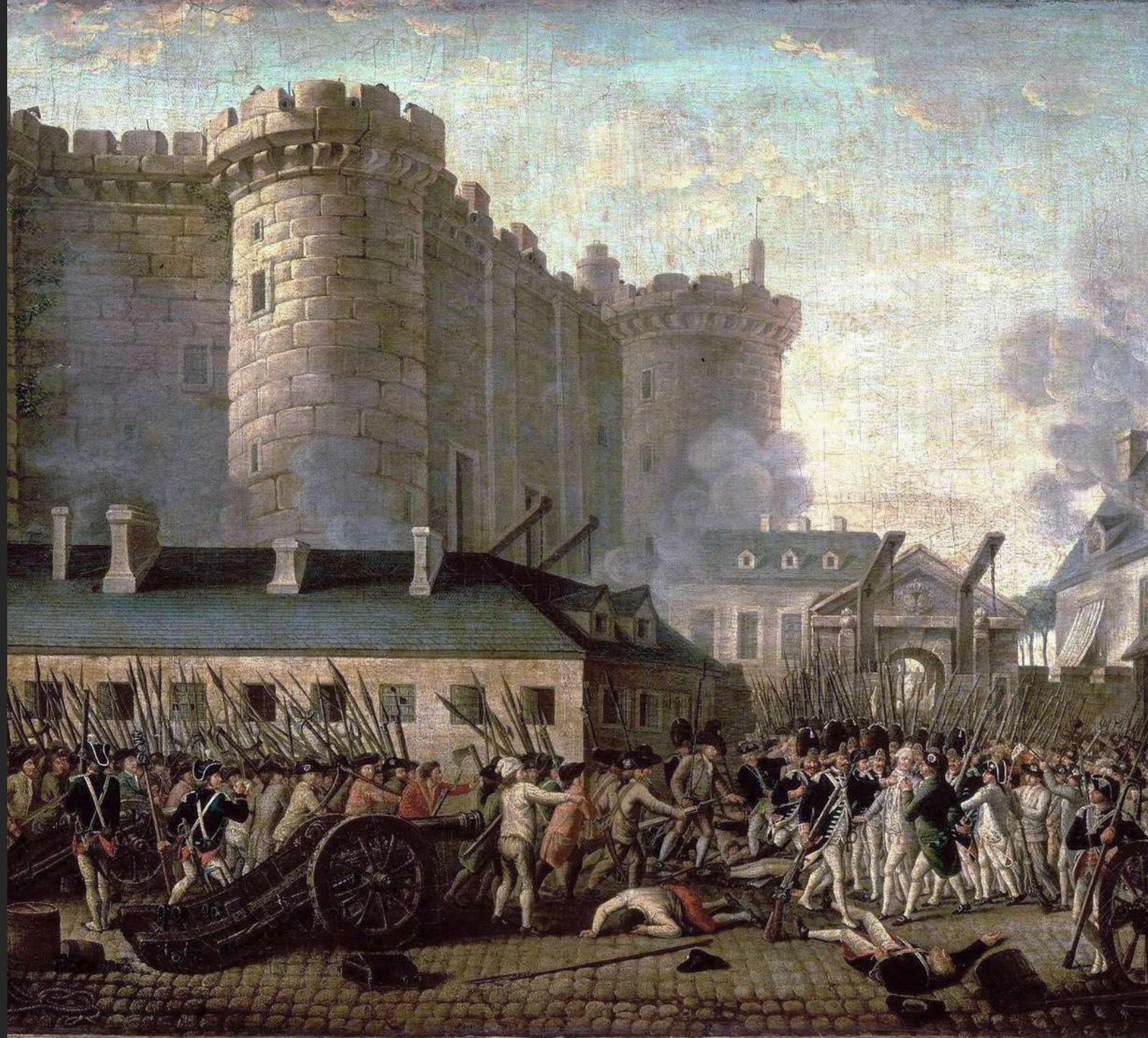
The three sources of discord

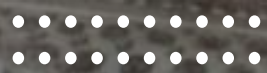
France's political history since the French Revolution associated with **three types of disagreements**

