



**B.A. PART-III  
(SEMESTRE-V)**

**HISTORY – PAPER A  
HISTORY OF THE WORLD  
(1500-1950)**

**UNIT NO. 1**

**Section : A**

**Department of Distance Education  
Punjabi University, Patiala**

(All Copyrights are Reserved)

**LESSON NO. :**

**UNIT NO. 1**

- 1.1 : Renaissance
- 1.2 : Reformation
- 1.3 : Causes of the French Revolution
- 1.4 : Results of the French Revolution
- 1.5 : Napoleon and his Reforms
- 1.6 : Causes of the Downfall of Napoleon
- 1.7 : Congress of Vienna
- 1.8 : Unification of Italy
- 1.9 : Unification of Germany

**Note : Students can download the syllabus from  
Department's website [www.dccpbi.com](http://www.dccpbi.com)**

---

**LESSON NO. 1.1**

---

**RENAISSANCE**

The term 'Renaissance' is derived from the French word 'renaister' which means to be born again. It was the reawakening of the European world to the value of ideas and ideals which had inspired and were embodied in art, architecture and literature in the classical world of Greece and Rome.

Renaissance or the "revival of learning" originated in Italy in the 14th century. It flourished in the 15th century and 16th century and continued even during a part of the 17th century. In a way, broadly speaking, it marked the end of the "Middle ages" and beginning of the "Modern times".

Ramsay Muir was unhappy with the choice of the term Renaissance to describe the movement. He writes "In one way the name Renaissance is unfortunate; it suggests that there had been intellectual sterility or deadness during the Middle ages, which is far indeed from being the truth". It is not right to suppose that the great change in men's thinking and in their way of looking at the world came suddenly.

The year 1453 is regarded roughly as the beginning of the Renaissance because it was in this year that the Greek scholars in large numbers were driven out from Constantinople when the city came to be occupied by the Turks. They took refuge in Italy because of its proximity and being a well - established trade centre. But many historians refute the idea of revival of Greek learning from 1453 onwards. They claim that the Greek classics were being studied even earlier also. The fact is that the beginning of the Renaissance can be traced far back into the middle ages. A great change in men's outlook had already been coming about. The enthusiasm for the learning of the Greek literature after 1453 only gave special direction to the movement. This proves that men were prepared by earlier developments to appreciate the Greek classics and the ideals they stood for.

The essential feature of the Renaissance was the wide diffusion of a new way of looking at the world and at life, which was a contrast and a sharp reaction against the conceptions that had dominated the best men in middle ages. The Greek view of life attracted the Italians too much that they went mad about it. Princes lavished their treasures on the purchase of Greek manuscripts. A knowledge of Greek was the sure passport to honour and even to high office. The contrast between the thinking of the men of the middle ages and the modern times was sharp and clear. During the middle ages men had believed that the life on earth was a punishment for

the 'original sin'. They thought of the world as a place of struggle where rigorous discipline had to be observed in preparation for the world to come. Whereas the Greek thought that life in this world to be a place of wonder and beauty which ought to be explored and enjoyed. The preachers of the middle ages had regarded the world as a snare of souls and man's body as the source of evils and temptations, which lead to destruction, unless they kept in subjugation. The Greeks thought the human body as noble, beautiful and a marvel, which ought to be cultivated by a cultured mind. Regarding truth, the middle ages preached that, truth was something which communicated to men by God through his church and regarded man's reason as very imperfect instrument. The church, so to say, was the guardian of the truth. Greeks on the other hand, thought truth to be attained through free and fearless expression of man's reason. For the best minds of middle ages the highest duty of man was to conquer his passions and resign to the will of God. He was to obey the rules set forth by God's church. Whereas the Greeks had thought at man should develop qualities of mind and health in a harmonious way to enjoy the beauty of the world and should seek the truth.

The revival of learning has often been identified with humanism, several humanists, namely, Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino of Verona, figured most prominently. They founded model humanist schools. It was a small group of people, which completely broke away from the Christian moorings.

The new learning brought about tremendous creations of art. In Italy first, though more faintly in other countries of the west. In every field the stimulus was felt. The reformation in religion would be looked upon as the outcome of the renaissance.

To highlight the course of Renaissance in the countries which came under the influence would be necessary to mention the life and work of the celebrated persons in the spheres of art, architecture, literature and science. Most of them were multifaceted personalities who could claim achievements in fields more than one.

### **The Italian Renaissance**

Between 1340-1540 the cities of Italy produced an output of art, scholarship and literature such as the world had not seen since the glory of ancient Athens. During the time of Lorenzo di Medici, the master of Florence, art and letters advanced with great strides. In his capital Arno, (known for Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio) there was a constellation of illustrious men who made Florence, the artistic and intellectual capital of Europe. It included the names of Michael Angelo, Donatello, Filippo lippi, Botticelli, the great artist. The names of Machiavelli a known publicist (author of *The Prince*) Guicciardini- a historian, Ficino a politician and a latin scholar, Leonardo-Da-Vinci and Lorenzo himself were well-known in their field.

In Florence, for instance, painters and sculptors belonged to the same corporation as the doctors and *apothecaries*, and were often instructed by Jewellers. The

classical examples of the omnipotence was Michael Angelo and Leonardo-Da-Vinci who fall in the same class.

The first one (Michael Angelo) was known for his statues and Frescoes, but as a man he was equally well-known for his skill in fortification. This was proved when he defended Florence during a famous siege. Leonardo was not only a painter of 'Mona Lisa' and the 'Last Supper', but an architect, mechanic and a man of science as well. Albert; an athlete and a horseman wrote poetry built churches, painted pictures and wrote comedies also. He is known for developing some modern discoveries in optics. The greatest of the culminating renaissance was Raphael (1483-1520.) His famous workistine Madonna, Madonna in the chair and Vatican frescoes.

The Florentine, Donatello, contemporary and friend of Brunelleschi, was the pioneer in this field. Although he fell in love with antiquity and closely studied classical remains, yet he had the good sense to regard nature as a more vital source of inspiration than the ancient models. He initiated a school of sculpture, which owed freshness of its products closeness of nature. Donatello thus became the herald of the new secular influences.

A love for personal glory was a feature of the age. Rich men commissioned painters for portraits and statues to give them immortality in art. The days of anonymous architecture of Gothic Cathedrals built by generation after generation of nameless craftsmen were past. The Italian style of architecture spread out to Europe. New palaces and villas were designed for grandeur, pleasure and comforts. The architecture of fear (castles), which had sprung as a result of barbarian invasions was on the decline.

In the field of literature, the main feature was of drifting away from scholastic and theological themes. They threw ethics and religion to the wind. There was a great influx of manuscripts into Rome. Lorenzo based his bold treatise on scientific historical criticism. He criticised the pope. It was life of leisure and freedom for scholars. People got attracted to read about ordinary people instead of kings or captain. They preferred to read biographies of intellectuals. The first Italian writer who used his native tongue was Dante a citizen of Florence. His book 'Divine Comedy' was a masterpiece of world literature. He was followed by Petrarch who was a poet and a humanist and represented middle ages. Totally committed to Renaissance was Boccaccio, author of hundred gay, agitated and often licentious tales familiar under the name of the 'Decameron'.

The rulers of Rome (Popes) could hardly remain indifferent to the changes going around them. The Popes of Renaissance continued building, restoring, decorating and collecting. The accession of Leo X from the Medici Home, when the papal patronage to the arts soared to a climax.

The hero of Italian Printing was Aldus Manutius (1449-1514) a critic, grammarian, literary historian, moralist and founder of the Aldine press at Venice. He was clear

that the Italian education would improve only if people were supplied good and cheap literature. He flooded Italian market with cheap and clear copies of Greek and Latin classics.

Two books destined to exert an enduring influence in the sphere of politics and Education was bequeathed to Europe by the Italy of Renaissance. The first was 'Il Principe' 'The Prince' written by Machiavelli in 1513 and the second was Castiglione's courtier'. The theme of the Prince was that in power politics any political means however, unscrupulous are justifiable if they strengthen the power of the state. Such measures of force or fraud might be used unashamedly to enable a prince to secure and extend his conquests. The theme of the Castiglione's book was that a courtier must be trained in the school not only of the court but of the camp. He must be a man at arms and a sportsman, an athlete and an intellectual, who should be well versed in Greek and Italian.

The Italian renaissance remained limited to Latin Christianity and meant nothing either to the Sultan of Turkey or the Tsar of Russia.

### **French Renaissance**

The most splendid period in the artistic history of Florene coincided with the long and painful convalescence of France from the havoc of the hundred years war against England. During these anxious years there was no French patronage of Italian genius and little sign of native artistic talent. It was not until the French invasion of Italy that the French became aware of the splendours of the Italian scene and got prepared for a reception of the Italian renaissance. Louis XI was a lucky king. His main rival the Charles, of Burgundy died without a male heir in 1477 and provinces like Burgundy, Picardy and Artois became part of the French Empire. Revis, the last King of Aix had the similar fate and the areas of Main and Anjou and the imperial freedom to Province became part of Royal France in 1480. Louis brought in a new type of statesmanship. He was a business king cast in a mould of Italian Renaissance Francis I succeeded to the French throne in 1515. He was a young brilliant and artistic. He was devoid of all scruples. Henry VIII of England felt towards him an intense personal jealousy which influenced his policy. Francis celebrated his accession to throne by a raid on Italy where he reconquered the duchy of Milan. During his reign the art of the flamish painters and sculptres spread westward through Burgundy into France and there existed a profound influence. As Flanders influenced France, so did France through the Burgundian dukes influenced Flanders. From the flemish the Italian borrowed the use of oil in painting.

### **German Renaissance**

The later half of the 15th century is marked in the history of Germany by a notable enlargement of culture, learning and education. The invention of German John Guttenburg in the art of typography brought revolution in the intellectual

activities of the mankind. Printing from metal types reached Italy in 1465, Paris in 1470, London in 1477, Stockholm in 1483 and Madrid in 1499. It is estimated that by the close of the century around nine million printed books were in existence. Printing was a German Art. Initially it brought more interest in the religious books but by the 16th century, the Printed material acted as an instrument of liberating critical movements of thought. The essential virtue of Germany lay in the thousands of gifted and ingenious town workers, who built Gothic churches and Cathedrals, developed the musical instrument. 'The organ' wrought carvers and sculptors in stone, wood and bronze and by their engravings, paintings and metal work secured a brilliant reputation. The drawings and engravings of Albert Durer were monumental. Nuremberg was the Florence of Germany in the 15th Century. With the coming of the Reformation an ill wind began to blow upon the sculptors and painters. It turned the minds of the German people to religion and social anarchy.

Luther's hymns pointed a new way. The Germans gave themselves to music and throughout the 16th century they led Europe in this art. German painters, early influenced by the Italians, also came under Flemish influence and turned to naturalism and technical mastery while taste of their Patrons directed them to realistic portraiture. Holbein was known for his portraits but also as a designer of Jewellery, glass windows and embroidery.

### **Spanish Renaissance**

Iberian art of the period centered around the figure of EL Greco, a Greek, who studied in Venice before he came to paint fervently Catholic Spain. The Spanish had lived through a half-century of religious wars and persecutions when to a great relief, EL Greco flourished there.

The drama in Spanish literature achieved a distinct place. Over two thousand works of the prolific Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega were free from Italian influences. Both his comedies and religious plays depicted the everyday life of his Countrymen and appealed strongly to all classes of people. Cervante's satires not always gentle, is directed at the pageant of Spanish life in his day. Don Quixote is the story of a quaint and woeful knight who pines for the old days before the introduction of the Gunpowder and the decline of chivalry. His Squire Sancho Panza is a prosaic peasant.

### **English Renaissance**

William Caxton, a London trader brought over a press from the Netherlands, in 1476, and set it up at Westminster and his services to English thought were immense. He not only printed Latin classics but also did a long series of translations of notable works into English. In 1488, Thomas Linacre (1410-1524) came back from Italy fired with enthusiasm for learning of the Greeks, and on the basis of Greek

learning started in England the scientific study of medicine. Grocyn, his friend, made Oxford, the center for Greek studies.

The English renaissance was for less brilliant in its artistic achievement. The only great painter working in England was the German Holbein. One of the earliest writings in England in the 16th century were of Thomas Moore, a young noble lawyer. 'Utopia' his classic was an attempt at criticism of political and social ills and a glowing picture of an imaginery world, It was a dream of the future. He hated religious bitterness and persecution. He felt that religion ought to be the teacher of mercy and love. Moore was a personal friend of Henry VIII-essentially a man a renaissance.

### **Renaissance in General**

The brilliant achievements of the age had their dark shadows too. The gravest among them was a relaxation of moral standards, a sort of moral anarchy. This was the natural result of the sudden casting off the old restraints and the old ideals of conduct, of the worship of human individuality and of the claim that every man had a right to develop his own personality unrestrained, According to Cellini, a typical Italian Renaissance artist, no apology was necessary for vices in which one was led by his own self-will. Henry VIII and Cromwell were typical example of Renaissance.

The disregard of moral restraints and the passionate egoism found its most unhappy expression in the sphere of politics. The record of petty italian Princes were full of incredible instances of ruthless non-moral cunning and cruelty in pursuit of power. Rulers regarded themselves as totally exempted from morality. The ideal Princes had been projected very well in Machiavelli 'Prince' a classic of the age.

