Discussion Guide

Directions: Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).

1. What was the situation in France in 1792 that led to the execution of Louis XVI?

2. What stance against the old regime drove Robespierre’s support for executing Louis XVI? How would you compare Robespierre to the leaders of the American Revolution and their view of the society that preceded the American Revolution?

3. How did the Committee of Public Safety determine whether an individual was an “enemy” of the revolution? What is dangerous about this method? Who was susceptible to being declared an “enemy” of the revolution? What impact did it have on the health of the political culture and civil society of France?

4. How did the actions of the Committee of Public Safety contradict their stated beliefs in the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity?

5. Did the Terror contradict the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen? Or, can the roots of the Terror be found in the national sovereignty and “general will” of the document? Defend your answer using evidence from the declaration as well as the narrative.

6. How did Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety seek to silence their opponents? Why is it important not to silence your opponents?