

UNIT-I CHAPTER-I THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

SOLUTIONS

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

A) Long answer type questions

Q1. Describe the "Ancien Regime" in France.

Answer: The declining political, social, economic system and the institutions that existed in France before 1789 were called the "Ancien Regime" or "Old Regime". During this Ancien Regime, the political system of France was the monarchical system under the Bourbon dynasty. The king was an absolute autocrat. The French society was divided into three classes or Estates. The first Estate included the Clergy, the second Estate included the nobles and the third Estate included the rest of the population. The First and Second Estates enjoyed various privileges but the Thirds Estate did not enjoy any privileges. During the Ancien Regime, the First and the second Estates were exempted from paying taxes to the state and even they imposed taxes and other dues on the peasants. Only the Third Estate was payable taxes to the state. The clergy and nobility were enjoying certain political rights whereas the third Estates were denied any political rights. The administration of the public finance was in complete disarray. There was no budget and there was no difference between the national income and the personal income of the king.

Q2. Describe the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Answer: The French Society before the revolution of 1789 was a stratified society. There was a clash of interest among the privileged and unprivileged classes. Despite their contributions to the state, the bourgeoisie were denied social mobility, absorption to the rank of nobility, entry into military services, political participation or membership of the court. So, this discontented bourgeoisie wanted to destroy the feudal system. The urban artisans and workers were depended on the food supplies from the rural France which was regulated by the government and they resented the government negligence when there was high price of wheat and bread in the urban areas and they became the striking hands of the revolution. Due to heavy taxation and large scale enclosure of agricultural fields by the nobles, the dissatisfied peasants resorted to local protest against the feudal lords and churches. The intellectual consciousness of the French people particularly of the middle class was aroused by the ideas of the philosophers of the time like John Locke and Rousseau. The writing of the philosophers pleaded for the abolition of the unequal social order and establishment of a new order of hope, human right and freedom. The financial crisis during the reign of Louis XVI forced him to convene the Estates General of France to find a solution to the problem of finance. The Estates General was usurped by the leaders of the third Estate to start the Revolution in 1789.



Q3. What are the rights of man which were spread by the French Revolution?

Answer: The National Assembly of France passed the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizens in September, 1789.

The Rights are as follows:

- i) Men are born free and remain free and equal in Right.
- ii) The inalienable rights of man and citizen are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.
- iii) Sovereignty resides in the nation.
- iv) All citizens have right to participate into formation, personally or through their representatives. All citizens are equal before law.
- v) No man may be accused, arrested or detained except in case determined by law.

Q4. Explain how France was declared a Republic.

Answer: Constitutional Monarchy was set up in France after the adoption of the constitution by the National Assembly. Finding it difficult to adjust himself to the new situation, the king Louis XVI made secret negotiations with the King of Prussia and other rulers of Europe to put down the revolution. Knowing this secret plan of the King, the National Assembly declared wars in April 1792 against Prussia and Austria to save the revolution. There grew up some radical groups of revolutionaries who wanted to lead the revolution like the Jacobin club. On 10th August, 1792, the Jacobins stormed the palace of Tuileries, the royal residence of Louis XVI and his family. The Jacobins led by Robespiere captured the National Assembly which was renamed as the National convention. The National convention abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic in February, 1792. On 21st January 1793, Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette were executed on the charge of treason. Thus, France became a Republic under the leadership of Jacobin club.

Q5. What do you mean by the "Reign of Terror"? What was its outcome?

Answer: During the period from September 1793 to July 1794, the Committee of Public Safety was established by the National Convention. It adopted an internal policy of suppression of dissent in order to strengthen the French Revolution. Under this policy, enemies of the republic were arrested, imprisoned and beheaded through a device called guillotine. About 5000 men were executed in the city of Paris. These people included exnobles and clergy, members of other political parties and even members of Jacobins who did not agree with the policy. This period of suppression of dissent by the Committee of Public Safety is called the Reign of Terror in the history of France.

The end of the reign of Terror paved the way for the establishment of the Directory consisting of 5 directors in 1795. The political prisoners were released. The committee of public safety was divested of its powers. The situation made possible the return of the priests, royalists and émigrés to France. In 1795, the convention adopted a new constitution which established the Directory.