The whole theme of the book was based on the idea that morality has no bearing on politics. Even kings like Frances I of France and Ferdinand of Aragoan were examples of new morality. Infact, the age of absolute monarchy had set in. Monarchs were refusing to admit the right of any one to control or criticise their actions.

In politics, renaissance was a reaction against the ideas of the middle ages. The belief in the middle ages held the theory that there must be some power in the world charged with the duty of enforcing the moral law of God upon all princes. This was theoretically used by the Popes But the rulers of renaissance repudiated it.

The ambition of every active sovereign of the Renaissance period (Spain, France and England) was to strengthen in every way the authority centred about his person. The king confirmed his position as court of final appeal and head of the national system of justice. He multiplied the official who looked after the royal interests in the Provinces and build up a royal administration. He increased his income by subsidies from the towns and with his enlarged means. As a result of this political evolution, before the close of the Renaissance, the kings of Spain, France and

England had acquired a formidable structure. They had acquired a centralized organisation undreamed of by their medieval predecessors.

After the reformation, the popes were in no position to impose their authority on the rulers.

### **Invention & Science**

During the middle ages people moved mostly for performing pilgrimages and for a lesser extent for purposes of trade. With the coming of Renaissance the immobility ended. However, mobility operated so languidly that its effects made themselves felt only gradually.

The invention of gunpowder in the 14th century was another memorable event. It was gradually put to use in warfare. It did not greatly affect the military tactics till the 15th century. Thus before gunpowder could revolutionize warfare, it was necessary to provide musket and artillery. The appearance of these weapons set important political and social changes in motion. The moated castle and the valour of the knight was replaced by the musket-wielder. The loss of the feudal lord or Baron was the gain of the overlord i.e. the king Feudalism declined and gave birth to many absolute monarchies.

There was a sea change in Geographical extent of the world. The Greek merchants and Sea Captains had added and enlarged man's knowledge of the new lands and countries. The Spanish and Portugeses discoveries of the earth demanded the enlargement and redrawing of maps. This brought to the forefront the importance of Cartographers for preparing new maps showing new details in them.

In the middle ages, the traders, especially of Italy, began to undertake the sea voyages which ended in their becoming thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the mediteranean basin. They hesitated to advance beyond the great middle sea, which was their immediate domain. In these circumstances the exploration of the Atlantic ocean left to the lot of the States bordering the Atlantic ocean. The lead was taken by Portugal.

In the first half of the 15th century a brother of the king of Portugal, Prince Henry known as 'Henry the Navigator' took up the idea of exploring the nearby coast of Africa. Its inhabitants were Mohammandans and pirates who had aversion for the portuguese. The first reward of the Prince's efforts was the discovery of the isles of Azores and Maderia. The Prince died in 1460 but his mariners had penetrated almost the Equator. By 1486 Bartholomew Diaz succeeded in rounding the Southern most point of the African continent named cape of Good Hope. In 1498, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, Vasco-De-Gama Sailed in to the Indian ocean and touched Calicut in India. With this voyage, the portugese were enable to acquire spices, silks and other luxuries of the orient.

The discoveries inaugurated by "Prince Henry, the Navigator", aroused the



emulations of all the maritime world or Europe. Columbus, a native of Genoa, secured the financial support of Queen Isabella of Castile and sailed from Palos, a part of Western Spain. Instead of touching Indies his goal, he landed in the Bahamas Islands and touched the Island of Cuba and Haiti. He thought he had touched Indies, that is why he called the people of these Islands as Indians. On his fourth voyage he sighted the American mainland. These starting discoveries did not remain passion for spainiards and portugese alone. In 1497, John Cabot, a venetian in the court of Henry VIII of England, reached cape Breton Island off the Coast of the North America. These new discoveries were promptly utilized for the purposes of trade. But Portugal and Spain out of religious zeal undertook to christianize the new regions and to settle them with colonist from the home lands. They thus committed themselves to the policy of Europeanization of the newly discovered lands.

One of the most successfully cultivated field of the Greek was Astronomy. The Ptolemaic system was challenged in the Renaissance period. The challange came from a citizen of Poland named 'Copernicus (1473-1513)'. He prepounded a revised astronomy with two outstanding propositions. The first was that not the earth but the Sun was the centre of the Planetary system. This was known as his 'Heliocentric Theory'. The second preposition was that instead of being stationary, the Earth not only revolved around the sun in course of a year but it also revolved once every twenty four hours about its own axis.

These new researches of Copernicus were not known to people immediately. He had a fear that he would be punished by church as a heretic since the Ptolemaic theory had the acceptance to the church. He hesitated to challenge the old established concept. It was only in the year of his death. i.e., 1543, that this new theory was made known to the people of Europe.

### **Rise of Capitalism**

Renaissance was also responsible for forstering a new form of economic organisation Earlier the economic life had centred around the manor grew was the economic conterpart of feudalism. Later the guild system which up more particularly in the manors which had grown into the towns. Each guild enjoyed monopoly for its particular product within the limits of the town government (feudal lord, the Church or the king). The guilds assumed the obligations to furnish the consumers proper articles at a fair price. Owing to the prevailing Christian system of Ethics and the system of elimination of middle man, the guild system was finding it difficult to cope with the new commercial situation of enlarged markets. The development of export trade also made guilds ineffective. Although the foreign trade involved lot of risks, yet the profits were correspondingly large. Larger markets required more output. More output, needed capital. This gave rise to a new class in society 'the merchants', who provided capital, either his own or by borrowing it. He towered head and shoulders over the rest of the community. Later, the merchants organised

themselves into companies raised larger amount of funds to increase profit. The risks could also be spread over a larger number of subscribers of capital. Risks particularly in foreign trade were very great.

The early trading companies, without exception almost, did the business of Banking. The Medici Bank of Italy by the second half of the 15th century had operated a branch established in every important centre of Europe. On the strength of its money power, the family gradually became a part of the Florence Government and finally the Medici family emerged as the ruler of the city and later became the Dukes of Tuscany ruling over a stretch of territory.

Though capitalism originated in the export trade, it was not long before it invaded and overwhelmed the inherited guild economy. The exporters with connections in every market and commanding ample resources could buy the raw material much more cheaply than the local guild. Thus the export merchant brought the guild under their control. The decline of the guild signified an economic revolution which was bound to crowd out the socialist's guild entirely from the scene by establishing a competitive capitalist order of society. This was a momentous development as it harmonized with all the other forces abroad in the Renaissance.

**Suggested Readings :**

1. Cheyney, E.P., *The Dawn of a New Era*, N. York, 1936.
2. Grant, A.J., *History of Europe, 1494-1610*, London, 1938.
3. Hudson, W.H., *The Story of Renaissance*, N. York, 1924.
4. Lucas, H.S., *The Renaissance and Reformation*, N. York, 1934.
5. Schevil, F.A., *History of Europe*, N.York, 1946.
6. Muir, R., *A Short History of British Commonwealth*, London, 1961.

---

**LESSON NO. 1.2**

---

**REFORMATION**

The Reformation was the 16th century religious movement directed to the rejection of reform through modification of much of the doctrines or practices of the Roman Catholic Church of Rome. It led ultimately to the establishment of the reformed or Protestant Churches central and North Western Europe.

Many evils crept in the principles and practice of the Roman Catholic Church through the course of centuries of its existence. These had been questioned by intelligent and pious persons from time to time but without success. The Church had grown more and more venal and corrupt. The clergy had become more and more wordly. Learning and piety was rare among them. Sale of Church offices had acquired scandalous proportions. The sale of pardons to the sinners even long dead by the church to fill the coffers of the Pope was widely criticised and ridiculed. The Practice of claiming 'the benefit of clergy' by which a member of the clerical order could escape trial in King's Court was till invogue at least in the case of the high officials of the Church.

The doctrine of 'Papal Supremacy' was an irritant and much resented by the Kings who were growing powerful.

The middle ages were so thoroughly dominated by the Church that its head, Pope, was able to proclaim the theory that since all power came from God and he himself was God's Earthly Vicar, all government civil as well as ecclesiastical rights vested in his person. Although the doctrine of papal supremacy never enjoyed general acceptance yet no European monarch made efforts to assert his independence.

Donald Sach said "a revolution does not arise without provocations and a wide spread reaction to them." In the case of reformation, the feeling of revolt on the surface against the Roman Catholic Church in Western Europe had been simmering for long. People Like Valla, Frasmus and Von' Hutten and exposed the vulnerable points of the Church, and the ground for a change to take place.

**Causes**

During Renaissance powerful monarchies developed in France, Spain and England. They undertook to challenge the papal authority exercised within their boundaries. In each stance, they scored successes. In France, King Charles VII issued in 1438 a royal ordinance known as 'Pragmatic Sanction' by which the French King got the

right of nominating French Bishops and Abbots in his kingdom. In Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella in 1482, also acquired the right of nomination Bishops and forbade all appeals from the religious courts of Spain to Rome. In England also through various measures since the mid fourteenth century, the English clerical appeals were not taken to Rome. But the 'act of Praemunire' in the reign of Richard II, any one guilty of doing so could be prosecuted. These monarchies helped to bring about new attitudes. Many nobles, lowly soldiers and middle class patriots who followed their country's fortunes through numerous wars began to think that their kings were as much entitled to their loyalty as their Church.

In addition to this the merchant, the banker, the sea Captain or the Joint stock holder who now had a vested interest in the growth of the overseas empires could not help feeling greater sympathy with his king than with the Church. Thus whether they wished to strengthen the king or to weaken him, various groups in society had begun to question the place of the Church in the political structure.

The demand for reform was not, however, confined to any particular section, it was widespread for various reasons. It was the Church as an institution that was criticised. Some of the church ceremonies and rituals struck the critics as becoming more and more formal and empty of content and inspiration. Many people, especially the humanists, felt that the Church was not keeping pace with intellectual developments. Middle classes felt that many Churchmen were much behind the times. Both kings and townsmen regarded with envy the steady stream of 'Peter's pence,' tithes, annates, and other religious taxes and the payments for confirmations, dispensations, marriages, penances and other religious gifts that swelled the coffer of the Church. The lowly placed peasantry especially in Germany, had the impression that the Church supports the oppression on them by siding with the feudal lords.

It was felt that the universal, unified and dominant Church was an anachronism in a world turning towards sovereign nations, cultural diversity and religious pluralism. The spirit of the middle ages was one of a single faith, resistance to innovation and devotion to traditional institutions like the Church, the guild and the feudal order. The conflict was inevitable. The individuals became less fearful of innovation. He was ready to listen to searching questions even in the religious sphere. The public mind recoiled from the discipline of the past. Old limitations upon thought and learning fell away. The layman could now read for himself. He could learn Greek and even Hebrew. He could reach his God without the intermediacy of a priest.

Those who were formed by doubts were clergy men themselves. They not only strengthened the forces favouring change but also revealed internal weakness among the forces resisting change. The Church had been able in the past to weather storms and protests led by heretics like John Wycliff (1320-1384) and John

Huss (1373-1415). Now however, it was not only facing a stronger opposition from without but it was also weaker within. The revolt began in Germany led by a German

### **Martin Luther**

Martin Luther was born in November 10, 1483, in a village of Thuangia at the foot of the Harz Mountains. His family was of peasant origin. He had his early education in his village and later on was sent to the university of 'Erfurt', in his youth, he had accepted unquestionable the doctrines and practices of the Church. He finally became a monk. He was diligent in the observance of the Church's teachings. When the Elector of Saxony in 1509 established a university at wittenberg he was appointed professor of theology on the recommendations of the vicar general. In 1512, he visited Rome and felt deeply disturbed with the wickedness prevailing there.

### **Sale of Indulgences**

The unpremeditated revolt of Martin Luther was a protest against the sale of indulgences to raise money for the completion of St. Peter's Church in Rome. In 1517, Tetzel, a dominiean friar appeared in Saxony for their sale. An indulgence was an ecclesiastical promise of remission of the whole or part of the penalty that the must undergo in purgatory on account of its sins. Rightly or wrongly, the Germans had come to suspected that indulgences were a financial device to minister the scandalous luxury of the Roman Court. Luther's revolt against Tetzel was not against the indulgence but against his fraudulently telling people that his certificate would remit not only the penalty but the sin itself. Even the princes did not approve of so much money being sent out of the country. But none of them ventured to incur the anger of the pope by forbidding his agents.

In 1517, Luther gave notice of his intention to protest against the indulgences. He nailed on the Church door a paper containing ninety-five statements on the subject including assertions that indulgences bought and sold were valueless, because the penalties of sin were not be evaded by the payment of money. Pardon of sin was only to be obtained by repentance and faith in God. This act of Luther had a tremendous outcome. His thesis sounded an antipapal note. The soil was germane to the seed as an antipapal sentiment.

The immediate effect of the Luther's action was that the sale of indulgences fell low. Though Leo X, the Pope, initially considered Luther's protest as a squabble among monks, yet dangerous dimensions were realized later on. A papal Bull (order) was ordered against Luther. He was declared heretic and given two months to recant or to be excommunicated. Luther met the challenge with a dramatic counter blast in 1520. He consigned the 'Papal' Bull to the flames amid the applauding audience of wittenberg. The breach with the Poper was complete. He discribed the Pope as antichrist. Choosing sides became a test for the German people.

