

HISTORY

CHAPTER: 01

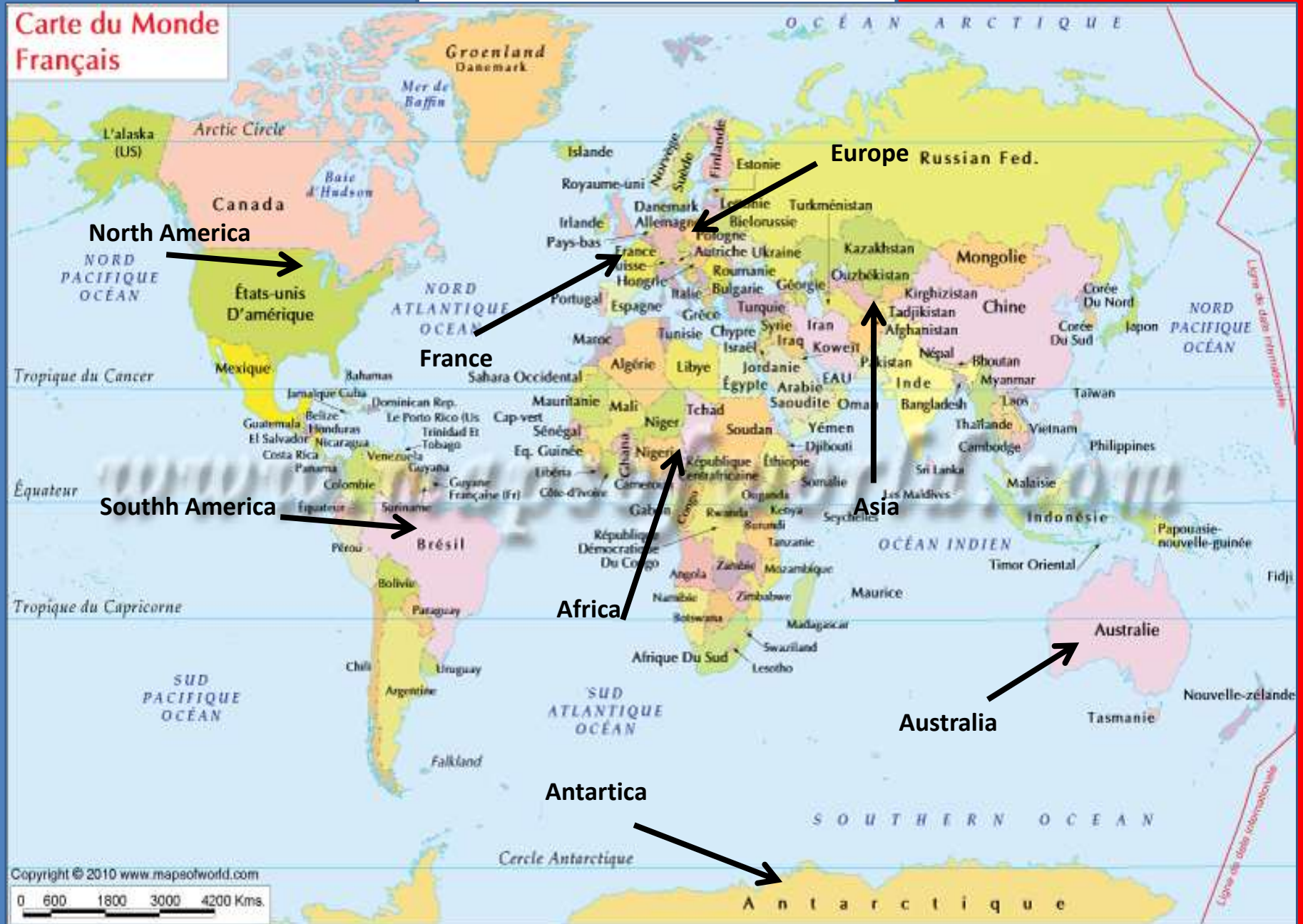


French Revolution

14th July, 1789

LOCATION

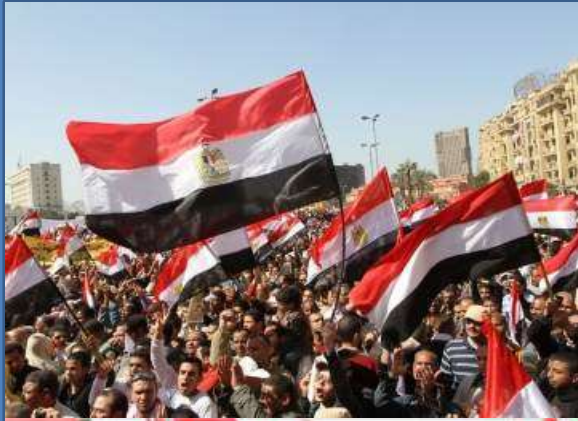
Carte du Monde Français





Versailles/Paris

MEANING



- A political upheaval in a nation state characterized by great change.
- A revolution may result in sudden overthrow of an established govt or system by force and bloodshed, e.g., French Revolution.
- It can also be a great change that comes slowly and peacefully, e.g., Industrial Revolution.

French Revolution

- French Revolution was the mass uprising of the people of France against the dictatorial and anti-people policies of the monarch.
- It started on 14th July 1789 with an incident known as Storming of Bastille.

INTRODUCTION



I N T R O D U C T I O N

- Today we often take the ideas of liberty, freedom and equality for granted.
- But we need to remind ourselves that these ideas also have a history.
- This history can find its origin in French Revolution.