Q6. Describe the legacy of the French Revolution.

Answer:

- i) The French Revolution abolished feudalism and monarchy. It proclaimed the democratic ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, declared the Right of Man and Citizen, abolished serfdom and slavery.
- ii) It introduced a republican principle in the polity of France and also made a far reaching reform in the social, economic and religious life of the French nation.
- iii) The management of the church was brought under the authority of the state and religion was made a private affair.
- iv) Property was declared as the foundation of the social order. Sovereignty was made to be vested in the nation and nationalism took a definite shape.
- v) It inspired national liberation struggles throughout the world in the coming centuries. It influenced the ideas and thoughts of the modern world.

Q7. Describe the circumstances that led to the rise of Napoleon.

Answer: During the rule of the Directory, France was facing great internal problems, the financial crisis, counter revolution and foreign wars. The Directory conducted their first election in March, 1796 but with the help of the army, they annulled the results of the election. So, there was a political dispute between the Directory and the Legislature. The Directory summoned General Napoleon Bonaparte in November, 1799 and made him temporary Consul to restore order. The Consulate was established in 1799 with three members. Napoleon was the First Consul. In 1802, Napoleon was declared the First Consul for life but in 1804, he coerced the legislature to change the title of the first consul to that of hereditary Emperor. It was approved by a plebiscite. On 2nd December, 1804, General Napoleon Bonaparte in the presence of Pope Pius VII crowned himself with the title of Napoleon I, the Emperor of France at the cathedral of Notre Dam in Paris.

B. Short answers type questions

Q1. Give an account on the "Third Estate".

Ans: The "Third Estate "was consisted of three social categories of France in the Ancien Regime. They are as follows:

- i) The first category was formed by the court officials, big businessmen, big merchants, the professionals such as lawyers, writers and the Scientist.
- ii) The second category was the peasants and the artisans who were well to do and numerous.
- iii) The third category was of small peasants, who were the real poor of France.



Q2. What was the "Estates General"?

Ans: The "Estates General" was a political body to which the members of the three Estates sent their representatives during the Ancien Regime. The French Monarch had to convene the Estates General to introduce taxes as only the Monarch had power to convene it.

Q3. Why was the 'Bastille' stormed?

Ans: France was in turmoil when the National Assembly was drafting the Constitution of the country at Versailles. People in the city of Paris were angry and protested against the rise of prices due to the bad harvest. Louis XVI ordered the troops to march to Paris to suppress any violent agitation on 14th July, 1789. There was a rumour that the king's troops might fire upon them. The agitating people decided to face the royal forces and they constituted themselves into a militia. They marched to the fortress prison Bastille and stormed it. Because, they hated it as a symbol of the autocratic power of the French Monarchy.

Q4. State the immediate changes undertaken by the National Assembly of 1789-91.

Ans: The immediate changes undertaken by the National Assembly of 1789-91 are as follows:

- i) The abolition of the Feudal Social Order in France, making all the Citizens of France as of equal status.
- ii) On 4th August, 1789 the National Assembly abolished the Feudal system of obligation and taxes
- iii) The Clergy was forced to give up their privileges.
- iv) Church lands were confiscated by the state.

Q5. What was justification of the use of terror by Robespierre?

Ans: Robespierre justified the use of terror in the Assembly on the following points.

- i) To establish and consolidate democracy, to achieve the rule of constitutional law, they must first finish the war of liberty against tyranny.
- ii) They should annihilate the enemies of the Republic at home and abroad.
- iii) To ensure the success of the Revolution, a democratic government may rely on terror.



C. Very Short Answer Type Questions

Q1. List the three Estates into which the French society was divided on the eve of the French Revolution.

Ans: On the eve of the French Revolution, the French society was divided into three estates. They were the first Estate (Clergy), the second Estate (Nobility) and the third Estate.

Q2. When did the French Revolution take place?

Ans: The French Revolution took place with the destruction of the Bastille, the fortress prison in Paris by the people on 14 July, 1789.