**Diet of Worms-1520**

In 1520 Charles V, the emperor of Germany, while touring the low countries summoned Luther and the Diet to the city of worms on the Rhine. The young king was well aware that a large section of the German princes and people either secretly or openly are Luther's, supporters. To condemn him unheard might bring on civil war. A public trial was ordered to the question, "would he recant the heresies" the king asked ? Luther replied "My conscience is taken captive by God's Word, and I neither can nor will revoke anything seeing. Seeing that it is not safe or right to act against conscience', God help me. Amen." He was allowed to depart because a safe conduct had been promised to him. But his friends kidnapped him and placed him safely in one of the castles of his protector, the Elector of Saxony at wartburg. On May 6, 1521. King Charles published the 'Edict of Worms' which pronounced the ban of the empire against the heretic and declared him an outlaw. King Charles at that stage never wanted to annoy the Pope Leo X as he wanted his help in his design against France and the reconquest of Milan. The King remained away from Germany for a decade and the people of Germany regarded Luther as a messenger straight from heaven. The hostile decree remained a dead letter.

**Lutherian Movement**

The Lutheran movement spread rapidly among all ranks of people. Many of the German Princes responded to Luther's direct appeal. As soon as a Prince went over to the new faith, his first act would be to appropriate the monastic and other ecclesiastical property. Thereby greatly increasing his revenues and adding to his importance. The allurements of huge big Church lands to the Princes was a determining factor in their Conversion.

**Reforms**

The changes carried through reforms belonged more particularly to the realms of doctrine and worship. On the monasteries being seized by the state, the monks and nuns resumed their civil condition and in many instances Luther himself set an example by marrying Catherine Von Bora (1525), a former Nun. Many medieval practices which fell under the head of 'works' were formally condemned and abandoned. Outstanding among them were pilgrimages to holy shrines, adoration of the virgin and the saints and of course indulgences.

A new religious service in Germany was adopted. The pope and the ecclesiastical hierarchy had no place in the reformed faith. Control of the Church was within the hands of the Princes. The sacred practices were reduced from seven to three—baptism, marriage and communion.

King Charles held a meeting of the Reichstag (German Parliament) at Speyer. In it after hot discussions he conceded to Princes and free cities the right to choose their own faith. It was a qualified recognition of the new Lutheran Church. Three

years later, i.e. 1529 Charles had reconciled with the Pope and he convened a meeting of the Reichstag at Speyer and revoked the concession of 1526. Lutheranism was thus again outlawed. It was now apparent that the decade of Liberty enjoyed by the Lutherans had stiffened their resolution. At the risk of incurring the emperor's displeasure they drew up a document where they took precedence over their duty to their earthly overlord. Because of this protest the followers of Luthernism tended to subordinate the Church to the local rulers.

### **Turkish Invasion**

Just as a religious war seemed unavoidable the Turks had built up a huge empire after taking over Constantinople (1453). They were making efforts to win West Europe up to Danube and by 1529 had appeared near Vienna. But the tough resistance given by the natives of Austria repulsed their attack. After two years again Sultan Solyman attacked Vienna but the whole of German people spontaneously acted against them and the King Charles prudently decided to have a truce with the Lutheran Church. The united faith of Germany headed by Charles defeated the Turks.

By 1545, Charles had triumphed over all his obstacles and Pope Paul III accepting the inevitable, convened a council at the city of Trent. But, it was too late, Protestants had completely broken with their past and were no longer to go back to the Roman Church. Charles resolved to settle the issue in the battlefield. But just before the hostilities had started, Luther died in 1546. Some years after their leader's death, the Protestants found themselves at war with Charles, but in 1555 shortly before the emperor's abdication. It was agreed that the religion of every German State should be settled by its Prince. Thus the empire came to be almost equally divided, Catholic in the South and Protestants in the North.

### **Reform Movement in Switzerland**

Almost simultaneously with the Lutheran revolt in Germany, a Swiss reformer named Ulrich Zwingli inaugurated in the town of Zurich a movement that was parallel to the movement in many ways. Zwingli was a cleric. He criticised the Pope and the abuses of the Church and ended up by breaking away from Rome in theology and in organisation. Zwingli delivered a concept of salvation by faith similar to that of Luther. He differed from the Catholics on the ceremony of "communion". While Catholics taught that the holy bread and wine actually became blood and body of the Jesus, Zwingli regarded the rite as purely symbolic, commemorating the last supper of Jesus. In Switzerland, the republican ideals and cantonal machinery already prevailing in politics were adopted by Zwingli to the organisation of his church. While operating under the civil authorities, the Zwinglian church in each locality was self-governing. He reverted to the medieval Christian idea of church and state united in a single religion, Zwingli denounced fasting in Lent, the celibacy of clergy,

monastic vows, the use of latin in the church services and the doctrine of the real presence. By 1529, six of the thirteen cantons and some few in Southern Germany were captured for Zwinglian reform.

The attempt known as the 'Marburg Colloguy' to bring the two protestant movements together against the common catholic foe was unsuccessful. They were able to agree upon most matters but not one the nature of the communion. As a result Zwingli's movement, is retained its influence in Switzerland, never became deeply rooted elsewhere. Civil war eventually broke out between Zurich and the neighbouring catholic cantons and Zwingli attending the Zurich forces as chaplain, was killed in the battle. Zwingli's adherents were eventually absorbed in the more powerful calvinist movement.

### **Calvinism**

John Calvin was born in France in 1509. He was intended for the Priesthood-Suspected of heresy, he left France and lived for a time at Basel, where he produced a book called 'The Institutes'. In it he set forth his ideas of Christianity and Christian church. In 1536, he was invited to live at Geneva a small independent city of Switzerland. There he was able to put his ideas into force. He proved to be so strict with the Genevans that he was exiled in 1538. But disorder broke out in his absence. He was asked to return in 1541. He virtually ruled the city till his death i.e. 1564.

His system was very severe, every citizen was compelled to belong to the church of Geneva and to obey its rules. The lines of the people were strictly regulated, even the cut and colour and material of their clothes being prescribed. Many positives were forbidden. Few religious ceremonies were permitted places of worship were made as plain as possible. Calvin persecuted and severely punished those who disagreed with his system and his doctrine in this respect imitating the practice of the Roman Church. The theatres were closed and taverns were closely watched. Violators were banished.

Efforts were made to unite together the Lutherians, Zwinglis and Calvinists. The followers of Zwingli acquiesced (accepted) and united with the Calvinists to establish single Protestant church in Switzerland and Calvin accepted the Augsburg confession. But after Luther's death, the lutherians rejected all compromise on his interpretation of communion and so perpetuated the division.

### **Puritans**

Had his influence been limited to Geneva he would have been hardly worthy of mention. But Geneva was open to reformers who were compelled to fly from persecution in other countries. Some men became Calvinists upon coming to Geneva and when it was possible for them to return to their native land they spread calvin's views. Many Englishmen fled to Geneva in the days of Marry



Todor. When Elizabeth came to the throne they comeback and formed a calvinistic group known as *Puritans*. They were also to be found in many other countries like France, Netherlands, Scotland, Holy Roman Empire and later on in North America Calvin's influence on the world was for greater then that of Luther, whose doctrine scarcely spread outside the empire, except into the scandanavian Peninsula and Denmark.

### **Reformation in England**

The Christian church had existed in England since the latter part of the 6th century. The church was co-extensive with the nation. The king of England was the head of the nation as well as the head of the church.

In the year 1213, however, king John who was engaged in a bitter dispute with the church submitted abjectly. He accepted to the Pope's Vassal. For more than three centuries the Pope's were the masters of the English Church. It was only in the times of Henry VIII that the Papal authority was abolished.

Henry VIII who came to the throne of England in 1509 was an accomplished specimen of a young Renaissance prince. Soon after he married his brother Arthur's widow, Catherine of Aragon, who was six years senior in age. A dispensation from Pope Julius II had sanctioned this union with a widow. Catherine bore him no male heir to the throne and only a sickly daughter, Mary survived the infancy, Meanwhile Henry VIII developed fancy for another women Anne Boylen.

In the early part of his reign. Henry VIII had little sympathy for the Reformation. He was deeply interested in theology. He even wrote a treatise in 1521 in refutation to further leading to the Pope bestowing on him the title of 'defender of faith'. He was a champion of the Papal camp. During the period of Henry VIII, Lutherism was however, not unknown to England. It was often discussed in circles of nobles and the clergies at that time, Luther's writings and his sect frequently formed the subject of a exchange of views. But yet interest in it was only academic.

The new commercial class (Business Class) had also begun to challenge the credentials of the old, wealthy and domineering church. They grudged the privileges and envied the passions of the priest. They were indignant that the clergy should be immune from the criminal jurisdiction of law courts and the layman should be subject to the criminal jurisdiction of the church. These complaints were passionaly ventilated in the Parliament in 1515.

The reformation in England was inflamed by wide spread social bitterness. There were certain things which the English people could not stand. Over and excessive taxation was one, war with Netherlands, which would run in the wool trade was another. The times were of great economic disturbances, poor were becoming poorer and the rich richer. Debate on religion however was not too much concern to them as yet. The conversion of farm land into meadows for grazing sheep was

throwing people out of employment and causing great distress. These social discounts never alarmed the king of the possibility of an organised uprising.

The incident that precipitated the break with Rome grew out of the private ambitions of Henry VIII. He wanted Cardinal Woolsey his Chancellor confidant in 1527 to ask Pope Clement VIII to annul his marriage of Catherine of Spain. He can do it on the plea that the marriage with widow of his brother was sinful from the beginning, that Pope's special dispensation could not legitimise it. He wanted the Pope to cancel his predecessor's dispensation and render the marriage null and void. The pontiff hesitated to comply, partly from conscientious scruples, but largely because he did not dare offend the powerful Charles I, who was head of the Spanish house. He stood by his aunt, Catherine, the British Queen. The Pope would examine and not pronounce. In 1529 Pope sent Cardinal Campeggio to England to form with Cardinal Woolsey the legatine court to ascertain the facts. The cardinals were instructed to delay and then the cases were suddenly transferred to Rome. King Henry got furious with this action of the Pope. He showed his displeasure in arresting Cardinal Woolsey and stripping him of his powers. Henry resolved to repudiate the Pope and make the English church subordinate to the king. An assembly of the English clergy was convened in 1531, which passed a decree announcing Henry VIII to be the head of the English church. In 1532, parliament was convened (It had not been called for the last 14 years) and the Act of Annates was passed. This forbade the payment to Rome of the first fruits,<sup>1</sup> which was the chief source of revenue to the Pope, when the Pope did not budge in 1533, the ban was put on for putting any religious case in the court of the Pope. John Cranmer was made the Archbishop of the Canterbury, who three months later, pronounced Henry VIII's divorce with Catherine of Aragon in his court. Henry married Anne Boleyn and made her the queen in 1533.

Pope excommunicated<sup>2</sup> Henry VIII. But Henry was prepared for this. In 1534, the British Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy by which the last traces of connection with Rome were removed.

The English Church was thus made subordinate to the king. Sir Thomas Moore, the humanist opposed the king's actions. He was convicted of treason and was executed. The King abolished the monasteries. In 1539, parliament formally approved the liquidation of the monasteries. By that time Anne Boleyn had been beheaded for unfaithfulness to Henry. Her daughter Elizabeth had been declared illegitimate and the king married again Jane Seymour.

- 
1. The first fruit meant the offerings of the church of the first year were given to the Pope of Rome out of reverence for the appointment in the church.
  2. It means that Pope put Henry VIII from the communion of the church.

### **Anglican Church**

Henry did not go beyond these essential political moves. All the main tenets of the catholic doctrine were reaffirmed in the six articles passed by the parliament. The catholic rituals were retained in the English churches. The Anglican church was neither catholic nor Protestant and yet partake of both the creeds. A general revision of the service book was ordered and the litany sanctioned in 1545. The "Great Bible" was already by royal order placed in the churches and made accessible to all. It must be clearly understood that Henry did not become a protestant he had been brought up in catholic faith and held it on to it to the end of his life. No change in the religion was made only the break up with Rome was there. This hardly effected the commoner. Henry died in 1547 and was succeeded by Edward VI. The Church as established by law in England, was catholic in doctrine but Protestant in government.

### **The Huguenots in France**

In every country where reformation took place it was closely associated with politics. In France, the reformation was of a different nature. The catholic church of France was not regarded as hostile and anti-national institution. The relations of the French king and the Pope were very cordial. In France the movement was against the king, who since 1516 had controlled the state as well as the church. The concordat<sup>1</sup> of 1516 had been dissastrous. It gave the king the right of appointment of Bishops, abbots and other patronage in the religious matters. This act corrupted the hierarchy. The king started appointing people of his choice and even appointed foreigners to Bishoprics. They never saw their dioceses (church). Some abbays were given to youthful people, who spent their revenues in debauchries and pleasure making. The discipline of the church as a whole became laxed. Drunkenness and concubinage abounded. Morality was very low. The need for reform was evident and insistant.

The efforts of Jacques Lefevre and his pupil Guillame Briconnet initiated a practical agitation for reform of the church from within. However, Calvinism also had its moorings in France. Its system of theology, worship and government appealed strongly to the french mind. But what commended it most was its militant republicanism. It was the 'creed of rebels'. After 1536, the political movement became very powerful and hence a menance both to catholicism and the monarchy. The French Calvinist were commonly known as 'Huguenots' or Associates. Their growth seriously alarmed both Francis I and his successor Henry II. In 1540 resolute attempt was made to suppress heresay of all sorts. Burning becamess frequent but brought no relief.