- It led to the end of monarchy, end of society based on privileges and gave way to a new system of governance.
- It declared the idea that all individuals had rights and could claim equality.
- These notions of equality and freedom emerged as the central ideas of a new age.

UPCOMING TOPICS

- 1) CAUSES**
- 2) EVENTS**
- 3) CONSEQUENCES**



CAUSES

POLITICAL CAUSES



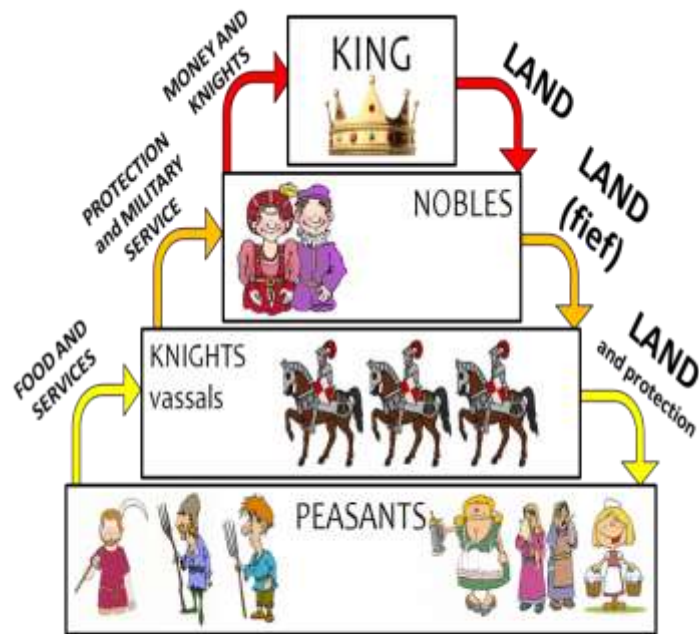
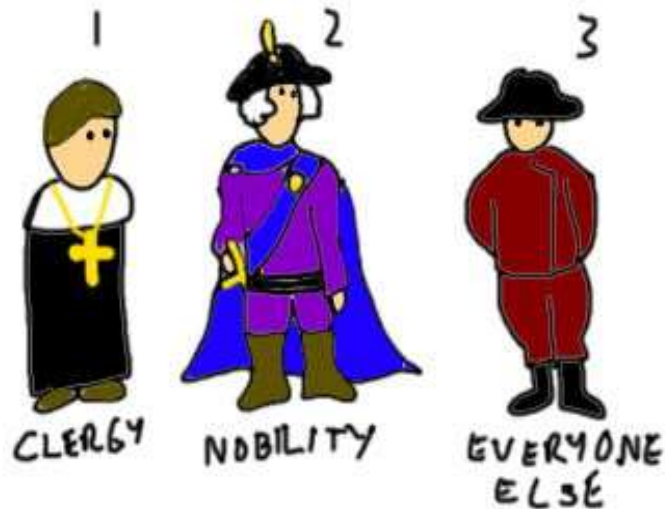
- In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France.
- He was 20 years old when he married to the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette who always interfered with the administration.
- He ruled as an absolute monarch.
- He had maintained a **huge army** and built a big extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles which drained the wealth of France.
- **Common people** had no say in administration. All bureaucratic posts were occupied by the aristocrats.

