

SRIRAM'S IAS



GENERAL STUDIES

WORLD HISTORY

(AMERICAN, FRENCH AND RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS)

.....
11A/22; 1st Floor; Old Rajender Nagar; New Delhi - 60

Ph. 011-25825591; 42437002

73-75; 1st Floor; Ring Road; Beside GTB Metro Station

Kingsway Camp; New Delhi.

Ph. 08447273027

The American Revolution

The American revolution was one of the most important events that occurred in the third quarter of the 18th century in the western hemisphere. By *this the supremacy of England came to an end over the colonists of America*. To understand the causes, course and the significance of this revolution a brief survey of the *colonisation of America, Anglo-French rivalry, the nature of the colonists, etc;* are very essential.

Christopher Columbus, in the year 1492, landed on a small island which is one of the group now called the Bahamas. Thus from that year the history of the United States of America was started. The history of the United States is the history of the European settlement of a large part of the North American continent. *Thus Columbus' discovery began the opening up of the 'New World' by the Europeans.*

Spain quickly followed up Columbus' discovery. But it was the central and southern parts of America to which the Spaniards went, not to the north. Mexico, Peru, Florida, etc; were the chief Spanish colonies in the central America.

France was the other European country which showed interest in establishing colonies in north America. Hudson Bay territory, New Foundland, Novo Scotio, Qubeck, Snt. Laurant region, Louisiana, etc; were the French colonies in north America.

England was the other important European power which showed very keen interest in establishing colonies in north America. *Her colonies were confined to the eastern Atlantic sea-board of north America.* Virginia, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, etc; were the chief colonies of England in north America.

Colonisation led to *colonial rivalry*. England and France vied with each other in expanding their colonies and this paved the way for *Anglo-French wars*. These two countries participated in the *Spanish Succession war, Austrian Succession war* and finally in the *Seven Year's war* which was terminated with the *peace of Paris in 1763*. In these wars England came out successfully and this gave a death blow to the French colonial supremacy in north America. *France surrendered Canada, Hudson Bay territory, New Foundland, Novo Scotia, etc; to England.* The peace of Paris of 1763 sealed the fate of France in America. *She had only Louisiana under her control.*

Exactly twenty years after the peace of Paris i.e; in 1783 England's supremacy over the thirteen colonies came to an end. The American revolution was mainly responsible for this change. The series of events that which the name American revolution is given covered only the twenty years after 1763. But many causes of the revolution lay further back in the history of the colonies.

Nature of the colonies and the colonists :

The settlers in the colonies went there *to find freer way of life*. They found it, *particular in the frontier region*, where the conditions forced men and women to show vigour and enterprise.

Laws for the colonies were made chiefly by the *colonial assemblies*, and the government in London interfered little with their every day life, *except in the one matter of trade*.

Most of the colonies had *governors appointed by the king*. These governors frequently quarrelled with the colonial assemblies, *which had one powerful weapon control of the governor's salaries*.

Each colony had its own assembly. The colonists soon developed the habit of free political discussions. In New England a very democratic institution called the "*Town Meeting*" arose. This was a regular meeting open to all the inhabitants of the settlement, *at which all local problems and grievances were freely discussed*. Newspapers were developed. Further, they grew, during the 18th century, more conscious of their number of importance. In 1764, a "*Colonial Congress*", a meeting of the representatives of the colonies, took place at Albany. Here Benjamin Franklin put forward a *plan for a federation or union of the colonies*. But it was turned down. It was certain that, if ever any grave cause of quarrel arose between the colonists and England, the colonists would speak freely and act vigorously. *Such cause of quarrel was growing steadily during the 18th century. The British laws to regulate the colonial trade became a cause of concern*.

British laws to regulate colonial trade

In Britain during the 17th and 18th centuries it was generally believed by merchants and politicians *that colonies and colonial trade existed simply for the benefit of Britain*. The colonies were a market for British manufactures; colonial raw-materials were to benefit Britain. Hence the British parliament passed a series of laws regulating colonial trade and they are as follows.

- i. Navigation Acts : It is known from these acts *that all goods to and from the colonies had to be carried in English or colonial ships*. These ships should be managed by the persons of either English or colonial born.
- ii. Certain kinds of produce, known as "*the enumerated articles*" *could be sent to Europe only through England*; these included *furs, ships, masts, tar, turpentine, tobacco, etc*; - in fact, most of the chief colonial exports.
- iii. *Goods from Europe to the colonies had to go through England*.
- iv. *To prevent competition with English manufacturers, restrictions were placed on colonial industries*. For example the Iron Act of 1750 attempted to limit the manufacture of hardware in America.
- v. By the *Molasses Act of 1763*, a duty of *six pence a gallon* was placed on molasses imported to the colonies from the *French West Indies*. The object of this duty was that the colonies should buy their molasses from the *British West Indies*.

The colonists got some advantages and disadvantages out of these laws.

Advantages

- i. The Royal army protected their shipping, and they paid nothing towards its upkeep.
- ii. The laws regulating trade *prevented foreign competition* and certainly helped the economic development of the colonies. Some of the colonists, like the *Virginia tobacco growers*, had a monopoly of the British market.

- iii. The British government *paid a bounty* on the export of some colonial goods. For example the Iron Act was largely ignored. Smuggling and contraband trading were easy, and the *officials who administered the laws were slack and open to bribery.*

Disadvantages

- i. The laws, on the other hand, seriously damages the colonists. They involved numerous inconveniences, such as the *necessity of the unloading and loading in England the colonial goods bound for Europe.*
- ii. Further, both European goods bound for colonies and the colonial goods bound for Europe had to *pay customs duties in England.* But the worst defect was not inconvenience but *the customs duties.*
- iii. The real trouble was that the *whole system put the colonists at the mercy of the British merchants, who controlled the prices of the goods they bought and of those they sold.* Two examples will illustrate this.
 1. A colonist who *bought goods from France* had to bring them home by way of England, where they had to be transhipped before being sent to America; the *freight charges and the commissions* which he had to be paid to the English merchants *raised the price of the goods*, often to several times their real value.
 2. A *Virginian planter* who wanted to sell his tobacco crop could do so only in England. He had no chance of trying to get a higher price for it elsewhere in Europe, and he had to accept what the English merchants offered. Due to this the Virginian planters often ran heavily into debt.

The *Molasses Act* was a special grievance in *New England*. One of the New England's major industries was *distilling rum*. In this connection they engaged in a *triangular trade*. They carried rum to Africa and bought slaves with it. They took the slaves from America to the West Indies and there they picked up molasses from which the rum was distilled, and brought it home. The British West Indian islands could not provide enough molasses to keep the New England distillers employed. *Hence they bought it from the French West Indies.* The six penny duty was levied on the molasses purchased from the French West Indies. The six penny duty made the price of the French molasses so high that the New Englanders could not buy it. *So they smuggled it instead.* The result of the Molasses Act, which was slackly enforced, encouraged lawlessness. *The colonists showed clearly that they had no intention of keeping laws - especially English made laws - which it suited them to break.*

These trading regulations did not produce a movement for independence before 1763. But *they created irritation in the colonies, and encouraged the colonists to defy the laws made by the parliament in England.* This was the background against which the events developed after 1763 which ultimately led to the revolution.

The events leading to the revolution

i. Prohibiting Americans to settle in the lands located to the west of the Appalachian mountains

In 1763 the Indian tribes west of Virginia made a sudden and violent attack upon that colony. British troops with the measure of American assistance eventually defeated the Indian tribes. After that an act was passed forbidding the American settlers to move to the lands taken from the French across the Appalachians. The object of this act of 1763 was to prevent further disturbances of the Indians and to stop the

Americans from settling west of the mountains. But this act caused great irritation among the western settlers.

ii. Measures adopted by Britain to improve her finances

Great Britain, after the end of the Seven Year's War, found herself with a *national debt* nearly double what it had been before the war. Much had been spent in America, in winning Canada from the French.

Further, it was still thought it necessary to *maintain British troops* in America, partly as a safeguard against the French rebellion in Canada and partly to protect the colonists from the attacks of the Indian tribes.

The colonists, on the other hand, had spent comparatively little money on the war. Moreover, the *colonial merchants had made profits by supplying food and other goods to the British troops.*

Measures of George Grenville

George Grenville, who became the Prime Minister of England in 1763, began to *tighten the control of the American trade*. He ordered strict measures against the smugglers and the contraband trade. He set up *Vice Admiralty Courts* to try those who broke the trade laws. He empowered the royal officials to use "*Writs of Assistance*", which enabled them to search houses suspected of containing contraband goods. He was also responsible of passing several acts.

Sugar Act of 1764

In 1764 the *sugar Act* was passed and this replaced the useless Molasses Act of 1733. This act put a *duty of three pence a gallon on imported molasses*. His object was to obtain more money from the colonists in order to make them contribute towards the cost of keeping British troops in America.

Stamp Act of 1765

The above measures of Grenville aroused hostility and protests from the colonists. But *the real storm of protest burst when Grenville introduced his next measure, the Stamp Act*. In England revenue stamps - stamps on legal documents, licences, wills etc; - had been used for sometime a convenient form of taxation. Grenville proposed to extend the same system to America and this was approved by the parliament.

The result of the Stamp Act was astonishing.

- i. There was a *general cry of the colonists* - rich and poor alike - against the tax.
- ii. The *newspapers* attacked it violently.
- iii. *Mobs made bonfires* and burnt heaps of stamps.
- iv. *Workmen* formed groups calling themselves "*sons of Liberty*". They expressed their resentment towards the Stamp Act.
- v. *Radical leaders like Samuel Adams of Boston*, made inflammatory speeches against the Stamp Act and the British government.
- vi. The *merchants* formed a "*non-importation agreement*" according to which they refused to import goods from England as long as Stamp Act was a law.
- vii. The *lawyers and merchants* encouraged the mobs in opposing the stamp act. A young Virginian lawyer by name *Patrick Henry* made himself famous in American history by his provocative speech in Virginian Assembly. In that speech *he questioned the right of the British Parliament to tax the people of Virginia.*

- viii. Finally, representatives of nine colonies held a *Stamp Act Congress* at New York. This Congress passed a resolution stating *that the British Parliament had no right to tax the colonists without their consent.*

The colonists found a *battle-cry with which to challenge the British rule - 'No Taxation without Representation'*. The colonists argued that the British Parliament had no right to tax them unless they sent representatives to it. Distance prevented them sending representatives, and *so their own assemblies only could tax them.* At the Stamp Act Congress nine of the colonies united for the first time against the British. Finally, the whole agitation showed up the weakness of the British rule in America.

In Britain the opinion was divided. The king, George III, was strongly against the Americans. Many politicians, and notably two of the ablest of them William Pitt and Edmund Burke supported the cause of the colonists.

In the end of the Stamp Act was repealed due to the influence of the British merchants whose trade was killed by the "non-importation agreement". But the British introduced another act known *Declaratory Act*", declaring that *Britain had every right to tax the colonists.* To the Americans it seemed that they had successfully defied British authority. Such a feeling led them later to further defiance; and in the end to a demand for independence. Yet in 1765 few Americans wanted independence. The agitation ceased. The wound seemed to have closed.

Charles Townshend's measures

The House of Commons in the year 1767 compelled the British government to reduce the land tax. Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer, decided to make up of the deficit by taxing the Americans. So he introduced a new series of customs duties on *paper, paints, glass and tea.* Having imposed these duties Townshend died. Once again there were riots, furious speeches, pamphlets and once again implemented '*non-importation agreement*'. The British government made renewed efforts to stop smuggling and the British garrison in Boston was strengthened. Most of the colonists were on the side of the colonies. In 1769 a mob in Rhode Island burnt the British revenue ship "*Liberty*". Thus Charles Townshend fanned the flames of hostility.

Lord North's responsibility

The year 1770 was a very crucial year. Lord North became the Prime Minister of England and George III was the king. He repealed all of Townshend's duties *except that on tea.* In America the so-called "*Boston Massacre*" occurred during this period, i.e; in 1770. The British soldiers in Boston were the victims of all manner of insults. Tempers soon frayed and incidents were frequent. One of these started with a brawl outside the customs-house. Soldier fired on a crowd, *three citizens of Boston were killed the five injured.* The revolutionary agitators saw a splendid opportunity in this incident to rouse the feelings of the people. They gave wide propaganda to the incident in the newspapers under the caption of "*Boston Massacre*", Yet from 1770 to 1773 the situation seemed to be growing less dangerous. *It was Lord North's Tea Act of 1773 that provoked the crisis which led directly to revolution and war.*

The East India Company, the chief importers of tea to Britain, found themselves with huge stock of tea on their hands in 1773. Most of the tea drunk in the colonies was *smuggled tea.* To enable the East India Company to sell their tea in America, Lord North introduced the act permitting them to take it direct to the colonies in their own ships and sell it direct to the American shop-keepers. *This would reduce the price of the tea and even make it cheaper than the smuggled tea.* It would, in fact, have benefited the colonists. *But the American merchants, who made profits out of smuggling, would have been hard hit.* Once again they united with the radical and stirred up popular feeling against the new act and the East India Company's tea.

The tea ships arrived, but none would buy it. *Boston was the centre of opposition to Britain.* Here the people would not allow the tea to land and the governor of Massachusetts would not allow the ships to go out of harbour without unloading. It was at this stage in Boston, Samuel Adams and his followers disguised themselves as the Red Indians made entry into the East India Company ships and threw all the 348 chests of tea into the water. This incident is popularly known as the famous "*Boston Tea Party*". This was the immediate cause for the out break of the American revolution. Besides the "*Boston Tea Party*" there were some more factors that paved the way for the revolution.

The nature of the colonial administration

The colonial administration was very defective. The colonies were governed by the governors and captains who were nominated by the British government. The colonies had then elected assemblies, but the governors were not responsible to them. This system resulted in the conflict between the two branches of government, i.e; *the executive branch*, represented by the governor and his officials, and the *legislative branch*, represented by the elected colonial assemblies. This kind of defective system of government could not obviously serve the interests of the colonists properly, and hence their resentment against it.

Religious and temperamental differences

There were *religious and temperamental differences* between the American colonists and the people of the Motherland (Britain). While the colonists were *puritans*, the people of England had faith in the *Church of England*. The colonists were *liberal of outlook* and never influenced by tradition and customs. The Englishmen were on the other hand *very much fond of old customs, traditions* and institutions. Above all *the long distance between the two countries and lack of proper means of communication weakened the ties between England and her colonies in America.* Hence the British government could not exercise an effective control over them. Under these circumstances, there was no possibility of any compromise between the two and a conflict was inevitable.

Self-sufficiency

Another factor was the *gradual attainments of self-sufficiency by the people of the colonies.* In the beginning, the colonists were dependent on England for the articles of daily use. But as the time passed on, they took various steps to improve agriculture and industry. By producing all the articles of daily use in the colonies, *the colonists soon became self-sufficient and self-reliant.* They were no longer dependent on England and were not eager to maintain any contacts with the mother country. Hence they tried to seek more autonomy and freedom.

Removal of French threat

Though the English imposed various political and economic restriction upon the colonies, the latter remained loyal to the mother country *as long as there was a threat of French invasion of the colonies and* Britain offered protection against such invasion. However, the conquest of Canada by the English after the *Seven Year's War (1756 - 1763)* removed any such threat to the colonies from the French, and the colonies no longer stood in the need of the help of the mother-country for their defence. They, infact, felt it useless to stick to the mother country and hence started their struggle for independence. A French writer rightly remarked, "*England will soon repent of having removed the only check (by conquering Canada from the French) that could keep her colonies in awe*".

Course of the revolution

The "*Boston Teac Party*", as stated earlier, precipitated the crisis. The British government took firm action and passed the *Boston Port Act* according to which the port was closed. Meetings were forbidden.

The closing of the port of meant unemployment. In 1774 a meeting was held in Philadelphia (in New Jersey) called the *First Continental Congress* and all the colonies except Georgia sent delegates. The Congress adopted an agreement *against importing British goods*. It also agreed *not to export goods to Britain*. The Congress drew up a *Declaration of Rights* and asserted that the British parliament had no right to tax the colonies without their content. It condemned the laws passed by the British government and sent a petition wherein it demanded repeal of all the acts passed by the British parliament since 1765. The British refused and *thus started the revolution in 1775*.

The first shots were fired in *Lexington* by the British and the first fighting occurred at *Concord*. In 1775 the *Second Continental Congress* met at Philadelphia and it made George Washington as the commander-in-chief of the colonial forces. In 1776 the Congress issued the Declaration of Independence and it was drawn by Thomas Jefferson.

Several battles were fought between the colonists and the British but ultimately the British force under the command of General Cornwallis faced defeat in the *battle of Yorktown in 1781*. The war went on in name till 1783 and *finally in the same year the peace treaty was concluded at Paris*. By this Britain recognised the independence of the 13 colonies, and handed over to them all territory in America westwards to the Mississippi, *except Canada which she kept and Florida which she returned to Spain*. Thus the Americans won their independence.

Causes for the success of the colonists

- i. The British government had to conduct its campaigns from 3000 miles away. It took at least *three months* for a message and its answer to cross the Atlantic. *Thus the distance reduced the strength and stamina of Britain*.
- ii. The *area of fighting was large* and the number of British troops small. Further, the British had little experience of war-fare in colonial conditions.
- iii. Lord North's government was one of the *most incompetent ones* in the British history.
- iv. *French, anxious for revenge for the loss of Canada, was hostile to Britain and eventually joined the colonists*. Their navy played a very vital role in the battle of Yorktown.
- v. The colonists discovered in George Washington one of the most outstanding leaders of the modern times. His uprightness and honesty were proverbial. Equally impressive were his unselfish devotion and his courage in adversity.

Significance of the American revolution

The American Revolution was an event of great importance not only in the history of USA and Great Britain, but also in the history of the entire humanity.

1. The American Revolution led to the emergence of a new independent state, namely the *United States of America*. It gradually became one of the two most powerful countries of the world.
2. The Revolution encouraged the *spirit of nationalism and patriotism* in America as well as abroad. *It recognised the rights of the people to revolt against their autocratic rulers and regain their freedom*.
3. The American Revolution, by *establishing democracy in USA*, gave inspiration to the other countries to follow the example of USA. After the revolution, the Americans adopted a democratic form of government, *based on the principles of liberty, equality*

and fraternity, instead of the monarchical form of government. The Declaration of Independence of 1776 not only *recognised that sovereignty not only resides in the people, but also emphasised the fact that the people can organise the government to safeguard their rights.*

4. The American Revolution is also significant for the fact that it resulted not only in the creation of the *first specimen of a written constitution*, but also in the foundation of the *first federation in the world*. Many other countries of the world took inspiration from this American example and come to have written constitutions.

Further, the 13 colonies united together to form a federation. It was *the first Federal Republic in the world*. It was a novel political experiment, which also proved to be a success despite of many setbacks. The 13 units recognised a central authority (federal government) for common interests, but retained considerable local autonomy. Due to its success, many modern democratic countries, such as *Canada, Australia, India*, etc; had followed the American example, and *adopted federal form of government, of course, with certain variations to suit their own requirements.*

5. The success of the Americans in bringing about a revolution and establishing democracy greatly inspired many people in the world.
 - i. It became a source of inspiration to the *colonies in Latin America*, who began to fight for their independence from their mother-countries.
 - ii. Encouraged by the defeat of Britain in America, the *Irish people* launched a struggle for the *legislative independence* of their own country and ultimately succeeded in getting the same.
 - iii. The success of the Americans had its *effect on England* also. The personal rule of George III was brought to an end, and the *party system* and the *Cabinet form of government* were strengthened.
 - iv. The success of the Americans also *inspired the French people*. Though French had helped the colonists against the British mainly for political purposes, the French people indirectly benefited from this participation in the revolution. The French soldiers who had participated in the revolution began to feel that if they could help others to win freedom, there was no reason why they could not free themselves from the oppressive rule of their own degenerate and corrupt monarchs. *They were very much impressed by the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity of the American Revolution*. When they came back to France, they began to preach the same principles in France. These ideas revolutionised the minds of the French people, and brought the French Revolution nearer.
6. The American Revolution had its impact on England in many a way. In the first place it brought *commercial loss to the British*. The 13 colonies served as *market for the finished goods of England*, and *provided different kinds of raw materials*. The loss of the colonies, therefore proved quite harmful for the commercial and industrial development of England.

In the second place it necessitated *certain changes in the colonial policies and practices of the British*. The English were now forced to grant more responsible government to their colonies in other countries so that she might not lose them, ex.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand and later India. Thus the British Colonies passed from one stage to another, i.e; *from the mercantile or monopoly stage to free trading stage.*

Assessment

The struggle between the British colonies in America and the motherland has come to be known the American Revolution or the American war of independence, which began in 1775 and ended in 1783, resulting in the defeat of the British and the establishment of the United States of America. *It was a great land-mark in the history of the world and produced very important and far-reaching effects on the subsequent history of the human race.* Several factors and forces paved the way for the out break of the revolution.

- i. The *economic exploitation* of the colonies by the British. The English thought that the colonies existed for the mother country and hence various restrictions were imposed on the colonies' trade (both imports and exports) as well as industries. The *Navigation Acts* were the best example to illustrate it.
- ii. The *defective colonial administration.*
- iii. The colonial people strongly opposed the *British claim to the right to legislate for tax them.* Further, the colonists had no representation in the parliament. The British parliament passed Molasses Act, Sugar Act, Stamp Act, etc. The last one created a stormy atmosphere and also paved the way for the agitative slogan like "*No taxation without representation*".
- iv. The other cause was the *religious and temperamental differences* between the American colonists and Britain.
- v. The gradual attainment of *self-sufficiency* by the people of the colonists also precipitate the matter.
- vi. The other factor was the *removal of the threat from the French.* Though the English imposed various political and economic restrictions upon the colonies, the latter remained loyal to the mother country as long as there was the French threat to the colonies and Britain offered protection against the French threat. The French threat was removed by 1763, and the colonists no longer stood in the need of the help of the mother-country for their defence. Hence started their struggle for independence.
- vii. The immediate cause of the American Revolution was the "*Boston Tea Party*". Lord North repealed all the import duties imposed by Townshend, except the one on tea. As usual there was a popular opposition to this move and the leaders in the colonies tried to prevent unloading of tea from the ships of the East India Company in the colonial ports in general and that of Boston in particular. This created a revolutionary atmosphere, and the provocative acts of the British started the war of independence.

Several wars were fought during the course of the revolution. The Yark Town Battle fought in the year 1781 decided the fate of the British in the colonies. By 1783, according to *the Peace of Paris* the British colonial supremacy over the 13 states came to an end. So the United States of America came into existence.

Significance of the Revolution

The American Revolution was an event of great importance not only in the history of USA and Great Britain, but also in the history of the entire humanity. It had far-reaching consequences.

- i. The success of the Americans became a source of inspiration to the colonies in North America, who began to fight for their independence from their mother-countries. It also gave inspiration to the French and Irish people to rebel against the tyrannical monarchy and colonial oppression.
- ii. It created a new independent state, namely the United States of America.
- iii. The American Revolution, by establishing democracy in USA, gave inspiration to the other countries to follow the example of USA. The Declaration of Independence of 1776 laid great stress on the basic principles of democracy, i.e; liberty, equality and fraternity. It also recognised that sovereignty resides in the people. It also emphasised the fact that the people can organise the government to safeguard their rights.
- iv. It is also significant for the fact that it resulted not only in the creation of the first specimen of a written constitution, but also in the foundation of the first Federal Republic in the world.
- v. The American Revolution necessitated certain changes in the colonial policies and practices of the British. It saw the end of mercantilism or monopoly trade and inaugurated a new phase of free trade.

Questions

Comment on the following statements in about 200 words.

"At the news of the declaration of the independence crowds gathered to cheer, fired guns and canons and ring church bells in Philadelphia, Boston and other places, but there were many people in America who did not rejoice".

1988

(The people of New England and Georgia expressed sympathy to the British.)

"The American War of Independence transformed Europe as well as America".