The nature of the political system

The religious question

Social peace



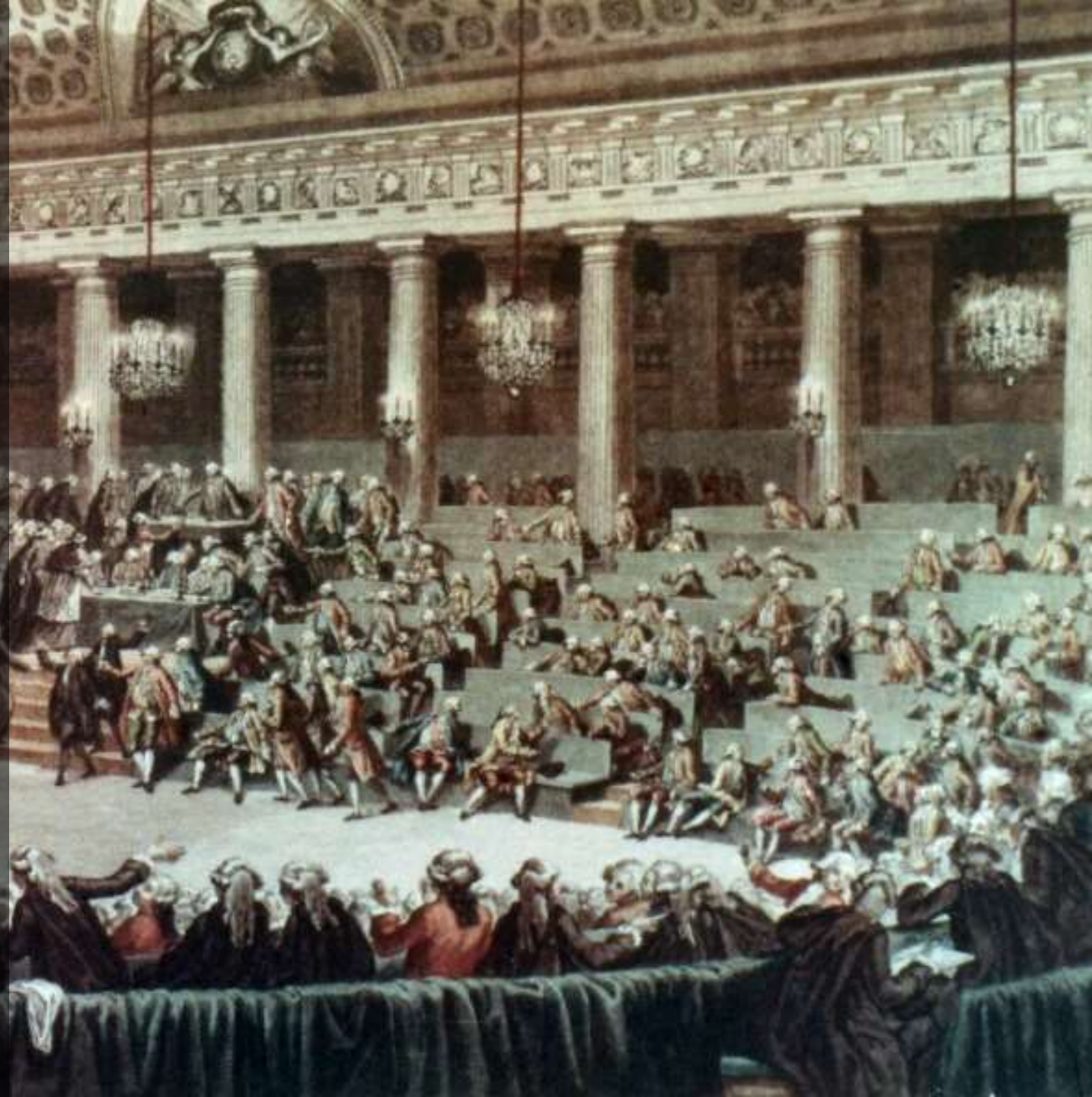


Lack of consensus
pertaining to the political
system

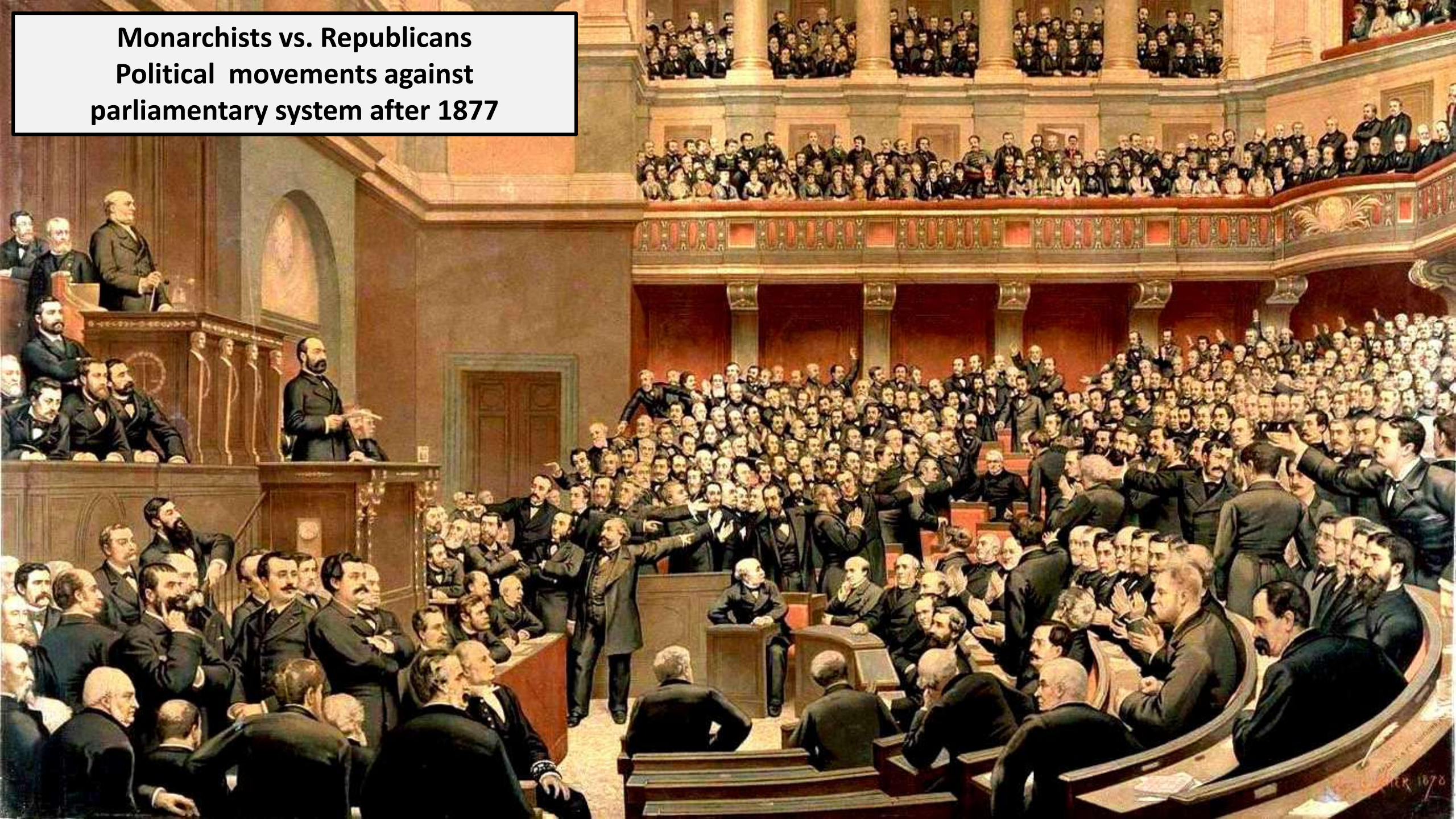
What constitution?

The French Revolution: lasting
divisions in heritage

15 Constitutions since 1791!



Monarchists vs. Republicans
Political movements against
parliamentary system after 1877



The “**Boulangier movement**”
(1886-1889): calls for the
end of the parliamentary
system deemed instable and
powerless

*“Since 1879, France had 14
governments. She witnessed
in 9 years more changes of
governments than England in
a century”*



Paul Déroulède (**League of Patriots**): calls for a republic based on plebiscites

No parliament

A president of the Republic elected by the people

The people consulted on a regular basis via referendum



6 February 1934 crisis: anti-parliament street demonstration in Paris organized by far-right movements

Calls for a change of political system



“Politics is no more; there is nothing by politicians, 600 chatterboxes, either reckless or too clever for their own good, always powerless. To be a deputy means all too often to give parliamentary impunity to a crook, a receiver of stolen goods, a dangerous imbecile.”

1^{re} année

n° 2

juin 1933

L'ORDRE NOUVEAU

REVUE MENSUELLE

1935

ANNÉE CRITIQUE

Textes et documents réunis
par ROBERT ARON et ARNAUD DANIÉL



DENIS DE ROUGEMONT. La Légion étrangère soviétique.
JACQUES DALLOZ. . . . Colonies, Capitalisme et État.
ALEXANDRE MARC. . . . Hitler ou la Révolution manquée.

PARIS

25 ter, BOULEVARD HENRI

Le numéro : 3 fr.

REFERENDUM DU 5 MAI 1946

A **Fourth Republic**: a new Constitution to re-establish the **parliamentary system**

Approuvez-vous
la Constitution adoptée par
l'Assemblée Nationale
Constituante ?

OUI

NON

Marquez la réponse que vous
n'acceptez pas

Charles de Gaulle opposed
to the new Constitution

Calls for a **strong executive
branch** of government
(constitutional revision)

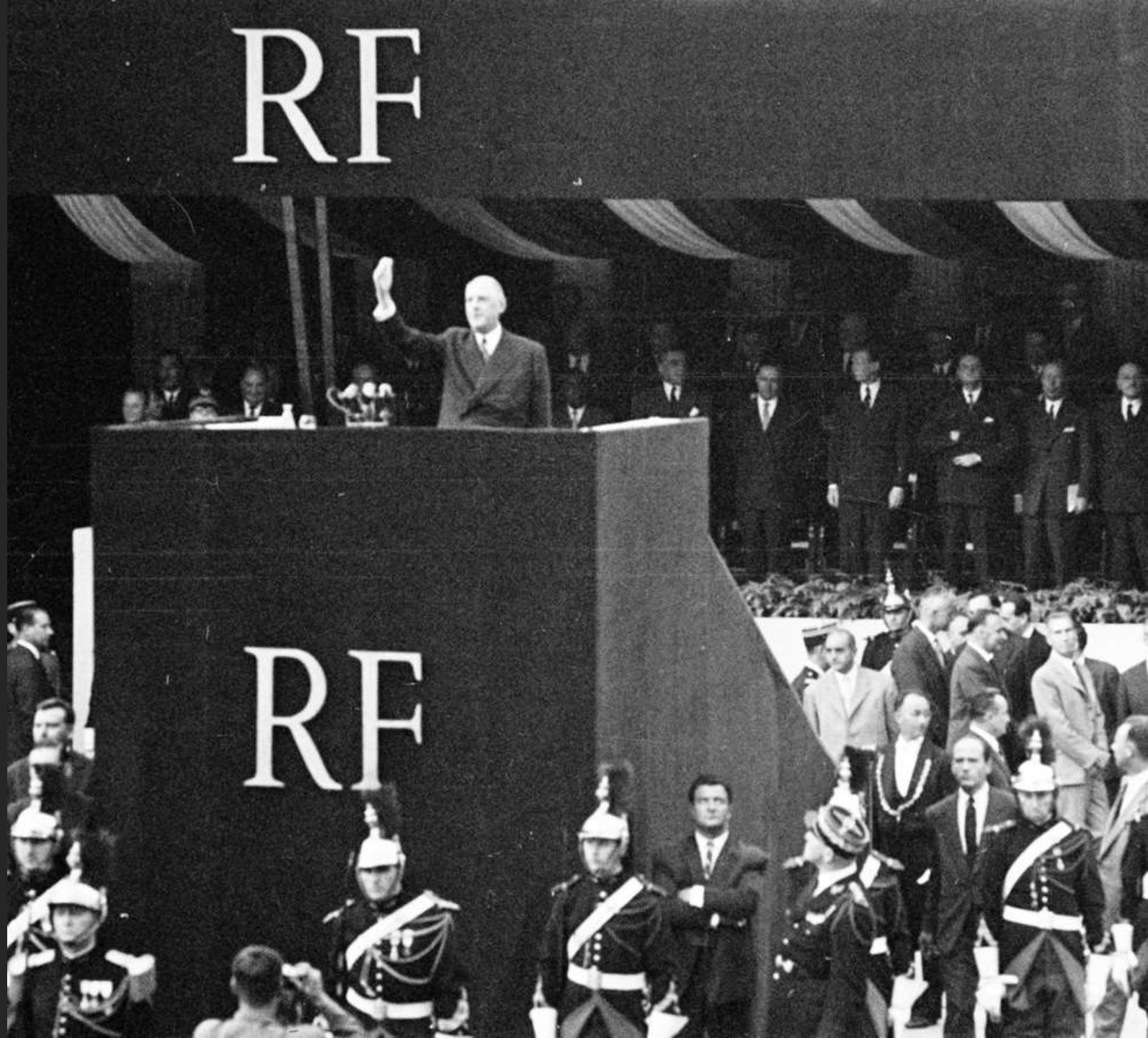




1947: de Gaulle founded the
*Rassemblement du Peuple
Français* (Rally of the French
People)