Q3. Who constituted the Estates General?

Ans: The representatives of the First Estate, the second Estate and the third Estate constituted the Estates General.

Q4. When and where did Louis XVI convene the Estates General?

Ans: Louis XVI convened the Estates General on 5th May, 1789 at the palace of Versailles.

Q5. Why was the Bastille hated by all?

Ans: The Bastille was hated by all because it symbolized the autocratic power of the French Monarchy.

O6. Who invented Guillotine?

Ans: Dr. Guillotine, a philanthropist of France invented the Guillotine.

Q7. Name the King and Queen of France at the time of French Revolution?

Ans: The King and Queen of France at the time of French Revolution were Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette.

Q8. What is meant by the term Directory?

Ans: After the fall of Robespierre, the Constitution of 1795 provided the executive power of the French Republic to a body which was consisted of five Directors. This body of five Directors is called Directory.



EXTRA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1. Why did the members of the third Estate walk out of the Estate General's Assembly?

Ans: i) The members of the third Estate demanded that voting should be done by assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote.

ii) But their proposal was rejected by Louis XVI and the members of the third Estate worked out of the assembly in protest.

Q2. Who was Abbe Sieyes?

i) Abbe Sieyes was a prominent member of the National Assembly.

ii) He wrote an influential pamphlet called "What is third Estate "which provided a platform and programme for the third Estate.

Q3. What were the causes of financial crisis in France just before the French **Revolution?**

i) Due to the national debts created by the French participation in the American war of Ans: Independence.

ii) There was lack of transparency in public finance. There was no differences between the national income and the personal income of the King.

Q4. How was the National Assembly recognized?

Louis XVI was confronted with the prospect of an open revolt of the people. So, he accorded the recognition to the National Assembly as the legislature of the French state. He also accepted the principle that the power of the king would be regulated by DUCATION (S) the constitution.

O5. What was the "Tennis Court Oath"?

The Tennis Court Oath was the oath taken by the members of the third Estate who Ans: were denied by Louis XVI the right to vote on the National Assembly that they would not disperse till the drafting of the constitution. The oath was taken on 20th June, 1789 in the indoor tennis court of the Palace of Versailles.

Q6. Define Tithe.

Tithe was a kind of tax levied by the churches comprising one tenth of the agriculture produce from the peasants and farmers during the Ancien Regime of France.

Q7. Who wrote the book "Contract Social"?

Ans: Jean Jacques Rousseau.



Q8. What was the Second great work of the National Assembly in 1789?

Ans: The Second great work of the National Assembly was the Declaration of the Rights of Man in September, 1789.

Q9. Why were women disappointed by the constitution of 1791 in France?

Ans: Women were disappointed by the constitution of 1791 in France because they were excluded from the Declaration of Rights of Man.

Q10. Which feminist leader was executed during the Reign of Terror in France?

Ans: Olype de Gouges.

Q11. What was the most important legacy of French Revolution?

Ans: The ideas of Liberty and Democratic Rights were the most important legacy of French Revolution.

Q12. What were the main causes of the French Revolution?

Ans: a) Autocratic rule of the Bourbon kings.

- b) The social system based on feudalism.
- c) Financial crisis.

Q13. Describe the concept of active and passive citizens of France?

Ans: Active citizens were those who had the right to vote ie. Men above 25 years of age who paid taxes equal to at least three days of labourer's wage. Passive citizens were the remaining men and all women who had no right to vote.

Q14. Why was the reign of Robespierre termed as "reign of terror" despite various reforms introduced by him?

Ans: Robespierre's Government adopted various reforms such as maximum ceiling on wages and prices, rationed meat and bread, fixed prices of grains, made whole wheat bread compulsory for all and converted buildings of churches into barracks or offices. However his period from 1793 to 1794 is referred to as a reign of terror because Robespierre followed the policy of severe control and punishment. All those whom he saw as being 'enemies' of the republic whether ex- nobles, clergy, members of other political parties, even members of his own party who did not agree with his method were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal. If the court found them 'guilty' they were guillotined. Robespierre pursued his policies so relentlessly that even his supporters began to demand moderation