1990



The American Civil War (1861 - 1865)

The most important event that dominated the history of the United States in the second quarter of the 19th century was the Civil War. It was described by Prof. C.P. Hill, "*the central crisis in the history of United States*". Many held the view that the Civil war was *begun in order to get rid of slavery*; that the north was deliberately trying to free the millions of black slaves owned by the south, and that the latter was trying to stop them doing it; that this explains the outbreak of the Civil war. This view is false. The truth is more complicated.

The Civil War was a conflict between the two parts of the United States of America. In which very different ways of living had developed. The northerners followed one set of ideals whereas the southerners the opposite. These two sets of ideals were contrary to each other. A detailed study of these differences will enable us to know the factors that were responsible for the outbreak of the Civil war in 1861.

Divergent economic interests of the North and the South and the rise of sectionalism

One of the fundamental facts that dominated the 19th century history of America was *the divergent economic interests which the different sections of the country came to develop*. This tendency was evident ever since the foundation of the republic.

North

The area generally known as North included in 1850 New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin.

- i. The North was the *industrial area of the USA*. By 1840 there were 1200 cotton industries in the USA, the overwhelming majority of them were located in the North.
- ii. Wealth carried with it *political power*, and the Whig party was largely controlled by the rich men of the north. But neither the political power nor the gulf between the rich and the poor affected the fact that *the North was democratic* in its ideals and in many of its ways of life.
- iii. Perhaps the most striking fact about the North in the middle of the 19th century was its *progress*.

Its population increased.

Its advance in industry and trade was impressive.

America's chief deposits of *coal and iron* are in the Northern states.

The *protective tariff* gave the northern manufacturers the change of capturing the ever-growing home market.

The *rail-roads* enabled them to sent their goods throughout the states. The North in 1850 was full of a vigorous and optimistic economic life, and visitors noticed the energy and activity of its inhabitants.

In *education* it was far ahead of the south. The *Harvard* and *Yale universities* were located in the North. In *literature* the North was supreme.

- iv. The Northern states were mostly engaged in manufacture, and so *their great concern was to how to promote and protect their growing industries. They wanted to open up markets for their manufactured goods and a high tariff to protect them from foreign competition.*
- v. *The dependency of the south upon cotton was in the long run disastrous.* King cotton brought ruin upon his subjects.

Its continuous growth *weakened the soil.*

The cultivation of cotton *the price of slaves rose rapidly* thus manufactured goods came either from England or from the northern states.

Something more detrimental to the south was *the costly system through which it purchased her manufacturing commodities.* Between the south and Europe there was little direct trade. A large proportion of the southern cotton was shipped to New York and from there to Europe. The European manufactured goods and other imports were first brought to the northern ports and then distributed in the south through the costwise trade. This aroused resentment among the southerns since it involved *higher transaction costs and added commissions to the middlemen.*

Besides, the profits of the cotton planters depended upon their ability to use the fertile new soil every few years. This wasteful had carried them westward until they had began to draw near the natural limit of cotton production. Beyond this the land is arid and unfit for cotton growing.

- vi. Difference between the north and south showed itself in many ways. In comparison with the north the *south was backward.* Its *rail roads* were fewer, and its *roads* were far poorer. Its average *standard of living was appalingly low.* Its people were mostly *illiterates.* *Lack of education* helped to make them disorderly and narrow minded. One of the worst results of slavery was that it demoralised the Whites. *It made all Whites despise manual labour which they thought it to be the work of the Negros.*
- vii. The Southern planters, with their aristocratic outlook, could have no sympathy with the capitalists of the north. They dominated the southern society, a society in which there were many poor Whites than slave-owners. Yet the whole section was united in defence of its "*peculiar institution*" - slavery. Sectional feeling ran higher in the South than in the North.

Thus the clash between the *plantation economy and the rising capitalist economy* was the root cause of the Civil War of 1861.

Slavery question and the sectional clash

Slavery was the basic feature of life in the Southern state. They called it her "*peculiar institution*" - peculiar in the sense that it did not exist in the North.

Most of the manual labour in the South was done by slaves. *Besides, a man's wealth and his position in the society was judged by the number of slaves he owned.* Able bodied slaves were chiefly employed in the plantations. Slave women did the house work.

The *Industrial revolution* and the *development of cotton cultivation* had its effect on the slavery question. As a result of Industrial Revolution in England the textile industry was developed by leaps and bounds and thereby created a great demand for cotton. *Whitney's invention of cotton gin* further enhanced the importance of cotton. Thus the cultivation of cotton received great impetus in the Southern states.

The cotton cultivation was done with the help of gangs of slaves. Thus the slave population of the South was increased rapidly. Thus to the Southern planters slaves became *economically indispensable* and provided an easy solution to the labour problem. Slavery became a *commercial asset* too valuable to be ever willingly surrendered. Thus the Southern states were bound together by strong economic ties and were solidly arrayed against the growing anti-slavery sentiment of the North.

The divergence of attitude towards slavery did not become quite acute until the rise of the *Abolitionist Movements and Societies* for its abolition had been on the increase since 1815. Northerners began to attack slavery in more militant terms.

The first achievement came in 1808, *when the legal import of the slaves to the USA ceased.*

Next, attempts were made to get individual slaves freed and sent back to South Africa. Such schemes were not highly successful, mainly because the *Negros considered themselves Americans and did not want to be shipped back to the African wilderness.*

The next land-mark in the abolitionist movement came in 1831, when *William Lloyd Garrison of Boston*, the founder of a paper entitled "*Liberator*" denounced the constitution which recognised the institution of slavery.

In 1833, the year of abolition of the slavery in the British empire, the *American Anti-Slavery Society* was founded. This movement grew steadily in the North. New England, especially Boston, was one of the centres of this movement. Most of them were members of different Protestant churches, and the whole movement was permeated with a spirit of religious idealism. Some of them refused to participate in ordinary political activity under the constitution on the ground that by associating with the Southern states, the north would become sinful.

From the point of view of the Southerners, the Abolitionist Movement was an unwarrantable interference with the South's "*peculiar institution*". Slave owners became indignant at being described as criminals and failed to realise that only a small number of Northerners actually supported the Abolitionists.

Another, even more potent, cause for southern indignation was their fear that Abolitionist propaganda might reach the slaves and lead to their revolt. Further, the westward expansion gave a new dimension to the problem of slavery.

Impact of the westward expansion on the question of slavery

The *economic aspect of the slavery question* was complicated by the *political considerations arising out of the steady westward expansion of the Americans.* With the settlement of the new territories in the west, the question arose whether they should be admitted into the Union as "*slave*" states or "*free*"

states. The North feared that the extension of slavery to new territories would enable the slave holding states, by virtue of numerical superiority, to control the government and run it to suit their own interests. Hence whenever a new state applied for admission, the North claimed it as a free state while the South demanded that it should be admitted as a slave state. As neither side was prepared to give away on the issue of slavery, the problem was for a time sought to be solved by compromise, generally by the establishment of a *balance between the slave and free states*.

The *Missouri Compromise of 1820* is an instance in point. In that, Missouri, a part of the Louisiana purchase, applied for admission into the Union as a slave state. As *Missouri lay midway between the North and South, a bitter dispute arose whether it should be admitted as a slave state or not*. After a prolonged controversy a compromise known as the Missouri Compromise was arrived at. *It was agreed that Missouri would be admitted as a slave state, but the further states, formed out of land west of Mississippi river and lying to the north of 30 degree parallel of latitude, should count as free*. The compromise was to last little over thirty years.

Texas and California problem

When the anti-slavery movement was going on, there developed certain startling incidents. The Missouri Compromise was reopened whenever a new territory was formed and sought admission into the Union. Thus when *Texas* applied for admission as a slave state, there was a storm of protest from the North, and even secession from the Union was threatened. *Ultimately in 1848 it was admitted as a slave state into the Union*.

But the struggle was keenest over *California*, the most coveted of the acquisitions from Mexico. After the discovery of gold there, California became Mecca of some thousands of adventurers, mostly gold-diggers and fortune-hunters. These men scorned the idea of working side by side with slaves and had in 1850 drawn up a constitution for themselves, which excluded slavery.

The *Southerners headed by Calhoun*, regarded this conduct as highly impertinent and strongly resisted the admission of California as a free state. In the end a compromise was agreed to chiefly through the efforts of *Henry Clay*, the architect of the Missouri Compromise of 1850. By it *California was to be admitted as a free state*, but in the rest of the Mexican section the people themselves were to be allowed to organise their territory with or without slavery. As a special concession to the *South*, a drastic *Fugitive Act* was passed, to facilitate the recovery of running away slaves. Clay's *Settlement* did not touch the main point at issue and shared the fate of all compromises which ignored the opposing principles on which the conflict is based. It applied a local and did not provide a permanent cure.

It should be noted here that the slavery question was very closely connected with *the question of the control of the government*. Up to 1850 there was a numerical balance between the slave states and free states. *California would turn the balance in favour of free states*. Hitherto each group had fifteen members. When the balance was broken by the admission of California, it provided a fierce *controversy*. The South feared the dictatorship of the North. Hence the Southern states were prepared to *beak away from the Union* rather than bullied into submission. *They held that this right of secession was part of the State Rights which they had not surrendered by the terms of the Union*.

Towards the crisis

The *Fugitive Act* created endless problems and thereby fanned the flames of friction. The Northerners instead of helping to recover runaway slaves *very often rescued them from their pursuers*. The South bitterly resented this and bitterness was increased on both the sides *by the publication of Mrs. H.B. Stowe's book, viz; "Uncle Tom's Cabin"*. She gave in her book most vivid and moving account of slavery and the

book had great influence in the North. The book did more than anything to turn the political campaign into a popular crusade.

The Northerners argued that the slavery was immoral and unjust. It was a contradiction of the free and democratic ideals for which USA stood. In the *Declaration of Independence* it was stated that, "*all men are created equal*".

The South's most effective answer to this is that all *their capital was invested in slaves*. They argued that *the slavery was the only means of getting the lazy Negro race to work and the only way of civilizing them*. They even stated that the workers working in the Northern industries were in no way better than slaves. They branded them as *White slaves*.

The Kansas and Nebraska disputes

The sectional feeling ran high over the question of slavery in the newly created states in the western lands, viz; *Kansas* and *Nebraska*. As all this area lay north to the line 35 degree, it should by the Missouri Compromise be "*free*" territory. But Stephen Douglas, senator of Illinois, ambitious to be the President and desiring the Southern votes, therefore proposed to repeal the Missouri Compromise. The Congress, by the efforts of Douglas, passed the *Kansas-Nebraska Act* in 1854. Its terms were simple. It recommended the creation of the two new states, Kansas and Nebraska; and *it was left to the settlers of the new states to decide whether they would have slavery or not*. The idea behind this second clause was given the name of "*popular sovereignty*". This apparently fair act was disastrous because of the vast number of Americans who did not want any further extension of slavery in the west.

Nebraska was unfit for slaves and the Southerners made no attempt to gain it. They cast their eyes on Kansas. Slave owners came in from Missouri and other slave states started to settle therein. At the same time the Northern Abolitionists formed companies to finance the settlement of Northerners in Kansas. *Both parties established territorial governments and asked for the approval of the Congress*. Each side made armed raids on the other's property. Murders and even massacres were not infrequent. The "*Kansas War*" which lasted for several years, was a preliminary to the Civil War. Gradually the Northerners outnumbered the Southerners. *In 1861 Kansas joined the Union as a free state*. This was too much for the Southerners to swallow it and the Civil War was brought perceptibly nearer.

Dred Scot affair

Early in 1857 the Supreme court published its decision in the Dred Scot case. Dred Scot was a Negro from the slave state of Missouri whom his master had taken with him, first to the free state of Illinois and then to the territory north of 36 degree where the Missouri Compromise had forbidden slavery. Scot claimed his freedom on the ground that he had twice been taken on to a free state. The Supreme Court under the chief justice Roger B. Taney (a southerner) decided the case against Scot. The judgement includes the following clauses.

- i. *No Negro should be the citizen of USA.*
- ii. *The slaves were the property of the owners and the Congress had no right to deprive citizens of their property.*

This judgement meant that the Missouri Compromise was null and void and it suggested that all United States territories were open to slavery. It was felt as a severe blow in the North, and meetings of protest were held throughout the Northern states.

The impact of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Dred Scot decision

The immediate result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was the formation of the *New Republican Party*. Its programme was two-fold, viz; *resistance to the extension of slavery and high tariff to protect home industries*.

These Republicans as well as Abolitionists were dumb founded by the Dred Scot decision which was dangerous triumph for the South. Thus the feelings ran high in the North and in 1859 a certain John Brown, a finatical abolitionist, seized the government arsenal at Harper's Perry with the object of arming the slaves so that they might rise in revolt against their masters. Brown was captured and executed. But his death evoked sympathy in the North and created alarm in the South.

The Republicans were enabled, at this time, to secure the election of their own candidate Abraham Lincoln, as President. The answer of the south to the election of a black Republican as President was secession. South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and Georgia seceded from the Union in 1861. These seceding states formed a new Union with the title of "Confederate States of America", choose Jafferson David as their President, and adopted a new flag. They drew up a constitution similar to that of the United States and recognised the principle of state sovereignty which carried with it the right of a state to succeed. They also recognised slavery as part of the constitution and forbade protective tariffs.

Abraham Lincoln, the President elect, in his inaugural speech refused to recognise separation of the Southern states. *He said to permit secession was to acknowledge the failure of the whole American federal experiment. It was over this question of separation the Civil War of 1861 - 65 was fought.* Thus the immediate cause of the war was not simply the question whether slavery should or should not exist, although the question was also decided. More vital was the question under the constitution sucession was permissible or not.

Many efforts were made to forge compromise, but they were failed. The Confederate States of the South began the war by the bombardment of fort Sumpter. During the first stage of the war success was on the whole with the South. So stubborn was the resistance of the Southern States that Lincoln determined to proclaim the emancipation of all slaves held by the states at war with the Union. This he did as a war measure. Lincoln made his position clear when he states :

"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, If I could do it by freeing all the slaves I would do it, and if I could do save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that".

Thus the object of Lincoln was to save the Union and not to save or destroy slavery.

The year 1863 promised to be a turning point of the Civil War. The capture of New Orleans by the North followed by the capture of Vicksburg gave the North the command of the Mississippi. The result was that the Confederate States were cut up into two sections and that weakened them considerably. *The battle of Gettysburg fought in the year 1863 was the decisive event of the war.* By this the South was exhausted by the war. Ultimately the South collapsed in the year 1865. Thus the Civil War came to an end. *The Union was saved and the cause of slavery and secession was doomed.*

Reconstruction of America after the Civil War

The period of fifty years which followed the Civil war was one of expansion and of rapid growth of material prosperity. But in the beginning there existed hostility between the South and North.

Andrew Jackson who succeeded Lincoln sought to carry out a *policy of generous conciliation*. But the victorious North was by no means conciliatory in its attitude towards South and hence bitter quarrels broke out between the Congress and the President which was dominated by the Republicans. The Congress adopted two amendments (14th and 15th) to the Constitution.

The first one accorded the *rights of citizenship to the freed slaves*.

The second one declared that *franchise was not to be denied to any citizen of the United States, on account of race, colour and previous condition of service*.

The *Reconstruction Act of 1867 - 68* provided that the Confederate States should be treated as *conquered provinces*. They should be *administered by military governors*. They were to be admitted into the Union only after they had ratified the 14th and 15th amendments.

As some of the states withheld ratification, Congress proceeded to subject the South to Negro rule under military protection. Governing bodies were filled by Negroes and unscrupulous Northern agents known, "*Carpenter-beggars*". This is known as "*Black Terror*".

Gradually the Southerners adjusted themselves to the new conditions. They broke up the big estates and adopted their cotton cultivation to a system of free labour. With the spread of industrialisation to the South they began to have their own manufactures and were thus *freed from the economic dependence on the North*. Isolation disappeared with the *development of railways* and with also *disappeared economic sectionalism*.

Developmental activities

i. Growth of material prosperity

The westward expansion in the *trans-Mississippi region* continued. Further stimulation was given by the discovery of gold in the Colorado and of precious metals in the Rockies. To develop this newly opened-up region the Congress passed the *Homestead Act in 1862*. This act provided for a free gift of 160 acres of land to any one who would work it and reside on it for five years.

The westward expansion necessitated development of means of communications. The railways began to be expanded. The *Great Trans-Continental Railway* and the *Union Pacific* began in 1862 was completed by 1869. There was a veritable mania for rail-road extension.

The occupation of the Trans-Mississippi region saw the *end of the Red Indian monopoly over that region*.

ii. Industrial development

During the Civil war, through the operation of war tariff and through the incentive of war profits, every form of industry in the North advanced by leaps and bounds. As the West developed and produced more, it also consumed more, notably of the manufactured articles of the North. Under the stimulus of this great domestic market, unrivalled in size, *the United States by the early nineties became the largest manufacturing country in the world*.

The *scientific inventions* and the *high tariff legislation policy* followed by the Republican government gave further stimulation for the development of industry. As a result great industrial cities sprang up in the west. Thus Pittsburg became the centre of iron and steel manufacturing, Chicago of meat-packing and other industries and little later Detroit for motor industry.

iii. Growth of big industries and trusts

The industrial development brought in its train many new problems. The capitalists began to combine their wealth so as to conduct business on a large scale and under one management. Thus the "*Big*"

business" grew up, and under the stress of competition the smaller concerns succumbed. These big corporations at first battled with their rivals for supremacy. Next they came to a mutual understanding and were *fused into giant combinations or trusts*. But these trusts soon became *monopolistic concerns* and were followed by increased prices. This led to strong agitation against the trusts and attempts were made to adjust them to government control and even to dissolve them.

Labour problems

When capital began to combine, labour also began to organise. *Trade unions* were established with the object of providing improved conditions. These unions in turn federated into such big organisations like *American Federation of Labour*. The struggle between the capital and labour brought serious strikes. As a matter of fact, the adjustment of the relations between labour and capital constitute the greatest single problem now facing the United States.

Immigration problem

America was the *chosen land of migration*. The *wealth* and the *comparative political freedom* that existed in the United States attracted the settlers of all kinds. When the Civil War came to a close streams of immigration from Europe began to flood the eastern shores of America.

The later immigrants' intelligence and cultural qualities were lower than those of the previous comers. They were ignorant and were willing to work for low wages. Their standard of living was low. Under these circumstances the Congress was forced to pass laws to regulate immigration. Thus convicts, lunatics, paupers, illiterates, anarchists, etc; were prohibited to migrate to America. A fixed quota of immigrants that the USA would accept from each country had been fixed.

Civil War's impact upon the foreign policy of USA

The Civil War had *consolidated the Union* and the *consciousness of the national unity*. The USA followed *assertive foreign policy*, and tried to improve her position and dignity in the international affairs. *She gradually abandoned her old policy of isolation from world politics*. She enforced the *Manroe Doctrine* and even enlarged its scope.

(i) Manroe Doctrine and France

The *Manroe doctrine* states that America would not interfere in the affairs of Europe. Similarly the European powers were not permitted to colonise the American continents (western hemisphere). In a word it proclaimed the principle of "*America for the Americans*". It was thus a *hint to pan-Americanism* and the forerunner of unrivalled imperialism.

The *Mexican adventure of Napoleon III of France* afforded an opportunity for asserting the Manroe Doctrine. Taking advantage of America's preoccupation in the Civil War, Napoleon III, in contravention of Manroe Doctrine, conquered Mexico. After the Civil War America ordered the French to Quit Mexico and Napoleon had to withdraw his troops from Mexico. It is evident from this that USA by using the Manroe Doctrine expelled French from Mexico and thereby Mexico came under the influence of USA.

(ii) America and Great Britain

During Cleveland's second term of Presidential office 1893 - 97 the foreign policy of America became more vigorous. He seized the opportunity of a boundary dispute between Britain and Venezuela to enlarge the Manroe Doctrine and to challenge Britain's position on the Caribbean Sea. Cleveland offered the mediation of the USA declaring that the "*United States was paramount on the American continent*", and as such

was entitled to intervene. He announced that he would appoint a commission of enquiry and enforce its decisions even at the risk of war. The British government consented to the arbitration which, however, gave Britain most of the territory in dispute. *Thus by an elastic extension of the Manroë doctrine the USA secured the recognition of her position as the guardian of the Latin States of South America.* This was the last grave dispute between the USA and Great Britain.

(iii) America and Spain

The vigorous foreign policy of USA soon *developed into imperialism*. USA not content with the colonisation of her own wide territories acquired from Mexico, began to *look farther for overseas dependencies*.

The *Cuban rebellion* gave an excellent opportunity for America to exploit. Cuba was the sole relic of the magnificent empire of Spain in America. The Spanish misrule was the cause of rebellion in Cuba. The savage method of repression employed by the Spanish army to curb the rebellion roused the feelings of the Americans against Spain. Besides, the inability of Spain to restore order caused serious loss to American trade, and brought ruin upon many capitalists who had invested largely in the Cuban industries. Matters came to a serious crisis in 1898 when the "*Maine*", a United States battle-ship was blown up in the Havana harbour. The Americans attributed it to Spanish agency and clamoured for war. Congress and President Mackinley passed resolutions declaring that Spain should grant independence to Cuba. This naturally provoked Spain and declared war against USA. *Thus the Spanish-American war became a reality.*

The naval superiority of USA brought the war to a speedy conclusion. Spain was defeated and the *Peace of Paris was concluded in 1898*. According to this Spain ceded to the United States the island of Porto Rico in the West Indies and Philippines in the Far East, receiving monetary compensation for the latter. Cuba was declared to be an independent state under American protection.

The Spanish-American war opened a new stage in the history of USA. *It marked the definite beginning of the American imperialism*. By the occupation of Porto Rico, converting Cuba as her protectorate and by establishing her control over the Philippine islands, USA became a power in the West Indies and Far East. In a word she stepped outside the affairs of the western hemisphere and assumed the role of world power with dependencies and subject races to care for. In a way the Civil War which consolidated the Union and roused the national consciousness was responsible for all these achievements.

Assessment

One of the important events that witnessed the 19th century history of United States of America was the civil war that was fought between the northern and southern states. This was described by Prof. C.P. Hill, "the central crisis in the history of United States". Several factors were responsible for the outbreak of the civil war.

- i. Divergent economic interests of the North and South and the consequent rise of sectionalism.
- ii. Slavery as a "peculiar institution" of the south.
- iii. Abolitionist movements and societies.
- iv. Impact of the westwards expansion : The westward expansion or the "*Manifest Destiny*" is the backbone of the history of United States. With the settlement of the new territories in the west, the question arose, whether they should be admitted into the Union as "slave" states or "free" states. This created very often tensions between the Northerners and Southerners, and created several problems. Some of them are as follows:
 - i. Missouri Compromise of 1820.
 - ii. Texas and California problem.

- iii. Missouri Compromise of 1850.
- iv. The Fugitive Act.
- v. The Kansas and Nebraska dispute.
- vi. Dred Scot affair.
- vii. Towards the crisis: The Republicans made their candidate Abraham Lincoln as President. The answer of the south to the election of a black Republican as President was secession. Further, the Southners made Jafferson Davis as their President. Many efforts were made to gorge compromise. But in vain and the civil war brokeout. The turning point in the war was *the battle of Gettysburg fought in the year 1863*. By this the South was exhausted and collapsed. Thus the civil war came to an end. The Union was saved and the cause of slavery and secession was doomed.

Reconstruction of America after the Civil war

The period of fifty years which followed the Civil War was one of expansion. During this period several changes occurred in several fields.

- i. *Constitutional changes*. Rights of citizenship were accorded to the freed slaves. Further, franchise was not denied to any citizen of the United States on account of race, colour and previous condition of service.
- ii. Growth of material prosperity. Trans-Mississippi, Colarado, Rokies regions were explored and exploited. The *Homestead Act* was passed to develop agriculture.
- iii. Industrial expansion.
- iv. Growth of big business and trusts.
- v. Labour and immigration problems.

Civil War's impact on the foreign policy of USA

The Civil war had consolidated the Union and developed the consciousness of the national unity. The USA abandoned her old policy of isolation from world politics and followed assertive foreign policy. This is very well reflected in her relations with various powers.