May 1958: the return
of de Gaulle

A Fifth Constitution





The religious question



The founding of the Third Republic in 1870

To deal with the role of the Catholic Church
(education)

Jules Ferry (Minister of Public Instruction)

A series of laws: free, compulsory and secular education – State run primary and secondary schools

Standardized & centralized curriculum
Schools: teaching **patriotism**
The rise of **national identity**

Measures **opposed** by the Pope and the Catholic Church



1905: the law on the Separation of the Churches and the State

The establishment of a **secular state** rejected by the pope and the French clergy

Practicing Catholic deputies excluded

No practicing Catholic elected president or appointed president of the Council of ministers

Nearly half of the French population not properly represented

Loi concernant la Séparation des Églises et de l'État.

Le Sénat et la Chambre des Députés ont adopté,

Le Président de la République promulgue
la loi dont la teneur suit :
Titre premier. — Principes.
Article premier.

La République assure la liberté de conscience. Elle garantit le libre exercice des cultes sous les seules restrictions édictées ci-après dans l'intérêt de l'ordre public.

Art. 2.

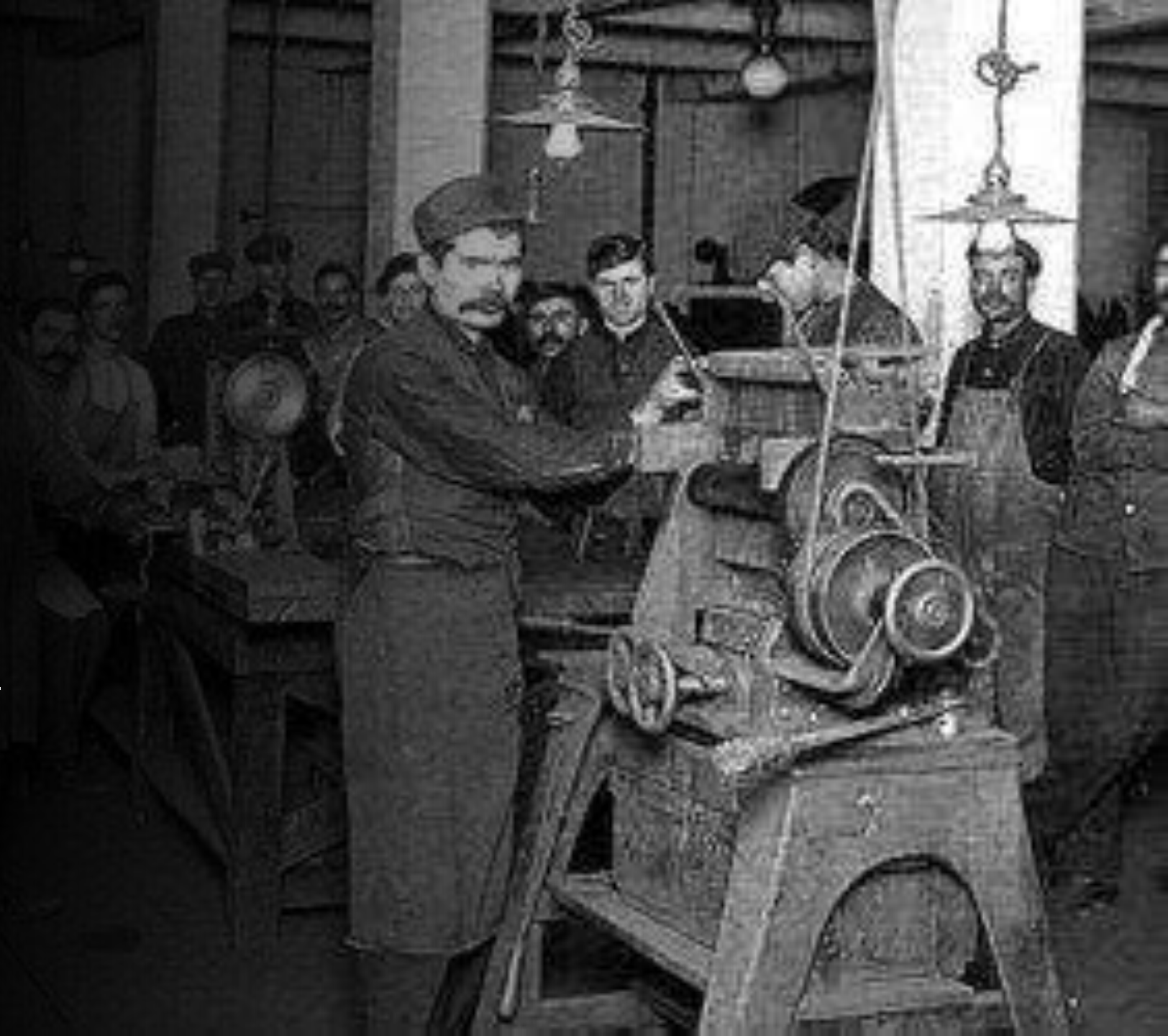
La République ne reconnaît, ne salarie ni ne subventionne aucun culte. En conséquence, à partir du 1^{er} janvier qui suivra la promulgation de la présente loi, seront supprimées des budgets de l'État, des départements et des communes, toutes dépenses relatives à l'exercice des cultes. Pourront toutefois être inscrites auxdits budgets les dépenses relatives à des services d'aumônerie et destinées à assurer le libre exercice des cultes dans les établissements publics, tels que lycées, collèges, écoles, hospices, asiles et prisons.

Les établissements publics du culte sont supprimés, sous réserve des dispositions énoncées à l'article 3.