The Estates General of 1789



- ✓ There was a political body, known as Estate General to which three estates sent their representatives to discuss contemporary issues.
- ✓ However, the monarch alone could decide when to call a meeting of this body. The last time it was done was in 1614.
- ✓ Each estate had one vote, irrespective of the number of representatives.
- ✓ The Estate General had power to increase the taxes.

SOCIAL CAUSES



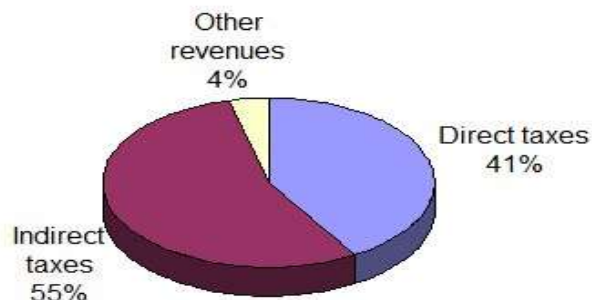
Feudal Pyramid of Power

- French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates **Clergy, Nobility & Common People**.
- The members of the first two estates, enjoyed privileges by birth.
- Peasants made up about 90 per cent of the population, however, only a small number of them owned the land they cultivated.
- About 60 per cent of the land was owned by nobles and church which they leased to peasants for greater share in the production.
- Peasants were obliged to render free services to the lord – to work in his house and fields – to serve in the army or to participate in building roads.

ECONOMIC CAUSES

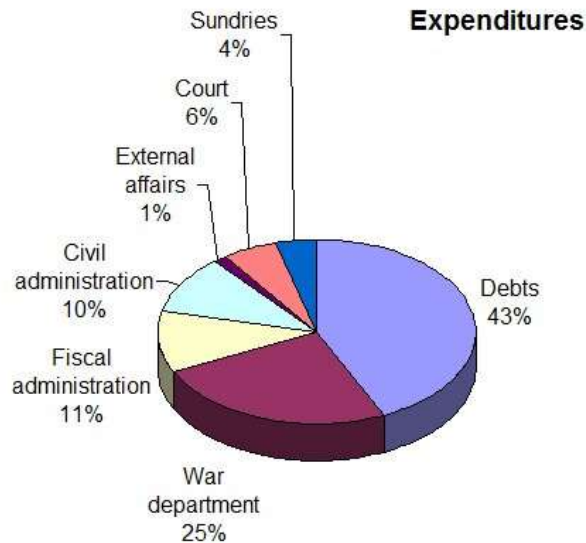


Revenues



- French economy was based on revenue from land and on feudal system.
- During Louis XVI, France had 2 billion livre debt.
- The government charged huge **taxes** from third estate.
- These included a direct tax, called **Taille**, and a number of indirect taxes which were levied on articles of everyday consumption.
- First two estates were exempted from paying taxes to the state.
- The **Church** too extracted its share of taxes called tithes from the peasants.

USELESS WARS



- in 1776, France helped thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from Britain.
- This added more than a billion livres to a debt of 2 billion which reached 3 billion now.
- Lenders, who gave the state credit, now began to charge 10 per cent interest on loans.
- The French government spend an 43% of its budget on interest payments alone.
- To meet its regular expenses, such as the cost of maintaining an army, the court, running government offices or universities, the state was forced to increase taxes.

