

EUROPEAN HISTORY

Rational Ideas and fear determined the course of French Revolution in the eighteenth century. Discuss.

ANSWER:

→ Introduction

→ Rational Ideas

→ • Voltaire
• Montesquieu
• Rousseau
• Diderot

Fears led to.

Political Structural

1) Introduction:

"The revolution was born of the contradiction between a society of orders and the equality of individuals promoted by Enlightenment thought"

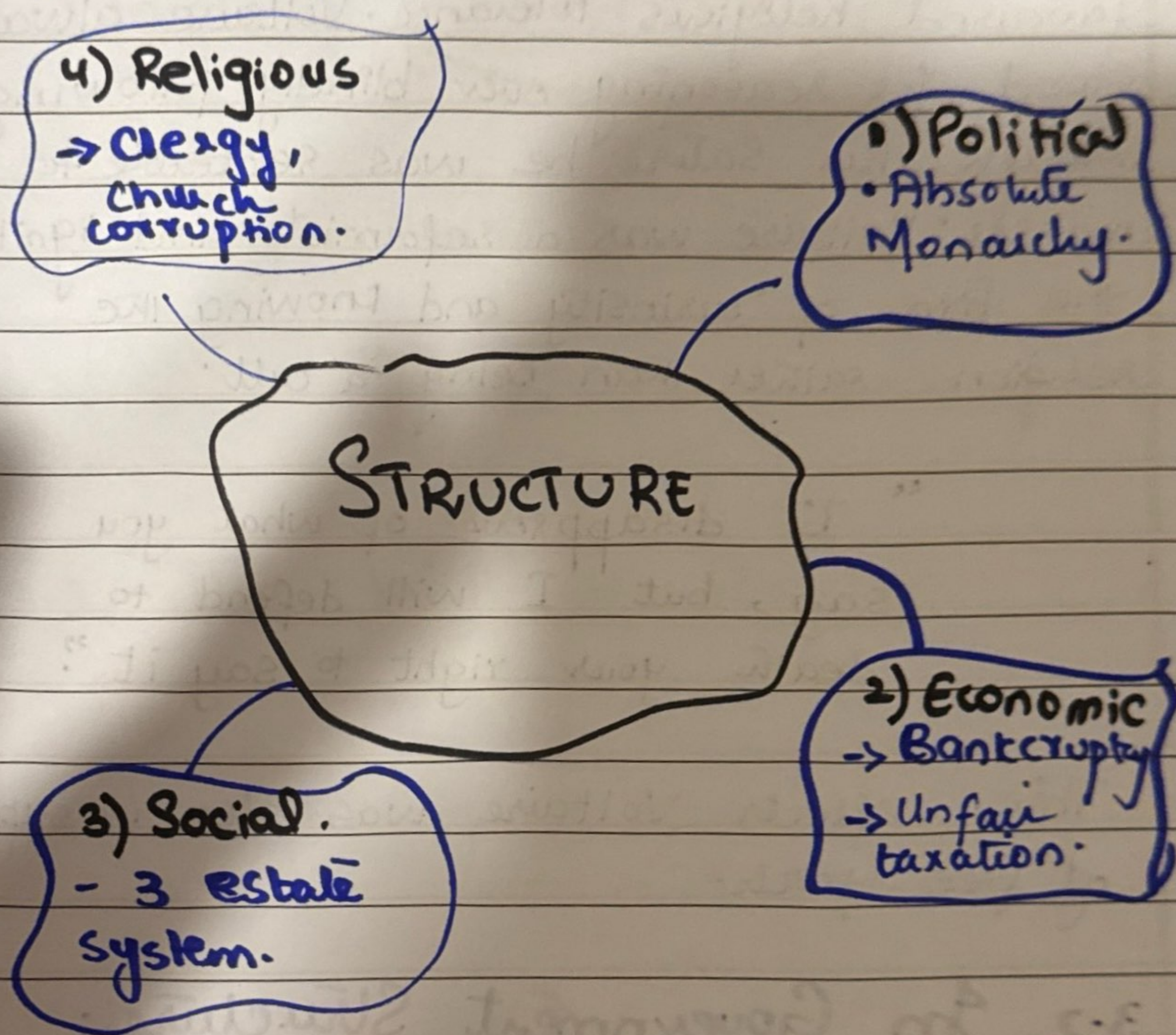
- Historian Francois.

The rational ideas and the fear became the beacon of revolution. Revolution paved its way through the hearts and minds of the people before materialising in 1789. The enlightenment era paved the way for rationality through discussions, press and pamphlets. The work of Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau did not go in vain but in fear when the people were in economic downturn and had nothing to lose then the French Revolution showed its drastic effects from the culmination of storming Bastille to take over of Napoleon.

the liberalism emerged in France through rationalisation and fear.