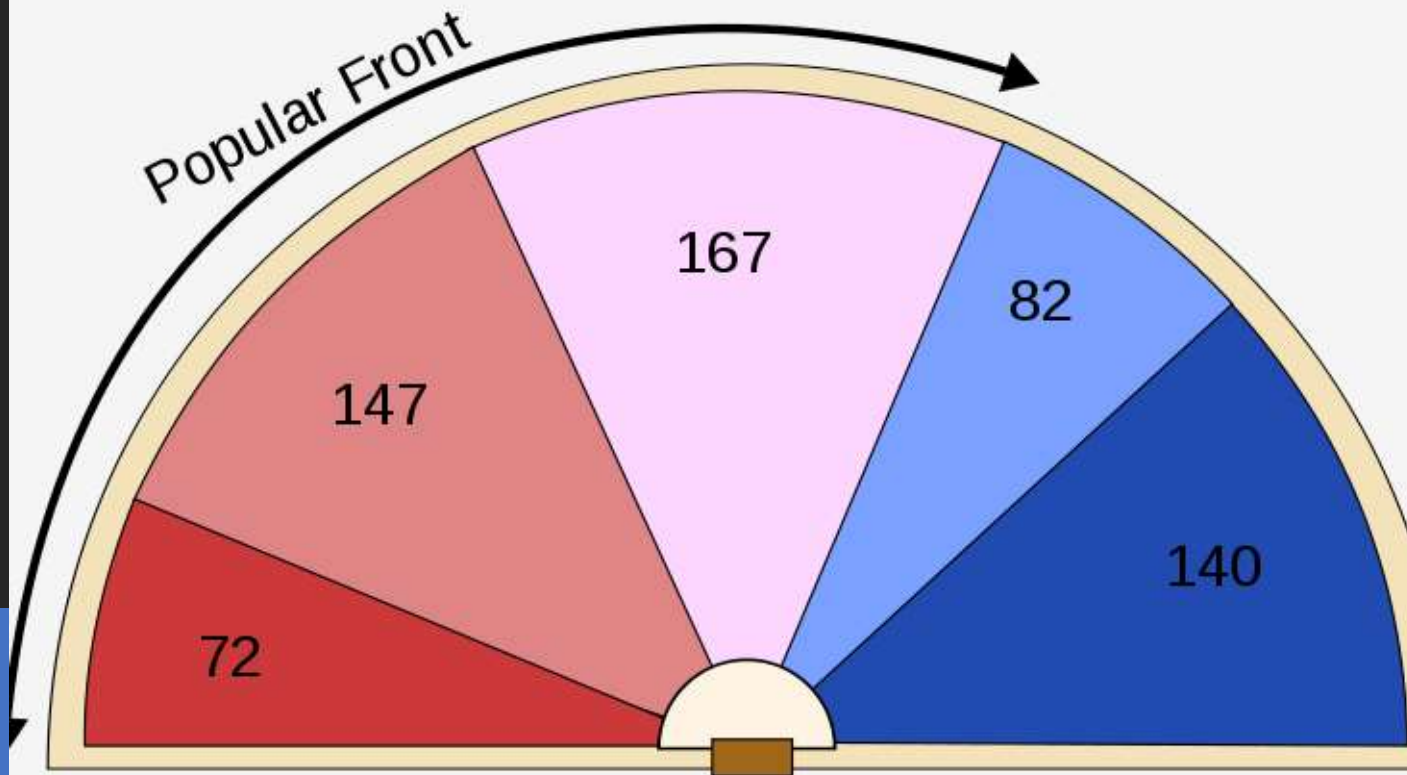
Class struggle

Revolutionary ideology vs.
reforms

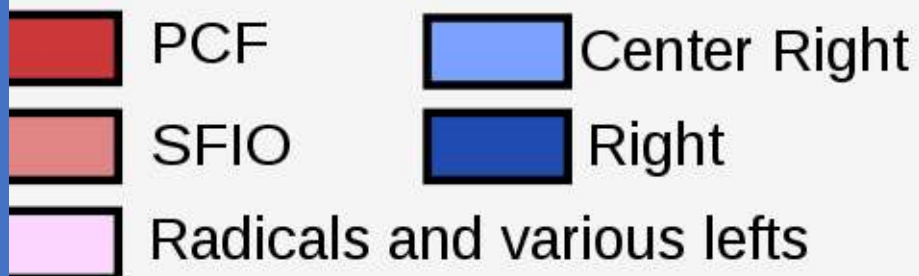


Socialist Party (founded in 1905) refused to join any “bourgeois” government until 1936





608 seats available



GENERAL ELECTION OF 3 MAY 1936

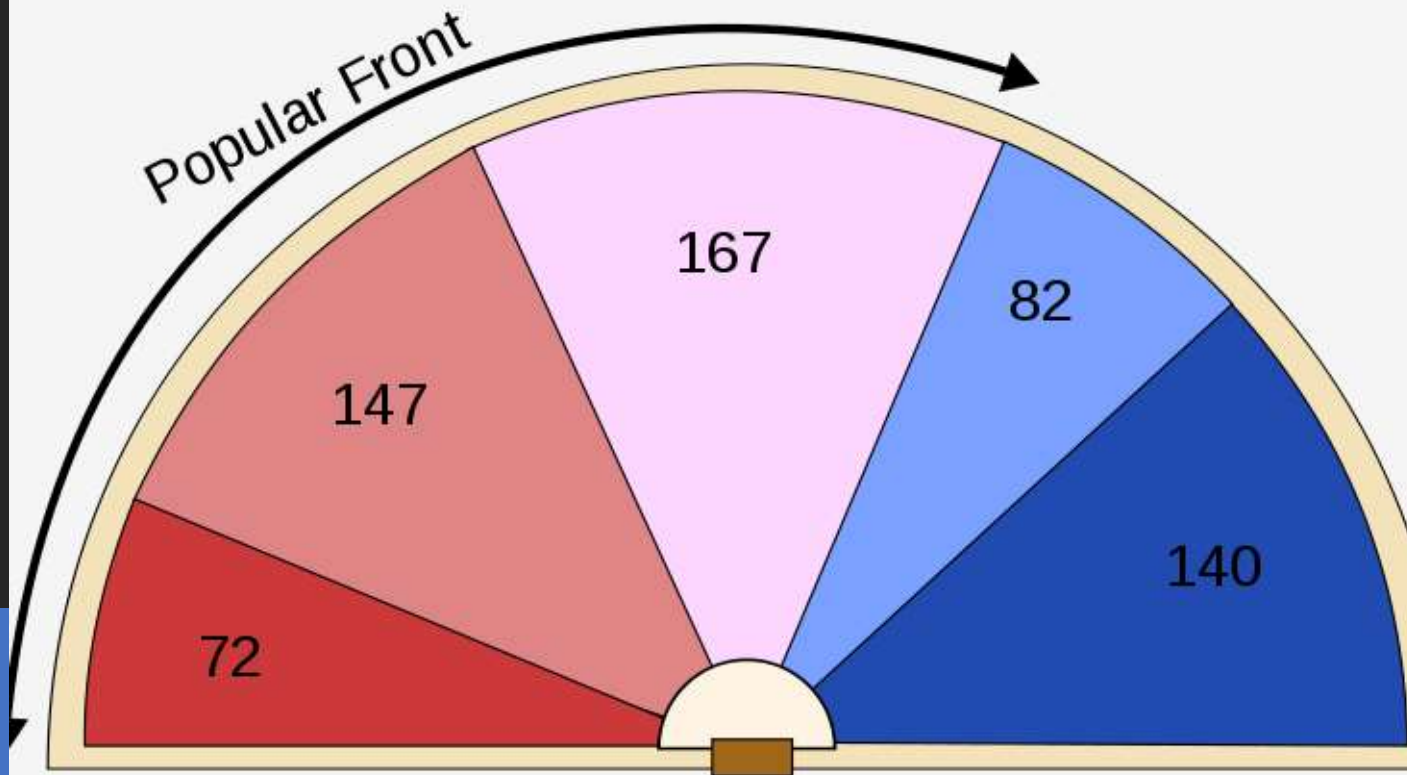
1936: alliance Socialist & Communist parties + Radicals

The **Popular Front** (a left-wing government)

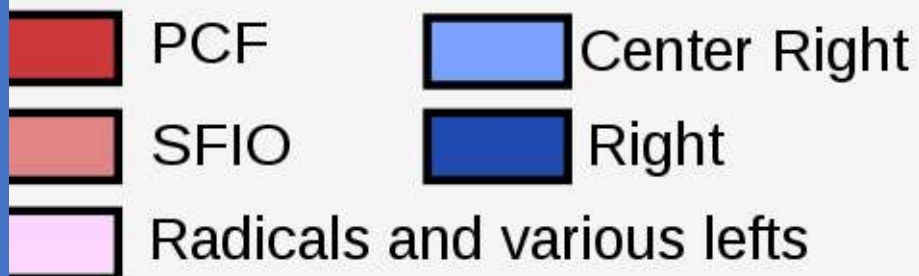
June 1936: massively
followed general
strike

The Matignon Agreements
(40-hour work week, collective
bargaining & paid vacations)