- 
1. Concordat is an agreement between the Pope and the king regarding religious matters.
  2. Oppression on Huguenots, particularly after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, (1572) drew a large number of Britain and other countries. Their follower belonged to the skilled class of artisans.

It is stated that between 1559-69 no fewer than two thousand Huguenots churches were founded. The break away schism to be well organised. They flourished due to their diligence.<sup>2</sup> While France suffered by their departure, other countries became seats of new crafts because of their skill.

### **Suggested Readings**

1. F Schevill, *A History of Europe*, London, 1948.
2. L. Gotrsckalk D. Laco, *The Rise of Modern Europe*, (Bombay, 1962 ID., ED.)
3. F. H. Carter, R.A.F. Mears, *A History of Britain*, (Delhi 1977).
4. J. Clapham, *A Concise Economic History of Britain*.
5. G. W. Southgate, *A Text Book of Modern English History* (London, 1960).

---

**LESSON NO. 1.3**

---

**CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

**Introduction :** Conspicuous features of political condition of Europe during the Ancient or Old Regime in almost all the European countries were arbitrary governments, social and economic inequalities, absence of religious freedom, and the emergence of the middle class of businessmen, doctors, lawyers, professors and scholars. The new middle class condemned the above mentioned abuses and demanded equal rights and equal privileges for all. These evils were so obvious in various European countries in the 18th century that these prompted benevolent despots like Frederick the Great of Catherine II and Joseph to introduce reforms from above before the French tried it from below. However on the whole these enlightened or benevolent despots accomplished no great permanent success. Hence the Old regime in Europe was to be brought down by a revolution which was brewing in France. Commenting on the inherent defects of the old Regime, Archbishop Fenelon had anticipated that the old machine would collapse with the first impact of the storm. Similarly Lord Chesterfield also declared in 1753 that he could perceive all the signs of the coming Revolution. This Revolution occurred in France in 1789. In order to understand the French Revolution, it is necessary to first analyse the conditions and institutions of France out of which it grew. These in other words mean a discussion of the political, social, intellectual and financial causes of this great revolution.

**Political Causes**

The period of two hundred of Old Regime preceeding the outbreak of the French Revolution saw the magnificent growth and deplorable decline of the governmental institution in France. These years also tell us the history of two centuries of Bourbon rule in France from the accession of Henry IV in 1589 to the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 during the reign of Louis XVI.

**France under the First Bourbon and the Incompetent Successors of Louis XIV :** Henry IV (1589-1610) the first King of the Bourbon dynasty was courageous and enlightened. He ended the disorders of the 16th century. Under his wise and firm rule France gained such a prestige in Europe as she did not have since the 13th century. At the end of the rule of his successor Louis XIII (1610-1643), royal authority had been further strengthened in France.

Louis XIV (1643-1715) who succeeded Louis XIII was probably the ablest of the Bourbon kings. He had built up the most efficient bureaucracy, the most astute diplomatic staff and the largest and the best equipped and well organised army in Europe since the days of the Roman Empire. He was so sincere to his country that he did not hesitate pointing at his own faults. Late in his life he confessed that he had loved war and glory too much and had turned France bankrupt. He advised his great grandson and successor Louis XV to refrain from war and establish peace. Louis XV (1715 - 1774), who was only a child of five at the time of his succession, proved an extremely incapable ruler. He was so busy with his mistresses, hunting and gambling that he hardly had time for matters of the state. He lavishly squandered wealth among his mistresses and parasitical countries. He cut off himself and his administration from France.. There was utter confusion in the administration of the country and his financial situation became grave. Louis XV used to say, 'After me the deluge.' He died in 1774. To his successor he handed down a heritage of military defeat, financial embarrassment, government inefficiency and intellectual resistance to the existing political and social institutions.

Louis XVI succeeded Louis XV and was the head of the state from 1774 to 1793. He was lazy and incompetent. When he became the King of France, the situation in the country was really serious, fundamental change had become necessary, but Louis XVI hesitated and failed to take up steps in the right direction and was eventually uprooted by the storm that followed.

Political institutions of France had also become either obsolete or corrupt as will be obvious from the following paragraphs :

**Divine Right of the King :** At the apex of the Ancient Regime was the king. He was the glittering head of the state and ruled by divine right, not by the consent of the people. As such he regarded himself responsible to God alone. Consequently, in actual practice he was subject to no earthly control. He enacted all laws, imposed taxes and spent them the way he liked. He declared war, concluded peace and made alliances according to his own wishes and whims. In short he was king the state.

**Bad influence or Marie Antoinette :** Born in 1755, Marie Antoinette was the daughter of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria and her marriage to Louis XVI was solemnised to strengthen the ties of friendship between Austria and France but from the very beginning the French hated her. She was regarded a living symbol of the humiliation of France in the Seven Years War (1757-63). She had no feelings for France. Although she was gifted with a strong determination, Ability to take prompt decisions and initiative and privy to undertake new experiments but she lacked political experience and training. She was extravagant and wasted a huge amount of national wealth in giving presents to her friends but inspite of these flaws in her

character she exercised profound influence on the King. To the misfortune of France as well as her own she had identified her interests with a group of self-seeking nobles who wanted to exploit the contemporary situation for personal gains, and were against change of any sort. It was for this reason that her interference in the matters of state proved to be disastrous for France.

**The lavishness of the Court :** Though the capital of France was Paris but the King lives twelve miles away amidst the splendours of Versailles. His court was so glamorous that it became a wonder of Europe. Two thousand courtiers, the privileged sons of the state, were engaged in life of perpetual round of pleasure. They surrounded King's person and constantly solicited and got rich favours from the lavish throne.

The king, the queen, the royal children, King's brothers, sisters and aunts, and their separate establishments in the spacious palace. There were five hundred servants to attend upon the queen alone. Similarly there was a large number of retainers to look after each member of the royal family. Thus their total number ran into thousands. There were nineteen hundred horses and two hundred carriages in the royal stables with an annual maintenance cost of around four million dollars. Similarly the annual cost of the royal mess ran into one and a half million dollars approximately. In short, total expenditure on the extravagant court stood in 1789 as high as twenty million dollars. It caused no surprise that it was disdainfully called by the French as nation's grave.

**Inefficient Government :** The Government of France was in a bad shape. It was complicated, vaguely defined, inefficient and a glaring example of mismanagement. There were five councils which assisted the king. They made laws and issued orders.

For provincial administration, France was divided into forty departments or provinces but the administrative set up in these provinces was neither uniform nor simple. Each province was in the charge of a governor who belonged to higher nobility and drew a fat salary. He did little governing and could do no more because he stayed at Versailles soliciting and obtaining King's favours.

The real work of provincial administration was carried through thirty-six generalities or the civil administrative districts (provinces) into which France was divided. Each was under the charge of an Intendant appointed by the King. Intendants generally came from the middle class or bourgeois, and unlike the provincial governors they were accustomed to work. They implemented in their respective districts the royal orders which came from the capital, and sent their reports also to the central government. In the actual practice they had unlimited powers and therefore the happiness of the people largely depended upon them but were unpopular with the people. This fact clearly proves that they did not concern

themselves with the welfare of the people. On the contrary they were the submissive agents of the corrupt central government.

Another disappointing feature of the provincial administration was the absence of local self-government. Decisions on small local matters like the repairing of a small bridge situated hundreds of miles away from Paris, were taken in the capital after a long interval in delay.

However in spite of such a centralised government where all powers rested with the King, it would be wrong to think that France was unified. Reality was far from it. Weights and measures differed from province to provinces and in certain cases from village to village. Likewise was the case of provincial tariffs. While there existed free trade in thirteen provinces of central France and goods moved freely from one province to the other in that area, in the remaining provinces goods passed through customs house and tariffs were levied as goods passed from one province to the other. Consequently prices of such commodities increased considerably when those reached other provinces, and to evade these duties many indulged in unlawful commercial activities.

**Confusion in Judicial Administration :** Similarly different civil laws which regulated the relations of individuals prevailed in various parts of the country, especially in northern France. These known as customary laws and were not written. To be more specific there were two hundred and eighty five different codes of customary laws. Even the written civil laws which prevailed in most of southern France, were of Roman origin and mostly written in Latin. So there were also not understood by common people. As a result there was confusion in judicial administration.

This confusion in judicial administration was due to another reason also. There were a number of parallel courts. Apart from the royal courts there existed feudal, church, municipal and revenue courts but there was not a single court of appeal in the entire country. Conflict of interest of the parallel courts and the facility of taking the cases from one court to another delayed justice.

Another reason was that the position of the judges was sold and bought for prestige and profit. The judges were rich and levied heavy fines to fill their coffers. They were given gifts and bribes. Thus justice was sold and bought, Punishments were inhuman and physical torture was inflicted to extort confession. Mutilation of limbs was in vogue. Capital punishment was given even for small crimes. Common people had no hope of justice as the nobles were exempt from the severe and insulting punishments. In short, the administration of justice was slow, costly, corrupt, arbitrary and thus hard to get.

**Unjust System of Taxation :** In the sphere of taxation also there was no uniformity. Taxes on goods differed from province to province which encouraged



smuggling. Again, taxes were not levied on all people. The nobles and clergy were exempt from most of them. Thus the burden of entire taxation fell on the third estate.

There were two types of taxes, direct and indirect. Direct taxes were imposed on real estate (land), personal property and incomes. The indirect taxes were much oppressive and were not called by the state officials but private individuals or companies known as farmers of taxes. They paid lump-sum to the government and themselves collected the taxes mercilessly from the people, and as much as they could. Many of the indirect taxes such as salt tax or gabelle were unjust as well. Trade in this essential commodity was not free but was the monopoly of private company which paid annually lump-sum to the state. In return, it was favoured by that unjust law which made it obligatory for every person over the age of seven to buy for domestic consumption seven pounds of salt annually irrespective of the fact whether he needed it or not. Even poor people who did not have money enough to buy bread, were given harsh punishment if they refused to buy the above mentioned quantity of salt.

Above all, there was no such principle as taxation by the will of the tax payers, Taxes were levied arbitrarily by the King. He could even increase the rate of taxation in secret meeting of the royal council.

### **Social Causes**

**Unjust Class Divisions :** The French society was divided into three estates or orders or classes. There were the clergy, the nobility and the third estate of the commoners. The first two were the privileged orders and the third an unprivileged class. In terms of numbers, the clergy numbered around one lakh and thirty thousand and nobility about one lakh and fourteen thousand out of a total population of twenty-five million.

**Privileges of the Clergy :** The clergy of the Roman Catholic Church formed the first order in France. Their privileges dated back to the medieval times. Since those times the church was supposed to have been the guardian of the souls of the people. It looked after their education, supported many hospitals and provided relief to individuals in distress through charity because there did not exist in France an organised poor relief by the state. In lieu of these services, clergymen had been given large estates and the Church owned probably a fifth of the land of France. On these lands it charged dues as feudal landlord. In addition, the church got a large income from tithe, religious courts, gifts, etc. Thus the total income of the Church stood around a hundred million dollars but this rich organisation was free from taxation. It only paid, from time to time, certain lump-sums to the treasury of France which were far less than there would have been, had the property and income of the Church been taxed at the same rate as levied on those of the commoners.

Such large income, had it been spent justly, might not have initiated criticism because many services performed by the Church were essential to the well-being of France but there existed gross favouritism and wanton extravagance in this organisation. It did not treat even its own junior staff (lower clergy) with any sense of justice. A very big portion of the income went to higher clergy which included one hundred thirty four bishops and archbishop a small number of abbots, canons and other dignitaries. In all they were not more than five or six thousand. These highly lucrative positions were monopolized by the younger sons of the nobility who were keen to accept the fat salaries but did not like to perform the duties. The morals of many of them were scandalous and their intellectual ability mediocre. They resided at the court and lived a gay and worldly life. Most of them were involved in the intrigues of Versailles.

On the other hand, the lower clergy comprising thousands of parish priests who did the actual work of spiritual consolation and instruction were poorly paid. With partly incomes of a few hundred francs they found it extremely difficult to keep their bodies and souls together. They belonged to the third estate. Their rich superiors who were the sons of nobility, treated them as plebeians. Consequently the lower clergy was disgruntled and bitter against their superiors. Thus the privileged order of the clergy was divided into two classes. The lower clergy came from among the commoners, experienced with the people their miseries, the injustice of the prevailing system and sympathised with their plans for its reform. The triumph of the popular cause in the early days of the French revolution was considerably rejoiced by the lower clergy who sided with the third estate against their ecclesiastical superior who supported absolute monarchy which had been lavish to them.

**Privileges of the Nobility :** Nobility formed the second privileged order, Among them there were two main classes, namely the nobility of the sword and the nobility of the robe. The nobility of the sword included old military nobles of feudal origin, while the nobility of the robe comprised the new judicial nobility which got its rank from judicial offices its members held.

The nobility of the sword can be further sub-divided into two groups, the nobles of the court and nobles the provinces. The nobles of the court numbered around one thousand. They lived in Versailles and danced attendance upon the King. They competed with each other securing appointments in the army; navy and diplomatic services, pensions and other gifts from the King. Since they themselves lived at the court so their estates were administered by the agents who were far more cruel than their masters and exacted all that they could from the peasantry who cultivated them. These nobles of the court lived in a luxurious style. They owned castles and to a large extent controlled trade and commerce also. They paid no direct taxes to the state and were also exempt from many indirect taxes. Everybody felt jealous of them.