- 1. Manroe Doctfine and France.
- 2. America and Great Britain.
- 3. America and Spain.

In a way Civil War made USA very strong internally and externally.

Questions

- 1. Comment on the following statement in about 200 words.
"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it, If I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that".
1986.
- 2. Examine the issues involved in the American Civil War. Was it a contest between two separate nations.
1991.



Franklin D. Roosevelt - The New Deal

F.D. Roosevelt, the successor of Herbert Hoover (1929 - 1933), was the most popular President of America. He was a Democrat. His personal qualities made him a particularly suitable candidate in the middle of a depression. He possessed a remarkable charm of character. Very few American Presidents have entered office with such a combination of personal qualities and popularity.

America experienced the "*Great Depression*" during the Presidency of Herbert Hoover. *It paralysed the economy of USA*. Created unemployment, gave set back to the industrial progress, shattered internal and external trade and made life as an intolerable burden. Hoover tried in his own way to remove the impact of the depression. But he could not provide suitable solution to the problem. The burden of solving the problem of depression had fallen on the head and shoulder of F.D. Roosevelt.

The New Deal

F.D. Roosevelt in his inaugural address attacked the system that had brought the USA to such a plight, and pointed the way to recovery. "*This nation asks for action, and action now*". And action he took immediately. This resulted in the introduction of a new policy of his own which is popularly known the *New Deal* policy.

The "New Deal" is the name given to the great series of actions undertaken by Roosevelt's administration to lift the American people out of depression, and to lead them to a new future.

These New Deal actions do not form one carefully planned schemes. In 1933 the time was short and the need urgent, so that many of the measures of Roosevelt were *the steps taken in a hurry* with the intention of dealing with immediate problems. There are *three aims* at the back of all these measures.

- i. *Relief was first* : those millions of Americans who were in desperate need of food and cash had to be helped.
- ii. *Recovery was the second*: the government had to lead the country out of depression.
- iii. *Reform was the third*: glaring wrongs had to be set right in order that USA might go forward to a new future.

Thus the *relief, recovery* and *reform* were the three great aims of the New Deal policy of F.D. Roosevelt. In practice they included a wide variety of purposes.

F.D. Roosevelt wanted to help the poor - not only the *poor people* throughout the country, but also *poverty-stricken industries* and *poverty-stricken regions*. He wanted to *attack the rich employers and financiers* and to *help the workmen to organise themselves into trade unions* in order to be able to bargain fairly with their employers. He wanted to *safeguard democracy, 'government of the people by the people, for the*

people' against the power of the rich. He wanted to help industry by giving loans to the bankrupt business firms and by enabling the ordinary American to buy more from the business firms. He wanted to stop the waste of America's resources - her oil, land, etc; in order to keep them for Americans of the future.

The methods which Roosevelt used to put the New Deal into action were bold and skilful.

- i. *He made it clear that it was his own personal policy. It was not the policy of Democratic Party.*
- ii. *Roosevelt used to the utmost the full powers which the constitution allowed him. No previous American President ever wielded such great power in peace time.*
- iii. *He made full use of expert advisers. He collected round him a group of comparatively young men, college professors, experts in economics, finance and in other departments.*
- iv. *Roosevelt cleverly used his own genius for winning popularity in order to gain popular support for his policy. Examples of this were the "fireside chats" and the White House Press Conferences.*

Many able people of very varied opinions and intellect contributed much in the implementation of Roosevelt's New Deal. But Roosevelt's team changed substantially over the years, and so did the New Deal itself, so much so that it was become customary to talk of two "New Deals", not one. What has become the First New Deal lasted from 1933 to 1935 and concentrated mainly on the immediate problems - of restoring the banking system, providing the jobs for the unemployed, raising agricultural prices to the farmers, setting industries on their feet once again, etc.

The Second New Deal (1935 - 1938) brought more measures of lasting reform; involving heavy expenditure and unbalanced budget, as well as the high taxation of the rich; and showed far less sympathy to big business and more encouragement to such groups as trade unions.

The change was neither so clear cut nor so sudden as this simplified division may suggest, for the actions of the government were numerous and complicated and took time into effect. The reasons for it were obvious.

- i. *The first was that the depression did not yield easily. The national income for 1934, after almost two years of the New Deal, was only little more than half of the 1929 figure. There was still almost ten millions unemployed. Thus more radical action was needed.*
- ii. *The businessmen had grown critical of various measures in the New Deal and Roosevelt was by no means unwilling to take up their challenge.*
- iii. *Roosevelt was worried by the extremists who were winning popular support. One of them was Henry Long with his "Share Our Wealth" movement; another less sinister but more appealing was Francis Town Shend with his pension plan for providing every body over 60 years of age with \$200 a month on condition that they did no paid work and spent the entire money in the USA within the month. The best way to undermine quack remedies for the depression was to make the genuine ones effective.*
- iv. *Lastly, and perhaps the most important was that Roosevelt had not satisfied the trade unions, as series of strikes in 1934 indicated.*

All these tendencies tended to propel Roosevelt to the left after his first two years in office, and thus to bring more far-reaching reforms.

The main details of the New Deal as a whole may be summarised as follows.

Relief measures

The *relief part of the New Deal* led to the establishment of a series of *administrative agencies* between 1933 to 1935.

i. The Civil Conservation Corps

One of the worst features of the depression was that it threw some millions young one out of work. Under this *scheme unemployed and unmarried men* between the age of 18 and 25 were given the chance of joining for six months government camps set up chiefly in mountain or forest areas. There they did various jobs of benefit to the community; they *learnt forestry, built dams, fought forest fires, floods and dust storms, constructed tracks and telephone lines* through remote areas. Each member was paid 30\$ a month, of which 25\$ had to be sent home to his family. The employers became anxious to take them, because they had the required training in the camps.

ii. Social Security Act

The USA had, before 1933, no *national scheme of unemployment, or health insurance, or old age pensions*. Germany had old age pensions since 1889 and Britain since 1909. One American state alone, *Wisconsin*, had unemployment insurance scheme before 1935. So one of the most important of the New Deal laws was the *Social Security Act of 1935*.

This act established a *scheme of old age pensions*, run by the Federal government, and paid for by the contributions from both the employees and the employed. It created a *plan of unemployment insurance*. *Help was extended to the blind and the child health*. The whole scheme aimed to provide social security for millions of Americans.

iii. The House Owners Loan Corporation

This gave assistance to some thousands of property owners and lending institutions. Thus it helped to *save the homes of some thousands of Americans from being sold up because of non-payment of loans and mortgages*.

iv. Work Progress Administration of 1935

The most important relief agency of the New Deal was the *Works Progress Administration*. Under this millions of poor men and women were employed on many jobs of value to the community and the government paid them wages enough to keep them alive. They were employed to *build dams, roads, airports, schools, hospitals, playgrounds and swimming pools*.

Musicians, actors, writers and artists were also provided work. This programme not only saved some millions of people from wasting their time in idleness but also produced works of permanent value to the USA.

The Federal government gave cash relief to the poor throughout the country, as well as assisting local charitable schemes.

These relief measures and agencies marked an unprecedented Federal government's involvement in looking after the *welfare of the people*. The millions of Americans who benefited from them, especially the blacks and the other 'forgotten ones', showed their gratitude by *lionising Roosevelt and by voting in favour of Democratic Party in the subsequent elections*.

The relief policies of the New Deal also *did much to restore the confidence in the nation's political institutions* and to undercut the agitation growing since 1929, for the radical resolutions to hard times.

Critics of New Deal were correct, however, in observing that the relief measures did not go far enough. Even at its peak, the Works Progress Administration failed to reach 7 million unemployed and their families, and it paid extremely low wages. Unemployed people like the sick, the crippled, the aged and the dependent dependent children, were left heavily upon the New Deal relief measures.

Recovery programme

In this case also the administration of Roosevelt introduced a series agencies.

i. Agricultural Adjustment Administration

This agency primarily directed its attention to the *American farmers*. They had *gained little from the prosperity years*. Besides, *they had suffered in common with the rest of the people during the depression*. There difficulties were many and they are as follows.

- i. The chief difficulty of them was *the low price* which most of the farm products were fetching. This low price was mainly the result of the fact that the farmers, *unable to sell their crops over-seas, were growing more than the American people could consume*.
- ii. The depression made their plight worse by making Americans able to pay still less for farm produce.

Roosevelt's main object was to *raise prices of the farm produce*. His government did other things to help farmers. It lend them money to save them from being evicted from their farms. It helped those farmers whose farms were on poor land to start in more fertile areas. But the only satisfactory cure of the farmer's ills would be to make sure that they got a good price for their produce. For this Roosevelt passed many acts of which the *Agricultural Adjustment Administration* was an important one.

This act *encouraged co-operative marketing of some farm goods*. Another important measure is that for all the important products in which the American farmers had lost some of their over-seas trade-for example cotton, tobacco, rice, wheat, pigs, etc; - *it devised a scheme for cutting down the amount grown by the farmers*. Reduction in production or supply, it was hoped, would increase market prices. *Farmers who cooperated received federal subsidies*. Fortunately at this time *disastrous droughts cut production in the Great Plains* and the government was able to limit the supply and raise farm prices by 50% in Roosevelt's first term. To this extent, it aided large commercial farmers in the regions unaffected by drought.

The Agricultural Adjustment Administration *created hardships to tenants*. It forced many of them *to cut down production by introducing acre-age-quota system*. It also *made the consumers to pay higher prices for food and clothing*. Many critics were appalled that the New Deal promoted agricultural scarcity when millions of people lacked adequate food and clothing.

ii. National Recovery Administration

It *set up rules or codes to govern industries*. These codes were usually first drawn up by the industries themselves and approved by this act. They *abolished child labour, lowered hours of work, fixed a minimum wage and stopped unfair competition*. All the employers who accepted were given the privilege of displaying a 'Blue Eagle' on their goods, and the government encouraged the public to deal with firms showing the *Blue Flag*.

This act also set *guidelines for pricing and production and guaranteed labour the rights of collective bargaining*. It should be noted here that after a quick start, the National Recovery Administration lost its effectiveness.

- i. The Union spokesmen complained that *the courts negated the labour guarantees*.

- ii. Progressivists protested that *monopolies were exempted from anti-trust prosecution.*
- iii. Small businessmen asserted that *the codes favoured large corporations.*

Thus by 1934 evasion of the codes was widespread, and the industrial recovery became sluggish. In the 1935 the USA Supreme Court declared that the National Recovery Administration as unconstitutional.

iii. Public Works Administration

This organisation *encouraged the building of public works* of all kinds like, dams, aerodroms, war-ships, post-offices and various government offices. Millions of people were provided with work.

iv. Wagner Act of 1935

This act *compelled the employers to recognise the union to which the majority of their workmen belonged*, and to bargain with it in any dispute over hours of work and wages. It also forbade the employers to interfere with their workmen's freedom to join unions.

v. Fair Labour Standard Act of 1938

It improved standards in many poorly-paid occupations by fixing the *minimum hours of work and maximum wages.*

The New Deal gave *immense encouragement to trade unionism.* This resulted in the establishment of the *Congress of Industrial Organisation.* In 1937 it had won strikes against two of the biggest American Corporations, viz; *General Motors* and the *United States Steel.*

Reform measures

Several significant *reform measures were legislated* as part of the New Deal and some of them are as follows.

i. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporations

This measure *insured the deposits* in the banks and thus *safeguarded depositors.* This was started with four billion dollars as security.

ii. Banking Act of 1935

By this act the *government control of the banks was established.* This was done with the intention of preventing fraud.

iii. Securities Act of 1933

This act *attempted to stop the formation of fraudulent companies.* It ordered all companies to state the facts about themselves clearly and accurately on any prospects which they issued to the public.

iv. Securities Exchange Commission of 1934

Its main function was to stop all the dishonest and dubious practices in the *stock-exchange.*

Roosevelt's first task was to get the national financial system working again. *He did this by giving the people confidence in the banks once more.* Within a week of entering office he got the Congress to pass the *Emergency Banking Act* giving him control over the banks and power to reopen those which he considered solvent. He convinced the people that all was well with the country's finances. Confidence was restored, Banks were reopened. People started depositing the money in the banks. He followed up this emergency action by the above referred important laws and agencies.

v. The Tennessee Valley Authority

During the First World War the government had built a dam on the Tennessee river *to provide power and to establish a nitrate factory*. Twice Senator Norris of Nebraska presented schemes to the Congress to use the dam for the benefit of the Tennessee valley. But Coolidge and Hoover, then the Presidents of America, had vetoed it. Roosevelt took up the scheme of Norris and in 1935 created the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Through this agency the government undertook a great experiment in planning the welfare of the whole Tennessee Valley which *covers not less than seven states*. It setup *hydro-electric stations* and sold electricity direct to industry and farmers, at rates well below those charged by the private companies.

It undertook *schemes of flood control, built navigation channels* in the Tennessee river; *helped to stop soil erosion in the valley by planting trees*. It also helped the farmers by *developing new fertilisers and built model villages*.

Cheap electricity not only helped the farmers but also gave impetus to the industry. Thus this plan brought a revolutionary change in the Tennessee valley.

vi. The National Resources Board

This made a survey of the *natural wealth of the country* and tried to exploit it.

vii. Soil Conservation Act

This act paid attention to the *problem of saving American soil* from wastage caused by reckless farming and draught.

The results of the New Deal or

How much the New Deal achieved?

I. Some of the experiments clearly failed.

The *National Recovery Administration* which made rules to govern industries was declared as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

II. Some of the measures were only partial successful.

- i. The *laws to help farmers*, for example, improved the lot of farmers themselves. But they didn't improve the position of the *agricultural labourers and share-croppers*.
- ii. The *banking reforms* failed to yield the expected results.
- iii. The *labour laws encouraged strikes* and thereby created bitter feelings between the employers and the employed. But they helped labour.
- iv. The *Public Works Programme*, backed by government spending, stimulated industry. But as the government spent less the industrial progress was also less. The American industry never worked at full capacity even before the outbreak of the second World War.
- v. Roosevelt, through the Civil Conservation Corps, tried to solve the *unemployment problem*. He faced partial success in this direction. Even in September 1940, the number of unemployed was nearly seven millions.
- vi. The anti-trust laws, the regulation of hours of work and wages and the excessive taxation of the rich were *resented by the capitalists and businessmen*. The New Deal, therefore, did not fully rescue the USA from the depression.

- vii. More broadly, many Americans, even among those who sympathised with the Roosevelt's aim, maintained that *too much government control interfered with the liberties of the Americans*. Some of them thought that it would sap and destroy the enterprise and independence which Americans traditionally regarded as characteristic of themselves.

Still, inspite of this, the *New Deal achieved something substantial*.

- i. In its early days the New Deal saved *the jobs, the farms, the homes and even the lives of countless Americans* caught up in a desperate and unexpected economic catastrophe.
- ii. The *Public Works Association* and *Works Progress Administration* provided the country with much of lasting value, *from roads and bridges to hospitals and works of art*.
- iii. The *Tennessee Valley Authority* brought millions of acres of land to cultivation, produced electricity and paved the way for the establishment of prosperous industries.
- iv. The *Social Security Act* did much to remedy American backwardness by providing *old age pensions* and *unemployment insurance*.
- v. Yet perhaps the greatest achievement of Roosevelt and his New Deal was to *change the outlook of many millions of Americans*. Many of the ideas the New Deal put into practice - *collective bargaining* between the employers and the employed, *the regulation of stock Exchange*, *the control of the output of crops*, *the restriction of the hours of work, etc*; are now accepted as part of the normal pattern of American life.
- v. The New Deal *helped to change politics and political institutions*. Democrats previously an awkward coalition of disparate elements, became *the proponents of urban liberalism*, and swept to power in much of the North and Mid-west. Henceforth, the Democratic party enjoyed majority status in USA.

Under the New Deal, the *executive branch* and the *Presidency* in particular became much more activist and innovative than before.

The *states* and the *localities* themselves grew in the course of *administering federal programmes* and appropriating funds for *matching-grant programmes*.

Roosevelt, above all, made his fellow citizens to recognise the new role for government in American life. He made them to realise that the vast resources of America should be used by means of *national planning for the benefit of all its people* and not merely *for the private profit of a few*. Roosevelt could also maintain that this had *been achieved without the introduction of the socialism* for which his conservative critics condemned him.

Assessment

F.D. Roosevelt succeeded Herbert Hoover as the President of America (1929-33). During his presidency America experienced the '*Great Depression*'. It literally paralysed the economy of USA. He introduced *New Deal policy* to neutralise the impact of the economic depression.

The New Deal is the name given to the great series of actions undertaken by Roosevelt's administration to lift the Americans out of depression, and to lead them to a new future.

There are three aims at the back of the New Deal measures. They are as follows.

- i. *Relief measures.*
- ii. *Recovery measures.*
- iii. *Reform measures.*

F.D. Roosevelt's main aim was to achieve the following through his New Deal.

- i. Help the poor and needy people.
- ii. Help to the poverty-stricken industries and regions.
- iii. To attack the rich employers and to help the workmen to organise themselves into trade unions.
- iv. Wanted to safeguard democracy against power of the rich.
- v. To stop the waste of American's resources.
- vi. To reform the Banking system.
- vii. To regulate the Stock Exchange.

I. Relief Measures

Under this Roosevelt introduced a series of measures and they are as follows.

- i. The Civil Conservation Corps. It solved to some extent the unemployment problem.
- ii. Works Progress Administration. It produced works of permanent value to USA.
- iii. The House Owners Loan Corporation. It helped to save the homes of some thousands of Americans from being sold up because of non-payment of loans and mortgages.

II. Recovery measures

In this case also the administration of Roosevelt introduced a series of measures.

- i. Agriculturist Adjustment Administration. It aimed at helping the American farmers.
- ii. National Recovery Administration. It set up rules or codes to govern industries.
- iii. Public Works Administration. It encouraged the building of public works of all kinds.
- iv. Wagner Act. Recognised workmen's right or freedom to join unions.
- v. Fair Labour Standard Act. It encouraged trade unionism.

III. Reform measures

Several significant reform measures were introduced as part of the New Deal and they are as follows.

- i. The Emergency Banking Act, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Banking Act, Securities Act and the Securities Exchange Commission were introduced to reform the Banking system and Stock Exchange. Besides, the Banking system came under the control of the government.
- ii. The Tennessee Valley Authority. It brought a lot of land under irrigation. It produced electricity and developed industries.
- iii. The National Resources Board and the Soil Conservation Act stopped the wastage of America's natural resources.

Results of the New Deal.**i. Some measures failed.**

The National Recovery Administration was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

ii. Some measures were partially successful.

- a. The laws to help farmers.
- b. Banking reforms.
- c. Labour laws.
- d. Public Works Programme.
- e. Unemployment problem.
- f. Anti-trust laws.
- g. Government control over American way of life.

iii. Permanent results.

- a. Saved jobs, the farms, the homes and even the lives of millions of Americans.
- b. The Public Works Association produced works of permanent value.
- c. The Tennessee Valley authority brought substantial changes in agriculture, industry, electricity, etc.
- d. Old age pension and unemployment insurance.
- e. Collective bargaining between the employers and employed, the regulation of Stock Exchange, the control of output of crops, the restriction of the hours of work, etc; became the part and parcel of the life of Americans.
- f. Democrats became very powerful.
- g. Executive branch and the Presidency became very effective and innovative.
- h. The states and localities implemented federal schemes got aid from the federal government.



The French Revolution and Napoleonic Era - 1789-1815

Its Significance in World History

Aims, Character, Causes and Achievements of the French Revolution

The 18th century was an *age of enlightenment* characterised by great *scientific discoveries* and *philosophical speculations*. The cumulative effect of the intellectual activity was *rationalism* which induced men to *re-examine the existing ideas and institutions*. The *political and social systems* of Europe were so rotten that they could not stand the test of the new ideas popularised by the intellectual movement. Of all the European countries, France was the first to react violently against the old order and try to establish a new order out of its ruins. *This reaction gave an expression in the form of the French Revolution of 1789.*

Aims of the Revolution :

The different classes that took part in the French Revolution had different aims, which inevitably flowed from their grievances. The members of the Third Estate which includes peasants, urban workers or artisans, middle class, etc; formed the bulk of the population of France.

To begin with, *the peasants* did not want a change in the form of government; they in fact, ignored the reform programme of the Enlightenment. *But they* wanted more land, if need be at the expense of the clergy and nobility. They wanted the *end of feudalism, serfdom* and *desired to enjoy socio-economic mobility*. Further, they wanted *relief from a system of taxation* that bore hardest upon them who could least afford to pay.

The *guild system* which was monopolised by the nobility hampered not only free trade but also reduced *artisan class* to dust. Thus they *desired to improve their economic position by destroying the economic domination of the privileged class*.

The *men of middle class* or the bourgeoisie fully realising their own growing economic importance desired that their *economic status should be in tune with their social and political ones*. They were *welathier*, better educated and more articulate than the peasants and the urban workers. Hence they took the preponderant part in formulating the grievances of the entire Third Estate. They became the aims of this class.

- i. They pronounced the *freedom of press* as the stoutest rampart against the administrative abuses.
- ii. Demanded *reform in criminal laws*.
- iii. Recommended a contract between the sovereign and his people to safeguard the *personal freedom of the citizens*.

- iv. Proposed that all Frenchmen have the right and hope of securing any state office, and all military and ecclesiastical dignities.
- v. Demanded to introduce the concept of the *equitable distribution of the incidence of taxation*.
- vi. Finally, they *asserted the sanctity of private property*.

It is clear from the above that the demands of the middle class were aimed to give effect to Adam Smith's "*Wealth of the Nations*", to Jeremy Bentham's "*Principles of Legislation*", and to Rousseau's "*The Social Contract*". Since the middle class became the leaders of the French Revolution their aims became the aims of the Revolution itself.

Thus the aim of the French Revolution was to destroy the "*Ancient Regime*" or "*the Old Order*" and to restore the "*New Order*", which will end the *galling social inequalities of the day*, institutionalised by the anachronistic social order. In other words the aim of the French Revolution was to put an end to the old political, economic and social order, and to usher in a *new order based on equality, liberty and fraternity*.

Character and the nature of the French Revolution

The French Revolution was one of the greatest events that the world had ever witnessed. With the outbreak of the French Revolution, "*European history merged into the history of one nation, one event and one man; the nation is France, the event is the French Revolution and the man is Napoleon.*"

The French Revolution has been rightly styled as the "*Mother of the Revolutions*", since it touched almost all the aspects of France - polity, society, religion and economy. Though revolutions took place in England and America, before the French Revolution, they were mainly political in nature, and hence did not touch all the aspects of the society. The *Glorious Revolution of 1688* in England was mainly political in nature because it was aimed at *ending the absolute and divine right of monarchy* and at ushering in the *principle of popular sovereignty* in the form of Parliament in England. The *American Revolution of 1775-83* was aimed at securing independence for America from the colonial domination of England.

The French Revolution was an amazing and ever changing drama, full of extraordinary incidents that still fascinate us and horrify and thrill. *It was not a clash of canons, not a battle of bayonets, not a war of weapons, but a revolution against unjust privileges and invidious distinctions.*

About the nature and character of the Revolution it has been rightly observed :

"It has its home in the *field, the street* and in the *market-place*, and its *methods are rough and coarse*. The people who make it have *not had the advantage of education* of the princes and statesmen. Their *language is not courtly* and decorous, hiding a multitude of intrigues and evil designs. There is no mystery about them, no veils to hide the working of their minds; even their bodies have little enough covering. Politics in revolution cease to be the sport of kings or professional politicians. They deal with realities, and behind them are the raw human nature and the empty stomachs of the hungry."

In France, during those fateful five years from 1789 to 1794 - *the hungry masses were in action - a very important characteristic feature of the Revolution*. It is they who forced the hands of the timid politicians and make them to abolish monarchy and feudalism and the privileges of the church. It is they who took cruel vengeance against those who exploited and crushed them in the past. It is rugged and bare-footed people who, with improvised arms, rushed to defend their Revolution on the battle-field and drove back the trained armies of Europe united against them.