608 seats available



GENERAL ELECTION OF 3 MAY 1936

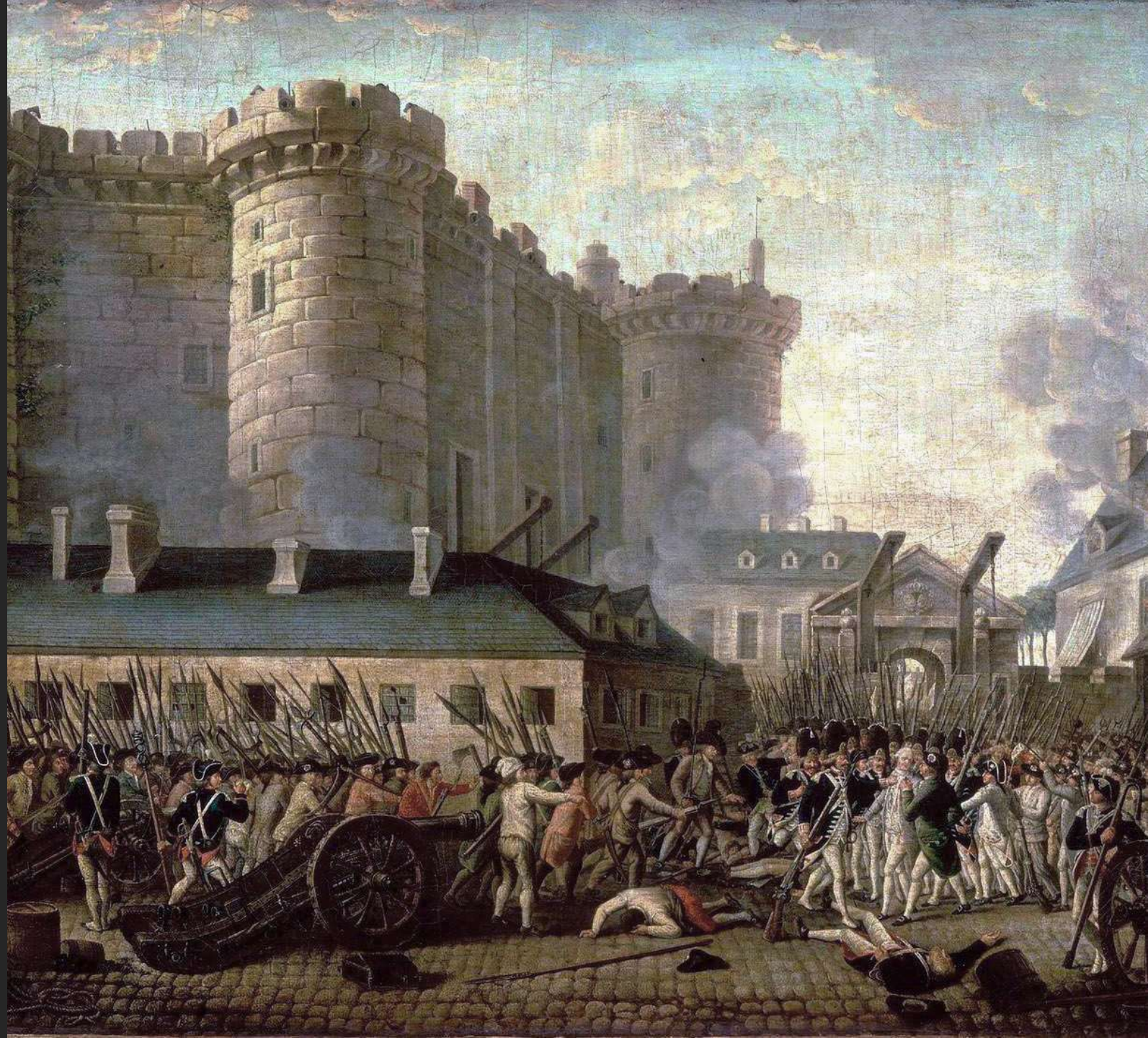
The Radicals (middle-class & heads of small companies) opposed to left-wing policies

The fall of the Popular Front government

The three sources of discord

The **weakening** of the representative system

Multiple political parties (**no clear majorities** leading to repeated street demonstrations and riots)

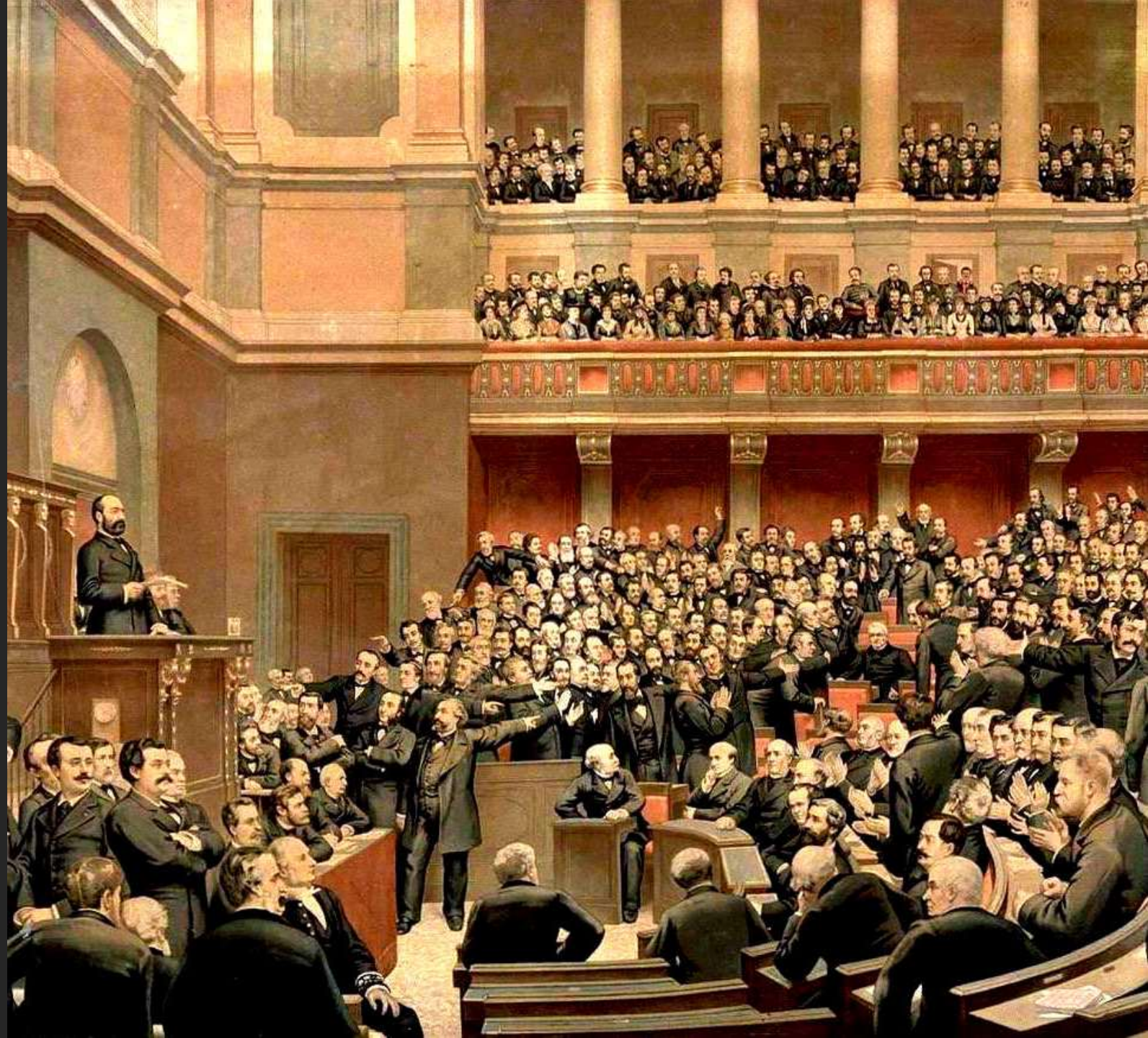


The founders of the Third Republic hostile to a strong executive branch-President

The Parliament **paramount**
Concentration of powers
(deputies & senators)

The National Assembly
=
National sovereignty

A **weak** executive branch



Patrice de MacMahon

Head of the Versailles army which defeated the Paris Commune (May 1871)

A devout conservative Catholic & a **monarchist**

1873: MacMahon elected **President of the French Republic** (royalist majority at the National Assembly)