GROWING MIDDLE CLASS



- The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of social groups, termed the middle class.
- All of these were educated and believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth rather, a person's social position must depend on his merit.
- These ideas demanded a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all.

SUBSISTENCE CRISIS



- An extreme situation when the basic means of livelihood are endangered.

CAUSES

- The population of France rose from about 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789.
- This led to a rapid increase in the demand for foodgrains.
- Production of grains could not keep pace with the demand. This led to inflation.
- Things became worse whenever drought or hail reduced the harvest.



AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



- 17th and 18th century was the age of enlightenment.
- Various philosophers put forward their theories for the state to be based on equality and freedom.
- John Locke in his “Two Treatises of Government”, sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch.
- Rousseau proposed a form of government based on a social contract between people and their representatives.
- In The Spirit of the Laws, Montesquieu proposed a division of power within the government between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary.
- These ideas revolutionized the outlook of people.



EVENTS

- 1) Session of estates general
- 2) Formation of national assembly
- 3) Outbreak of revolution
- 4) Constitutional monarchy
- 5) New constitution
- 6) Revolutionary wars
- 7) Rise of new ideas
- 8) French republic
- 9) Robespierre state policy
- 10) Reign of terror
- 11) Rule of directory

SESSION OF ESTATES GENERAL



- On 5 May 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of the Estates General, in the hall of Versailles, to pass proposals for new taxes.
- The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each, while the third estate sent 600 educated members.
- Peasants, artisans and women were denied entry to the assembly.
- Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote.
- Members of the third estate demanded that voting now be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote.
- The king rejected this proposal, members of the third estate walked out of the assembly in protest.

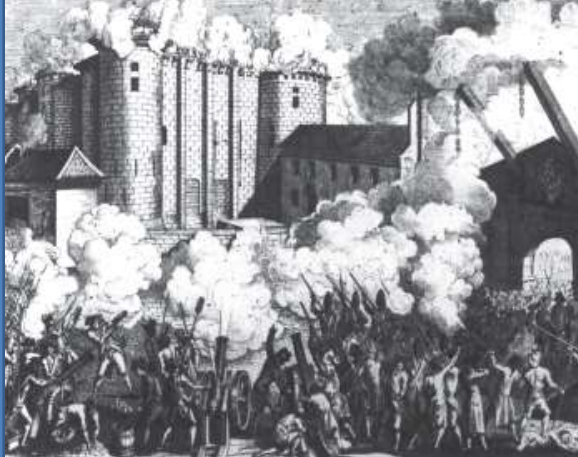
FORMATION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



let's go down to the tennis court
and talk it out like yeah (yeah)

- on 20 June 1789, led by Mirabeau and Abbe Sieyes, representatives assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles.
- They declared themselves a National Assembly and swore not to disperse till they had drafted a constitution for France that would limit the powers of the monarch.
- Mirabeau was born in a noble family but was convinced of the need to do away with a society of feudal privilege.
- He brought out a journal and delivered powerful speeches to the crowds assembled at Versailles.
- Abbe Sieyes originally a priest, wrote an influential pamphlet called 'What is the Third Estate'?