The ragged, rugged, bare-footed and the hungry masses controlled the very character and the nature of the Revolution and the so called intellectuals played the role of a second fiddle.

The Revolution was primarily *violent, emotional, passionate and blood-thirsty, for the human spirit was subdued, crushed and humiliated to the extreme.*

The French Revolution shook not only the very foundations of the 'Old Order' but also spread the principles for which it fought throughout the length and breadth of the world. Thus the saying, viz, "*If France gets cold, Europe sneezes*" became a reality.

The French Revolution was *neither spontaneous one nor a result of sudden outburst of events.* Thus several factors were responsible for the outbreak of the Revolution in France.

Causes for the outbreak of the Revolution

1. Social factors

"The Revolution of 1789 was much less a rebellion against despotism than a rebellion against inequality".

The social factors may be taken as one of the most potent causes for the outbreak of the Revolution in France. The French society, before the last quarter of the 18th century, was *dominated by the unjust privileges and invidious distinctions.* There were two prominent classes in France, viz. *privileged class and unprivileged class.*

Privileged class

The privileged class consisted of the *nobility and the higher clergy.* In a total population of 24 millions, there were 150,000 nobles and 130,000 clergymen. Roughly their combined strength was about *one percent*, yet they excelled all others in enjoying ranks, possessions and privileges.

Nobles

The great noble was one who could see the king, speak to his ministers and possessed ancestors and rich landed estates. They lived in opulence and grandeur. The best seats in the churches and theaters were reserved for them. The important and lucrative positions and posts in the administration were monopolised by them. They owned castles and magnificent mansions. They were exempted from taxation and any duties to the state. The nobility, especially enjoyed the rights of hunting, fishing, etc; in the community lands. They belonged to the *Second Estate.*

Higher clergy

They belonged to the *First Estate.* This class consisted of cardinals, arch-bishops, bishops, etc. The higher clergy, like the nobles, enjoyed privileges. They had castles, cathedrals, palaces, invaluable paintings, rich vestments, rentals from land, etc. They literally competed with the worldly men in leading a life of ease and luxury, which was highly undesirable. They had monopolised all the important positions in the church. They never cared to discharge their religious duties and tried more to live in extravagance. *This shocked the moral sense of the nation.*

It is estimated that the privileged class (nobles and the higher clergy) owned $\frac{1}{5}$ th of the landed property of France. *That means one percent of the people owned about 40% of the property of the country.* There was a French maxim, viz, "*The nobles fight, the clergy pray and the people pay*". The privileged class enjoyed many political, social and economic privileges without performing their duties and obligations. They degenerated into a band of greedy and vicious courtiers. They collected taxes and dues from the people but paid no taxes to the government.

Unprivileged class

One of the most important causes for the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 was the discontentment of the unprivileged class or the *Third Estate* which includes the middle class, peasants, urban workers, lower clergy, etc.

Middle class

The *middle class*, the bourgeoisie, consists of *politicians, rich merchants, industrial capitalists, intellectuals, professionals*, etc. This was the most important section of the French society. *They had brains and money*. They were very widely travelled people and also profoundly influenced by the French Philosophers. While profiting by the rise in prices, the wealthier and more enterprising businessmen complained of guild regulations and the other obsolete restrictions on free commercial activity. They found it galling to be snubbed by the nobility, *treated as second-class citizens or subjects by the monarchy and excluded from the better posts in government, Church and army*. It is the members of this class who became the leaders of the people of France and also became the authors of the French Revolution.

Peasants

The *peasants and the serfs* were the much exploited class of France. They neither enjoyed *social freedom nor economic mobility*.

The peasants had to work on the land of his feudal lord from dawn to dusk. The wages paid to them were the lowest.

Although the degree of the agrarian distress of the peasants varied greatly from province to province, the total picture was far from bright. The trouble came chiefly from three factors - *backward methods of farming, the shortage of land and over population*. The efficient techniques of the agricultural revolution of England made little headway in France before 1789. Vast areas of land were not cultivated at all or lay fallow every second year or third year in accordance with the mediaeval manorial practice. The crowded and constantly increasing rural population could not find full employment or a decent livelihood. Further, the *rotation of crop system was not known to the French peasants*. Besides, the peasants were not allowed by the nobles to plant according to their will and pleasure.

The nobles of France kept *large flocks of pigeons, deer and game* and all of them were fed on the crops of the peasants. The peasants were not permitted to obstruct them, but simply they should act as spectators.

The nobles tried the cases of peasants and whatever fines they collected went straight away go into their pocket.

The peasants were *not permitted to protect the crops by erecting fences round their fields*. As a consequence, the pigeons, deer and other pets maintained by the nobles freely entered into the fields and eaten away the ripened crops. The peasant could not even drive away the birds and animals on account of the fear of the nobles.

The peasant was bound to *grind his corn at the mill of his landlord*. Normally these mills were located at a great distance from their dwellings and as a result they were put to a lot of inconvenience. They were punished if they tried to grind the corn themselves and that too with the help of stones.

Besides, the *crushing weight of taxation* had fallen on the head and shoulders of the peasants. They *had to pay taxes to the Church and to the state, besides dues to their lords*. They had to pay tithes to the Church which usually amounted annually to one-fifth or one-fifteenth part of the gross produce of the land. The *Taille* was the most important *land tax* paid to the state. *It was not fixed*. It depended upon the

produce and the value of the land. The other tax paid by the peasants to the state was the income tax. This amounted to the five percent of the income. Another tax was *the Gabelle or the salt tax*. This was the most repressive one. The government had the monopoly of salt manufacturing and every one above the age of seven had to buy a salt of certain quantity, i.e; seven pounds approximately, every year. *The price of the salt was about ten times heighter than its real value.* Another tax was the *Corvee or the road tax*. Erection of roads was the duty of the peasants and they had to spend many weeks in a year on the construction and maintenance of the roads in their neighbourhood.

It has been estimated that after paying all the dues and taxes to the lord, the church and the state, the French peasant was left with only about 20% of the total produce. Thus the peasants were unable to make their both ends to meet. A dry winter or a long summer will suffice to smash them completely. In some cases the starving peasants tried to satisfy their hunger by eating roots and herbs. It is rightly pointed out that in *"France one-tenths of population died of hunger, and the tenth of it died due to indigestion"*.

The discontentment of the peasants was further aggravated by *the steep rise in prices*. Even nature worsened the crisis. The harvest of 1787 and 1788 were very bad. *The crop failure and the increase in prices brought great social distress making the peasants to flee to near by towns.* It was this flight of people that introduced the element of violence because it created the notorious Paris mob of 1789-94 and the peasant riots of the country side in 1789. *In a significant way the peasants who migrated to towns and cities successfully created revolutionary situation which caused Revolution in France.*

Urban workers

Urban workers, another class with in the Third Estate, had little reason to cherish the Old Regime. Though "labour" in our modern sense of a large self conscious body of factory workers hardly existed in pre-Revolutionary France, almost every sizable town and city had its *wage-earners* and *artisans*, employed chiefly in small business or workshops and handicraft industries. This class felt with particular sharpness *the pinch of rising prices*. The *guild system* and *lack of free trade* had their impact on them. Thus they, like the peasants, were ready to follow the lead of the middle class.

The lower nobility and the clergy

The *lower nobility* were in no way better than the middle class and lead a life of distress and discontentment. Similarly the position of the lower clergy. They had to bear the entire burden of the official duties and responsibilities while the higher clergy were enjoying the pleasures of court life. Therefore, the lower classes despised the unwarranted privileges of the higher classes. *Thus the prevailing social and economic disparities between the privileged and unprivileged classes fanned the flames of Revolution in France.*

2. Political factors

Several political factors promoted the cause of Revolution in France and the most potential of them are as follows.

Centralised despotism

During the 17th and in the first quarter of the 18th century, French monarchy *steadily became a centralised despotism*. Under the strong, able, efficient and enlightened kings like Henry IV, Louis XIII and to some extent Louis XIV, the centralised despotism brought *internal prosperity* and *external glory*. But the succession of weak and inefficient kings nullified the advantages of a centralised despotism. So, far want of a bold and efficient mechanic, the machinery of centralised royal absolutism was gradually falling apart. Further, its impact on administration was telling.

Dismal administrative system

- i. The administration had fallen into the hands of *greedy and corrupt nobles* who successfully resisted all the attempts of Louis XV and Louis XVI at reforms.
- ii. The greatest defect in the administrative system was that there was *over-lapping of powers* between different departments. This conflict of jurisdictions added to the troubles of the people.
- iii. There was *no uniform law* in the whole of France. The legal system was full of confusion. A thick jungle of laws prevailed throughout the length and breadth of France. In some places German law prevailed whereas in another place Roman law was in force. It is estimated that 400 different laws were in force in France. This thick jungle of laws considerably hampered the smooth working of the judicial administration.

Further, *the laws were written in Latin* and consequently they were not within the reach of a common man.

The laws were cruel and unjust. For simple offences cruel punishments were awarded.

Torture was a common method used for establishing the guilt of a criminal. Breaking one's bone on a wheel or cutting the hands and ears were profusely employed. There was *no regular criminal procedure* and as a result any body could be imprisoned on the whim of an influential person. Men like Voltaire and Mirabeau were imprisoned like ordinary persons.

There was confusion not only in the sphere of law but also in the field of law-courts. There were royal-courts, military-courts, church-courts and courts of finance. Their over-lapping jurisdiction often added to the confusion and injustice.

"Nobility of the Robe" was a peculiar institution that was prevailing in France during this period. The persons who belonged to this institution were acted as judges in perpetuity or for life. Besides, their offices were sold and bought.

- iv. There was *no uniformity in weights and measures*. They had different names and values in different provinces. The same is the case with the coins. This system not only *paralysed ordinary monetary transactions* but also hampered to a very great extent the *trade and commerce of France*.

Thus the administrative system that prevailed in pre-Revolutionary France was paralytic, decadent and dismal to the extreme. This became a cause of concern to the common people of France.

Ambitious foreign policy followed by the Bourbon kings of France

The ambitious foreign policy followed by the Bourbon kings of France also contributed much to the *unpopularity of the monarchy in France*.

Louis XIV and Louis XV participated and waged many wars, viz, the *War of Devolution*, the *Dutch War*, the *War of the League of Augusburg*, the *Spanish Succession War*, the *Austrian Succession War*, the *Polish War*, the *Seven Year's War* and the *American War of Independence*. The Bourbon kings waged these wars only to increase their prestige rather than promoting the welfare of the country and the people. They were responsible for the creation of economic crisis, which was the last nail in the coffin of French monarchy.

The *intervention of the French people* on behalf of the rebels in the American War of Independence did more harm to their French monarchy. It opened the *gates of France to the revolutionary ideas from abroad*. The American Revolution disseminated throughout France the *principles of rebellion and the ideas of republicanism*. Further, many French revolutionaries who participated in the American War of Independence had got the required experience to stage revolts and revolutions against the monarchy in France.

3. Economic factors

The *taxation system*, prevailing in the pre-Revolutionary France, was *unfair and oppressive*. Unfair, because the *privileged class*, who were swimming in a sea of wealth, *were exempted from taxation*. The entire tax burden fell on the head and shoulders of the peasants.

Oppressive, because the system of tax-farming gave rise to much tyranny and oppression. According to the tax-farming system, the right of collecting taxes was accorded to the highest bidder in the auction, and he will pay to the state the amount decided in the auction. But he will try to enrich himself by collecting more from the peasants. Under this system the peasants and the state were the losers whereas the tax-farmers were the beneficiaries. However, this system was responsible for the ruthless exploitation of the peasants by the tax-farmers and the kings of France, in this connection, never tried to come to the rescue of the peasants.

As the privileged class was exempted from taxation the income of the state was less than its due. This was further aggravated by the tax-farming system. Therefore, France was in a chronic state of economic bankruptcy. Every capable finance minister who came to power demanded that the mischievous exemptions of the rich should be abolished. But the privileged class successfully stalled the plans of reform. Thus the *unequal distribution of the incidence of taxation, the presence of tax-farming system, the selfish attitude of the privileged class produced suitable atmosphere for the outbreak of revolution in France*.

4. Contribution of the French Philosophers, physiocrats, etc

The *material Revolution* of France was *preceded by an intellectual revolution*, and the French philosophers like Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquie, etc; were responsible for it.

In a land where there was no parliament and established political conventions either written or unwritten, the men of letters and philosophers will become politicians.

In a land where galling social inequalities reigned supreme, the writers and thinkers enthuse people to voice their grievances. They will provide the required leadership and faith to the people.

This is what exactly happened in France in the 18th century. The three outstanding philosophers who roused the sensitive feelings of the masses of France were Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu.

French Philosophers

i. Voltaire : 1694 - 1778

Voltaire, also known "*King Voltaire*", did the greatest damage to the church. In verse, in prose, in drama and in romance, he attacked the irrational traditions, beliefs and gross abuses that crept into the organisation of the church. He attacked them with his masterly satire and biting wit.

He believed in the "*Supremacy of Reason*". He observed that everything and anything should stand to the test of reason. His speeches hypnotised the French public.

Voltaire, in the political field, advocated "*Enlightened Despotism*". Frederic the Great of Prussia and the Catharine the Great of Russia were some of the greatest enlightened despots of the 18th century. They were the admirers of Voltaire. *Voltaire preferred enlightened or benevolent despotism instead of monarchical autocracy.* Enlightened despot always cares more in looking after the material and moral comforts of his subjects and people. Thus Voltaire preferred it.

Voltaire is said to have remarked that "*he would be preferred to be ruled by one lion rather than by hundred rats*". Voltaire by his electrifying speeches exposed the gross abuses and prepared the people for the Revolution.

Rousseau : 1712 - 1778

Rousseau began where Voltaire left off. His philosophy was the moving spirit of the Revolution. He stated in his famous work "*The Social Contract*", that "*Man was born free but every where he was in chains*".

Rousseau said that *all societies are artificial*, and hence advocated the people to sweep away all the fabric of the society.

He attacked the *Divine Right Theory of Monarchy*. He favoured *Popular Sovereignty* based on the will of the people. *No political system can maintain itself without the consent of the governed.*

Rousseau advocated a *state where people were virtuous, equal and free*. He propounded theory of the "*Sovereign will of the people*". People were responsible for the creation of the state. If the state failed to look after them they had every right to revolt and destroy it.

The "*Social Contract*" of Rousseau became the *gospel of the Revolution*. The revolutionary Jacobines were the greatest votaries of the philosophy of this great political thinker of the age.

Rousseau further, popularised the *ideas of civil freedom, social equality and the rights of man*.

It has been very aptly said that "*Voltaire harnessed the horses of reason whereas Rousseau unchained the tigers of emotion*".

Montesquieu 1689 - 1755

He was a polished and an eminent lawyer, but well versed in history. He was also a serious, acute and a profound student of human institutions. He was a master of a terse and pointed style. His writings were weighty, luminous and moderate in tone, but scientifically sane.

Montesquieu advocated the *theory of separation of powers*. He believed that the legislative, judicial and executive powers must be put under the control of different organs and then only administrative homogeneity could be realised. The combination of any two powers or three will result in tyranny.

All his theories are incorporated in his magnum opus, i.e; "*The spirit of the laws*" - the result of twenty years labour. It was published in 1748. It is stated that 22 editions of this book were printed within 18 months.

Physiocrats

The physiocrats also contributed their might for the outbreak of the Revolution. Mirabeau, Turgot, Necker, etc; were the greatest exponents of physiocracy. They were very much influenced by Adam Smith - one of the greatest classical English economists. They gave a *twist to the existing theory of mercantilism*. They advocated that the government should not put any restrictions on trade and commerce. *They firmly believed in free trade* and the encouragement should be given to the international trade. By

advocating this they wanted to break the monopoly enjoyed by the trade guilds which were under the control of the privileged and middle class.

The physiocrats, further argued that *due importance must be given to agriculture for the internal prosperity of the nation*. In this context they argued that the wealth of a nation is nothing but a mere *application of labour to land*. This stimulated the thinking of the peasant-artisan community of France.

These philosophers and thinkers were very careful in not carrying their criticism too far. They knew very well the art of saying everything without being sent to the Bastille (prison) - the odious symbol of "Ancient Regime". Regarding the contribution of these philosophers to the outbreak of the Revolution Prof. Hazen observes :

"The Revolution was not caused by the French philosophers, but by the conditions and the evils of the national life and by the mistakes of the government. Nevertheless, these writers and philosophers were a factor in the Revolution, for they educated a group of leaders instilled in to them certain decisive doctrines, furnished them with phrases, formulas and arguments, gave them tone and case their minds, imparted them certain powerful illusions, encouraged an excessive hopefulness which was the characteristic of the movement. They did not cause the Revolution, but they exposed the causes brilliantly, focussed attention upon them and compelled discussion and aroused passion".

Hence to say that *the philosophers and thinkers were mainly responsible for the outbreak of the Revolution, amounts putting the cart in front of a horse*. The unprivileged class which was exploited to the maximum by the privileged and the king were the main motive forces to the Revolution. But they were only led by the philosophers.

5. Economic crisis

The most powerful factor that caused the Revolution in 1789 was the *economic crisis*. It is this economic crisis coupled with the social inequalities successfully created a "revolutionary atmosphere" and this atmosphere finally precipitated in the form of a Revolution in France. Several factors contributed to the economic crisis.

- i. The Bourbon kings of France led a life of *unparalleled grandeur and glamour*. Huge amounts of money, collected in the form of taxes from the unprivileged, was spent for the personal pleasure of the emperors.
- ii. Louis XIV and XV *waged many wars*. These are wanton aggressions which sapped the very vitality of France without expanding its geographical horizons.
- iii. The *exemption of privileged class from taxation*, the presence of tax-farming system, lack of free trade, shortage of land, backward methods of agriculture and over population also paralysed the economic stability of France.

Thus by the last quarter of the 18th century France was virtually on the brink of economic bankruptcy. It was at this time heavy loans were taken from the European powers to solve the situation temporarily. It was under these circumstances Louis XVI (1774-1793) ascended the throne of France.

Louis XVI came to the throne at a very tender age of 20. He was not a man of parts. His hobbies were lock-making and shooting deer through the palace windows. *During his reign period all the accumulated debts reached its cumulative point*. The annual national income was not even sufficient to clear the interest on the foreign loans. Thus the economic position of France was deplorable, distressing and above all destructive.

Louis XVI with good intentions appointed Turgot, a man of rare ability, as the Controller-General of Finance to solve the economic crisis. He followed three methods to extricate the national finances.

- i. Enforced *strict economy* and checked the useless expenditure.
- ii. Abolished all *customs barriers*, introduced *free trade* and checked the activities of the *trade-guilds*.
- iii. *Abolished tax-farming system* and fixed a stipulated amount as *land-tax* on the proprietors of the land.

These measures curtailed the privileges enjoyed by the privileged class. They with the assistance of the queen brought pressure on Louis XVI and as a result Turgot was dismissed and his measures lapsed into oblivion. Then after some time the king entrusted the task of solving the economic position of France to Necker.

Necker was a Genevan banker. He tried to solve the economic crisis, but faced the same situation as faced by Turgot. Necker, like Turgot, abolished the farming of taxes. *He was the first person to publish a report which showed the annual income and expenditure of the state.* Thus the whole thing which was hitherto kept as a secret became black and white. This act infuriated the members of the court. They demanded and even succeeded in necking out Necker from the finance department. After him came a succession of ministers who literally hastened the catastrophe instead of trying to solve it.

Louis XVI, with a view of tackling the financial problem, summoned the *Assembly of Notables* consisting of chief nobles, bishops and magistrates. He thought that they would give their consent to tax the privileged and unprivileged alike. Although the Assembly of Notables abolished compulsory labour on the roads, they refused to approve the request of the king. They recommended that the question of taxation should be referred to the Estates General.

Louis XVI, then tried to get *fresh loans* from the European powers. But the *Parliament of Paris* refused to endorse it. The king immediately suspended it.

It was at this time the *economic crisis reached its climax*. The economic crisis grew worse because of prolonged inflation. Prices rose high and even nature worsened the crisis. The harvest of 1787 and 1788 were distressing. This brought great social distress making the people to flee to the cities and towns. It was this flee of people that *created the notorious Parisian mob*. They created terrific commotion and literally revolutionary atmosphere. The Parisian mob immediately demanded the king to summon the Estates-General which had the power to levy new taxes. It was under these circumstances that Louis XVI ordered the summoning of the Estates-general and also to conduct elections to it. *The very summoning of the Estates-General in 1789, after the lapse of 175 years (1614-1789), may be taken as the sign and signal for the starting of a Revolution in France.*

Course of the Revolution

The course of the Revolution can be broadly divided into two periods - from 1789 to 1791 when France was ruled by the National Assembly, and from 1792 to 1795 when France was dominated by the National Convention.

First period : 1789 to 1791

Louis XVI having no other recourse to fall back, at last decided to summon the Estates-General in 1789. *This shows that for the first time in the history of France, monarchical absolutism bowed before the sovereign will of the people.*

Nature and the composition of the Estates-General

The Estates-General was the mediaeval feudal parliament of France. It was a three-chambered body of the elected representatives of the Three Estates, viz; Higher clergy, Nobles and the Commoners. It

was met 175 years back and hence it was as good as a dead body. When it was summoned in the year 1789 the question of its constitution assumed paramount importance.

Previously, each of these three chambers used to have an equal number of delegates and each chamber or order voted separately. The first two chambers being composed of the privileged classes, the Third Estate, i.e; the commoners, were left always in minority. Thus the privileged used to carry always the decisions in their favour. Further, voting by chambers and not voting by individuals also favoured the privileged class.

Louis XVI, before summoning the Estates-General, ordered Necker to conduct fresh elections. Necker being a part and parcel of the Third Estate simply increased its number of representatives to 600 and prescribed 300 apiece for the First and Second Estates. This was going to favour the Third Estate if voting by individuals was introduced.

On 5th May 1789, on the eve of Estates-General's meeting, the members of the Third Estate demanded three demands and they are as follows.

- i. As the Estates-General represents national problems and also possessed representatives from different social strata, it should be named as *National Assembly*.
- ii. It should be converted as a *single chambered organisation*.
- iii. Voting by orders should be abolished, instead *voting by individuals should be introduced*.

The privileged class offered stubborn resistances to concede the demands of the unprivileged. The latter did not budge even an inch and finally took the momentous step of declaring the Estates-General as *the National Assembly*.

The king in order to stop the revolutionary proceedings of the Third Estate simply ordered the hall where the proceedings of the Estates-General had to take place to be closed. Then the members of the Third Estate assembled in the near by Tennis Court and took an oath to the effect that until their grievances were redressed they should not move from the Tennis Court. Sensing the gravity of the situation Louis XVI ordered all the three Estates to sit as one body. It appears that the king did not take this defeat happily. He had ordered soldiers to come to Paris with the intention of suppressing the National Assembly. Further, he dismissed Necker and ordered him to leave the country.

Fall of Bastille and its impact

The infuriated Parisian mob immediately attacked the soldiers. Further, they had directed their fury towards the prison by name Bastille - *the odious symbol of the Old Regime*. Pitched fights were fought in the very streets of Paris. Blood ebbed and flowed like water. At last the revolutionaries completely destroyed the prison of Bastille and all the prisoners were left free. The historians of the French Revolution gave a lot of importance to the fall of Bastille.

- i. It was considered as the triumph of liberty and spread the same throughout Europe.
- ii. It was responsible for the revolutionaries to capture Paris and afterwards some sort of municipal government was established in Paris.
- iii. National guard was created to protect the government.
- iv. The peasants revolted in the provinces. They had plundered the castles of the nobles. They took particular interest in destroying all documents and titles of the nobles.
- v. The nobles voluntarily surrendered their feudal rights and privileges.

- vi. Sale and purchase of offices were abolished.
- vii. Class distinctions were put an end to. Thus in one word the principle of equality was recognised.