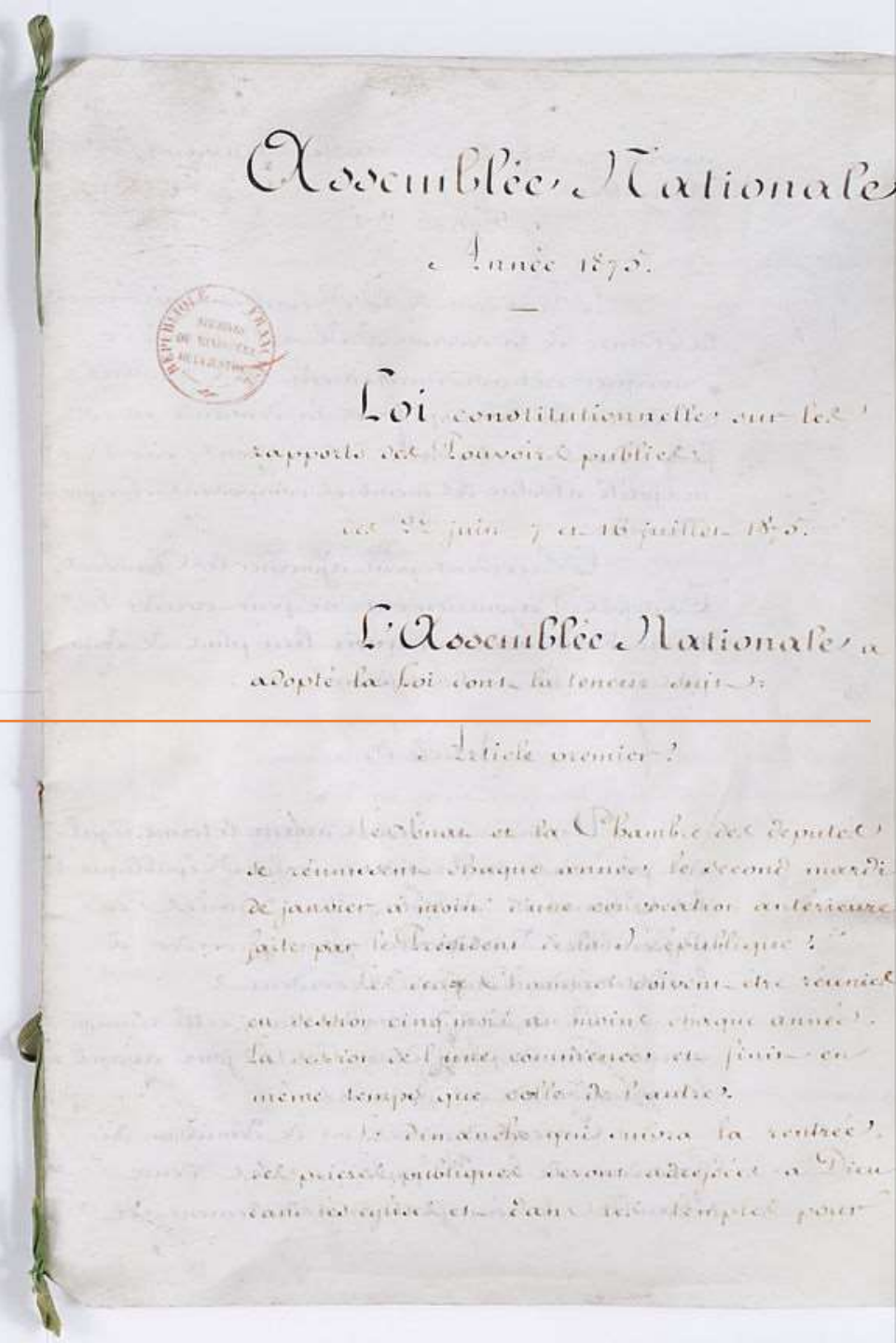
French Constitutional Laws of 1875

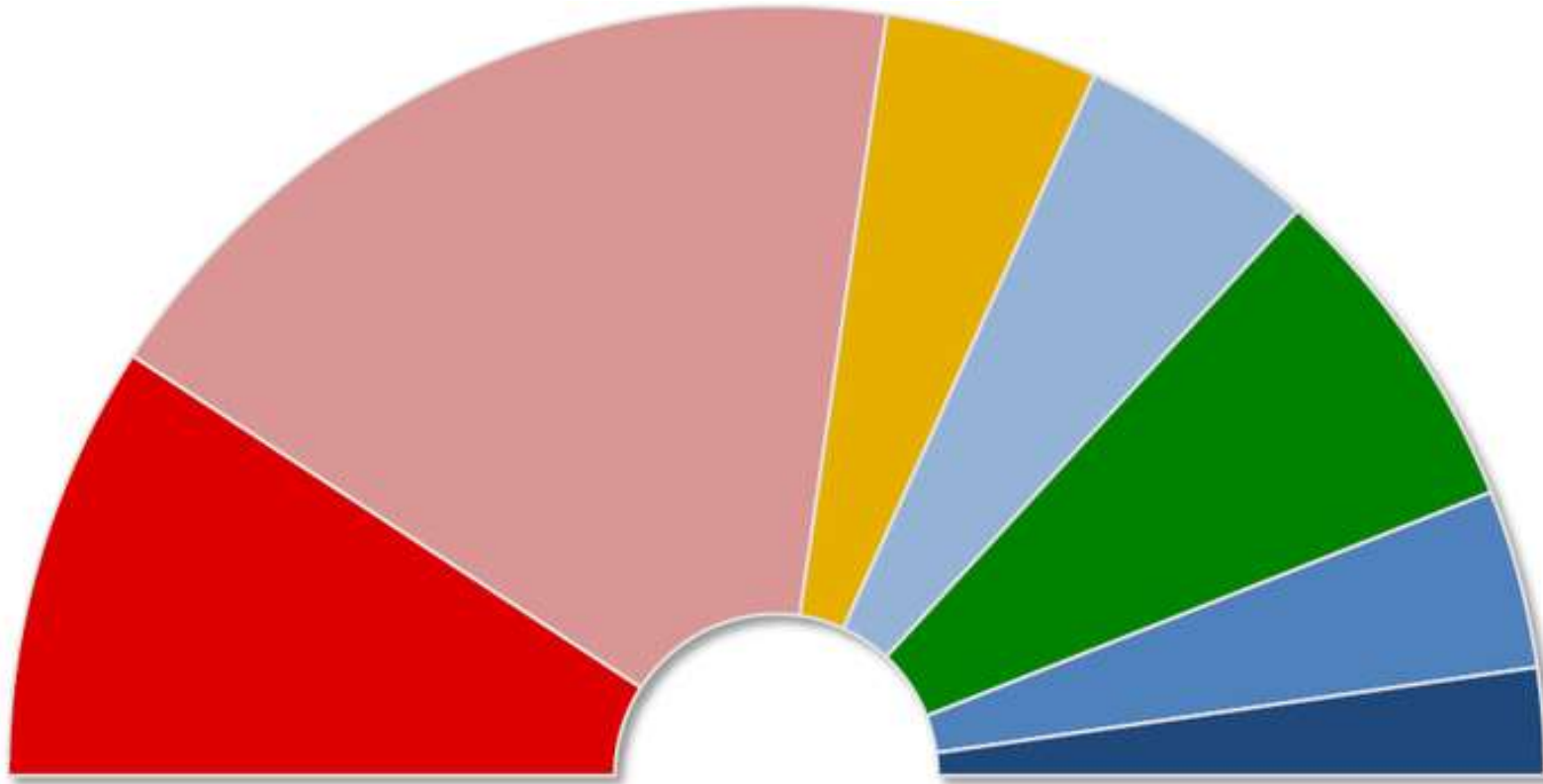
The establishment of a
parliamentary system

A two-house legislature: Senate and
Chamber of Deputies

A Council of Ministers responsible to
the Chamber

A president as head of state with
limited powers





Chambre des députés

*IIIe République - Elections des 8 février
et 5 mars 1876*

- Union républicaine [98]
- Gauche républicaine [193]
- Centre-gauche [48]
- Centre-droit [54]
- Bonapartistes [76]
- Orléanistes [40]
- Légitimistes [24]

