

Revision Notes Class 9

Social Science - History

Chapter 1 – The French Revolution

Before the French Revolution

Before the French revolution the French territories and society was like an ancient regime. They had feudal lords who had taken over the political system of the country. The French society was divided into three Estates. They were the clergy, the nobility and the peasants and workers. The upper two estates were closer to the royals and hence received favours easily. The others had to pay multiple taxes and had a life of suffering.

The Initial Stage of the Revolution

- When King Louis XVI sat on the throne, the financial condition of France was horrible.
- The king decided to convene the Estates-General to put more taxes upon the citizens on the Finance Minister's advice.
- The votes of the Estate General used to happen on a per Estate basis.
- The people of the Third Estate demanded that the votes should happen on a per head basis.
- The King did not agree with such a proposal so the representatives of the Third Estate walked out of the assembly.

The Tennis Court Oath

The representatives of the Third Estate formed a National Assembly where they tried to draft a constitution that would limit the powers of the monarchy. The King and the Clergy ultimately conceded to the National Assembly. The legislative powers then shifted from the hands of the King to the National Assembly.

The newly created Legislative Assembly was divided into various political groups.

- The Constitutionalist
- The Republicans (The Girondins and The Jacobins)

The Rise of The Jacobins

Due to a war, France faced havoc. The Girondins lost power and the Jacobins became the rulers. They declared France a Republic but it lost its value when they turned tyrants. It was a brutal period of terror that the French had to face. Their

leader, Robespierre was killed in 1794.

The Rise of The Middle Class

- The middle class became powerful in the National Convention after the Jacobins left power.
- The National Convention again created a new constitution.
- Now, the Legislative Assembly has become bicameral.
- There were 5 directors in the Executive.
- Two-thirds of the members were from the National Convention.
- The public did not receive it well and attacked the convention in 1795.
- Napoleon, who stopped this attack later became the commander in Chief of the French Army and also the supreme leader of France in 1799.

Frequently Asked Question and Answers

1. List all the important dates or years related to the French Revolution?

Ans: The important years associated with the French Revolution are as follows:

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|----------------|--|
| 1774 | - Louis XVI became the King. |
| 5th May 1789 | - The king calls the Estates-General. |
| 20th June 1789 | - Tennis Court Oath. |
| 14th July 1789 | - The razing of Bastille and the official start of the French Revolution. |
| 1791 | - The National Assembly completes the draft of the new constitution where France is regarded as a constitutional monarchy. |
| 1792 | - The National Convention declared France a Republic. |
| 1793-1794 | - The Reign of Terror |
| 1794 | - Robespierre is killed and the Directory system is introduced. |
| 1799 | - Napoleon Bonaparte becomes the first consul. |

2. Why were women disappointed with the French Revolution?

Ans: The new French Constitution considered the women as passive citizens and there were no rights for the women. The political clubs of the females were also banned. So, they were disappointed with the Revolution.

3. Can you list some of the democratic rights that we enjoy today that have their origins rooted in the French Revolution?

Ans: Here are the democratic rights that have their origin in the French Revolution:

- Election of leaders and representatives
- Equality before law
- Right to Freedom
- Right to Personal Liberty

4. How was the message of the Universal Rights contradictory in nature?

Ans: The Declaration of Rights announced that all men were equal in the eyes of law. But the right to vote was granted only to those men who could pay taxes equal to three days' wages. The women and non-tax-paying men were deemed passive citizens. Thus, a large number of citizens became passive and could not vote making the Universal rights contradictory. So, in a way, the Universal Rights were not universal in nature.

5. What was the contribution of the French Philosophers to the French Revolution?

Ans: The French philosophers had little to do with the French Revolution. They are remembered today only for their ideas which planted the seeds of revolution into the mind of the people.