Thus the fall of Bastille shook the very foundations of the Old Regime. Alarmed at the rapid changes that were taking place in France after the fall of Bastille, Louis XVI immediately sent away troops, restored Necker and recognised the National Guard and National Assembly.

National Assembly : 1789 - 1791

The National Assembly created Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for France. The new constitution contained the following provisions.

- i. It *abolished feudalism, serfdom and class distinctions and privileges.*
- ii. *Taxes* were to be paid by all the individuals of France in proportion to their revenues, and all public expenses were to be borne equally by all. In addition, the *clergy gave up its tithes* and the *nobility surrendered its mediaeval rights* like game preserves and collection of feudal dues.
- iii. *The sale of offices was abolished.*

In short all the special privileges of classes, cities and provinces were swept away.

- iv. Declaration of the Rights of Man

This document *reflected the philosophy of Rousseau* and incorporated some of the provisions of the *Constitution Laws of England and USA*. It became a platform of the French Revolution and influenced the thought of the 19th and 20th centuries. The following are some of the *important clauses of the Declaration of the Rights of Man*.

- i. *Men are born free, and remain free and equal in rights.*
- ii. *Every political institution should protect the rights of the Man.* These are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.
- iii. *The free communication of thought and opinion* is one of the most precious rights of man.
- iv. *No person should be accused, arrested or imprisoned arbitrarily.*
- v. *No one shall be deprived of his right over his property* except in the case of public need. Even then adequate compensation shall be paid to the owner.
- vi. *Sovereignty resides in the nation* and hence no body can take the power into his hands and act.
- vii. *Law is the expression of the general will.* Hence all citizens have the right to take part personally or through their representatives in its formation.
- viii. *The people have the right to control the finances* of the country.
- ix. *All the officials of the state* shall be responsible to the people and to the country.

Prof. Thomson in his work, "*Europe Since Napoleon*" observes :

"It (Declaration of the Rights of Man) was drawn up not for France alone, but for the benefit of men everywhere who wanted to be free and to rid themselves of comparable burdens of absolute monarchy and the feudal privileges".

The Declaration of the Rights of Man has been described as the most remarkable event in the history of the growth of democratic and republican ideas in Europe in general and that of France in particular. It was the gospel of the modern times.

v. Administration

The new constitution introduced *uniform administration*. The old provinces, governments, intendancies, etc; were abolished. The country was divided afresh into 83 departments. These departments were uniform in size and population. They were named after natural features like rivers and mountains.

Each department was further divided into *Cantons* and *Communes*. The heads of the local divisions were elected by the people and not nominated by the executive.

This was the first written constitution of France. It incorporated the *theory of separation of powers* enunciated by Montesquieu. The legislative, executive and judiciary were separated and kept under the control of separate heads.

The legislative authority was vested in one chamber called the *Legislative Assembly*. It has 745 members, they were elected by the people and their period of *duration was 2 years*. The right of voting was exercised by only *active citizens* - those citizens were those who hold property and paid taxes to the government. This shows that the Legislative Assembly was dominated by the middle class.

The *executive authority* was vested in the hands of the *king*. He was the head of the army and navy. He was given the power of *Suspensive Veto*, by which he could *postpone* the execution of any act passed by the Legislative Assembly. But he had no power to *alter* it, *dismiss* it and even *postpone it permanently*. He will be assisted by ministers in discharging his work. But they were not allowed to sit in the Legislative Assembly.

The *Judicial system* was completely revolutionised. Formerly, the judges used to buy their possessions. They had also the right to pass on those possessions to their sons. All these things were abolished. In future, *all judges were to be elected*. The term of office was to vary 2 to 4 years. *Jury system* was introduced in the criminal cases.

Attempts were also made to *simplify and to unify the legal system of the country*. But the task could not be accomplished till the time of Napoleon as first Consul.

vi. Financial measures

Belief in the theory of the equal taxation of all Frenchmen didn't solve the urgent practical problems of finance. *The landed estates under the control of the church were confiscated*. Keeping that as security the National Assembly issued paper currency known as "*Assignats*". Paper currency worked very well as long as the printing of the paper currency was in proportion to the value of the property in security. It is true that issuing of *Assignats* temporarily tackled the financial problem, but it was considered as one of the sorriest chapters in the course of the French Revolution. The excess of printing of paper currency created additional problems.

vii. Religious measures

The monasteries and the other religious communities were suppressed. *Absolute religious toleration was proclaimed*. The number of bishops were reduced. They were to be elected by the people and paid by the state. Their association with the Pope was merely nominal.

In December 1790 a decree was passed according to which all the clergy in France were required to take a solemn oath of allegiance to *the Civil Constitution of the Clergy*. The Pope condemned it and

ordered the clergy of France not to take the oath. The result was that the clergymen of France was divided into two groups. Those who took the oath were called as *Juring Clergy* and those who did not take the oath were called as *Non-juring Clergy*.

Up to this time a large number of the lower clergy were sympathising the cause of the Revolution. But now onwards they disassociated with the Revolution. A small minority of the clergymen took the oath of allegiance to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

Merits of the work of the National Assembly

- i. It destroyed the *monarchical absolutism*.
- ii. It *destroyed feudalism* and put an *end to the class privileges*.
- iii. It *abolished serfdom and forced labour*.
- iv. It destroyed the old system of administration and introduced a new order where the *sovereign will of the people* and the *theory of separation of powers* played a very important part.
- v. It brought revolutionary changes in the judiciary and in the organisation of the church.
- vi. The most important contribution made by the first written constitution was the introduction of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*.

Demerits

- i. The constitution of 1791 went a long way towards instituting popular government, but it stopped well short of full democracy. Restricting the political equality promised by the Declaration of the Rights of Man, it divided Frenchmen into two classes of citizens, viz; "*active*" and "*passive*". It limited the right of voting to the "*active*" citizens who paid taxes. The "*passive*" citizens enjoyed the full protection of the law but didn't receive the franchise. *Thus the bulk of the population of France were eliminated from the active participation in the administration. The middle class monopolised the constitution of 1791.*
- ii. The *executive authority* left to the king was too weak to be effective. The executive and the legislature were so sharply divided that the communication between them was difficult and much room was left for mutual suspicion.
- iii. The *confiscation of the church property* and the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* shocked the religious conscience of many men and gave rise to religious disorders and civil war. A large number of clergy, particularly of the lower order, developed contempt for the Revolution. *Thus the Counter Revolutionary forces were set in motion.*
- iv. The *over printing of Assignats* led to inflation. Thus the National Assembly instead of solving economic crisis created additional financial problems.

Factors for the rise of National Convention and its contribution : 1791-1795

Before the actual functioning of the first written constitution a very important event had taken place and that was *the attempted flight of the king*. Louis XVI was dragged from Versailles to Paris by the Parisian women, since then he was practically leading the life of a prisoner. Further, the new constitution deprived him from all power. Thus a plan was made to run away to Austria. Accordingly the royal family disguised themselves and left Paris in secret. However, the royal party was captured when it was 20 miles away from the Austrian boarder. *The unsuccessful flight of the king had produced some serious consequences.*

Men like Danton and Robespere *d demanded immediately the abolition of monarchy and the establishment of a Republican form of government.* However, the constitutionalists were in majority in the National Assembly and hence the matter was dropped. It was under these circumstances the Legislative Assembly plunged into action.

Work of the Legislative Assembly

The Legislative Assembly consists of 745 members and *unfortunately all of them were new to the job.* Foolishly the National Assembly passed self-denying law by which its members were debarred from being elected to the Legislative Assembly.

Another difficulty that was faced by the Legislative Assembly was that its members were affiliated to several parties and clubs. They were as follows.

- i. *Constitutionalists* : They stood for constitutional monarchical form of government.
- ii. *Republicans* : They were for the Republican form of government and for the abolition of monarchy. They were divided into two groups, viz, *Girandists* and *Jacobines*. The Girandists were moderates, but they stood for the establishment of Republican form of government gradually. Their outlook was more academic than practical.

The Jacobines were the Republicans of the extreme type. They were prepared to adopt all kinds of means for the establishment of a Republican form of government in France.

Laws passed by the Legislative Assembly and voted by the king

The Legislative Assembly passed two laws.

- i. By the first law all the priests were required to act according to the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*. If they failed to do it they will be declared as suspects and their pensions will be stopped.
- ii. The second law is called *the law of Emigrees*. This law required them (the supporters of the king who migrated to Austria, etc.) to return to France within a fixed date. If they failed to do so their property will be confiscated, their children and family members will be imprisoned and finally they will be declared as traitors.

Louis XVI, the head of the executive, refused to execute these laws and *exercised his Suspensive Veto* and suspended them temporarily. The people of Paris were not prepared to accept such an attitude on the part of the king. They attacked the royal palace and murdered mercilessly 600 Swiss body-guards of the king. They further insulted and humiliated the king. The king and his family members escaped secretly from the palace and took refuge in the Legislative Assembly.

The attitude of the European powers towards the revolutionary France

At this time the European powers opened their eyes and determined to support the cause of monarchy in France. Further, the act of revolutionaries infuriated the powers. *They despatched parties to different countries to spread the ideals of revolution and republicanism.* This naturally created an atmosphere of animosity between France and the other European powers.

Austria and Prussia took up the cause of French monarchy. As a retaliation the revolutionary government of France declared war upon Austria. In the war that ensued France was beaten by the combined forces of Austria and Prussia. The Frenchmen immediately attributed their defeats not to their own lack of preparation but to the activities of the king. Added to this the Duke of Brunswick the commander of the

Austro-Prussian forces issued a *Manifesto* in which he declared that *the intention of Austria and Prussia was to restore Bourbon king to power.*

The French reply to the *Manifesto* was *the revolt in Paris*. The outcome of the revolt was the establishment of the *Dictatorship of Danton*. The king was suspended, the National Assembly was dissolved and fresh elections were ordered for a *National Convention* to prepare a new constitution for the country.

Supreme control passed into the hands of Danton. The Austro-Prussian forces at this time literally penetrated into France and straight away marching towards Paris. It was at this point of time the revolutionaries fought a majestic battle against the Austro-Prussian army at Valmy. In this battle France scored a thrilling victory. Thus France was saved from a grave danger. This victory gave self-confidence to the French troops and after that they won victory after victory. It was under these circumstances that the National Convention met on 21st September 1792.

National Convention : 1792-1795

Prof. Hayes observes :

"Perhaps no legislative body in the history had been called upon to solve such knotty problems as those which confronted the National Convention at the beginning of its session."

The most important and the urgent problem faced by the Convention was the king. *Monarchy was abolished* and the deposed king was put up for trial and was found unanimously guilty. By a small majority, his immediate death was voted upon. Girandists pleaded for leniency, but the Jacobines demanded his immediate execution. Ultimately, the king was guillotined on Sunday, Jan. 21st. 1793. His last words are as follows :

"Gentlemen I am innocent for that of which I am accused. May my blood assure the happiness of the French".

Internal and external impact of the execution of the king

Internally the peace and tranquility of France destroyed. Revolts, clashes and disturbances were spread throughout the length and breadth of France. The Jacobines were branded as the murders of the king.

Externally, a menacing European coalition was formed with the intention of crushing revolutionary France and to strengthen monarchy. *Austria, Prussia, England, Holland, Spain and Sardinia* played a very vital role in this connection.

To face the foreign threat, first, peace must be restored in France. In this connection Danton, Marat, Robespierre, Snt. Just, etc; introduced *the Reign of Terror* in the internal France. Its main object was to restore peace in France.

Reign of Terror

Several agencies and institutes were created with an express desire of restoring peace in internal France and they are as follows.

1. Committee of Public Safety

It consists of 12 members with almost dictatorial powers. This committee became practically omnipotent, enforcing its decrees even up on the National Convention. Robespierre was its leader.

ii. The Law of Suspects

This organ authorised to declare any and every person suspected of being attached to the cause of monarchy. These suspects were to be detained in the prison or placed before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

iii. Revolutionary Tribunal

It was an extraordinary criminal court, created for the speedy trial of the suspects.

iv. The Square of the Revolution

Here the unfortunate victims fell under the stroke of the guillotine. In one day over two thousand persons were executed by the sentence of Square of the Revolution. The most prominent of the victim was Maria Antoinette.

While the *Law of Suspects*, *Revolutionary Tribunal* and the *Square of the Revolution* were very busy in sending the suspects to heaven, the *Committee of Public Safety* took measures to put down internal revolts. Thus peace was successfully restored in internal France.

In the meanwhile, under the dictatorship of Danton several decrees were passed to improve the military strength of France to face the European coalition. In 1793 compulsory levy of half a million men was ordered. That every French citizens, between the age of 18 and 25, were ordered to render military service. By the end of 1793, 7,70,000 soliders were recruited and they were given splendid discipline and drill. They were ready to defend France from any external threat.

The revolutionary army of France scored victories over the Allies. Spain and Prussia were humbled. *William V of Holland was deposed and Holland was transformed into the Republic of Batavia*. Sardinia was withdrawn from the coalition. England and Austria were reamined to be tackled. Thus France enjoyed peace internally and externally.

The work of the National Convention

- i. The first and foremost achievement of the National Convention was *the abolishment of monarchy* and the *establishment of the First French Republic*. France was declared as Republic on 21st September, 1792.
- ii. Another achievement of the National Convention was *the successful creation of the sentiment of nationalism*. With a view of creating a truely a nationalist army, the Revolutionary France, issued a decree by which compulsory military service was prescribed. The decree states :

"The youngmen shall go to the people, the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions, the women shall make tents and clothing and shall serve in the hospitals, the children shall turn lenin into lint the aged shall betake themselves to the public places in order to rouse the courage of the warriors"

This decree not only electrified the nation but also charged with the sentiment of nationalism.

- iii. The National Convention declared *French as the national language*. It also made changes in the *National Calender*. The year was divided into 12 months and each month was to consist of three weeks of ten days each. Every 10th day was declared as holiday. National holidays, five or six, were fixed. The year was to start from 21st September - *for it was on that day France was converted as Republic*.

- iv. The National Convention was taken up the work of the *codification of laws* and much progress was made in that direction.
 - i. There was *no imprisonment for debt*.
 - ii. *Slavery was abolished* in the French colonies.
 - iii. Women were accorded *the property right*.
 - iv. The *law of primogeniture* by which the eldest got the property and the others nothing was abolished. All children were allowed to have equal in the paternal property.
 - v. A new and uniform of system of *weights and measures*, called the *metric system* was introduced.
- v. The National Convention also introduced certain changes in the realm of religion. During the period of Reign of Terror attempts were made to de-christianise France. However, after the end of Reign of Terror and the fall of Robespierre, *Christianity was again restored* and *religious toleration was also accorded*.
- vi. The National Convention also issued some social reforms and some of them are as follows.
 - i. The *property of the Emigrees* was confiscated.
 - ii. Persons of *wealth, clergymen and nobles* were treated as suspects.
 - iii. *Large landed estates* were broken up and offered for sale in small plots and on easy terms so that ordinary people may be able to own land. Thus a large number of *peasant-proprietors* were created. *No compensation* was to be given to those who were deprived of their lands.
 - iv. The *Laws of the Maximum* were passed which *fixed the prices* of grains and other commodities of necessity and the *wages of the workers were fixed*.
 - v. Every body was to be addressed as "citizen".
 - vi. The government rationed scarce commodities.

The ~~Socialist historians~~ used to argue, by taking into consideration the above mentioned measures that the newly created Republic of France was moving *towards a social democracy*. But the middle class leaders of France who monopolised the National Convention were not the genuine socialists. Only the emergencies of the revolution and to promise men some hope of future well-being initiated all these social changes.

- vii. The last great act of the National Convention was passage of the *Constitution of 1795*. The leaders of the Convention *retained Republican fabric* and also assured the *dominance of the propertied classes*. The Constitution of 1795, therefore, denied the vote of the poorest quarter of the nation and required that candidates for public offices a considerable amount of property.

According to the new constitution France was to have two chambers. The *Lower House* consisting of 500 member and *Upper House*, known as the Council of Ancients consisting of 500 members. *These chambers were empowered to examine and to enact laws*.

The *Executive authority* was entrusted to five Directors known the *Directory*. The Directors were to be elected by the legislature and they were to appoint ministers of the state who were to supervise the enforcement of the laws.

The Directors were invested with dictatorial powers. They restored order in the internal France and then directed their attention towards Austria and England who were the enemies of the revolutionary France. This paved the way for the rise of Napoleon.

WHY THE REVOLUTION BROKE OUT IN FRANCE?

The monarchical despotism, oppression of the peasantry, kings squandering the public wealth for their personal pleasures that are cited as the causes for the revolution were not only present in France but also in many countries of Europe. Yet the Revolution was started in France. There were certain *peculiar and particular* factors that were present in France were responsible for the outbreak of Revolution in France.

i. Nature of French feudalism

Feudalism as a politico-economic institution, was existing in every country of Europe. The feudal lords enjoyed privileges, and at the same time discharged their duties. They served in the army of the kings, maintained law and order in their localities and for this they were even exempted from taxation.

The feudalism and the feudal lords of France were different. The Prime minister of Louis XIII, Cardinal Richelieu, suppressed the feudal lords by depriving them of their powers and duties. But they were allowed to retain their privileges and exemptions. The result was that *while in other countries the feudal system was a reality, but it had lost its vitality in France.* The privileges enjoyed by the nobles without discharging their duties created irritation and reaction among the French people. This is a peculiar feature prevailing in France.

ii. Enlightened middle class

Another peculiar feature of the French society was *the enlightened middle class*. This type of class was conspicuous by its absence in the countries of Europe. The members of this class had wealth, brains and were profoundly influenced by the philosophy of Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu. But they were classified as unprivileged class. The middle class, influenced by the philosophers, *refused to reconcile with the inferior social status that was accorded to them.* No wonder, although the unprivileged in the other countries of Europe also suffered, they had neither idealism nor any leaders among them who were prepared to challenge the existing order and hence no revolution broke out there. Thus this peculiar phenomenon also contributed to the outbreak of Revolution in France.

iii. Economic crisis

The economic crisis was the other factor, present only in France during this time, which precipitated matters towards the Revolution. Several factors were responsible for this economic crisis.

The wars waged by Louis XIV and XV, *wasteful expenditure* of the court, showering presents and fiefs on worthless favourites and fiddlers, active intervention of queens in the administration, *exemption of privileged class from taxation*, and *the presence of tax-farming system* fanned the flames of economic crisis. Further, the situation was *aggravated by the huge loans which the French kings had taken from the other European countries.* The cumulative effect of this was that it not only paralysed the economy of France but also the annual income of France was less than the interest that it had to pay on the national debt. It should be noted here that the economic crisis which shook the foundations of the monarchical despotism in France was not present in the other European countries.

iv. Revolutionary atmosphere

Prof. Selyimini in his great work *"The French Revolution"* states that it was precisely because of the more favourable conditions prevailing in the social life of France that the revolutionary crisis broke out there rather than elsewhere in Europe. Several factors contributed for the growth of the favourable situation in France.

- i. In other countries the *lay and ecclesiastical nobles*, as in France, not deserted the provinces and *flocked round the central authority at Paris in a scramble for favours*. The removal of local administration from the control of the nobility paralysed it and it paved the way for the *political distress*.
- ii. The French middle classes were simmering with discontentment regarding the inferior social status accorded to them. The class consciousness of this middle class created *social distress*.
- iii. The *peasants of France* were conscious of their civil equality and liberty and also of *their own sufferings*. They were prepared to defend themselves against the *feudal tyranny*. They even showed reaction to the ruthless taxation. The middle class leaders stimulated the peasants and produced the favourable atmosphere for the outbreak of the Revolution. *It may be stated here that the peasants of the other countries of Europe were utterly ground down by feudal serfdom. They were too innocent to grasp such ideas as those of civil equality and liberty.*
- iv. France alone had the *capital city* acquired such importance as to become the centre of the nation's entire political administrative life. Thus when the Revolutionary forces gained mastery over Paris, the whole country too succumbed to them.

In France, *widespread trouble in the provinces* had an almost paralysing effect on the capital. It has been said that the most dangerous city of France was Paris. The centralisation of administration and the excellent communication facilities that existed between Paris and the other parts of the country were responsible for that.

In the other countries, administrative centralisation was as yet rudimentary or entirely lacking, and provincial life remained more or less autonomous. *Thus unrest arose in one area did not necessarily disturb the rest of the country.*

- v. Added to these, two years before the outbreak of the Revolution, the *harvest failed* and as a consequence the *prices of the necessities of life rose by sixty-five percent*. This made the life of the peasants miserable. Hence, in large numbers they had migrated to the city of Paris in search of their fortune and food. Their hopes were belied. This created the famous unruly Parisian mob. It was an army of unlettered, rugged, hungry and unruly rebels. *They successfully created the "Revolutionary atmosphere" which ultimately created the Revolution.* When the Parisian mob gained mastery over Paris the whole country was paralysed. They questioned the authority of the king who decided to increase the taxation on the peasants. They demanded the summoning of the Estates-General. It was under these conditions Louis XVI summoned the Estates-General in the year 1789. That was the sign and signal for the starting of the Revolution.

Thus the nature of the *French feudalism*, the presence of the *enlightened middle class*, the *economic crisis* and finally the *favourable revolutionary atmosphere* that prevailed only in France were ultimately responsible for the outbreak of a Revolution in that country.

Achievements of the Revolution

The French Revolution was one of the greatest events in the history of mankind. It brought *drastic changes in the human thinking and institutions*. Its impact was felt not only in internal France but also in the international sphere.

Internal achievements

- i. The French Revolution gave a *death blow to the galling social inequalities* that reigned supreme in France. It asserted that all men were equal before law and hence there was no justification for the maintenance of privileges whether based on birth or wealth. *Feudalism and serfdom were abolished.*
- ii. The *monarchical despotism* which was the very core of the "Old Regime" was reduced to splinters. The *Declaration of the Rights of Man* by the National Assembly emphasised the fact that the sovereignty resides in the people and law is the expression of the general will of the people. It asserted that the people should rule themselves and the government should be not only "*for the people*" but also "*by the people*".
- iii. The revolution brought substantial changes in the economic sphere.
 - i. The *monopolistic attitude of the guilds* was smashed.
 - ii. *Free trade* was introduced.
 - iii. *Right to private property* was recognised.
- iv. France became *stronger and prosperous*. Formerly there was scarcity in many parts of France, but as the result of the Revolution, France began to produce much more of the necessities of life of every kind after 1789. *The peasants ploughed the lands which they had taken back from the lords.* A new France was born. For the first time in centuries, the peasant ate his fill, strengthened his back and dared to speak out.
- v. The Revolution brought drastic changes in the *administrative structure*. The principles of selection and nomination were replaced by *election*.

The *Theory of Separation of Powers* was inserted in the Constitution and there by legislature, executive and judiciary were separated.

A uniform system of administration was introduced. The sale of offices was abolished.

Attempts were made to *simplify and unify the legal system of France*. But the work could not be accomplished till the time of Napoleon. Napoleon codified the laws of France and there by earned the title "*Second Justinian*".

- vi. Another achievement of the Revolution was that it spread the *sentiment of nationalism*. It introduced the national clender. French was made as the national language. The names of the provinces were named after the names of rivers and mountains. It is this sentiment of nationalism that was responsible in reducing the European coalitions formed against France to dust. It was during this period the idea of "*the nation in arms*", based on the sentiment of nationalism was declared.

The nobles and the people, prior to the Revolution, showed their loyalty to the king. Now *loyalty to the king was replaced by the loyalty to the nation*.

External impact

- i. *Feudalism* was abolished in France. With the abolishment of feudalism in France, feudal institutions all over Europe began to be shaken and in due course of time disappeared altogether.

The abolishment of feudal privileges was followed by the establishment of equality and liberty, first in France and then later in the whole of Europe. *Social equality* came to be recognised and *individual freedom* was held most precious, since individual now became the unit of society.

- ii. *Political power shifted from the nobility to the middle class*. The nobility could not recover from this fatal blow and their monopoly of politics was shattered. Due to this French example, political power shifted from *the aristocracy to the industrial middle class in England*.