The legislative
elections of **1876**

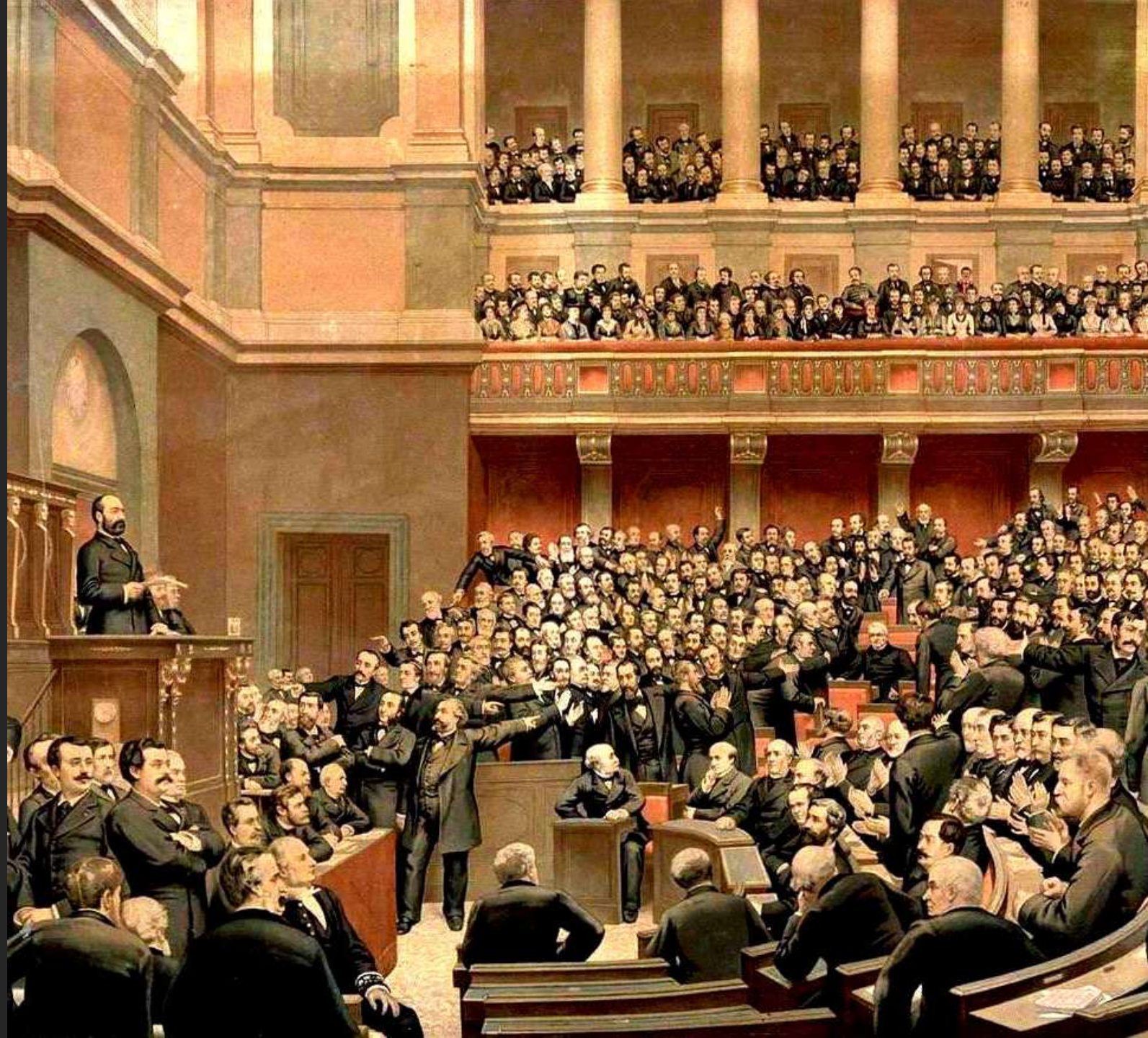
A clear **Republican**
majority


The 16 May 1877 crisis

Victory of Republicans over monarchists

The president of the Republic lost all his remaining powers
(the right to dissolve parliament)

The president of the Council of ministers dependent on a parliamentary majority






The French voters unable to
choose the government they
wanted

Voting for a candidate or a
political party without
knowing the name of the
president of the Council of
ministers

No majority governments

Fragile coalitions



Repeated calls for
constitutional reform
(executive branch too weak)

No success

The solution: to govern by
decrees

No majority governments

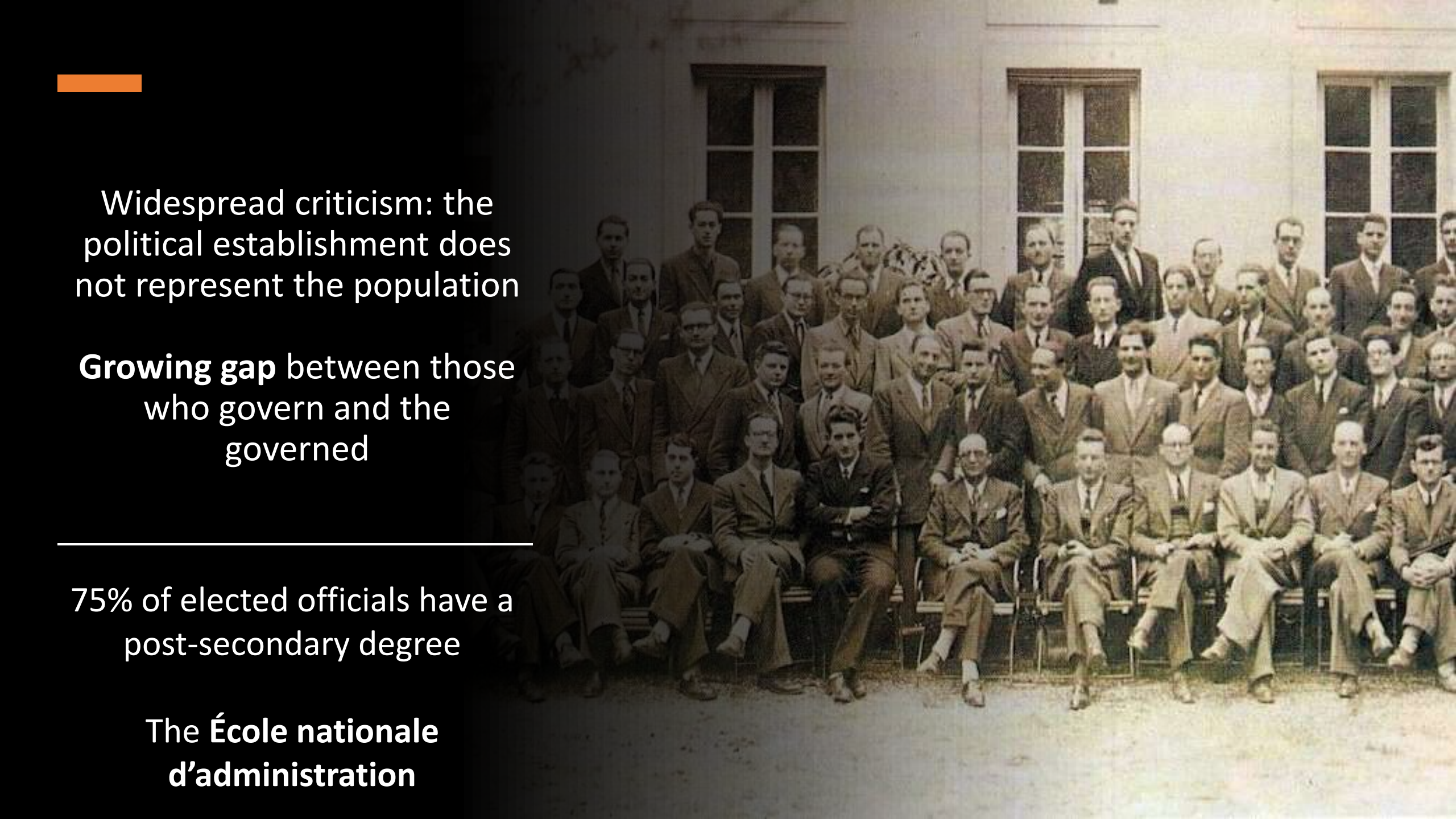
Fragile coalitions



Growing criticisms towards the
representative system

A disconnected **political class**
too eager to seek re-election

Political dynasties
Accusations of corruption

A large group of men, likely students or graduates of the École nationale d'administration, are posed for a formal group photograph. They are arranged in several rows, with some seated in the front and others standing behind. All are wearing suits and ties, typical of mid-20th-century formal attire. The background shows a building with large, multi-paned windows.

Widespread criticism: the political establishment does not represent the population

Growing gap between those who govern and the governed

75% of elected officials have a post-secondary degree

**The École nationale
d'administration**



The **Socialist Party** (a “worker’s party) never included many workers

Communist Party: 65 workers out of 150 deputies in the 1950s


Women not represented until 1945

39% of women in 2017

Minorities not represented

Oligarchy: a political regime in which most of the powers are kept within the hands of a small group of individuals