OUTBREAK OF REVOLUTION



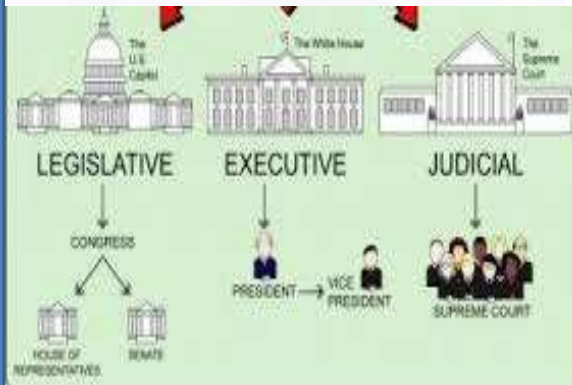
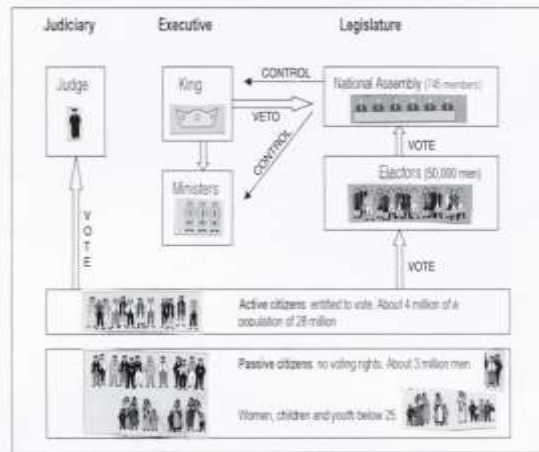
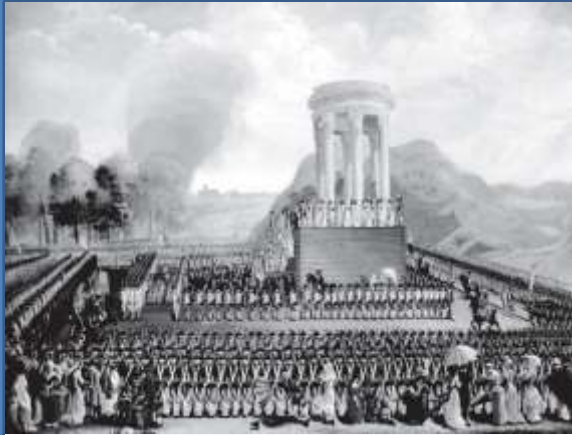
- While the National Assembly was busy at Versailles drafting a constitution, the rest of France was suffering from inflation and riots due to shortage of bread.
- On 14 July 1789, rumors spread that king had commanded troops to move into the city and would soon order the army to open fire upon the citizens.
- Some 7,000 people stormed the fortress-prison, the Bastille, where they hoped to find hoarded ammunition.
- The fortress was demolished and its stone fragments were sold in the markets.
- Meanwhile, in the countryside too there were riots and attacks on nobles forced to flee the country.
- This incident marked the beginning of French revolution.

CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

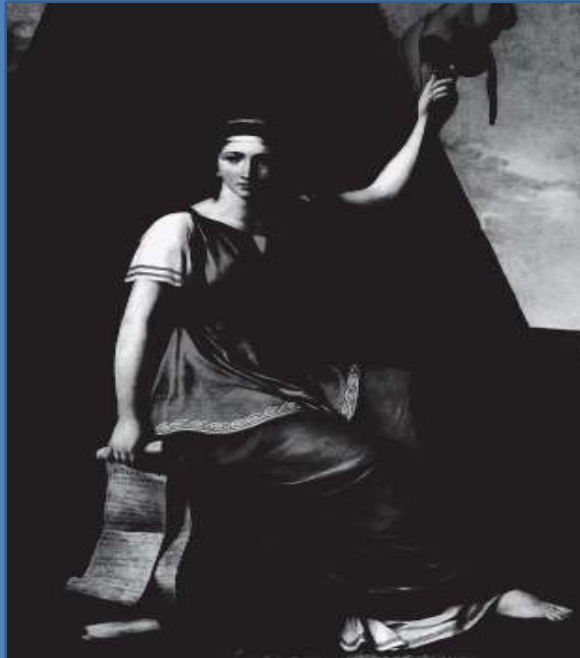


- In 1789, National Assembly completed the draft of constitution.
- On 4 August, Louis XVI finally accorded recognition to the National Assembly and accepted the constitutional monarchy.
- On the night of 4 August 1789, the Assembly passed a decree abolishing the feudal system of obligations, taxes privileges, tithes and land confiscated from church.
- As a result, the government acquired assets worth at least 2 billion livres.