The example of the middle class was followed by the *peasants and workers* who also began to fight for franchise not only in France but all over Europe.

- iii. The Revolution *shook the control of the church over the people*. For the first time in the history of Europe, social life was made independent of priestly authority. *Reason but not faith, Philosophy but not theology became the guides in all social and political activities*. These developments opened a new and bright chapter in the history of religious toleration.
- iv. Another important achievement of the French Revolution was the growth of *humanitarianism*. Individual came to be treated as an end and life as the greatest of values. As a consequence there was around interest and desire to *promote the material and moral well-being of the people*. Many humanitarian movements were started with this object. The *Methodist movement* in England, the movements for the *abolition of slavery*, for the *prohibition of child labour* and *reform of prisoners* all over the world did much in that direction.
- v. Another great achievement of the French Revolution was the *rise and growth of the sentiment of nationalism*. The abolishment of feudalism brought about unity and solidarity in society and helped the growth of national spirit. This idea was further reinforced by fear of foreign invasions during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. The ideas of nationalism and liberty, in turn, produced the principle of national self-determination.

The history of Post-Revolutionary Europe is characterised by many national movements, some for the *national unification* and some for the *political liberation*. The *dynastic empires of the previous centuries were challenged* and new states began to emerge, whose *boundaries corresponded to the ethnical boundaries*.

The aspirations of the *Germans and Italians* for national unity received stimulation from the French Revolution.

The world began to sympathise with the *Home Rule Movement in Ireland*. The *Balkan peninsula* became a scene of national revolutions which aimed at the overthrow of the oppressive Turkish domination.

The *Spanish and the Portuguese revolutions* were aimed at overthrowing the monarchical despotism.

The national movements in *Egypt, Indonesia, Indo-China, Latin America, India*, and the *Boer Wars in South Africa* were the manifestations of the French Revolution.

- vi. The French Revolution gave a further *boost to constitutionalism*, which had already began in Great Britain and USA. The French Revolution discredited the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings and established that of *Popular Sovereignty*.

The so called *benevolent despotism* also failed to satisfy the demands of the enlightened people of the 19th century. People realised that the *interests of the king and those of the nation were not identical*.

The history of the Revolutionary France taught to the people of Europe that the king might imperil the independence of the nation in pure personal interest. Therefore the idea that the entire nation should take in the government, which should be the expression of the national will, was firmly established. This tremendous intellectual stir manifested itself in a series of constitutional experiments in the 19th century. People overthrew autocracies and wrested constitutions which guaranteed the rights and liberties of the individual.

- vii. The French Revolution also fostered the *growth of romanticism*. It asserted individualism, *defied tradition* and tried to mould human life on the basis of rational feelings.

The influence of French romanticism is found in Victor Hugo's "*Less Miserable*"; Southey's "*Joan of Arc*"; Wordsworth's "*Prelude*"; Shelly's "*Mask of Anarchy*" and in the early works of Coleridge.

- viii. The confiscation of the Church property by the government wakened the *idea of the sanctity of property*. The result was that *socialism ceased to be merely a speculative doctrine but became a political programme*.

Prof. Kropotkin in his work "*The Great French Revolution*" observes :

"The French Revolution left a *legacy on the principles of communism*. Robspear declared that only the superfluity of foodstuffs was to become the articles of commerce and what necessary belonged to all. The communism of 1793 with its affirmation of the right of all to sustenance and to land for its production, its denial of the right of any one to hold more land than he and his family could cultivate and its attempt to communalise trade and industry, went straight to the heart of things than all the minimum programmes of our own time or even all the maximum preambles of such programmes. As a matter of fact, *the French Revolution was the source and origin of all the present communist, anarchist and socialist conceptions*".



Napoleonic Era

1789 - 1815

Dr. Sloane states :

"Alexander Hellanised the civilization of his day and prepared the world for Christianity, Charlemagne ploughed, borrowed and sowed the soil of barbaric Europe making it receptive for the superb of all secular ideas and ideals, that of nationality. Napoleon tore up the system of absolutism by its roots, propagated in the most distant parts of Europe the modern conception of individual rights, overthrew the rotten structure of the German-Roman Empire, and in spite of himself regenerated the long abused ideas of nationality and father-land".

Grant and Temperly observes :

"Napoleon was without doubt a man of extraordinary force of brain and character, who under all circumstances would have won for himself a high position. He had great powers of work and organisation, rapid insight, courage, a willingness to accept responsibility and resolution in following out a plan once undertaken."

Dr. Herald Opines :

"The supreme combination of intellect and energy gave Napoleon's mind a magnetic almost supernatural power-the power that seems to radiate from his pictured features and endows his very name with magic. Like the Olympian he is beyond good and evil, a true pagan God eminently classical and Greek".

Early life and the rises of Napoleon

Napoleon was born on August 15th, 1769 in the city of Ajaccio, located in the island of Corsica. The island of Corsica, sublimely picturesque with its rugged mountains, wild revines, meandering rivers reflecting the race of sun like the ribbons of silver emerges from the bosom of the Mediterranean Sea and located exactly hundred miles from the east coast of France. It was formerly a province of Italy, and was Italian in its language, sympathies and customs. But in the year 1769 it was conquered by France.

Charles Bonaparte and Letisia Romalini were his parents. Thirteen children were born to them, of which eight survived and of the survived eight Napoleon was the second. The eight survived were, viz; Joseph, Napoleon, Louis, Lucian, Jerome, Eliza, Pauline and Caroline. Had the young Napoleon seen the light of the day two months earlier, he would have been by birth an Italian, not a Frenchman.

He received his elementary education at Ajacio. After finishing his education in the elementary school, with the help of a French governor of Corsica, Count Marboeuf, got a seat in the military institute of Brinne, located in the neighbourhood of Paris. As Charles Bonaparte died at this time, Letisia used to look after her sons and daughters.

Napoleon from his childhood showed great love and liking for poetry. The poetry of Homer and Ossian, he read and re-read with great delight. He always combined the poetical passion with the practical outlook in a harmonious way.

The following letter written to his mother bear testimony to it :

"With a sword by my side and Homer in my pocket I hope to carve my way through the world".

Napoleon remained in the military institute of Brienne for five years from 1779 to 1784. Then he went to receive military training at Paris when he was 15 years old. In the year 1785, Napoleon then 16 years of age was examined to receive an employment in the army. He got the post. At that time he was thin, fragile and there was girlish gracefulness gliding on his face.

During this period, i.e; before the outbreak of the Revolution, France experienced bitter struggles between Royalists and Revolutionary Republicans. Thus disturbances arose in several parts of France. Napoleon was asked to quell the disturbances at Valance, Loyans and Auxonne. He successfully accomplished the task that was entrusted to him.

Napoleon joined the Republican side. Most of the officers in the army, being the sons of the old nobility, were Royalists, and this made Napoleon unpopular with them. However, in September 1791 Napoleon was promoted to the post of First Lieutenantcy and then he was 21 years old.

Napoleon during the course of the Revolution

The Revolution broke out in the year 1789. In the year 1793 it was in full swing. In that year the king was executed and France experienced internal eruptions and external dangers. To restore order in internal France the *Reign of Terror* was introduced. After restoring order in internal France the revolutionary army successfully routed the army of the European coalition. Then the Republican France diverted her attention to Toulon.

Napoleon and the seige of Toulon

Toulon is located on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. This was the greatest naval arsenal of France. It contain 25 thousand inhabitants and the majority of them were the supporters of old monarchy. Added to this some ten thousand royalists from the southern France went and took helter there. Besides, the English ships sailed triumphantly into the port, and landed troops. This alarmed the Revolutionary government of France.

The Revolutionary France immediately sent forces to destroy the Royalists of Toulon. But in vain. Finally Napoleon was asked to proceed to Toulon and do the required. He had successfully destroyed the Redfort of Royalists and earned name and fame. Napoleon, then immediately promoted to the rank of *Brigadier-General*. This brought a change in the career of Napoleon.

First Italian campaigns of Napoleon

By 1795, France was enjoying comparative peace and the National Convention introduced the Constitution of the Year III. According to it France was kept under the control of Directory. The Directory immediately directed its attention to suppress the enemies of France, viz; Austria and England. The Directory

first decided to smash Austria. Austria at this time enjoying unlimited power in Italy. Thus France aimed a double attack on Austria, i.e; attacking Austria in Austria itself and second attacking Austria in the Italian Peninsula. The second plan was entrusted to Napoleon for its execution.

Napoleon, armed with the orders of the Directory, first proceeded to Marsellies took blessings from his mother and then proceeded to Nice to join the troops numbering 30 thousand who were literally in a very bad condition. However, he proceeded with them to the Italian peninsula.

In Italy the *Austrian were joined by the Sardinians and the Pope*. Napoleon first fought a major battle *against the Austro-Sardinian forces at Montenotte*. In that battle Napoleon scored a flashing victory. After that Napoleon fought many battles at Dego, Mallismo, Carsuglia, Chiracuro, Lodi, Mantua, Arcoli, Rivoli, etc; in Italy. In all these battles he crushed the opponents.

Napoleon, then decided to attack Austria in Austria. He crossed the Alps entered into Austria and reached Leoben - which is hundred miles away from Vienna - the capital of Austria. It was at this time Austrian emperor sued for peace and the treaty of *Campo Formio* was concluded.

Significance of the first Italian campaigns of Napoleon

- i. The *Austrian authority over the Italian peninsula came to an end*.
- ii. Austria surrendered *Austrian Netherlands to France*.
- iii. The most remarkable impact of these campaigns was that Napoleon during the course his campaigns successfully created *two Republican states in Italy, viz; Cis-Alpine and Ligurian*. The Austrian emperor was forced by Napoleon to accord recognition to these newly created states. By this the Italians had an opportunity to taste the sentiment of liberty. It is for this *Napoleon has been hailed as the father of Italian nationalism and liberalism*.
- iv. During the course of these Italian campaigns Napoleon collected the *princeless paintings by the Renaissance painters* and they are now preserved in the museum of Paris.

Now the Napoleon became the household word in France. His popularity knew no bounds.

Egyptian campaigns of Napoleon

After the Italian campaigns of Napoleon, the Directory decided to fight against England and Napoleon was appointed as the General of the army which was meant for the invasion of England. Napoleon taking into account the naval supremacy of England decided to attack her indirectly. In this connection he resolved to attack Egypt - the British protectorate. His plan was that after conquering Egypt, he would be able to turn out the English from India with the help of the Marathas and Sultan Tippu - the arch enemies of the English in India.

Napoleon conquered Malta and then penetrated into the interior of Egypt. The Pasha of Egypt fought a battle against the French in the neighbourhood of Pyramids. In the *battle of Pyramids* Napoleon secured victory, occupied Cairo - the capital of Egypt. Thus the entire Egypt fell flat at the feet of Napoleon, and this challenged the authority of England.

England sent Nelson to protect Egypt and to reestablish the prestige of England in that quarter. Thus the *battle of Nile* was fought between Nelson and Napoleon. In this battle the French fleet was completely destroyed and Napoleon was cut off from France. He invaded Syria, but failed to capture it. He has some how managed to reach France in 1799.

During the absence of Napoleon, the Directors had not managed the affairs of France successfully and hence there was a lot of resentment against them. Napoleon took the advantage of the situation and with the help of some of the Directors overthrow the Directory and captured power by the year 1799. He had introduced a new form of government in France and it is known as *Consular government*. This government flourished in France from 1799 to 1804. During this period Napoleon introduced several reforms which earned eternal fame and name to him.

Reforms of Napoleon

The fame of Napoleon rests primarily not on his military achievements but as a First Consul he carried out a large number of reforms which have made his name immortal. It is rightly pointed out :

"If the conquests of Napoleon were ephemeral, his civilian work is built up on granite".

Napoleon, in the first instance, brought changes in the administration.

i. Consular Constitution

The Consular Constitution was introduced in France in 1799 and it continued up to 1804 - when Napoleon became the emperor of France. It was drawn up by Sieyès, one of the Directors, and amended by Napoleon. The details of it are as follows.

- (a) Under this Constitution the *legislative functions* were distributed among three separate bodies, viz; the *Council of state*, the *Tribunate* and the *Legislative Body*.

The *Council of State* drafts all laws and bills. The *Tribunate* discussed them without voting. The *Legislative Body* voted them without discussion.

There was another body higher than the above mentioned ones and it is called *Senate*. It consists of 80 members who were appointed for life and were irremovable. It had the power to appoint the Consuls, the members of the *Tribunate* and the *Legislative Body*. It also empowered to cancel any law considered contrary to the principles of the *Consular Constitution*.

- (b) Under this Constitution the *executive power* was vested in the hands of three Consuls who were to be elected by the Senate. One of them was to be the *First Consul* who had the power to declare war, make peace and the appointment of ministers ambassadors and all other officers, both civil and military. The other two Consuls will have only *consultative powers*. Their longevity of office was for 10 years.

The First Consul also promulgate laws.

- (c) Napoleon *centralised* the whole local administrative system of France. Prefects, sub-prefects and Mayors who were the heads of the Cantons, Communes and cities were directly appointed by the First Consul.
- (d) Napoleon developed *Secretariat of the State* which later on became the *Ministry of State* to supervise and control the worked of various ministers without allowing them any collective responsibility.

ii. Financial reforms

A centralised administration was set up for the assessment and collection of taxes. *Collectors of taxes* were required to make a deposit in advance of a proportion of the estimated yield of the taxes. By 1800 the tax returns were up-to-date.

Napoleon improved the financial position of France by a careful collection of taxes. Further, he maintained *rigid economy*. He severely *punished the corrupt officials*.

He forced the vanquished states and countries to maintain and support the French armies. This enabled Napoleon to reduce the military expenditure.

In 1800, Napoleon established the *Bank of France* which was considered to be one of the finest financial institutions of the world.

iii. Educational reforms

Napoleon took every keen interest in reforming the *educational system of France*.

He gave lot of importance to the *primary and elementary schools*. For they provide the required base to the future citizens of France, These schools were established in every Commune and Conton and kept under the control of the Prefectss and sub-prefects.

Grammar schools were provided for special *training in French, Latin and elementary sciences*. Whether supported by the government or by private individuals all of them were kept under the control of the government.

Lycees or high schools were opened in all important towns and instruction was given in them higher branches of learning by the teachers appointed by the government.

Special schools such as *Technical schools, Civil Service Schools, Military Schools, etc;* were established and brought under the state regulation.

The *University of Paris* was established to *maintain uniformity in the educational system*. Its chief officials were appointed by the First Consul. No one was allowed to open a new school without the permission of the University.

A *Normal School* was established at Paris for the purpose of *training the teachers*.

Another interesting feature of the educational reforms of Napoleon was that *the education for women*. He believed that the women should be taught the art of *writing, arithmetic, elementary French, history, geography and physics*. They must learn *music, dancing and even the gardening* must be done by women. In fine Napoleon desired to produce not "*the women of charm but the women of virtue*".

All the educational institutions should be given top priority to the *ethical principle of Christianity, loyalty to the head of the state and obedience to the statutes of the University*.

Napoleon established the *Institute of France* to support and appreciate the meritorious work done by intelligent people in Physical Sciences, fine arts, Mathematics and Literature.

iv. Public Works

Napoleon carried out large number of public works with out spending any money from the state. *He used the prisoners of war for that purpose*.

- i. Improved the transport and communication facilities which in turn fostered trade, commerce and industry.
- ii. The splendid high - ways of France were the work of Napoleon. In 1811, *220 broad military roads were constructed by Napoleon*. Thirty of these roads radiated from Paris to the boarders of France. Two *Trans-Alpine roads* brought Paris in touch with Turin, Milan, Naples and Rome.

- iii. A large number of bridges were constructed.
- iv. Marshes were drained.
- v. Dikes were strengthened. Old ones were repaired and new ones were raised. The important sea-ports were enlarged and fortified for commercial and naval purposes. Toulon, Calais, Brest, Harvey, etc; were completely remodelled.

v. Religious reforms

Napoleon believed :

"Society is impossible without inequality, inequality is impossible without a code of morality, and a code of morality is unacceptable without religion".

Napoleon found that the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* had alienated considerable number of Roman Catholics. He sought to win their gratitude by restoring the Roman Catholic Church. He came to an agreement with the Pope in 1801 known to *Concordat*. According to it the following religious measures were introduced in France.

- i. *Catholicism* was recognised as the state religion, and religious toleration was also accorded.
- ii. *The Pope regained his claims to the confiscated property of the church.*
- iii. The state in turn assumed the responsibility of *maintaining clergy.*
- iv. The bishops should be nominated by the state but they should be *ordained* (conferring holiness on them) *by the Pope.*
- v. The clergy should take the *oath of fidelity to the state.*

Thus the church was re-established in France and also made dependent of the state. This measure gave great satisfaction to the people of France who radically reconciled to Napoleon's ascendancy. Thus Napoleon made a political use of religion.

It is to be observed that inspite of the Concordat, serious differences arose between Napoleon and the Pope. The Pope did not like the restriction of his powers to purely religious affairs and the dependency of the clergymen on the state. He also resented the *extension to Italy of the code of Napoleon* which authorised *diverse*. The Pope even expressed his resentment to the *Continental policy* of Napoleon. Thus the steady opposition of Pope regained for him in the Papal State and he managed to maintain his authority over the clergymen in France. *Napoleon's quarrel with the Pope cost him the support of many Catholics in France and enabled his enemies to declare him as the enemy of religion.*

vi. Codes of Napoleon

Attempts were made, before Napoleon, by Colbert, National Assembly and finally the National Convention, to codify the laws of France. But they did not cut the ice.

The greatest work of Napoleon was the codification of laws in France. He has been hailed for this work as, "*Second Justinian*". The codes were drawn up by the committee appointed by his "*hard commonsense*" and "*unbelievable legislative vision*". The codes were consise, simple and just.

i. Civil Code

A committee of four lawyers, appointed by Napoleon, drawn up the Civil Code and it contains the following laws.

- a. The authority of the father over his family was strengthened and the family was placed "absolutely at the disposal of its head".
- b. The father was entitled to imprison his children and his consent was necessary for their marriage.
- c. A wife was to be under the control of her husband and his consent was necessary for their marriage.
- d. Contrary to the policy of the Roman Catholic Church, the principle of divorce was admitted. Divorce was allowed by mutual consent for adultery, cruelty and grave criminal offences.
- e. A man could dispose of by will *not more than half of his property*.

ii. Code of Civil Procedure

It maintained the principle that *conciliation must be attempted* before going to the law courts.

Jury system was introduced. Accused persons were tried in public. They were entitled to get the assistance of their own lawyers. The accused were also entitled to use the *documents* and to produce *witnesses* to prove their purity. Thus *trial by jury* was introduced.

iii. Criminal and Penal Codes

For criminal offences, *capital punishment, imprisonment, deportation for life and confiscation of goods* were prescribed.

iv. Commercial Code

This dealt with *general commerce, maritime commerce, bankruptcy* and the other commercial matters. This failed to gain popularity.

The Code of Napoleon was adopted not only in France but also introduced in every country conquered by the armies of Napoleon. It is true that many harsh punishments were retained and the *position of women was made distinctly inferior to that of men*, but, on the whole, *the French Codes remained the most convenient and enlightened set of laws in the world*. Besides it provided the common system of law and social equality to the people of France.

vii. Promoter of arts

In spite of many preoccupations, Napoleon found time for the patronage of art. State palaces were not only enlarged but also beautified. The city of Paris was beautified. Broad avenues were planned. The population of Paris was also doubled during the time of Napoleon. The National Museum of Paris was decked with priceless paintings.

viii. Napoleon and the colonial empire

Napoleon decided to found a new Colonial Empire. However, all his efforts failed on account of the British naval supremacy. Finding his position weak, Napoleon *sold Louisiana to the USA in 1803*.

These reforms of Napoleon bear eloquent testimony of his *administrative genuine*. He restored order and confidence in the people of France. The establishment of the Bank of France restored financial confidence. The repeal of the decrees against the emigres and his agreement with the Pope hailed him as the deliverer. He threw career open to the talent. He adopted *equality in the social, fiscal and judicial fields*.

It should be noted here that Napoleon flouted some of the principles of the Revolution.

- i. He allowed *neither liberty of speech nor press*.
- ii. He established highly *centralised government* and thereby trimmed the *political liberty*.
- iii. Theoretically the universal suffrage was introduced.
- iv. *Inferior social status was accorded to women*.
- v. As an emperor, he openly *flouted the sentiment of nationalism*. The outright annexation of Spain and Portugal and the occupation of Italy and Holland bear an evidence to it. The very introduction of *Continental System* by Napoleon, as an emperor of France, shows that he showed scant respect to the aspirations of the people.

In this respect Napoleon may be considered *as the destroyer of the Revolution*. But it should not be neglected that he was considered, at the same time, ~~that he was~~ the father of the German and Italian National Movements.

Foreign policy of Napoleon as the First Consul

The failure of the Egyptian campaigns of Napoleon enabled England, Austria and Russia to form coalition against France. Austria successfully reestablished her control over Italy. Thus Napoleon as the First Consul desired to smash the European Coalition. In this connection he first selected Austria and aimed a double pronged attack. He sent his general Moreau to attack Austria and he himself proceeded to Italy. Thus the second Italian Campaigns of Napoleon started.

Second Italian campaigns

Napoleon accomplished one of the greatest feats in this campaign by crossing the Snt. Bernard Pass and appeared before the Austrians in Italy. The Austrians were defeated in the battle of Marengo in 1800. At the same time Moreau defeated the Austrians in the battle of Hohenlinden. The Austrian emperor, Francis II immediately concluded peace with Napoleon, viz; the *treaty of Lunaville in 1800*. It confirmed the provision of the *treaty of Campo Fermio* which was concluded between Austria and Napoleon after the end of his first Italian campaigns.

Napoleon, then, by tact and guile won over to his side the Czar Paul of Russia.

England was the only enemy left in the field. England had formidable naval power whereas France possessed menacing land army. These two powers were hardly within the striking distance. Napoleon, unable to strike England on Sea, turned to diplomacy.

England used to search the ships of the neutral ships for the French goods. Taking the grievance of the neutral powers, Napoleon contacted Denmark, Russia, Sweden and Austria and formed a league. The object of the league was to prevent England searching the neutral ships for the French goods. This diplomacy of Napoleon is called *Armed Neutrality*.

England immediately retaliated it by sending her naval fleet under the command of Nelson to broke the back of the league. The English feet attacked Copenhagen and as a consequence Denmark fell from the league.

It was at this time Czar Paul was murdered in Russia and hence Russia was withdrawn from the league.

In the meanwhile another British fleet was sent to Egypt and ~~France~~ ~~Russia~~ was withdrawn from the league.

All these reverses compelled Napoleon to conclude peace with England and England too was tired of war and ready for a peace settlement. Hence the *Peace of Amiens was concluded*. Both England and France agreed to restore the occupied territories. It should be noted here that Napoleon concluded this treaty with England only to gain time and to improve the strength of France to smash England.

Due to the peace of Amiens, Napoleon had sufficient time to consolidate his position. After that he followed once again the policy of aggrandisement.

- i. He occupied Piedmont in Italy.
- ii. He intervened in the internal matters of Switzerland by sending his troops.
- iii. He threatened the independence of Holland.
- iv. He sent a mission to India to encourage the Indian princes to revolt against England.
- v. Another mission was sent to Egypt to create trouble for England.

All these factors were responsible for the renewal of war between England and France. Further, Napoleon conquered Hanover which belonged to England. Throughout 1803 to 1804 he was preparing for a war with England. He built ships, but they were not sufficient to defeat England. Finally Napoleon fought a naval battle, known as the *battle of Trafalgar*, against England. In that battle Napoleon was defeated but the British naval commander Nelson lost his life. This battle was so decisive that Napoleon could not dare to attempt an invasion of England once again.

Napoleon as the emperor of France

Napoleon became the First Consul of France according to the Consular Constitution. After that the Senate made him, in the first instance, as Consul for 10 years and then later on for life with the right to nominate his successor. In 1804, the Senate declared him as the Emperor of France. He remained in that position up to 1814.