Oligarchy



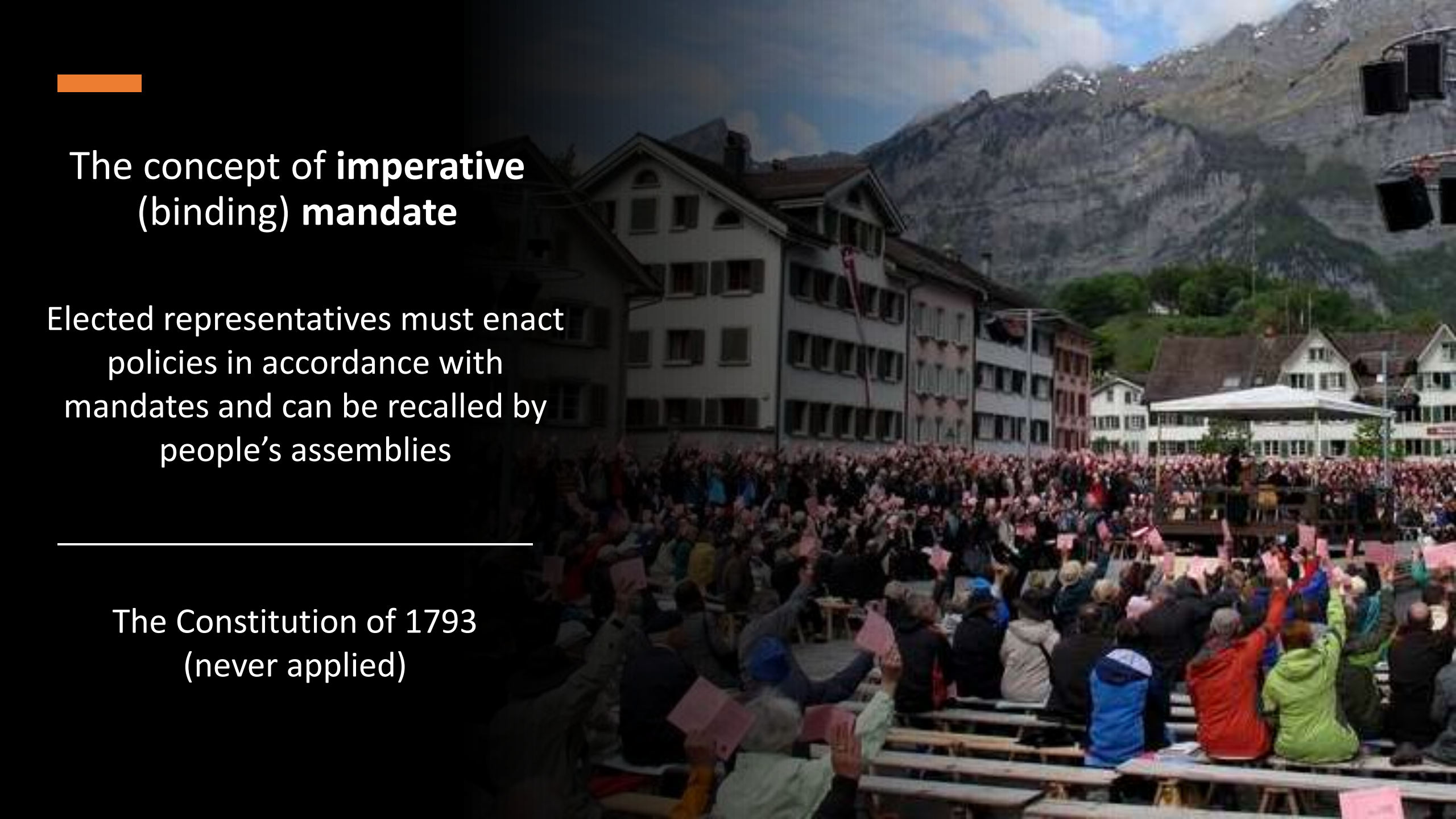
Direct democracy: the solution?

Growing **frustrations**

The sovereign people elects its representatives

Once elected the people's representatives ignore the people



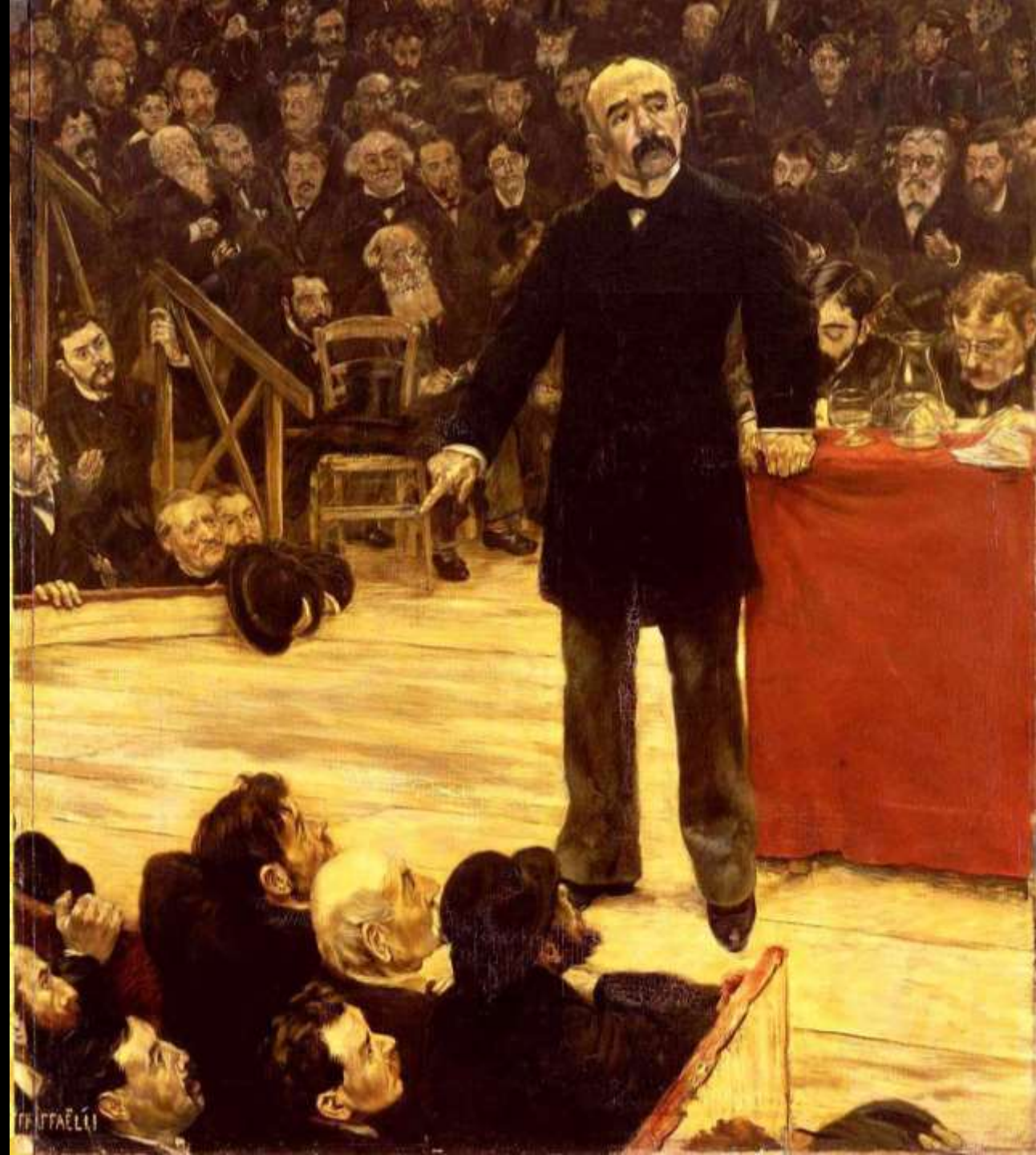
The background image shows a large crowd of people gathered in a town square, likely in Switzerland, with traditional European architecture and a large mountain in the background. The crowd is seated on wooden benches, and many people are holding up pink cards. The scene is set in a town square with traditional European architecture, including multi-story buildings with many windows. In the background, a large, rugged mountain with some snow is visible under a cloudy sky. The overall atmosphere suggests a significant public event or referendum.

The concept of **imperative** (binding) **mandate**

Elected representatives must enact
policies in accordance with
mandates and can be recalled by
people's assemblies

The Constitution of 1793
(never applied)

Georges Clemenceau (1885)



De Gaulle in **1958**: a new Constitution

Political powers concentrated
within the executive branch of
government & incarnated by
the president of the Republic

1962: the election of the
president by universal suffrage



The Algerian War (1954-1962) and the fall of the Fourth Republic

Only a stable and strong
political regime able to
bring back peace





COMMUNIQUÉ
À LA NATION
28 avril 1969
« JE CESSE
D'EXERCER
MES FONCTIONS
DE PRÉSIDENT
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE.
CETTE DÉCISION
PREND EFFET
AUJOURD'HUI
À MIDI. »
Général de Gaulle

28 AVR 1969



AVEC VOUS POUR VOUS

DE GAULLE
SE RETIRE DU POUVOIR



RÉFÉRENDUM

du 27 avril 1969 relatif à la
régionalisation et à la réforme du Sénat

NON 52,41% OUI 47,59%

TIRAGE LIMITÉ
numéroté de 1 à 200

N° 96

EUROPA FDC SERVICE
Conseil de l'Europe
67 Strasbourg



President Jacques Chirac
supported a European
Constitution

The NO site won the day but
Jacques Chirac did not resign



The Treaty of Lisbon
(2007) approved by the
French Parliament





65,1%
EMMANUEL MACRON



34,9%
MARINE LE PEN



The principle of **verticality**

**Growing number of
voters abstain**

**Abstention rate: 40% in 2007, 57% in
2017 (legislative elections)**



A pacified France?
Not for tomorrow...