NEW CONSTITUTION



- The National Assembly completed the framing of the constitution in 1791 with an aim to limit the powers of the monarch.
- Powers were now separated and assigned to three different institutions – the legislature, executive and judiciary. This made France a constitutional monarchy.
- The Constitution of 1791 vested the power to make laws in the National Assembly, which was indirectly elected i.e., citizens voted for a group of electors, who in turn chose the Assembly.
- Only men above 25 years of age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a laborers wage were given the status of active citizens, that is, they were entitled to vote.



- The remaining men and all women were classed as passive citizens.
- To qualify as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a man had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers.
- The Constitution began with a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.
- Rights such as the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, equality before law, were established as 'natural and inalienable' rights, that is, they belonged to each human being by birth and could not be taken away.
- It was made the duty of the state to protect each citizen's natural rights.

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF MAN



- Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.
- The source of all power resides in the nation.
- The aim of every political association is the preservation of the rights of man
- Liberty consists of the power to do whatever is not injurious to others and law has the right to forbid only actions that are injurious to society.
- Law is the expression of the general will.
- All citizens have the right to participate framing laws directly or indirectly.
- All citizens are equal before it.
- No man may be accused, arrested or detained, except in cases determined by the law.



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- 10) Reign of terror
- 11) Rule of directory

REVOLUTIONARY WARS



- The situation in France continued to be tense during the following years.
- Although Louis XVI had signed the Constitution, he entered into secret negotiations with the King of Prussia and Austria to send troops to put down the events that had been taking place in France.
- Before this could happen, the National Assembly, in April 1792 declared war against Prussia and Austria.
- The French army sang *Marseillaise*, song composed by the poet Roget de L'Isle.
- The revolutionary wars again brought losses and economic difficulties to the people.

RISE OF NEW REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS



- While the men were away fighting at the front, women were left to cope with the tasks of earning a living and looking after their families.
- Large sections of the population were convinced that the revolution had to be carried further, as the Constitution of 1791 gave political rights only to the richer sections of society.
- Political clubs became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies.
- The most successful of these clubs was that of the Jacobins under the leadership of Maximilian Robespierre, which got its name from the former **convent** of St Jacob in Paris.

FRENCH
REPUBLIC



- On 10 August, 1792, the Jacobins stormed the Palace of the Tuileries, massacred the king's guards and held the king himself as hostage and later imprisoned by assembly.
- In the following elections, all men of 21 years and above, regardless of wealth, got the right to vote.
- The Jacobins under Robespierre won elections.
- On 21 September 1792, Assembly abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic under Robespierre and renamed Assembly as Convention.
- On 21 January 1793 Louis XVI was guillotined publicly at the Place de la Concorde on the charge of **treason**.
- The queen Marie Antoinette met with the same fate shortly after.

ROBESPIERRE'S STATE POLICY



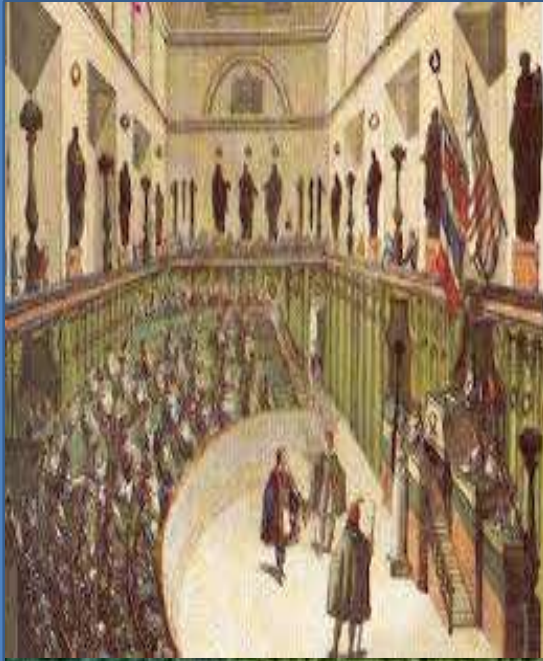
- Robespierre's government issued laws placing a maximum ceiling on wages and rationed meat.
- Peasants were forced to transport their grain to the cities and sell it at prices fixed by the government.
- Expensive white flour was banned and all citizens were required to eat the bread made of whole wheat.
- Equality was also sought to be practiced through forms of speech and address.
- Instead of the traditional Sir and Madam, all French men and women were henceforth Citoyen and Citoyenne (Citizen).
- Churches were shut down and their buildings converted into barracks or offices.