The nobles of the Provinces numbered about one lakh. They enjoyed the same privileges as the nobles of the court but they did not live at the court, were not known to the king and consequently received no favour from him. However, they were aware that in purity of blood and decent they were the equals or superiors of those who surrounded the King in Versailles. Many of them had very small incomes with no prospects of increase; rather these were decreasing steadily. Their sons were trained for the army, the only noble profession but could not rise high because all big appointments went to the nobility of the court. They lived on their estates among peasants, in some cases could hardly be distinguished from them but they insisted upon maintaining the tradition of their class, life of leisure because to work was to lose class. So many of them expected cruelly the burdensome and irritating feudal dues which the peasants owed to them. It was only in few parts of France like Vendée and Brittany that they were sympathetic and helpful towards the peasantry and were in turn respected by them.

The entire class of nobles enjoyed the exclusive privilege of hunting which was considered the chief noble sport but the peasants it made more difficult the conditions of their already hard lives. They could not disturb the game even when it spoiled their crops.

From the above account of nobility, one important fact became obvious that the life of splendour was being lived by the nobles of the court only; the selfish and greedy minority. The provincial nobility like the lower clergy were themselves discontented with the prevailing system and wanted change and reforms at least up to a certain degree.

**The Grievances of the Third Estate :** The rest of the population comprised third estate. No one was not a noble or a clergyman in the third estate. Rich bankers, distinguished men of letters, artisans, poor belonged to the peasantry and beggars were all the members of the third order. The three chief divisions of this vast majority of people were the peasants, the bourgeoisie and the artisan. Now we will discuss their condition of their existence in detail.

**The Peasants :** By far the largest section of third estate constituted peasants. In fact it was the nation. Out of a total population of twenty five million of France, the Peasants numbered more than twenty million. However, around a million of them were serfs, the remaining were free men but conditions of their life were miserable. The burdens of the society fell on them with a crushing weight. They were subject to triple taxation; taxes to the King, to the nobility and to the clergy. The King claimed both direct and indirect taxes. The bulk of the King's income or state revenues was derived from them. According to a moderate estimate of Turgot fifty five percent of what the peasants earned was paid to the state. Nobles also claimed a number of dues. The peasants had to use Lord's oven, lord's wine press, slaughter house and paid for their use. They had to work on lord's estate three days a week

or in lieu of it they had to pay quit rent. On successive to his father's land, every peasant had to pay double rent to the lord. If he sold the land he paid share to the lord for the use of the roads and bridges. To the church they paid tithe. When we add what a peasant paid to the King the lord, the church, and as salt tax and excise duties the total comes to around four-fifths of his total income added to his misery. With the remaining one-fifth he had to maintain himself and his family.

The difficulties resulting from the uncertainty of the weather added to his misery. Whenever there was a bad harvest he faced starvation. For example, in 1788 the harvest was poor and the following winter was very severe. These cruel conditions of intolerable hunger forced lakhs of peasants to become beggars or brigands.

In Paris, out of its total population of six lakhs, around one lakh and twenty thousand became beggars. It was no surprise that there were enormous recruits for riots and violence. They had realized that if they wanted their lives to become tolerable, feudal dues must go and the excessive taxes of the state must be reduced.

**The Bourgeoisie :** The bourgeoisie or middle class had steadily emerged through the last two centuries. It consisted of all those who were not manual labourers. Thus rich merchants, bankers, manufacturers, lawyers, physicians, teachers and men of letters were all its members. They dominated commerce, they controlled industry through guilds. They had become fairly rich and quite a few of them could compete favourably in wealth with the nobles but they belonged to the unprivileged class and were subject to taxation. They resented the existing system because they were made to realise in numerous humiliating ways their social inferiority. But being conscious that they were economically as well off as the nobles, they hated them.

As they had longed huge amounts to their government, they naturally got worried when they found it heading speedily towards bankruptcy. They wanted political reforms in such a way that they control the expenditure of the state and thereby assure its solvency. By their participation in the government they felt that they would also be able to end the interference of the government in their business which impeded its growth. They pleaded for commercial and industrial freedom, and laissez-faire so that the numerous obstacles created by guild system, regulations and monopolies could be removed. Their condition and demands were aptly brought out in a pamphlet written by one of their members, Abbe Sieyes. This was circulated in large numbers on the eve of the French revolution. "What is the Third Estate ?" asked Abbe Sieyes. "Everything" "What has it been in political unit now ?" "Nothing", "What does it desire ?" "To become something." It was from the ranks of the cultured and ambitious lawyers that the most enthusiastic and violent response came to the new ideas of the century. During 1768-1780 they played a prominent role in undermining the Old Regime in France.

**The Artisans :** Belonging to the third estate and lower than the bourgeoisie were the artisans. They lived in cities and towns and numbered about two and a half

million. They faced many hard conditions of life. Those craftsmen and workmen who belonged to the guilds or corporations felt it increasingly difficult to rise to the status of their masters. They realised that they were doomed to remain wage earners throughout their lives. They formed secret organizations to protect their common interests against their masters and the government but could not achieve much success. The guilds made regulations for their respective workmen. Government helped the masters in outlawing strikes of the workers more difficult and forbade them from making their independent corporate groups. As a result they were subjected to the control of their respective employers and the government.

The great economic progress recorded in France during the 18th century had brought no prosperity to the workmen. In the period between the death of Louis XIV in 1715 and the outbreak of the Revolution, the foreign trade of France had gone up four times and was only next to that of England but for the artisans it raised the cost of living much more rapidly than their wages. Whenever a crisis occurred, many workers were thrown out of employment and were forced like the peasants, to become beggars or brigands. The workers complained more and more vigorously against their miserable conditions and pleaded for relief from unemployment, ever increasing prices, government regulations and the menace of starvation. However they achieved no success in their demands.

### **Influence of the French Philosophers**

The 18th century was an age of reason and witnessed a good deal of intellectual activity. It was an age of enlightenment, and its special characteristics were scepticism, rationalism and humanism. A number of philosophers criticised the existing political social and religious institutions and traditions and tried to find their rational basis, but they came to the conclusion that these had no reason behind them. With a view to improving the lot of the common man who was being exploited by the church nobility and the state, they stood for a fair, humane and equitable treatment of all members of society. The writings of the philosophers had a tremendous influence on the minds of the people and created a revolutionary awakening that provided further fuel to the French Revolution. The common man was convinced that the church, the nobility and the state made an unholy alliance to exploit him and so these institutions should be changed radically.

In creating this intellectual awakening in France the following philosophers played a notable role :-

**Montesquieu (1639-1755) :** The campaign against the existing political abuses was initiated by Montesquieu. He was a member of the nobility of the robe, and an eminent lawyer and a judge in the parliament of Bordeaux. He was deeply influenced by the English culture and political institution. He attributed the comparative happiness and prosperity of the English people to their liberal political institutions especially the constitutional monarchy and advocated the adoption of similar

institutions in France. In 1748 he published his famous book 'The Spirit of the Laws' after visiting England and Europe (1728 - 1731) studying British institutions. He supported the principle of separation of powers, that is, the independence of the three organs of the government, executive, legislature and judiciary from one another. Even though he misinterpreted the English constitution where the judiciary was independent but the other two organs were dependent on each other yet his book exercised such an influence that within eighteen months twenty-two editions had to be brought out. The Americans adopted his ideas when they drafted their constitution. They incorporated his principle of the separation of powers in it. To the French, the principle of separation of powers had greater appeal because in that country executive, judicial and legislative power were concentrated in the person of king who was subject to no control.

**Voltaire (1694-1778) :** He was a great philosopher, historian, poet, dramatist and satirist his age and was very widely known. He stood for the emancipation of the intellect. He himself had experienced the torture of the Old Regime. He was thrown into prison many times for his views. He had also to spend a large part of his life in exile because he was not safe in France. However, primarily he was not a political philosopher. He only condemned individual abuses of the state. He did not condemn monarchy as a political institution. According to him the ideal form of government was benevolent despotism. He was not a democrat and used to say that he would rather be ruled by a lion than by hundred rats.

His greatest aversion was the church. So he launched a strong attack against the church and the clergy. He used to call the church an 'infamous thing'. He ridiculed it by means of his sarcasm and satire and completely shook people's faith in it. In 18th century France, the church, as already discussed, suffered from a number of abuses which were attacked by Voltaire. His writings had a tremendous effect on millions of people not only in France but in the whole of Europe.

**Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778) :** Rousseau was the most outstanding of all the philosophers of the period under review. He has been called the apostle of the Revolution. Born in Geneva but a Frenchman by race, he settled in Paris. His writings made a profound impact on the minds of the people. He was a revolutionary not only in the sense that he sought to demolish the existing political institutions, but also due to his radical and constructive political ideas.

He analysed the causes of the ills of the society in his book *The Social Contract*. His opening sentence is highly significant. It reads : "Man was born free, but everywhere he is in chains" According to him, man originally lived in the state of nature which was blissful. All men were free and enjoyed equality and liberty but under the influence of a wealthy few who wanted to safeguard their vested interests' they made a social contract which formed the basis of the government. This contract was the root cause of all human misery. It gave the

strong and the rich an opportunity to exploit the poor and the weak. It was the real basis of social inequality. Hence people should break this contract and go to the state of nature and claim their original rights of liberty and equality. So back to nature was his constant cry. If men had the right to make the contract to establish a government, they certainly had the right to break and replace the government if it was not just and fair. He asserted that the people had the right to revolt and overthrow a corrupt government. He believed that the sovereignty of state depended on the will of the people (General Will) and not on the divine right to the king or the theory of force. From above, we can deduce Rousseau's two important democratic principles, namely, the sovereignty of the people and the political equality of all citizens. Thus he contributed to the popular idea of modern democracy and gave the French Revolutionaries their famous slogan of 'liberty, equality and fraternity'.

**The Encyclopaedists :** A number of French philosophers compiled a huge encyclopaedia in seventeen volumes containing human knowledge on all subjects. Its chief contributors Diderot, Aletmbert and Holbach exercised tremendous influence on the minds of the people and were responsible for a good deal of political awakening.

**The Economists :** There was a group of writers who studied the existing economic system and propounded new economic principles. They claimed that if these were applied they would completely change the industrial and commercial life of the nation by ending numerous restrictions, privileges and favouritism. These would be replaced by liberty in the fields of commerce, industry and agriculture.

Thus it is obvious that the philosophers explained the evils of the Old Regime to the people and prepared the ground for a general revolution by creating national awakening in France.

### **Immediate Cause - The Deplorable National Finances**

The national finances of France had been in a dangerous state since the times of Louis XIV who had wasted a lot of national money on wars. Under his successor Louis XV, under the excessive and uncontrolled expenditure of the state and the extravagance of the court, the financial crisis deepened further. Louis XVI who inherited debts from both of them, further increased national debt. Almost half of the national receipts were consumed by the payment of interest on national debt. Expenditures were larger than the income of the state. As a result every new loan had to be raised to meet the deficit.

By participating in the War of American Independence, Louis XVI added four million dollars more to the crushing weight of the national debt. Due to his utter inability to sort out the financial crisis, national debt increased by six hundred million dollars during 1776-1788; Financiers refused to loan any more to the state. France was on

the verge of bankruptcy. It could be avoided in three ways - either by cutsailing expenditure of the state, or by increasing income, or by both.

From 1774 to 1786 Turgot, Necker and Calonne tried to improve and resolve the financial crisis in France but the King and the Queen (Marie Antoinette) were not responsive to any proposal for reform and reconstruction and they were dismissed one after the other.

In an endeavour to surmount crisis the King called a meeting of the Assembly of the Nobles in February, 1787 but the nobles refused to give up any of their privileges and share any burden of taxation. Thereafter the King resorted to a dangerous alternative of leaving a new tax on land. The Paris Commune reacted very strongly to the proposal. Violent outbursts took place in different parts of France. People argued that a permanent tax could only be levied with the consent of the States-General. The meeting of the States-General when summoned marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of France and the country fell into the throes of Revolution.

### **Who really brought about the Revolution ?**

It is an established fact that the third estate brought about the Revolution but there is a dispute as to which class, the peasants or the bourgeoisie actually began and gave lead to the Revolution. Some historians are of the view that the deplorable condition of the French peasantry pushed them into the Revolution. Professor Hearnshaw differs from his opinion, he feels that the French peasantry was in no worse condition than it used to be. The French peasants were better off in comparison to the peasantry in central and eastern Europe. Serfs were not in majority among the French peasants. The peasant had the right to buy and sell land. They could move freely and exercise freedom of occupations. There is no doubt that the burden of state's taxation fell on this class but as there was no political awakening among them, they neither had the ability nor the resources to bring about a Revolution. On the other hand the middle class was gifted with a consciousness and awakening to provide leadership. The peasants simply followed. The bourgeoisie class had the ability and resources. It was influential as well. This class was most profoundly influenced by the ideas of the French philosophers. Elections to the States-General in 1789 demonstrated the strength of the bourgeois class. Out of a total of five hundred and seventy five representatives of the third estate two thirds were lawyers and judges. The middle class favoured a political system in which that class had the opportunity of direct participation in matters of the state. In this way, the middle class brought about the Revolution.