2) The Structure in the Ancien Regime.

France was following the below structure before the French revolution.



"France was a rich nation but her people were poor."

3) The Role of Rational Ideas in the course of French Revolution:

Rational Ideas also known as the Era of Enlightenment did set the tone of French Revolution but indirectly.

3.1, Rationality over blind following:

Voltaire was the proponent of Rationality in France. Voltaire attacked church and favoured Religious tolerance. Voltaire always stood for reasoning over blindly following. Through his Satire he was relateable to masses. Voltaire was a reformist and ignited the fire of curiosity and knowing the religion rather than being a cult.

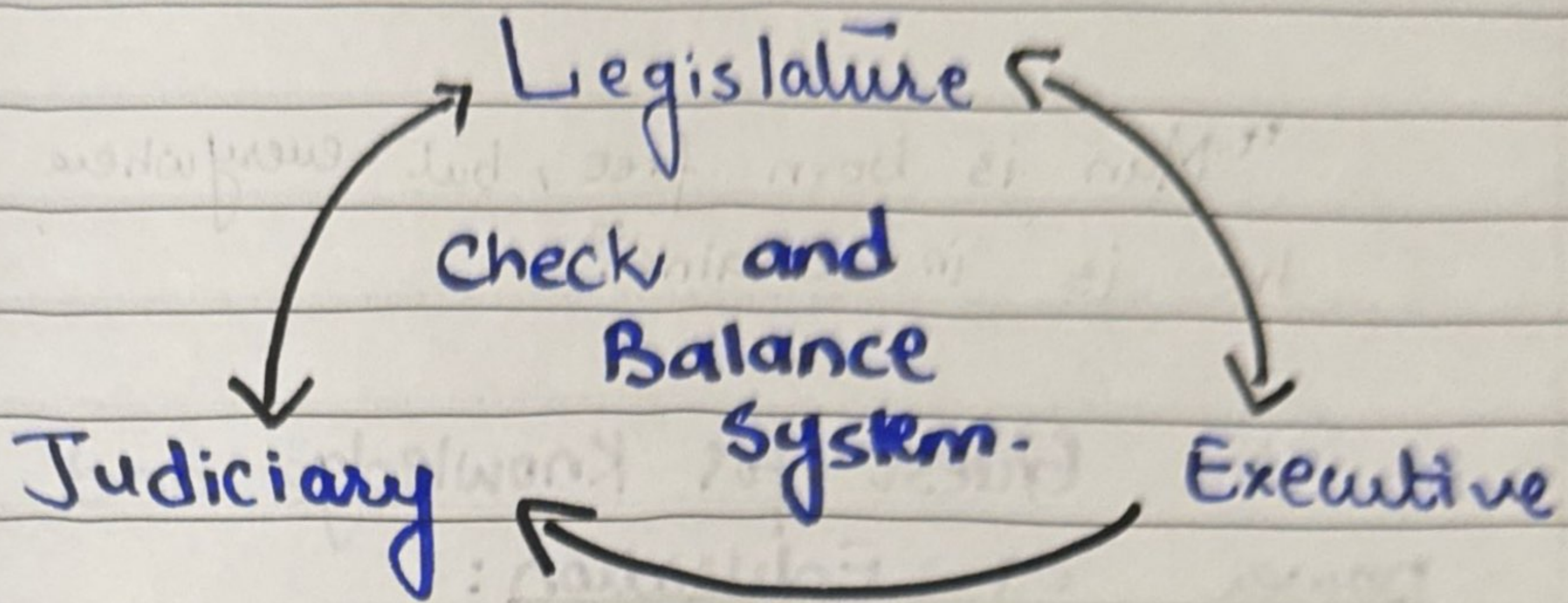
"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to death your right to say it".

This reflects Voltaire was also in support of free speech.

3.2, In Government Structure: Montesquieu and Check and Balance System:

The democracy's foundation was laid by Montesquieu in his work 'The Spirit of Laws 1748'. Montesquieu, for the first time spoke against Absolutism. He pointed out, criticised and above all gave the

Solution: Montesquieu believed in:
 "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