REIGN OF TERROR



- The period from 1793 to 1794 is referred to as the Reign of Terror.
- Ex-nobles and clergy, members of other political parties, even members of his own party who did not agree with Robespierre's methods were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal, if found guilty were guillotined (named after Dr Guillotin who invented it).
- Robespierre pursued his policies so relentlessly that even his supporters began to demand moderation.
- Finally, Robespierre was convicted by a court in July 1794, arrested and on the next day sent to the guillotine.

RULE OF DIRECTORY



- The fall of the Jacobin government allowed the wealthier middle classes to seize power.
- A new constitution was introduced which denied the vote to non-propertied sections of society.
- It provided for two elected legislative councils.
- These then appointed a Directory, an executive made up of five members.
- This was meant as a safeguard against the concentration of power in a one-man executive as under the Jacobins.
- However, the Directors often clashed with the legislative councils, who then sought to dismiss them.
- The political instability of the Directory paved the way for the rise of a military dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte.

RULE OF NAPOLEON



- An Army chief under king Louis XVI namely, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of France In 1804.
- As a modernizer he set out to conquer neighbouring European countries, dispossessing dynasties and creating kingdoms.
- He introduced many laws such as the protection of private property and a uniform system of weights and measures provided by the decimal system.
- Initially, many saw Napoleon as a liberator who would bring freedom for the people.
- But soon the Napoleonic armies came to be viewed everywhere as an invading force.
- He was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815.



CONSEQUENCES

- 1) General consequences
- 2) Abolition of slavery
- 3) Role of women



- It abolished censorship, feudalism, ended privileges.
- The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen guaranteed freedom of speech and expression and equality in the eyes of law.
- The revolution inspired the people from all over the Europe and Asia.
- People in colonies were reenergized and launched movements to gain freedom.
- Tipu Sultan and Raja Rammohan Roy are two examples of individuals who responded to the ideas coming from revolutionary France.



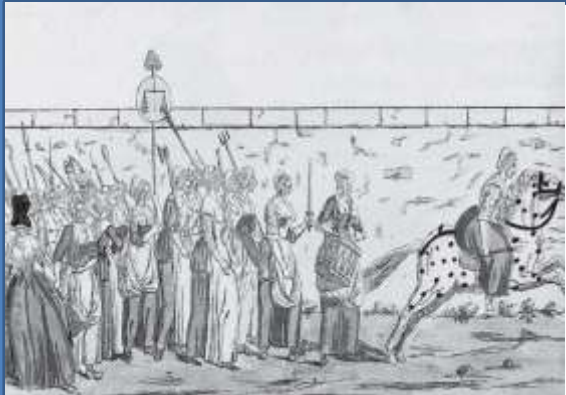
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY



- The slave trade began in the seventeenth century.
- French merchants sailed from the ports of Bordeaux or Nantes to the African coast, where they bought slaves from local chieftains.
- In Caribbean. they were sold to plantation owners.
- Throughout the eighteenth century there was little criticism of slavery in France. The National Assembly held long debates it. But it did not pass any laws, fearing opposition from businessmen whose incomes depended on the slave trade.
- In 1794, Jacobin regime abolished slavery in the French colonies. Again in 1804, Napoleon reintroduced it
- Slavery was finally abolished in French colonies in 1848.



ROLE OF WOMEN



- From the very beginning women were active participants in the revolution.
- In order to discuss and voice their interest's, women started their own 60 political clubs and newspapers.
- From the very beginning they demanded the right to vote to be elected to the assembly and to hold political offices.
- During Jacobin regime the government made schooling compulsory for all girls.
- Their fathers could no longer force them into marriages against their will.
- Divorce was made legal.
- It was finally in 1946 that women in France won the right to vote.