### **Relevant Pages of Books for Further Study**

1. Ketelbey, C.D.M. : History of Modern Times, pp. 27 - 50.
2. Grant and Temperley; Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries, pp. 23-29.



3. Lipson, E : Europe in the 19th Century.
4. Southgate, G. W. : History of Modern Europe.
5. Leo Gershoy : The French Revolution and Napoleon, pp. 4-100.
6. Hazen, C.D. : Modern Europe upto 1945, pp. 66-86.

**Suggested Questions for your Practice**

1. Discuss the causes of the French Revolution.
2. Do you think that the French Revolution was inevitable ?
3. Who really brought the revolution in France ?
4. Why the Revolution come first in France ?
5. Compare the French Revolution, with the Revolution in England and America.
6. Discuss the role of the French philosophers in bringing about the French Revolution.

---

**LESSON NO. 1.4**

---

**RESULTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

**Introduction :** Before the outbreak of the Revolution in France, movements for political and constitutional reforms took place in Belgium, Holland, England, Ireland, Austria and Poland. But with the exception of England these movements could not achieve much. But against these the French Revolution affected the government and political institution and changed the social structure completely. That apart, the events of the French Revolution immensely influenced the European affairs and in some cases took the shape of a new revolution. There was not a single country in Europe whose political institutions and social structure was not profoundly affected by the revolutionary principles. Peoples of France and other European countries emphatically stressed that the special privileges should be abolished and such government should be established as were benevolent to their people. The idea of fraternity or universal brotherhood inspired a feeling of affinity among the people. It was felt that group belonging to one race and culture be organised into political entities. These revolutionary ideas created strong reaction among the conservatives who had vested interests in the old system.

**Results of the Revolution**

**General Results :** The immediate result of the French Revolution was that the response of the European society came to be divided in two opposite groups; one constituted the advocates of the Revolution and the other of its opponents. However, groups were not markedly distinct because the fall of Bastille and other early events were welcomed in all the countries. Only Catherine, the Russian Empress, the Kings of Spain, and Sweden and Edmund Burke, a philosopher of England, protested against these events from the very beginning. The liberal Austrian Emperor Joseph II (1765-90) and his successor Leopold (1790-92) and brother of the Queen of France (Marie Antoinette), opposed the Revolution not on principles but due to personal interests namely their fears about their sister's future. But against it the dissenters of England, the liberals of Poland and other reformers were inspired by this revolt against the despotic rules of France.

Another remarkable result was that the artists and artisans of Europe also praised the coming of this Revolution. English poets and scientists, German poets and philosophers and the enlightened Italians hailed this Revolution in their works and writings; Although some of them changed their views yet when the Revolution began, all had agreed with Wordsworth and Samuel Romilly that the French

Revolution was the most significant event in the history of mankind. In England and in some other European countries there were some added reasons for the general enthusiasm for the revolutionary events. One such was that France was their common enemy. These convulsions, they hoped would make her weak both militarily, and financially thus France would be unable to stand up to England. Many thoughtful Frenchman had anticipated this kind of thinking and expressed even before the fall of Bastille that the English must be happy over the confusion in France. Pitt's Government was of the view that for many years France would not be able to disturb their valuable peace, but the satisfaction proved shortlived. While during 1732-90, people being unaware of the dangerous possibilities of the Revolution, showered abundant praises on it, the latter events changed their views, particularly the harassment of the privileged and propertied classes. The confiscation of the Church property, the drastic had reforms, the emigration of nobles and moderates and the tales that they narrated, all served to alarm the conservatives. Meanwhile the democrats and the reformers, who had arrived from other countries in Paris, imbibed the revolutionary ideas and on returning to their respective countries or by corresponding with their friends at home spread the new ideas. All this further alarmed the orthodox opinion and resulted in the reactionary writing and their rejoinders in some cases. Burke published his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and it was read enthusiastically by the vested interests. In this book Burke condemned the Revolution outright. But there were others who praised the Revolution. Thomas Paine criticised Burke in his book *The Right of Man*. Though it was badly received by the England propertied classes, it was eagerly read by reformers, Protestant dissenters, democrats, craftsmen and skilled factory hands. In a similar way, Europe was also divided into two divergent schools of thought. The basic problem which confronted European statesmen was whether the social and political structure be modelled on the revolutionary principles or the traditional institutions existing prior to 1789 should continue. Governments and individuals were opposed to the Revolution in England and the supporters of the Revolution were dealt with severely. Many steps such as blocking the reforms, inciting the King and the Church, provoking the peasants and urban workers against the revolutionaries, interventions in the movements of Birmingham, Manchester, Brussels, Naples, Madrid and France were taken by the opponents of the Revolution. Such reactionary movements gained success in almost all European countries excepting France.

There is no doubt that the French Revolution profoundly affected the foundations of traditional institutions but the degree of impact varied from country to country. Countries like Russia and Turkey being far away from France and with different traditions and cultures remained almost totally immune to revolutionary ideas. Bavaria and Spain were also not much affected by the Revolution, England being

geographically isolated and with a tradition of enmity with France, was also not much influenced by the Revolution.

On the other hand, there were countries which due to their geographical position, cultural and social traditions reacted favourable to the revolutionary ideas, and the armies of France influenced them in a big way. Such countries were Holland, Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland and Italy. In these countries revolutionary governments survived so long as the military protection of France was available. To have a clearer view, let us study the effects of the Revolution on individual countries.

**Effect on England :** England was one of those countries where in its early stages (until 1792) the Revolution evoked an enthusiastic response. There was freedom of expression and a free press in England. British Government was delighted rather than upset by the challenge of the French people to their despotic Government, because for the British, the French Revolution was in a sense an indication of their own Glorious Revolution of 1688. In England religious dissenters parliamentary reformers and whigs expected some political advantage from the events in revolutionary France.

Regarding its influence in the political field, radicals and reformers belonging to the middle class. Whigs aristocrats, London craftsmen and industrial workers drew inspiration from the ideas associated with the Revolution. In London, Dr. Richard Price founded a Revolutionary Society to commemorate the Glorious Revolution (1688). This society sent greetings to Constituent Assembly of France. Some old radical societies, which had, become defunct, were revived and some new were established. Major Cartwright's Society which had been established in 1780, gained a new lease of life in 1791. It came under the influence of John Home Tooke and Thomas Paine. In many cities like Sheffield, Norwich, Leeds and Nottingham reform societies were established on the French model Society of the people under the leadership of Fox. It opposed Pitt in the Parliament. In 1799, Thomas Hardy established the London Corresponding Society which corresponded with the French and acted as the nucleus of radical agitations in England; Members of this society were craftsmen and small traders. It was the first political organisation of the workers in Europe. French Revolution also left its mark on the industrial workers of England.

On the other hand Burke condemned the Revolution from the beginning. Since 1792, the attitude of the British Government also changed. It took strict measures against the supporters of the Revolution. Pitt's Government took steps against the Jacobins and reform societies of England and Scotland. Harsh punishments were given to Muir, Palmer and Margaret of Scotland. They were exiled to Botany Bay on the charge of having convened a British Convention in 1793. Though the British Jury was less severe than the Scottish but radical movements subsided gradually and could not make any mark in the next fifteen years.

On the economic side, French Revolution adversely affected the financial stability of England. The continuous wars between France and England increased her national debt many times and to meet his deficit, government imposed new taxes. Even after the downfall of Napoleon, her financial position remained weak for many years to come.

**Effect on Ireland :** It was a matter of great surprise that Jacobinism was successful in Ireland than in England or Scotland. Another Irish rebellion took place. It was a two-pronged revolt. First was the independence movement of United Irishmen led by Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Wolfe Tone and the Second was the massive agrarian revolt of the land-hungry Irish peasantry. Tone and Fitzgerald came to France to discuss their plans with the National Convention. Irish peasants felt happy over the French victory and offered to welcome the victorious French troops on their soil.

**Effects on Poland :** The social structure of Poland was such that the country seemed unsuitable to follow the path of the French Revolution but even then some influence was visible, French Revolution was greeted with enthusiasm by the Polish intellectuals and the liberal nobility. A Philosophical Club was established at the residence of Prince Radziwill, In May, 1791 this club through a coup d'etat compelled the Diet to adopt a liberal, constitution. This constitution similar to that of France, declared the Diet representative of the whole nation. The right of veto of every member of the Diet which for long had obstructed all legislative and executive initiative, was abolished. Judges were to be elected. Polish monarchy was declared to be hereditary.

When Poland was partitioned second time in 1793, among Austria, Prussia and Russia. Polish parties refused to compromise with it. To offer resistance to the foreign powers they organized a popular movement under the leadership of Kosciuszko.

**Effects on Hungary :** The society and institutions of Hungary were similar to those of Poland and she also had her problems. In 1793, the Diet drew up the Declaration of Rights of Man on the French model but under the pressure of Francis II, these were dropped. Still the Hungarian Jacobins who believed in democracy and had chalked out a social and political programme to realize their ideals rose in revolt. Government resorted to a policy of repression. Matinovicz and six comrades were executed in May, 1795. Other leaders of the revolt were punished severely. Thus the revolt was suppressed. But the revolutionary ideas bequeathed by them became immortal. The cause of their failure was that they had kept aloof from the people. Thus they failed to turn lead hunger and weariness of the peasants into a political cause.

**Effects on France :** The Revolution proved beneficial to France. It gave a severe blow to the despotic monarchy and privileged class. Feudalism and serfdom were abolished. It is true that the period of Revolution was one of bloodshed, terror and

of great loss of life and property. Many innocent people were killed, trade industry and finance suffered tremendously, many people were thrown out of work, and it was followed by an era of dreadful struggle over land and sea which lasted for about twenty years. But the ultimate gains of the Revolution were no less significant. The Revolution put an end to the Old Regime and ushered in a new era. Uniform laws were enforced throughout France. Class privileges were abolished. Religious disabilities were no longer important. Big estates and Church property were confiscated and sold to the middle and lower classes at nominal price. Thus many socio-economic ills, which had sapped the vitality of the French, were wiped out. Many internal reforms of enduring value were also introduced. Laws were codified and made simple. Justice was now made equal and fair for all. Reforms were introduced in the judicial system. Consequently France made great progress in socio-economic sphere. As time passed, the principles of the Revolution became fully operative in spite of the fact that Napoleon opposed liberty and his rule was despotic. It is true that he always had in mind the welfare of the people. As such his rule was enlightened despotism.

**Effect of the French Revolution on other European Countries :** The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars as also Continental System dislocated the economic life of many European countries. Their reaction was so great that a strong resistance was built up against Napoleon. Even after the war it took these countries a long time to recover their economic stability.

#### **Permanent Result of the Revolution**

**Popularity of Equality :** Equality was one of the fundamental principles of Revolution. Social equality was first established in France and then in other countries. Feudalism and serfdom were abolished. All people high or low, rich or poor, were acknowledged equal before law. Opportunities were given to all able persons. Burden of taxation was equitably distributed. Peasants were released from the tyranny of the feudal lords. Slavery was abolished in France immediately and in other countries gradually.

**Democratic Ideas became Popular :** Liberty Equality and Fraternity became the watch-words of the new order. The concept of liberty was no longer restricted to political liberty but also included social and religious freedom. The theory of Divine Right of Kings began to be discarded and despotism was no longer tolerated. During the nineteenth century and thereafter people asserted their rights. Prior to the Revolution, kings were extravagant, autocratic, irresponsible and indifferent to law but after the Revolution their position was completely changed. They could no longer afford to be extravagant. Their expenses were fixed. Now they could not misuse public funds. They could not exercise absolute power as their authority was limited. They had no respect for the constitution and were responsive to the representatives of the people. They could not disregard law because they could be tried according to law, and if found guilty, they could be punished like any other citizen.

**Rise of Nationalism :** Nationalism was an important legacy of the French Revolution. The Fall of Bastille became a national festival of France. All old distinctions and inequalities were swept away and the French became a united nation. Similar ideas also spread to other countries through the victorious France armies. People of those countries also began to think in term of liberty. They even resented their French master. Ultimately they united to shake off foreign rule, even though it was of revolutionary France. This spirit of asserting their national identity, right to self-government, resistance to foreign rule had in the germs of a concept which later came to be known as nationalism.

**Conclusion :** The French Revolution introduced a new era in human history. It was an event of worldwide significance and its influence was not restricted merely to the history of France. Europe and the world at large felt its impact. It was an epoch making-event in the world. As a result of this revolution, political liberty-freedom in general and liberalism permeated into European consciousness. All the revolutionary movements of the 19th century, throughout the world more or less, owned their origin to this Revolution. Its principles were relevant to the entire human society. In fact this Revolution proved a bold attempt to reconstruct human society by abolishing the old socio-political and economic system and a new order competent to fulfill the needs and aspirations of the new society. The temporary phase of violence, bloodshed and economic depression fades into insignificance when compared with its positive and enduring results.

### Suggested Readings

1. George Rude, : *Revolutionary Europe* (1781-1815), pp. 179-200.
2. Ketelbey, C.D.M., : *History of Modern Europe*, pp. 50-93.
3. Grant and Temperley : *Europe in the 19th centuries*, pp. 29-58.