Russian Czar offended when Napoleon assumed the title "Emperor". Austria was bent upon regaining her control over the Italian peninsula. England immediately arranged a coalition of these three powers against Napoleon. As soon as Napoleon heard of it he immediately decided to destroy it.

Napoleon first marched upon Austria and defeated her in the battle of Ulm. He also fought another battle against Austria at Austerlitz, where he celebrated the first anniversary of his coronation as emperor. The battle of Austerlitz was so decisive that it broke the back of the coalition. On hearing this success of Napoleon the Prime Minister of England, Pitt the Younger said :

"Roll up the map of Europe, it will not be wanted these ten years".

Napoleon then proceeded to Prussia and defeated her in the battle of Jena in 1806, and entered into Berlin.

After the defeat of Austria and Prussia, the whole of German States lay in the hands of Napoleon. He had no respect to the Holy Roman Empire and hence he destroyed it. The Austrian emperor who enjoyed the title of the Holy Roman Emperor gave up his title and hence the German States were freed from the control of Austria. Further, Napoleon created *Confederation of the Rhine consisting of 16 German States and he became its Protector*.

From Prussia, Napoleon proceeded to Russia and defeated the Czar in the battle of Friedland. The Czar Alexander I concluded the *Treaty of Tilsit with Napoleon*. The treaty of Tilsit marked the greatest height of Napoleonic power in Europe. After this he destroyed kingdoms and created kingdoms.

- i. He created the *kingdom of Italy* and proclaimed himself as the king of it.

- ii. He placed his elder brother Joseph on the throne of Naples.
- iii. He created the *kingdom of Holland* and made his another brother Louis and its king.
- iv. He *destroyed the Holy Roman Empire* and in its place created the *Confederation of the Rhine* and he became its Protector.

Alexander and Napoleon became friends. The former once said :

"Where is Europe? Where is it if it is not you and I". Prussia and Austria were humiliated. Now Napoleon directed his attention to England.

Continental System

Napoleon tried thrice to reduce the strength of England. But failed. Napoleon was not having sufficient naval strength to attack England once again. But he realised that England's commercial monopoly was supreme in Europe, Asia, Africa and Far East. Napoleon aimed at destroying it.

In 1806, the plan was announced by Napoleon in the famous *Berlin Decrees*.

"The British islands are henceforth blockaded. All commerce with them is prohibited; letters and packages with an English address will be confiscated as also every store of English goods on the Continent within the border of France and her allies; every piece of English goods, all English vessels, and those laden with staples from English colonies will be excluded from all European harbours, including those of the neutral states".

The *economic blockade* of England is the essence of the plan. It is said :

"It is through her commerce that England must be attacked.-----".

To destroy British commerce is to strike England to the heart". This policy of economic blockade of England is called as the *Continental System*. By threats Napoleon got the support of Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain, Portugal and Denmark.

The British retaliated the Continental system by passing *Orders in Council* according to which all vessels trading with France or her allies were liable to be captured. In certain cases, the neutral vessel were to touch at the British port before proceeding to any part of Europe.

The Continental System was one of the greatest blunders committed by Napoleon, for the application of it was physical impossible.

1. France had *extensive coast - line* which helped the French to smuggle ~~English~~ goods. Napoleon was not having strong navy to prevent it.

Cloth and leather for preparing uniform to the French soldiers were brought from England in defiance of the Continental System.

The French were in the habit of *taking tea and coffee*. Hence they started smuggling tea, coffee and sugar on a large scale from England.

2. *England hitherto used to import silk and other luxuries from France*. Now not only it stopped it but also substituted for them woolen and cotton. This affected the trade of France.
3. *Europe dependent upon England* and could not live without her and no wonder the people of Europe were prepared to defy Napoleon rather than submit to the Continental System.

England held the monopoly of coffee, tea and sugar without which the Europeans in general and that of Germans in particular could not live. Napoleon could not dare to cut off the entry of these things into Europe.

Further, the *prices of sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee, cotton and other commodities* rose sky high and this added to the sufferings of the people of Europe without in any way harming the people of England.

4. The only real *danger for England was the starvation of her population*, but that was avoided because Napoleon allowed the export of French wheat to England. The reason for this was that *there was surplus of wheat in France and England was the only place for export.*

Portuguese resentment to the Continental system and the starting of the Peninsular War

It was with the object of enforcing the Continental System, Napoleon demanded Portugal that she should stop all trade with England. Portugal, which was on friendly terms with England, refused the demand. The result was that the French armies made their way through Spain into Portugal and occupied it. The British came to the help of Portugal and thus the *Peninsular War started.*

The *people of Spain did not approve of the passage of French troops through their country to Portugal.* They blamed their king for his weakness and there were riots. It was at this time there were misunderstandings between the king of Spain and his son. On the pretext of mediating between them, Napoleon lured the king and his son to a place on the French frontier and by threats made them to resign all their claims to the throne of Spain. Then he placed on the throne of Spain his eldest brother, Joseph, with the intention of implementing the Continental System. This was not accepted by the Spaniards and they finally drove away Joseph from Spain. *Thus Spain, Portugal and England played a very important part in the Peninsular War.*

In the Peninsular war the French forces were beaten by the English forces supported very actively by the Portuguese and Spanish in several battles. The defeat of France gave a very fine opportunity for Russia, Prussia and Austria to withdraw from the Continental System. This infuriated Napoleon.

The infuriated Napoleon immediately attacked Austrians in a battle fought at Wagram and defeated them. *Then in 1812 he conducted the disastrous Moscow Campaign which literally paralysed the military might of France.* Napoleon conducted the campaign with six lacks of soldiers and returned to France with two lacks and that too without waging a single battle. Thus the failure in the Peninsular war and in the Moscow Campaign gave a very fine opportunity for Prussia, Russia, Austria and England to form another European coalition against Napoleon. Thus a war of liberation was fairly on foot. Napoleon succeeded in mustering a new army and appeared in central Germany to punish the Prussians and Russians. He maintained his reputation by defeating the Prussians and Russians at Lutzen and Bautzen. Then he went to Austria and defeated them at Dresden.

In the meanwhile all the allies mustered their forces and met Napoleon at Leipzig in 1813. This is called the *battle of nations*. In this battle Napoleon was defeated. Then the allied forces straight away entered into France and forced Napoleon to abdicate the throne. Napoleon was sent to St. Elba as a prisoner and Louis XVIII was placed on the French throne.

Escape of Napoleon from St. Elba and the battle of Waterloo

In Feb. 1815 Napoleon miraculously escaped from St. Elba and landed suddenly near Cannes in France. He was very enthusiastically received by the people. Louis XVIII fled across the border and Napoleon entered Paris amidst wildest acclamations. Thus Napoleon started the famous *Reign of Hundred Days.*

As soon as the European powers heard the escape of Napoleon they sank their differences and united against Napoleon. They branded him as the "*disturber of the peace of Europe*" and declared him as an outlaw. Napoleon accepted the challenge and immediately attacked and defeated the Prussian army at Ligny. Then he fell upon the English Duke of Wellington who had taken a strong defensive position at Waterloo. The iron Duke maintained his position till the Prussian army came and Napoleon was caught in between the two armies and finally faced defeat. He was then taken as prisoner and sent to St. Helena where he died in 1821.

Estimate of Napoleon

It is difficult to give an accurate estimate of his greatness on account of strong prejudices on the part of those who have written about him. However, he was *one of the greatest conquerors and rulers of the world*. He was a genius of a very high order. He will always be remembered as one who laid the *foundations of a new social order in Europe*. His contribution towards the *unification of Italy and Germany cannot be denied*. He emphasised the idea of equality by abolishing class distinctions and privileges and by throwing, "*career open to talent*". *He was the last of the series of benevolent despots and at the same time one of the first of great modern statesmen.*



Russian Revolution of 1917

Rousseau states :

"Man is born free but every where he is in chains".

Carl Marx wrote in 1848:

"The Proletarians have nothing to loose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workmen of all countries unite."

These two statements are symbolized in the Russian Revolution of 1917. Since it was a Marxist Socialist Revolution, the aim of the Revolution was to install the dictatorship of the urban proletariat, which after withering away, would lead to the socialist ideal known as Communism.

Russian Revolution was a *symbolic continuation of the French Revolution because the latter was a revolution of the bourgeoisie against the obsolete feudal order and monarchical despotism.*

Significance of the Russian Revolution

- i. The remarkable feature of the Russian Revolution was the *text-book nature of it*. It was a preplanned event. From the day the ship Arora opened its guns on Leningrad till the formulation of the first five-year plan in 1928, the leaders of the Revolution were constantly guided by what Marx and Engels wrote as well as how Lenin interpreted Marxism in his political writings.
- ii. Another significance of the Russian Revolution was that *at no time in history a single person was responsible for a mighty revolution, except the Russian Revolution.*

None of the Revolutions of the past like the *Glorious Revolution* of 1688, the *American War of Independence* and the *French Revolution* were conceived and piloted by a single individual just as Lenin did.

Further, neither the royalists nor the parliamentarians of the 17th century England wanted to precipitate a crisis but events led the parliamentarians from one extreme to other extreme ending in the *execution of Charles I* and the *establishment of Puritan dictatorship*.

In the same manner, neither those who stormed the Bastille in France, nor the enthusiasts among the clerical and nobility who ended the ancient order overnight, *did ever foresee the Reign of Terror* and the *ultimate monarchical ambition of Napoleon*.

The same was true of the American War of Independence. Contrary to all these revolutions was the Russian Revolution 1917 since Lenin knew what he would bring about a revolution and did plan every step of the revolution.

- iii. Further, the significance of the Russian Revolution lies in the fact that it was an event *sounding the death-knell of prehistory so that history could begin.*

According to Marx, *all the previous political changes were the work of the minorities, and every political change led to change in the group of exploiters, since in every political change the groups of exploiters gained control of the means of production.*

Marx, further added, *the whole super-structure of man as embedded in the institutions, systems, principles, values, religion, literature, arts and science only served the ends of the economically dominant section of the society, while the have-nots were made to believe and cherish that the whole superstructure was for their own good.*

The whole superstructure as sustained by the Haves could be ended in the era of Communism, since the means of production would be owned by the whole society. Logically in such a society the values, the principles, systems, institutions and everything could be genuinely serve the needs of all people instead of a few. Since, such should be the total transformation of society, Marx contended the pre-history would end and with communism history would begin that is, the story of man before civilizations would come to an end and true civilization would begin. *In brief that the Russian Revolution signifies is the promise of a new Garden of Eden.*

Factors responsible for the outbreak of the Revolution

1. Social factors

There was a great deal of discontentment among the various interest groups of Russia. The social order in Russia, like in France, was marked by a wide *cleavage between the privileged and unprivileged.* A cursory glance at the social structure of Russia clearly shows *that up to the middle of the nineteenth century Russian society was composed of two classes, i.e; the Nobles and Serfs.*

The Nobles were the privileged class of Russia. The greater portion of the cultivable land and the cultivated land was directly under the control of the nobles. Further, all the important, powerful and lucrative positions and posts in the state were monopolised by them.

The conditions of the Russian Serfs and peasants were distressing and appalling. They were literally slaves, since they were bound to the land sold by the nobles along with them. They rendered free labour for a fixed number of days in a week. They could not marry even without the permission of their nobles.

In the middle of the 19th century, there were 45 million serfs. Half of them was under the Crowns and the other half was under the nobles, the church and the other institutions.

Ever since the time of Peter the Great, the serfs had demanded freedom. During the time of Catherine the Great, also the serfs demanded freedom. They argued that *as long as the nobility rendered military service to the state, the nobles had the right to demand the services of the serfs,* but when the nobility obtained exemption that should be granted to the serfs as well. The agitation of the serfs so strong in the 19th century that Alexander II decided to do some thing solid to them.

Alexander II (1855 - 1881), with a sound instinct, applied himself to the question of emancipation of the serfs.

In the first instance, he set the *example by freeing the serfs on the Crown lands in 1858.*

Then, in the second place, with dogged pertinacity and cautious compromise Alexander overcome the opposition of the selfish nobles, so that in 1861 he was in a position to issue the famous *Edict of Emancipation which abolished serfdom throughout the Russian empire.*

Liberation of the serfs without providing means of subsistence will produce more serious problems and hence this problem was also tackled by the Czar. The following provisions were provided to the serfs by the Edict of Emancipation.

- i. It freed the serfs from the bondage of their masters and the legal jurisdiction of the nobility over them was abolished.
- ii. They were allowed to own about one-half of the land which till then they had cultivated as serfs of the nobility. This land was bought from the nobles. But the serfs were to pay for it by installments spread over for 49 years.
- iii. The land was not given to the individual serfs, but the village community known as Mir which was to allot to it for the use of the peasants. The Mir was made responsible for the collection of the redemption dues and for this purpose, was authorised to levy taxes on the peasants.

These measures, though conceived in an enlightened spirit, proved disappointment to the peasants, for the following reasons.

- i. They found themselves burdened with taxes and bitterly resented the payment of compensation for the land which they had come to regard their own.
- ii. Further, the area of land allotted to them was not enough to live upon.
- iii. Besides, they found the authority of Mir as irritating as that of the nobles and felt that the Edict of Emancipation of Alexander II freed them from the nobles only to make the serfs of the state.

Naturally the serfs were not happy with the Edict of Emancipation. But it should be noted here that the Edict made the nobles to part with some of their property, deprived of their control over the serfs and loose some of the overwhelming predominance in the country and the peasantry made a corresponding gain. But the serfs remained as a discontented class and ready to take advantage of any movement which promised them relief from their misery.

The Edict of Emancipation neither reduced tax burden nor increased their income nor made any difference in their working conditions.

Besides, due to the industrialisation of Russia, the opportunities and the income of the peasants were reduced. As a result the peasants very soon began to agitate for more meaningful reforms and between 1861 to 1917, staged a series of revolts. When the Revolution of 1917 broke out, they whole-heartedly welcomed and joined it.

2. Industrialisation and the emergence of middle class and the working class

In the early 18th century, Peter the Great had opened the doors of Russia for foreign trade. He was the founder of modern Russia. He worked in the dock-yards of London and in the industries of Holland. He not only modernised Russia but also made conscious attempt to industrialise Russia.

Catherine the Great followed suit. Alexander II and III also took interest in the industrialisation of Russia. But the industrialisation of Russia entered into a new phase during the time of Nicholas II (1884 - 1917), the son of Alexander III. Industrial and commercial activity quickened in Russia. Oil came to be exploited in the Caucasus and in the areas of Black and Caspian Seas. A large number of factories came into existence in Petersburg, Moscow, etc. Ship-building industries were established in the ports of Riga, Odessa, Vladivostok and Archangel.

Count Serge White, a Russian industrialist, took further interest in industrialisation. *Protection was given to the infant Russian industries.*

Foreign investments were encouraged.

The transport and communication facilities were improved. The building of Trans-Siberian and Trans-Caspian railway lines were constructed and this helped the cause of the industrialisation, trade and commerce.

The rapid industrial progress of Russia was made partly due to the free flow of the French capital and partly due to the cheap labour of the ex-serfs of Russia.

After 1871 considerable progress was made in establishing textile and metallurgical industries and by 1900 about 269 foreign firms were operating in Russia. By 1904, Russians ranked as the fourth industrial country in the world.

The industrialisation and modernisation of Russia brought many changes.

- i. *It brought a remarkable improvement in the productive activity.*
- ii. *It marked a remarkable progress in the cultural advancement.*
- iii. *It created many socio-economic problems.*

The industrialisation produced two new classes in Russia, i.e; industrial class or the middle class and the industrial workers. The middle class may also be styled as the capitalist class.

The working class in the industrial centres were required to live in squalid conditions and worked in insanitary conditions. As there were more labour than the industries could absorb, the workers were at the mercy of their employers.

Further, workers' unions were not allowed. The state feared the unions so much that even sent troops to help employers to put down the agitating workers. This led to the labour unrest.

Despite the repressive measures of the government, labour strikes became common after 1870. The economic depression in the last years of the 19th century brought utter confusion and intensified unrest.

The strikes gradually began to take a political turn, i.e; agitations against the employers turned against the Czars.

Another potent manifestation of the industrialisation of Russia was the emergence of the capitalist class. They were merchants, industrialists, factory owners and other businessmen. They were economically strong, but enjoyed hardly any political and social privileges. So they joined hands with the intellectual liberals in demanding some system of representative government. Thus by the dawn of the century the challenges to the monarchical despotism of Russia came from liberalism rather than from socialism. The Zemstvos (local assemblies), which were dominated by the middle class, became very active and drew up a definite programme of reform demanding a free elected national assembly, a responsible ministry, equality of all citizens and freedom of press, religion and speech. But czar Nicholas II, who was a conservative and reactionary, turned a deaf ear to these demands.

2. Reactionary rule of the Czars

The government of Russia, as in France, was autocratic, despotic, tyrannical and aristocratic without being efficient. The Czars who ruled Russia enjoyed absolute and unlimited powers. They believed in the divine right theory of monarchy, and hence never allowed their powers to be checked by any body or by any institution. Thus till the end of the 19th century the people of Russia were kept out of political responsibility and a parliament as such did not exist in Russia.

Besides, more than one occasion, *Russian autocracy stood discredited by military disasters*. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Russia was involved in four great wars - *the Napoleonic war, the Crimean War, the Russo-Japanese War* and the *First World War*. But excepting the first the Russian army was routed in all the three wars, thereby exposing the weakness of the Russian military and political system. This forced the Czars to concede some reforms.

The *Crimean War* was followed by the reforms of Alexander II, including the grant of freedom to the serfs. The Russo-Japanese war was followed by the introduction of Duma or the parliament.

The *First World War* uprooted the institution of monarchy and brought the Czarism to an end.

Thus the reactionary rule of the Czars and the military disasters faced by them gave sufficient stimulation for the Russians, at least the liberals to voice their grievances against the autocratic rule and also to get some constitutional concessions.

3. Revolution in the realm of ideas

In Russia, as in France, the materialistic revolution was preceded by a revolution in the realm of ideas, i.e; the influence of political thinkers on the minds of people. In spite of the attempts of the Czars to seal Russia against the liberal and radical ideas of the west, the influence of the western European thought filtered into the country and produced a movement subversive of the existing order. The influences naturally found expression in the Russian literature.

The great novels of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky and Dostoevsky profoundly influenced the thinking of the young Russians.

There was something very significant about the intellectual climate of Russia in the 19th and in the early part of the 20th century. Tolstoy in his later novels grew more philosophical and revolutionary renouncing all private property while extolling a kind of communist and anarchist Christianity. Chekhov concentrated on peasant life and extolled simple life. The *school of realism* to which all these writers belonged primarily stressed the following.

- i. Upliftment of the *labour classes*.
- ii. *Emancipation of women*.
- iii. Eradication of *social evils* and *ending wars*.
- iv. *Distribution of land to the landless*.

The unique feature of these Russian writers was the theme of eternal human emotion and a concern for the welfare of the people. The same unique quality is reflected in the symphonies of Borodin and Tchaikovsky and in the musical programme of Rimsky-Korsakov. All of them leaned very heavily upon legends and folk tales of Russia for their themes. The writings of these great intellectuals stimulated the young Russians to a very great extent.

The *liberals* and educated section of the people called 'intelligentsia' demanded *political reforms on western lines*.

The *radical intellectuals* deriving their inspiration from Carl Marx and Bakunin turned to *socialism and anarchism*.

The other result of the ferment of thought was the growth of *Nihilism* which aimed at destroying everything in the existing order of Russia. Nihilism was stamped out, socialism came to stay.

The rise of radical political parties and the spread of socialism

The rapid industrialisation of Russia, particularly in the second quarter of the 19th century, created conditions ripe for the *rise of radical political parties and the spread of socialism*. It was from the new class of industrial workers who had to toil hard in the crowded towns under pathetic and appealing working conditions, that the message of socialism met with a hearty response. In 1890's the teachings of Marx were popularised and spread by radicals like Maxim Gorky, and *revolutionary socialism made rapid progress among industrial workers*.

In 1895 was founded 'Workmen's Social Democratic Party' with a programme similar to that of the socialists of the other countries.

The peasantry, at the same time led by the middle class radicals, imitated the example of the industrial workers and in 1901 organised the 'Social Democratic Party' with a programme that included the confiscation of the landed estates of the nobles and their division into small individual holdings.

Thus was set on foot a revolutionary movement which aimed at reconstructing the social, political and economic systems of Russia on socialistic principles.

In 1908 there came a split in the Workmen's Social Democratic Party on the question of tactics and party discipline and its radical section led by Vladimir Ulianov, better known as Lenin (pen name), seceded from the main party. This section came to be known as *Bolshivicks*. The more moderate wing of the party came to be known as *Menshivicks*, and their leader was Alexander Kerenisky.

The *Bolshivicks* stood for extreme measures and were very much eager to establish the dictatorship of the urban proletariat at the very first opportunities by force and violence if necessary.

Further, the *Bolshivicks* did not recognise any class other than the industrial workers.

Besides, they were hostile to cooperate with the middle class political parties.

The *Menshivicks*, on the other hand, were less radical in their views and methods. They were willing to await the eventual triumph of socialism, by a slow and a gradual process. They were willing to cooperate with the other political parties to eradicate Czardom in Russia.

Immediate cause of the Revolution

The immediate cause of the revolution was the *exposition of the incompetent rule of the Czars by the First World War*. Ridden by the domestic crisis, Russia in 1914 greeted the outbreak of the First World War with demonstrations of national patriotism. The Duma (the mediaeval feudal parliament of Russia) supported the war, and did yeomen service in organising Red Cross activities. By 1917 more than 15 million Russians had been drafted into the Russian army. The Russian losses in the war were staggering. In the first instance the Russians suffered more than 3.8 million casualties during the first year of the war.

On the home front the criticism was that there was inadequate handling of the supply of munitions. By the mid 1915, the right and left groups in the Duma were urging moderate reforms. *They demanded the end of the discrimination against minority nationalities (Poles, Finns, Etc.) Further, they demanded an increase in the powers of the Zemstoves (local councils)*.

The empress Alexandria took the lead in opposing all such measures, and kept urging her weak husband, Czar Nicholas II, to act more autocratically. When Nicholas took personal command of the armies in the field and prorogued the Duma (1915), Czarina Alexandria became supreme at home. The supremacy of the empress meant also the supremacy of her favourite, the unscrupulous adventurer, Rusputin.

With the empress and Rasputin in control of Russia, gangs of black-mailers and profiteers brought and sold offices, speculated in military supplies, put their own puppets as ministers and created a series of shocking scandals. Confusion, strikes and defeatism mounted at home during 1916.

Rasputin was murdered by a group of conspirators. Despite repeated warnings from moderates in the Duma that the government itself was preparing for a revolution by its failure to create a responsible ministry and clean up the mess. At the same time Czar Nicholas remained apathetic. So in the early months of the year 1917, all conditions favourable for the revolution were present.

On 8th March 1917 strikes and bread-riots broke out in the capital and four days later the Romanov rule, which had governed Russia since 1613, collapsed. Yet this revolution of March 1917 had been rightly called leaderless, spontaneous and anonymous. The social revolutionaries, and both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks of the Social Democrats were surprised at what happened. Indeed the Bolshevik leaders were either abroad or under arrest in Siberia.

The determining factor in the overthrow of the Czar was the crisis that appeared in the garrison of Petrograd in 1917 (the new Russian name given to St. Petersburg during the revolution). The workmen struck work. The people rioted for bread. When the Czar ordered the troops to fire on the striking workers, they not only refused but also began to fraternise with the strikers. A Soviet or Council of workers and soldiers was set up in the capital to direct the ruling and to discharge the functions of the local government. The Duma set up a provisional government and forced the Czar to abdicate the throne.

Provisional government

The provisional government in outlook and composition was a *middle class government*. It was mostly dominated by the constitutional democrats or moderate republicans. They were led by Malinkov - a professor politician. It promulgated a number of reforms and the following figure prominent.

- i. Freedom of press, religion and association.
- ii. Announced a National Constituent Assembly would be elected very soon to determine the form of the permanent government.
- iii. Declared for the continuation of war and sought to stimulate the patriotism of the masses.