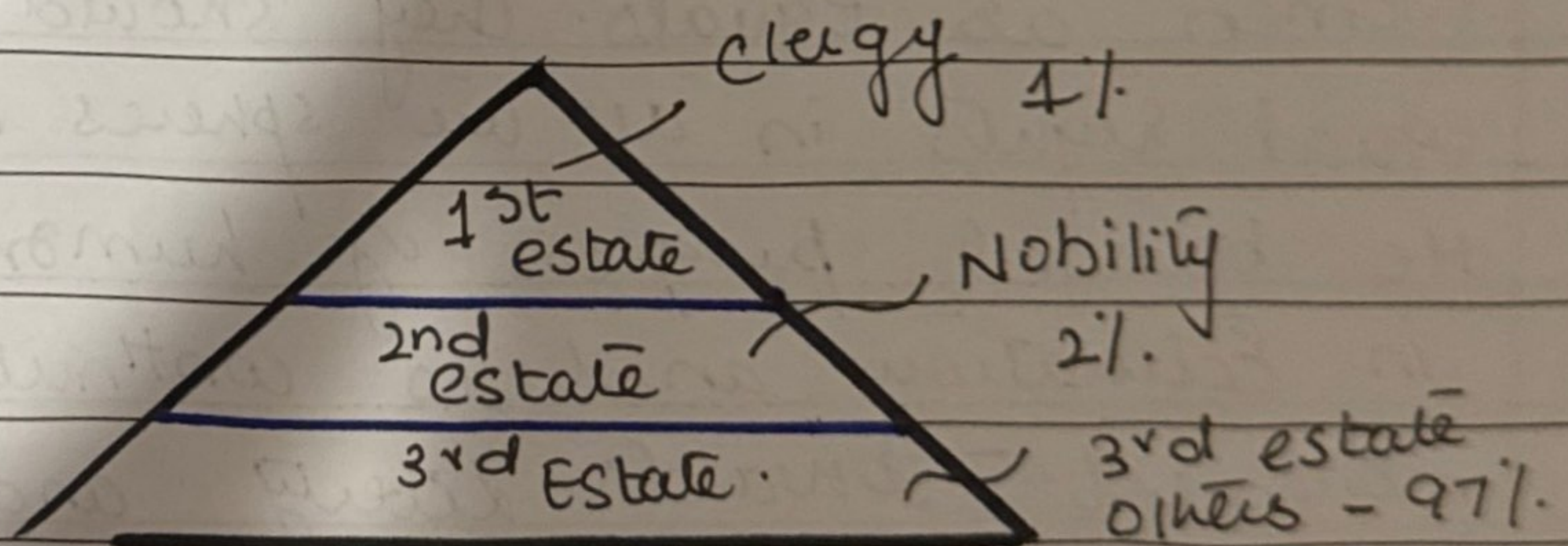


Montesquieu believed,

"Power should check power".

3.3, The Will of People:

In a state like France, where citizens were subjects of the Monarchy and divided into three estates. The 3rd estate



had no say at all. It was Rousseau who through his work of Social Contract (1762) gave the idea of General Will. Rousseau was against Monarchy.

and Absolutism. This further led to people's choice and if ruler failed to protect people then the people have all the right to overthrow the ruler.

"Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains."

3.4, The Quest for Knowledge and the power of Education:

Diderot, was the co-editor of Encyclopédie and advocated for rationality and critical thinking. He believed knowledge and education can empower people which will further lead to social progress.

3.5, Equality and Universal Suffrage:

Condorcet, Advocate of Universal Equality and Knowledge. Treating Men and Women as Equals. They should have equal rights in all the spheres of life. He believed progress of humanity lies in Education and is continuous movement towards Liberty and Reason.

"No one is born to serve another."

4) The Role of Fear in the course of French Revolution:

4-1, 3rd Estates disproportionality and fear of inequality:

King Louis XVI called the Third Estate in the General Assembly that was summoned after 175 years. The Representation in the General Assembly was as follows:

Clergy (1%)	→ 1 Vote
Nobility (2%)	- 1 Vote
3 rd (97%)	- 1

This disproportionality meant, the Third Estate despite being in majority would always be outnumbered by 2:1 ratio. This fear further led to heavy taxation and economic debts, discontent of the Third Estate.

The burden of war and taxation was borne by the Third Estate.

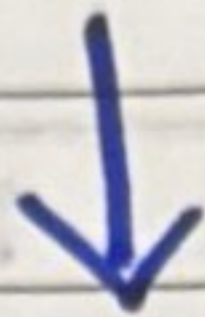
The 1st and 2nd Estates along with the Monarchy would live a luxurious life.

"France on the eve of 1789, was a volcano covered

with calm snow - calm on
the surface, but ready to erupt".
- G. M. Trevelyan.

4.2, This fear further led
to:-

Formation of
National
Assembly



Tennis Court
Oath (1789).



Declaration of
the Rights of
Man and
of the Citizen.



Storming of the
Bastille



Attacks on Foreign
countries out of
pre-emptive fear.

5-

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, Rational Ideas raise awareness amongst common people of France and the inequality they were subjected to. This further led to the unleashing of potential with the fear that erupted with every step and reestablished its position. In order to protect their position and ^{topple} monarchy.