---

**LESSON NO. 1.5**

---

**NAPOLEON AND HIS REFORMS AS FIRST CONSUL**

The famous historian Carlyle said that history is made by heroes and those who do not believe in it are atheists. Another historian Anatole France remarked that whatever be the cause of great events in history, they are unfolded through the personalities of great men. Napoleon, about whom the German philosopher Goethe said that his life had been shaped and written by nature itself, was one of such great men.

**The Consulate**

**or**

**Napoleon as First Consul**

**Constitution of 1799 :** It is true that Napoleon had faced a big opposition in the Council of the Five Hundred but within a month of assuming office when he put forward the new constitution, people accepted it with an overwhelming majority. This constitution was drafted by Sieyès and Ducos, and Napoleon improved upon it. The new constitution outwardly democratic in form, was a cleverly disguised despotism of the First Consul. He controlled the Council of State and the Senate and throughout them all administration, legislation and taxation. He could appoint and remove ministers.

**Centralized System :** After giving a constitution to France, he got enacted a law which placed all local government in his hands. Though the elected councils were allowed to exist, their powers were vested in the prefects; sub-prefects and mayors who were all appointed by the First Consul and carried out his orders. The elected bodies met rarely. Prefect headed of a department, sub-prefect an arrangement, and mayor of a town or a commune.

At the same time, police in big cities like Paris was also controlled by the Central Government. As a result of these reforms while Napoleon achieved centralization on the one hand. He also brought uniformity in the system of local administration throughout France, which was a big achievement.

**Merits Recognised :** As a First Consul, Napoleon appointed able people to high offices. Bonaparte himself summed up his policy in the phrase "Careers open to talent" which owed its origin to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Under Napoleon a person could rise as high as his ability, industry, and service justified.



Of course there was one condition-loyalty to Napoleon. Generally the men, who reached highest positions in the army, came from humble families. Massena was the son of a sa oon-keeper, Augereau (ozh-or) of a mason, Ney (na) of a cooper, and Murat (mu-ra) of a country inn-keeper.

Offices were thrown open equally to former royalists–Jacobins and Girondists on the only condition that they vowed loyalty to Napoleon. The laws against the emigres were so relaxed that of over 100,000 (one lakh) of them all except about 1,000 (one thousand) were allowed to return to France, they were allowed to recover those estates which had not been already sold. Only those who placed their loyalty to the Bourbons above all considerations were debarred from returning to France.

**Foreign Policy :** Napoleon faced much opposition at home and abroad as he led France to stability and strength. In France itself, revolts at Vendee and Brittany were ruthlessly put down by him. In 1800, Russia, Austria, Naples, Portugal, England and Turkey concluded the second Coalition against France. A joint Anglo-Russian army invaded Holland and an Austro-Russian army recaptured Mantua for Austria. Another Russian army defeated the French army at Nevi and pushed it back to Genoa. To face their attacks, Napoleon sent Moreau to reach Vienna from southern Germany and himself advanced towards Lombardy. On 14th June hostilities started with Austria at Marengo. Austrian army outnumbered the French and Napoleon was defeated at about three o'clock in the afternoon. It was his good luck that General Desaix (de-sa) arrived with reserves by 5 p.m. Austrians were upset at the arrival of the French reinforcements. A short but decisive battle followed and the Austrians were defeated. However, Desaix who was responsible for the French victory died in the battle. Thereafter Napoleon returned to Paris via Milan.

**Treaty of Luneville :** Six months later, on December 3, 1801 the French under Moreau defeated the Austrians decisively at Hohenlinden in Germany. By the Treaty of Luneville concluded on February 9, 1801. Austria concluded peace with France. The new treaty reaffirmed the treaty of Campo Formio. Thus Austria's defeat broke the back of the Second Coalition in Europe.

**Peace with England (March, 1802) :** Once again Great Britain was isolated and the war came to be confined to the sea. Out of this situation nothing decisive could come out. Both England and France were by now tired of war. While the British were supreme at sea, on land the French had maintained their mastery. So the two agreed to conclude the peace of Amiens (1802). England recognised the French Republic. She restored all the French colonies and some of the Dutch and Spanish, retaining only Ceylon and Trinidad. She promised to vacate Malta and Egypt, which Napoleon had captured in 1798. Nothing was said of the French annexation of Belgium and left bank of the Rhine. Thus, the de facto new frontiers of France, far exceeding those of the ancient monarchy were recognized.

Now Europe was at peace after 10 years, It was welcomed both in England and France but is proved short lived; it lasted only for one year.

**Colonial Affairs :** With a view to adding glory to the French people, Napoleon planned to increase French colonies. French power was established in San Domingo. He tried to strengthen the French colonial power in South America and India, But Napoleon could never be free from the affairs in Europe. As a result, he could not pay much attention to the expansion of the French colonies.

### **His Civilian Work as First Consul (Internal Reforms of Napoleon)**

As First Consul, according to Ketelbey, Napoleon's civilian work at home is far more important than the achievements of his foreign policy. Similarly, Fisher has written that if his conquests were ephemeral, his civilian work was built on granite. The principal features of his civilian work were that he created respect in the heart of the people for their government, and introduced rule of law. While the standards of social and civic behaviour had deteriorated considerably during the preceding ten years, he introduced reforms for internal reconstruction, and thus made solid contribution towards the development of civil institutions. His internal reforms can be studied under the following headings :

**Secretariat and Finance :** The Secretariat was recognised for greater efficiency and centralized control by the First Consul. Gaudin, an expert in matters of Finance, introduced reforms in the duties of collectors. Now they had to deposit a part of the amount before the collection of taxes. To promote industry and commerce, the Bank of France was established in 1800. Corrupt officers and bribers were dismissed from service. A special fund was raised from indemnities imposed on the vanquished countries to meet the expenses of the army. Thus, Napoleon's wars were not drain on the French exchequer, rather they became self-supporting.

**Educational Reforms :** Realizing the importance of education in building national character, Napoleon introduced a new system of education, popularising loyalty to the new constitution particularly to Napoleon. Primary and elementary schools were established in every commune under the supervision of the prefect or sub-prefect. Grammar schools were established for imparting instruction in French and Latin language and science technical, civil service, and military school were opened under the control of the government. The University of France was obliged to maintain uniformity in the educational system and public school and their teachers were to be approved by it. Facilities for research were provided at the Institute of France. All teaching was based on the principles of Christianity, loyalty to Napoleon and obedience to the rules and regulations of the University.

In female education, more importance was attached to the cultivation of civic and moral values, instead of making them intellectuals, the aim was to develop their

human qualities. Writing, arithmetic, French language, embroidery and needle work were taught to them. Training in dance was meant for recreation rather than turning out professionals. They were not allowed to learn foreign languages. Only unmarried women or widows without encumbrance would become teachers. Except for the headmaster there was to be no other male in the girls school. Though these were institutions for female education, education of girls was primarily considered the responsibility of their mothers.

**Criticism :** Napoleon's educational reforms have been much criticised. He has been accused of stopping the study of subjects like political science and economics as they promoted better understanding of social and economic conditions and could lead to agitation for individual rights. Hayes notes that at the time of Napoleon's fall, many French children still went to Catholic schools in preference to government institutions. The Lycee system was an instrument of authoritarianism. Fisher holds the view that people were discouraged from receiving education. However, in spite of the above criticism, it may be concluded that under Napoleon France made considerable educational progress.

**The Codes of Napoleon :** "My real glory", Napoleon said at St. Helena, "is not my having won forty battles. What will never be effaced what will endure for ever, is my civil code". The French historian Guignebert has also given a great credit to Napoleon for framing the code. The renowned code of Napoleon was a systematic and a compact statement of the laws of France. The need arose because there existed a large number of the system of law in pre-revolutionary France. The confusion was made still worse by extensive legislation during the revolutionary years. Napoleon decided to present to the people of France a clear and rational system of laws so that every Frenchman could know clearly about his rights and relations with the State and fellow-citizen. Napoleon invited eminent jurists to participate in the big task, and a number of committees were appointed for the work of compilation.

Napoleon himself participated in the deliberation of the committees. It is said that Napoleon would be busy in matters of state till late at night. Then he visited committees where discussion continued till the early hours of the morning. If any member felt sleepy, Napoleon would say, "Gentleman, do let us keep awake, it is only 2 o'clock as yet. Let's earn our salaries".

The laws were based on such principles of the Revolution as civil equality, religious toleration and right of equal inheritance to all. All feudal privileges were abolished. As far as its scope is concerned, the codes covered subjects like capital punishment, arrest, exile, confiscation of property, punishment for various offences, divorce, commerce and navy. The code was immediately enforced in France and after sometime in the conquered territories and dependencies of Italy, German territories west of the Rhine, and Belgium.

**Significance :** The Code of Napoleon embodied manifold benefits to the people although his critics including Fisher have disapproved the brief and hastily compilation of these laws in just four months and argue that a work of that magnitude should have taken not less than 15 years yet Fisher himself feels that in spite of the flaws in the Code these are better than not having any at all; one written law is preferable to 200 laws based upon customs.

Another significance of his Code is that these are easily understandable by all and incorporated such revolutionary principles as equality, religious toleration and open trials.

**The Concordat of 1802 :** Napoleon believed in God but religion as such was not of much importance to him. He himself that in Egypt he was Musalman and in France a Catholic for the good of people. But in fact Napoleon wanted to exploit religion for political purpose. He advocated that the Government should control the religion of that the people. State without religion was like a ship without the compass. He argued that the bourgeoisie, the peasants and the intellectuals retained a deeper faith in the church in spite of their obvious disapproval and questioning of it. Men like Chateaubriand attributed even growing lawlessness in contemporary life to the decline of people's faith in Church. Supporting Napoleon's viewpoint Guizot writes that he was very clearly aware of the hold of the Church and desired it to be "in the service of the state and in the service of the state only." He wanted to end the influence of Englishmen in France. To give effect to the above ideas, Napoleon gave to the church of France a new constitution known as the Concordat. By it Catholicism was recognized by the Republic as the faith of the great majority of the French people and its free exercise was permitted, In return, the Pope agreed to a reduction in the number of bishops. He also approved the sale of the Church property made during the Revolution. That way the title of those who had bought the confiscated Church lands were recognized as legal even by the Church. In future the bishops were to be appointed by the First Consul but were to be invested by the Pope. Bishops thus appointed were to appoint priests with the consent of the Government. Bishops were to take an oath of loyalty to the head of the state which practically meant fidelity to Napoleon. All Bishops and priests were to get their salaries from the government. Thus they became state officials.

**Significance :** The Concordat lasted for almost a hundred years. According to Fisher in spite of its flaws, it put an end to faction in the Church of France and also removed the principal cause of resentment and distrust of the Church among the peasants.

However, it did not prove to be smooth in its working. When Napoleon became emperor he used it for appropriating more power to himself. This widened the conflict between him and the Pope. Ultimately his differences with the Pope played an important part in his downfall.

**Creation of Employment :** Napoleon also tried to solve the problem of unemployment in France. In order to provide employment to the people, the Government ordered the marking of 500 (five hundred) pairs of shoes daily. By another order the workman at St. Anoine were asked to mark furniture for the Government. Government undertook the construction of roads and canals to provide livelihood to the labour. Work was started on Ourcq and Quri Desaix canals. Schemes undertaken to beautify France also helped in creating employment. Artists were engaged to depict scenes of the France victories Historians and writers were appointed to write about the glories of France.

**No Significant Changes in the Army :** As First Consul, Napoleon did not introduce any technical reforms in the army. The system of military ballons, started in 1793, was discontinued. An American engineer, Foulton offered his services for the recognition of the French Navy Napoleon expressed greater faith in soldiers and turned down the offer and foulton was sent back.

**Conclusion :** There can be no difference of opinion that Napoleon was gifted with a versatile personality. He was a born general and a great statesman. He won victories for France and enhanced her prestige in Europe. As an administrator, he introduced substantial reforms to reorganize the administrative structure of France. The Code of Napoleon was his lasting gift to France, There is almost is unanimity among his apologists, critics, students and scholars of history regarding his lasting contribution as First Consul to the progress and prosperity of the people of France.

#### **Relevant pages of Books for Further Study**

1. Ketelbey CDM : *A History of Modern Times, pp. 93-114*
2. Fisher, H.A.L., : *History of Europe, pp. 908-33.*
3. Hayes, C.J. : *History of Modern Europe.*
4. Grant and Temperly : *Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries, pp. 119-32.*
5. Emile Ludwig : *Napoleon.*

---

**LESSON NO. 1.6**

---

**CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF NAPOLEON**

**Introduction :** With the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 with czar Alexander of Russia, Napoleon had reached the apogee of power. Soon after, he asked the king of Portugal to stop all trade with Britain. But he refused to do so. It provoked Napoleon to send his army into Portugal, which was easily over-run by French. Thus by the end of the year, he was the most powerful ruler in Europe. Ketelbey has rightly remarked, "During the five years between the Treaty of Tilsit and Moscow Campaign in 1812, Napoleon was at the height of his power and master of Europe." But even then, as early as 1807 the great structure built by him had begun to show signs of decay. In that year the French suffered the first great defeat at Baylen. It gives a shattering blow to Napoleon's power. Despite this, Napoleon continued to be the unquestioned and uncrowned master of Europe until 1812.