But in a politically backward country like Russia the masses cared little for political reforms. Their more urgent demands were *peace, land and bread*. The revolution they desired was not of a political type, but one which would accomplish *radical socio-economic changes*. Thus the revolution which began as a liberal movement drifted towards socialism.

Local Soviets of workers and soldiers were set up all over Russia. The workers refused to work and demanded higher wages and fewer hours of work.

The peasants seized the large estates of nobility and distributed between themselves.

The infection even spread to the army. The soldiers refused to obey the orders of their officers and even murdered some of them.

Finally the subject nationalities, like the Poles, Finns, etc; began to assert their freedom and to break away their union with Russia. The empire was in a process of rapid disintegration and the whole existing order in Russia, moral and material, was on the verge of crumbling to pieces.

It was at this time the war policy of the moderate republicans became thoroughly unpopular and so they were turned out of the provincial government and were replaced by the moderate social democrats, the Mensheviks, under the leadership of Alexander Kerensky.

Moderate Social Democrats and the provincial government

Alexander Kernesky, who now came to head the provincial government soon found himself in a tragic situation. *His policy was to continue the war and bring to a speedy and honourable conclusion. He desired to guide the revolution into safe channels and assured the people both political, democratic and social reforms. But he wanted to bring all these changes by constitutional methods and that too by gradual stages.* His policy, however, found no favour with the extreme wing of the socialists known as Bolshivicks. *These extremists were opposed to war and wanted to bring about peace, on the basis of no annexations and no indemnities. They sought to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat at once by the violent overthrow of the existing order. They were led by two returned exiles, Lenin and Trotsky.*

Alexander Karensky, for a time, roused the enthusiasm of the army and organised a sensational defensive against the Germans in Galicia. But the success was temporary and the ground gained was immediately lost. The soldiers influenced by the pacifist propaganda of the Bolshivicks, refused to fight, and before long the grand army of Russia became a mutinous rabble.

Taking advantage of the prevailing confusion Germany captured Riga and then threatened Petrograd itself. In the meanwhile Bolshivicks improved their organisation and swelled their ranks. They soon came to control the Petrograd Soviet and in November 1917 they successfully saw the end of the provisional government. Alexander Kernesky fled from the country. Thus was carried out the November Revolution and power passed into the hands of Bolshivicks.

The rise of Bolshivicks and Lenin

The Bolshivicks succeeded in coming to power due to a variety of reasons and they are as follows.

- i. First of all, it is evident from the above discussion that the provisional government headed by the liberals first and then later by the Menshivicks *failed to meet the demands of the masses, mainly the workers, soldiers and peasants.*
- ii. *The workers wanted immediate improvement in their working conditions, which could be achieved only by a radical government through radical reforms and not by a moderate government through constitutional reforms.*
- iii. *The peasants wanted land immediately. But the provisional government believed in acting with deliberation and according to law. It refused to sanction the peasant seizure of land. Instead it appointed a commission to collect material on which feature agrarian legislation was to be based - an act totally inadequate to the emergency.*
- iv. *The soldiers wanted peace without any further delay. But the liberal and Menshivick policy of continuation of the war made them really rally round the Bolshivicks, who wanted to bring about peace immediately by concluding a separate treaty with Germany and her allies.*
- v. *The personality of Lenin, who a skilful tactician, was also responsible for the success of the Bolshivicks in coming to power. Lenin sensing the mood of the people, called the abolition of the provisional government and establishment of the republic of Soviets, confiscation of the estates and the nationalisation of the factors of production. Lenin also saw the end of the war and brought the much required peace to the people.*

Lenin was always able to judge with accuracy *what was politically possible in a given situation.* He galvanised the Bolshivicks into a truly revolutionary group waiting only for the movement to seize power. Bolshivicks, after their successful revolution, led by Lenin proceeded to consolidate their gains. But the hurdles they faced were quite enormous.

First of all the *Bolshivicks were still in minority* of the Russian population, and they would have to

secure the acceptance of their rule within Russia as well as without.

Secondly, they would have to *organise a form of government* and with its aid they have to rebuild the social and economic life of the people of Russia on Communist principles.

The first essential thing to secure these objectives was *the external peace* which was necessary to enable the Bolshivicks to concentrate their full strength and energy on the pressing problems at home. Hence immediately after seizing power. Lenin opened negotiations with the Central Powers and concluded a separate treaty with Germany and her allies known as the *treaty of Brest Litovsk*. It was as humiliating treaty, involving, as it did, the loss of all the territories acquired by Russia since the time of Peter the Great. But, for Lenin and for his followers, no sacrifice was too great to secure the triumph of the Socialist Revolution which they were bent upon accomplishing.

At the domestic front, Lenin began his work by giving effect to the principles of Marxian Socialism.

- i. He *abolished all private property* and gave lands to the peasants to be cultivated for the benefit of the State.
- ii. *Factories and workshops* were seized by the State without paying any compensation to their former owners and handed over the same to the management of workers.
- iii. *Labour was made compulsory for all the citizens.*
- iv. All *public debts* contracted by the previous Russian government were repudiated.
- v. The *orthodox church of Russia* was disestablished.

Such drastic and sudden changes, introduced by Lenin, naturally provoked opposition to the new regime. The Bolshivicks were supported by the workers, peasants and soldiers. But they faced opposition from the other quarters.

The *landlords, businessmen* and the *clergy* who were still powerful, vehemently protested against the *confiscation of the private property and abolition of special privileges*. The *sacrifices of the individual liberty and political democracy at the altar of the dictatorship of the proletariat* was resented by many including the *Menshivicks*. But the Bolshivicks resolved to suppress the opposition.

The Bolshivicks, like the Jacobines of France, adopted terrorist methods against those who opposed their policy without any hesitation. Under the agency of a tribunal known as *Cheka*, there were thousands of executions recalling the excesses committed by the *Committee of Public Safety* of the Revolutionary France. The Bolshivicks by creating the *Reign of White Terror* completely ruined and destroyed the opposition. Among the victims of terror were Czar Nicholas II and his family, who were shot dead in July 1918.

Further, *the socialist regime in a capitalist world naturally caused alarm in foreign countries* and there was a foreign intervention in the internal matters of Russia. Everywhere there was *economic distress and political unrest* attending the World War I, and the western powers feared that the example of Russia might incite a revolt among the working class within their own borders. This fear was intensified by the *Bolshivick propaganda for a world-wide Socialist Revolution*. Hence the Allied powers refused to recognise the Socialist Government. The Soviet Government further alienated the western powers by Lenin's *repudiation of foreign debts contracted under the old regime*. Hence the western powers felt it necessary to interfere in the internal affairs of Russia. Their object was two fold :

- i. Firstly, *to prevent Germany from exploiting the disturbed situation in Russia to her own advantage.*

- ii. Secondly, to *overthrow the Bolshivick government by supporting the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia.*

An Allied expeditionary force landed at Archangel to support the anti - Bolshivick party of North Russia.

A similar force consisting mainly of Japanese soldiers occupied Vladivostac.

The British force occupied the major part of Caucasus.

The French forces occupied some parts of southern Russia for helping the counter revolutionary forces.

To make matters worse, Poland incited by France and anxious to extend frontiers declared war against Russia.

It appears that the Bolshivick government would collapse. But Bolshivicks, however, pulled out of these troubles and several factors contributed for their triumph.

- i. There was a *great deal of dissensions amongst the counter revolutionaries* and so united action for any length of time became impossible. The royalists were at odds with the republicans, and the military leaders with the politicians.
- ii. The *peasants did not support the counter-revolutionaries* for they feared the return of the old landlords to power would mean the loss of their newly acquired land.
- iii. The *workers were always with the Bolshivicks.*
- iv. Further, the *Allied intervention was inadequate and half-hearted.* After the strain of the First World War and with many post-war problems still unsolved the Allies were not in a mood to undertake extensive military operations which were necessary to subjugate the huge country like Russia.

Hence the Allies withdrew their troops from Russia by the year 1919.

Deprived of foreign military support, torn by dissensions among themselves and above all the overwhelming power of the *Red Army of Trotsky*, the counter-revolutionary forces were crushed. By 1921 the authority of the Communist dictatorship in Russia was established.

Germany formally recognised the dictatorship in 1922, France and Italy recognised the Soviet regime in 1924 and the USA in 1934.

Lenin and the Marxian Socialism

The Bolshivick programme of *nationalisation and the state ownership, produced results which put Marxian socialism to a very severe test.*

The *peasants* were extremely happy to get rid of their landlords, but they wanted the confiscated lands for themselves rather than to the state. They cared little for the Communist theory or the Marxian Socialism and *wanted to cultivate lands from the capitalist motive of profit.* They were reluctant to handover the surplus produce to the state. When the authorities insisted, the peasants decided to cut down production.

The *workers* and the industrial situation were still very grave. Factories and the large industrial plants were nationalised and committed to the charge of workers. But a very few of the workers were *trained in management* and so there was *little discipline and less efficiency.* Besides, the workers showed no inclination for hard-work. Hence the *production was reduced and the prices increased.*

Lenin realised the perilous economic situation that came into existence on account of the implementation of the Marxian theory of Communism. Hence he immediately proclaimed a *New Economic Policy (NEP)*. It was a strategic retreat from Marxian Socialism and involved a compromise between socialism and capitalism. The following are the chief features of the New Economic Policy.

- i. The property right of the peasants over small holdings was recognised. They were allowed to sell the surplus produce in the open market after payment of tax to the state.
- ii. Private enterprise was allowed on a small scale industries. Large - scale industries, transportation, public utilities, the financial system and the major natural resources were kept under state control.
- iii. To secure capital, profit sharing concessions were allowed to foreign capitalists for large scale agricultural and engineering projects. But the state retained the option of purchasing the products from such concerns.
- iv. Private retail trade was permitted. But the state setup retail stores on its own by way of competition. The state also encouraged Consumer Cooperative Societies.

Though N.E.P. was a departure from Marxian Communism, it was not a complete return to capitalism. It was a temporary makeshift. The new policy stimulated production and brought it to pre-war levels. This N.E.P. averted a great catastrophe and saved the Bolshivick government. This reflects the flexibility in the thinking of Lenin and this was responsible for the success of Bolshivism.

Bolshivism is both a political and economic movement.

Its political creed is the dictatorship of the urban proletariat. It doesn't recognise any class other than the workers. The rule of the working class and not political democracy, is what Bolshivism stands for.

Its economic creed seek to overthrow the social order based on capitalism. This implies the abolition of the private capital and the nationalisation of the land and other instruments of production.

It is a fact that Lenin could not implement Marxian Socialism completely. But he worked very hard for it. Tremendous pressure of work told on his health and he died in 1924.

Lenin was the father of the Bolshivick Revolution and the creator of Soviet Republic of Russia. He had tremendous driving force, iron will and fanatical faith in Communism. To save the revolution he reversed his policy and thereby averted a great catastrophe. The Communists have raised him to the stature of divinity. In the Red Square of Moscow in 1924 the embalmed body of Lenin was enshrined as an object of public worship. In workmen's tenements and the peasants' cottages the lithographs of Lenin, Marx and Stalin were hanged, like icons in the midst of customary candles.



Economic and Social Reconstruction of Soviet Union under the Leadership of Lenin and Stalin

The Bolsheviks were in control over Petrograd as a result of their coup in November, 1917 (October in the old Russian calendar and hence called the October Revolution), but elsewhere the takeover was not smooth. Fighting lasted a week in Moscow before the Soviet won control and it was by the end of November the other cities were also brought to heel. Country areas were much more difficult to deal with, and at first the peasants were lukewarm towards the new government. However, the dictatorship of the proletariat was established.

Lenin's Period (1917-1924)

i. War Communism

With the onset of the Civil War (between the whites and the Red Army) and the emergence of one-party dictatorship in mid - 1918, the Bolsheviks abandoned the relatively gradual approach that they had taken in economic and social matters since the October Revolution, an approach characterised by Lenin as "*one foot in socialism*"

Beginning with the sweeping nationalisation of large scale industry in 1918, *an attempt was made to transform Russian society directly into classless Communist ideal.*

At the same time, a pattern of centralisation and coercion was adopted to channel the country's efforts and resources into victory in the Civil War. But the *war communism* had to be admitted as failure.

- i. *Nationalisation of industries resulted decline in production.* Transportation was in a critical state, which contributed further to the paralysis of industry.
- ii. To finance the costs of government and civil war, the Soviet regime relied mainly on *the printing press*, with the inevitable consequence of accelerating inflation. So, the government was forced to rely increasingly on measures of "*natural economy*", rewarding workers with ration in kind, confiscated apartments, etc.
- iii. The break up of the large landholding and the propensity of the peasants to consume their produce or cuttail production rather than sell it for worthless money caused a catastrophic drop in the food available for the urban sector and the army. The Soviet government responded by having grain "*requisitioned*" by armed detachments, aided by the "*committees of the village poor*". The result was further disruption of food production and a severe alienation of the majority of the peasants, to the point of armed insurrection against the Soviet authorities in some districts of central Russia.

By the end of 1920, the experiment of war communism, coupled with wartime disruptions, had brought industry almost to a standstill. The countryside was simmering with unrest over the requisitioning of the food. Strikes, though outlawed by the Soviet government erupted in the major cities. In March 1921, a serious Naval Mutiny occurred at Kronstadt, suppressed only through prompt action by Trotsky.

The New Economic Policy

The Naval Mutiny at Kronstadt seems to have convinced Lenin that a new approach was needed to win back the faltering support of the peasants; he put into operation what became known as New Economic policy. The following are the changes introduced by Lenin under the *New Economic Policy*.

- i. It marked the *end of war communism*.
- ii. It also marked the *suspension of food requisitioning* and the introduction of *tax in kind* specifying the amounts that each peasant had to contribute to the state.

The peasants were allowed to *dispose of their produce freely after meeting their tax obligations*.

- iii. *Small scale industries were denationalised* and this paved the way for the rise of new class of small businessmen. But the large-scale industries like transportation, public utilities, the financial system and major natural resources were kept under state ownership.
- iv. It should be noted here that within state-owned sector also, there were further steps back towards capitalistic economic arrangements. *Individual and professional management became the rule*, and profit-and-loss account was restored.

State-owned enterprises traded with each other and sought to grow by earning profits. *Wages and salaries were set to reflect effort and responsibility, an acknowledged reversion of the Marxian goal of equality*.

Economic planning was reduced to a modest effort at forecasting resources, *rehabilitation of war-torn plants* and building up the infrastructure, particularly *electric power*.

The NEP thus temporarily *sacrificed the collectivist and egalitarian goals of communist party*. It was a retreat from the momentarily unattainable goal of communism to a state of capitalism.

The NEP quickly achieved a recovery in both agricultural and industrial production. By the mid 1920s, most of the economic sectors reached pre-war levels. A major issue then developed at this time was *over the manner of its future development* - an issue between the proponents of gradual growth in the pattern of market socialism, on the one hand, and the advocates of more deliberate planning for a high tempo of industrialisation, on the other. The issue was ultimately decided by the political succession struggle that characterised the years of the NEP.

Social Reconstruction

In literary and cultural matters, the communist regime during this period was generally content to *suppress over political opposition*.

No attempt was made to control the conclusion of scientists. Strictly speaking, the Soviet regime, *while dictatorial was not yet totalitarian* (it became totalitarian during Stalin's era). Non-political areas were not subjected to the positive and exclusive dictates of the official controllers.

In education as well as in the arts, a doctrine of service to the proletariat was combined with serious attempts at experimentation. *Great strides were made in expanding the basic primary and secondary school system, creating the machinery that, by the end of the following decade substantially wiped out illiteracy among the younger Soviet generation.*

In higher education, class principles required admission preference for the children of workers and peasants, regardless of preparation, to the great detriment of the universities. *Much was achieved, however, in the education of the working class through the so-called "Rabbak" (workers night schools).*

Stalin's Period (1924-1953)

Economic Reconstruction

The economic problems that confronted the attention of Stalin were basically two-fold and they are as follows.

i. Industrial production

Although the Russian industry was recovering from the effects of the First World War and the subsequent Civil War, *production from heavy industry was still surprisingly low.* In 1929, for instance, France not a major industrial power at that time, produced more coal and steel than Russia, while Germany, Britain and especially USA were miles ahead.

Stalin believed that a *rapid expansion of heavy industry* was essential so that Russia would be able to survive the attack which he was convinced would come sooner or later from the western capitalist powers who hated communism.

Stalin, further believed, *that industrialisation would have the added advantage of increasing support for the government*, because it was the industrial workers who were the Communist's greatest allies. *Thus the more industrial workers, the more secure the Communist State would be.*

One serious obstacle to overcome though, *was the lack of capital to finance industrial expansion*, since foreigners were not willing to invest in a Communist State.

ii. Development in agricultural sector

The second problem faced by Stalin was the *state of food production.* More food would have to be produced both to feed the growing industrial population and to provide a surplus for export which would bring in foreign capital and profits for investment in industry. But the primitive agricultural system that was prevailing in Russia was incapable of providing the required food production to meet the demands of the time.

Stalin, though had no economic experience whatsoever, had no hesitation in plunging the country into a series of dramatic changes designed to overcome the problems in the shortest possible time.

Measures adopted by Stalin

In the first instance the NEP introduced by Lenin, was abandoned, *Both industry and agriculture was brought under the direct control of the government.*

Industrial expansion

Industrial expansion was tackled by a series of *Five Year Plans*, the first two of which (1928-32 and 1933-37) were said to have been completed a year ahead of schedule, though in fact neither of them reached the full target.

The *First Plan*, concentrated on heavy industry - coal, iron, steel, oil and machinery (including tractors), which were scheduled to triple output; the two later plans provided for some increases in consumer goods as well as in heavy industry. It should be noted that in spite of all sorts of mistakes, the plans were a remarkable success.

By 1940, the USSR had overtaken Britain in iron and steel production, though not yet in coal, and she was within the reach of Germany. Hundreds of factories were built, many of them in new towns east of the Ural Mountains where they would be safer from invasion.

The capital needed for the industrial expansion was provided almost entirely by the Russians themselves. It was gathered from grain exports, from charging peasants heavily for use of government equipment and the ruthless ploughing back of all profits and surplus.

Hundreds of foreign technicians were brought in and great emphasis was placed on expanding education in technical colleges and universities and even in factory schools to provide a whole new generation of skilled workers.

In the factories the old capitalist methods of piece-work and pay differentials between the skilled and unskilled workers were used to encourage production. Medals were given to workers who achieved record output. Ordinary workers were ruthlessly disciplined. Severe punishments were awarded for bad workmanship, and sometimes they were sent to the forced labour camps.

Primitive housing conditions and severe shortage of consumer goods (because of the concentration on heavy industry) must have made life grim for most of the industrial workers. However, by mid 1930s things were improving as benefits such as education, medical care and holidays with pay became available.

Development in agricultural sector

The problems of agriculture were dealt with by the process known as "Collectivisation". The idea was that the small farms and holdings belonging to the peasants should be merged to form large collective farms jointly owned by the peasants. There were two main reasons for Stalin's decision to collectivise.

- i. First, the existing system of small farms were not conducive for the use of tractors and combine harvesters which would vastly increase grain production.
- ii. Secondly, Stalin wanted to eliminate the class prosperous peasants (Kulaks) which the NEP had encouraged. He thought that they were standing in way of progress.

Stalin also directed his attention towards the Kulaks on political grounds, for they were the enemies of communism.

The programme of collectivisation was launched in earnest in 1929, and had to be carried through sheer brute force, so determined was the resistance in the countryside. There was no problem in collectivising landless labourers, but the peasants to seize cattle and machinery from the Kulaks to be handed over to the collectives. Kulaks very often reacted by slaughtering cattle and burning crops rather than allow the state to take them.

Peasants who refused to join collective farms were arrested and deported to labour camps or shot dead. When newly collectivised peasants tried to sabotage the system by producing only enough for their own needs, local officials insisted on seizing the required quotas, resulted in large scale famine during 1932-33, especially in Ukraine.

In spite of these hardships and opposition three-quarter million tons of grain were exported during this period while over five million peasants died out of starvation. In this way, well over 90% of all farm land had been collectivised by 1937. In one sense Stalin could claim that collectivisation was a success.

Impact of the collectivisation

- i. It paved the way for the *mechanisation of the agricultural sector*.
- ii. The mechanised agricultural sector *provided the required capital for the rapid industrialisation of Russia*.
- iii. But, on the other hand, *so many animals had been slaughtered that it was in 1953 and before, the livestock production recovered to the 1922 figure*.
- iv. *The loss of human life and suffering was matchless*.

Social Reconstruction

The Stalin Era marked the *imposition of totalitarian regimentation in practically all realms of life*. With the rise of Stalin the *Communist Party had been subjected to centralisation of authority within its ranks*. After 1928, using the party as his *primary agent of control*, Stalin extended this pattern to most aspects of Soviet social, cultural and intellectual life.

Social life

The social pattern of the period was based above all on *the subordination of the individual to the collective organisation*. This was apparent by the elimination of individual economic enterprise among the Kulaks and ordinary peasants. At the same time, the old revolutionary impulse towards the *collective equality was suspended*.

Stalin put heavy emphasis on the development of individual responsibility on the *strengthening of the authority of organisers and managers and on the expansion of wage and salary differentials on the basis of skill and effort*. This was no longer represented as a postponement of the Marxian ideal but as a permanent aspect of it.

Educational sector

The educational experimentation of the 1920s was abruptly suspended in 1929. The new emphasis, under the label "*Polytechnicism*", was *heavily directed to foster practical industrial skills*. In Stalin's regime the challenge of training uneducated peasants for the tasks and responsibilities of industrial life was a monumental one. But through a *complex network of technical schools and institutions and on-the-job training*, the Soviet government made *substantial break through in the modernisation of its population*.

In 1929 the *power of the party was turned on Soviet intellectual life*, until then prevailed the freest aspect of the system. Beginning with crackdowns on the philosophers and historians, *every academic and artistic field was subjected to the dictates of extreme Marxism and the imposition of strict party controls*. Typically, the party found a leader in every field who represented the doctrinaire Marxist view, and gave them authority to impose the party line on their colleagues. Bourgeois, i.e; non-conformist thinkers and artists were silenced or in many cases, imprisoned. Immediate technological or propaganda contributions to production were the over riding demand. Few artists of works of merit were produced.

Over all, the *doctrine of "Party Spirit" was stressed*, entailing party judgements in every field as to the ultimate truth and the appropriateness of any piece of work. *Party judgement, in turn, ultimately meant Stalin's personal judgement*.

By 1939 Soviet Cultural life was cast in the mould that was essentially *restrictive in form, conservative in substance and revolutionary in labels*. The writers were the first to feel the new strictures. The *Russian Association of Proletarian Writers*, which had controlled the field since 1929 was dissolved and replaced by the *Union of Soviet Writers*. Their artistic works should be *graditional in form, accessible to the masses*

and *optimistic*. Similar standards were enjoined on all other fields of artistic creation during the next few years. *Modern art and literary experimentation* were condemned as "*bourgeois formalism*" and their dissemination was altogether banned.

The *sciences* were less affected and some what later works in the physical sciences generally proceeded without interference, except when philosophical issues were involved. In *historical teaching* stress was laid on *nationalism and great leaders*.

Soviet *educational policies* shifted similarly. Beginning in 1934, traditional discipline, examination and the like were restored. The polytechnic approach was dropped in favour of a classical secondary school curriculum, heavily oriented towards language and science. *Educational preference for the childrens of proletarians* was abandoned in the later 1930s in favour of combination of merit and political reliability.

Changes in the area of *social policy* reflected Stalin's paramount concern with order and discipline. The loose family legislation of the 1920s was abolished. In 1936, new laws were passed which banned abortion and made divorce difficult and expensive.

Labour regulations put a premium on discipline, punctuality and incentives. In fine Stalin's regime acquired an aura of grim puritanism, compared by some commentators with the Protestant ethic that earlier spurred the forces of Industrial Revolution in the West.





—

—

8
8
4