"At the beginning of the year 1812" writes Delberfield the Duke of Wellington, sumend up the situation on the continent as follows. "Napoleon governs one half of Europe directly and most of the other half indirectly." This was neither a simplification nor an exaggeration." In fact when in June 1812, Napoleon was on the point of crossing the Nieman into Russia, the whole of Europe lay at his feet yet within a few months he had to suffer humiliation in Russia due to the failure of his Moscow expedition followed by the complete collapse of the French power in Spain. Then came the Battle of the Nations (Leipzig) followed by Emperor's abdication, his subsequent return to France to rule over the country hundred days and the final collapse of his power at Waterloo in June 1815.

The pertinent question is often asked the forces and factors that were responsible for the downfall of this great Emperor. Some say that his failure was due to limitation of human capacity and sheer exhaustion caused by continuous involvement in wars and battles. Other are of the opinion that success of the allies against him was the victory of good over evil. In fact the failure of Napoleon was due to various and manifold reasons which may be discussed as under.

**(I) Napoleon's Inordinate Imperialistic Ambition :** Napoleon was a man of high ambitions. He wanted to build an empire that should be more glorious and more widely spread than Alexander's or Roman Empire. Early in his career, he had repeated the performance of Haddibal by crossing the Alps in snowy winter and won name and fame in the world, His subsequent victory in Italy made him an invincible

general. His dash in Egypt in 1798 and subsequently his adventure in the Acre, all won him admiration as an unfailing general every where. His career as a first Consul later on added more glories success of Austerlitz. Friedland and Jena made him the master of Europe, Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Poland etc. all lay prostrate before him. In 1807 Czar Alexander was compelled to become a subordinate ally. The Emperor and the Czar agreed to collaborate in humbling down the Ottoman Empire. Later on, Napoleon dangled before the Czar the prospect on conquering 'Turkey and undertaking joint expedition to India. But there was one country in Europe to defy Napoleon i.e. Great Britain. He very well knew that unless he conquered that country, he could not realize his dream of becoming the world Conquerer. He had failed in humbling her. Hence to bring her low, he entered on adventures that could not succeed. In his desire to fulfil his imperial avarice, he spread his nets far too wide to be easily controlled. The huge extent of the Empire built by him proved to be too 'expensive' to be kept intact. Hence breaches came in to bring about Napoleon's downfall.

**(2) Limit to Human Capacity :** Napoleon was a past-master in the art of military strategy. He had risen from the position of a very small official in the army to become a great emperor merely through hard work, intelligence diligence and superb generalship. But after all he was a human being and neither a superman nor a God. And every human being's capacity to work and act is limited. This was true of Napoleon also. He was often continuously on horse back leading his army in the battles for days together, this was bound to affect his physical and mental facilities so that in the long run he could not make right decisions. His thinking became perverted and he adopted certain courses of actions and military strategy that led him on to complete ruination.

**(3) Napoleon's Vanity and Arrogance :** Power and unalloyed success against his enemies turned Napoleon's head. After signing the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 and the capture of Portugal by his forces in the same year, he had full command over Europe from Lisbon to Moscow. He came to believe that he was invincible and no power, how so ever great, had a right to stand against him. All the kings and Emperors of Europe should bow before him. Any power, which dare defy him was to be laid in dust. He believed that he was always in the right and those who dared to oppose him, were in the wrong, they should therefore be compelled to the his line through the threatened use of force or by actual military campaign against them. He actually restored to use of force against Portugal the Pope and many others, when they did not agree to dance to his tune.

He came to believe in his infallibility and invincibility. He refused to listen to advice and scoffed at the very idea of compromise. To quote just, one example, when Metternich suggested to him at Dresden that he might sign peace on certain conditions in the interest of good of Europe, he rejected his suggestion. He is said

to have remarked very arrogantly; "What is it you wish of me, that I should dishonour myself ? Never I shall know how to die but never yield an inch of the territory." Such type of arrogance and disregard for compromise, could not but produce a sense of determined active opposition to Napoleon and his activities – a determination that landed him in trouble.

**(4) Napoleon's Resort to Deceit and Trickery :** Napoleon himself had said once, "I know when to exchange lion's skin for that of the fox." He was thus ready to use any means, foul or fair, to win success. To achieve his aim, he would not mind resorting to deceit and trickery. It is a well known fact how he beguiled the Spanish King Charles IV and the Crown Prince Ferdinand into abdicating the Spanish throne in his favour. He also succeeded in winning over Czar Alexander to his side from 1807 onwards for a few years by dangling before him false promises of joint expedition to conquer the Turkish Empire. These are only two main instances how he resorted to treachery to achieve his ends. All this trickery and deceit came to be exposed in course of time and the rulers and the ruled of all the countries, which he had occupied, took up arms against him. Their stiff resistance and later on determined struggle against him, put an end to his hegemony, which came to be buried in the battle-field of Waterloo.

**(5) Napoleon under estimated the Strength of his Opponents :** Napoleon had an over exaggerated notion of the strength of his army always underestimated the force of his opponents : When he was about to launch the campaign against Spain, he had stated that he would go in for the conquest of that country, even if he were to throw 88,000, soldiers in the battle-field. But he had actually believed and stated that he would require only 17,000 soldiers to consolidate his army over there. He also underestimated the strength of the Russians, when he had his Moscow Campaign in 1812. All this was bound to end in his ultimate failure.

**(6) Napoleon's Militarism led to Development of Militarism in Europe :** Napoleon had succeeded in building a huge empire with the help of re-organised well-trained and well disciplined army, which was not only devoted to him but also fired with a spirit to bring glory for France. He could inspire confidence, fearlessness and spirit of heroism in the minds his soldiers, who won victories against heavy odds. Fired with a spirit of intense nationalism to sacrifice their lives for the sake of motherland, they could win victory against the enemy forces which did not fight for ideals but for their kings and queen. But after sometime the opponents of Napoleon also began to imitate him to build strong military machines of their own. For instance leader of Prussia like Generals von Clausewitz and Stein built up a strong army of their own. In 1808, the Austrians also began a huge military force of their own, other countries also followed suit. Thus in course of time Napoleon's militarism came to be opposed by militarism of Austria, Prussia, Russia, etc. His army had to face well disciplined armies of different



countries, particularly those of Prussia, which was destined to break the backbone of French forces at Leipzig. Napoleon's army had been very much decimated in continuous wars. In his later struggle against the allies, he could not muster sufficient large number to give a stiff fight to his enemies. Napoleon had himself said, "God marches with the biggest battalions" and this turned out to be true, when his enemies brought bigger armies in the field to beat him.

**(7) Napoleon's Generals :** One of the causes responsible for the downfall Napoleon was the conduct of his own generals. Napoleon had centralised in himself all the power of conducting various campaigns. His generals had either very little or practically no initiative in conducting them. They had to act according to his directions and could not act independently to deal with a particular problem, according to the exigencies of the situation. This often went against the interests of the French "Napoleon's Marshal" as pointed out by Fuller, "had not been brought upto command but only to obey; they were followers, not leader, vassal princes many of whom had been raised in rank for dynastic and personal reason," Many were of humble origin, including Massena, Murat, Ney etc. The Emperor heaped wealth and rank of them. They proved unequal to the task, as they had grown war weary. Hence they failed to rise upto Napoleon's expeditions. Moreover his generals quarrelled amongst themselves. They would not co-operate with other lest the credit of victory should go to the other.

**(8) The Continental System :** After the defeat of Austria at Austerlitz in 1805 & of Prussia at Jena in 1806, Napoleon had emerged as the greatest Emperor in Europe. In 1807 Russia also tied herself to Napoleon. Only England remained there to defy him. He felt that until and unless Great Britain was humbled he could not rest in peace. After the French naval defeat at Trafalgar he had come to the conclusion that he could not win a naval war against that country. On the suggestion of Montgellard he decided to crush the opposition of the British by giving a blow to her trade. Montgellard had stated, "To destroy British commerce is to strike England to her heart," Hence for this purpose Napoleon decided to establish the so-called "continental system." Its establishment was announced by the issuing of famous Berlin Decree in 1805. This was later on supplemented by other decrees issued by Napoleon from time to time. These decrees ordered that the British Islands were to be blockaded and all trade with the country was to be stopped. It was also announced that all British ships were to be seized and all goods carried to and from the Islands, were to be confiscated, England's reply to this was given, in the form of "Orders in Council" which established the blockade of the coast of France and of her allies. No doubt the British trade suffered to some extent as a result of the continental system, but all the same she could smuggle into Europe through Portugal and other weak points on the European coast. She could, however, succeed in dealing commercial blows to France and her allies.

It was however, impossible for Napoleon to enforce the continental system; as there was great demand for British goods all over Europe, Even his great supports and satellites amongst the state of Europe permitted the smuggling of British goods or the products of her Empire in a secret manner. After sometime Napoleon had himself to permit the import of British goods in France. It was as a result of the refusal of Portugal to enforce the continental system that Napoleon sent his force there. This forced a long war on him bring about his ultimate downfall.

**(9) The Peninsular War :** The Peninsular war (1801-14) which became a running sore for Napoleon was a major factor responsible for the downfall of Napoleon. When he sent his troops in Portugal in 1807 to teach her lesson for refusal to stop trade with England, he had never believed that he would be involved in a long war for six years. He had sent troops in Spain in the year on the pretext that he wanted to deploy them to maintain his hold over Portugal. But actually he had done this in order to subjugate the country. Later on he compelled Charles IV of Spain and his son to abdicate in his favour. He put his brother Joseph on throne much to resentment of the people of Spain. They rose in revolt and adopted guerilla tactics. People of Portugal called the British for aid. The latter came to their rescue immediately and later on supported. They (The British) fanned the flame of national resistance and give the Spainards moral and material support against the foreign aggression, the Spanish peasants were led by monks and landlords against the army of a foreign aggressors. The Spanish struggle was the national struggle of people against Napoleon. Hitherto he had fought war against kings and queens. But in Spain he had to fight against a whole people. She (Spain) became as ulcer that sapped the vitality of Napoleon. The Spanish Ulcer, Napoleon confessed, ruined him. Sir Arthur Wellesley not only succeeded in pushing the French out of Portugal, but also out of Spain with the support of Spainards. He pursued the French and Defeated them in their own city of Toulouse in 1814. This was the undoing of Napoleon's scheme of building a grand empire.

**(10) Rise of Spirit of Nationalism in Europe :** During the career of his Italy, Germany and other states. Napoleon had freed the people over there from the weak, corrupt and inefficient rule of the despots. He gave them good government, But an alien good government is no substitute for the rule by people's own king or queen. In course of time, the governments of the conquered territories by Napoleon's nominees, mostly his relatives and satellites, produced a reaction against the foreign rule, But this reaction against foreign rule which represented an assertion of Nationalism though in the negative sense became apparent, only after Prussian defeat at Jena in 1806 and the Commencement of hostilities in Spain in 1808. The Spainards had first, welcomed the appearance of the French troops in their land. But when they discovered that Napoleon had imprisoned their favourite Ferdinand and foisted his own brother Joseph on them as their ruler they rose in revolt against

him. Helped by the British they succeeded in defeating the French at Baylen. Here was the example of people defeating a strong French force. National resistance had succeeded in wearing down the opposition of a disciplined army. This encouraged the Austrians to take up arms against Napoleon in 1809. It was the Spanish contagion that had caught the Austrians. While asking his people to go to war against Napoleon Archduke Charles of Austria had said, "The liberty of Europe has taken refuge under your banners : your victories will loosen its fetters, and your German brothers now arrived in ranks of the await liberation at your hands." This was a clear appeal to the spirit of nationalism. Similarly after their defeat at Jena, the Prussians had begun to reform their country and recognise their army. The Spanish success against Napoleon's horders in 1813, encouraged them and inspired them with great national favour to wreak vengeance on Napoleon. Their army was filled with a new enthusiasm, that gave them strength under Blucher to tough fight to Napoleon with a view to bringing about this downfall. Italins, Swedens and many other people under the same spirit took up arms to put an end to the tyranny of Napoleon.

**(11) Napoleon's Ill Treatment and Subsequent Imprisonment of Pope :**

Napoleon committed the greatest blunder in life when first of all he captured the Papal state and later on, the refusal of the pope the religious head of the Catholic Church to enforce the continental system, imprisoned him. This produced a great resentment in the minds of Roman Catholics all over the world especially in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium etc. They began to look upon to destroy Roman Catholicism. They lay low as long as they were helpless. but once they found that breaches had begun to appear in the super structure raised by Napoleon, they rose to a man to put an end the whole Napoleonic system. Wrong religious polity pursued even by the strongest potenate turns out to be his undoing. This also turned out to be true in case of Napoleon. The Roman Catholics in the allies had a religious among other resons to fight to last against the tyranny of Napoleon.

**(12) Napoleon's Relatives :** Napoleon had a great love for his relatives. He made his brother and brother-in-law (Murat) and stepson king and governors of various states conquered by him, without caring to take into considerations their merits for the jobs on which they were put, They were ill fitted to undertake the work of governance with which they had been entrusted. Napoleon himself stated that he had tried to make eagles of his brothers, who proved to be no better than fowls strutting about their homes. He himself confessed after wards that it was wrong on his part to have put Joseph on the throne of Spain. At the time of need, when he required the support of his relative they betrayed him. This was particularly true of his sister, whose husband Murat had been made the king of Naples. Some of them actually complained against him. It was because of this that Napoleon was compelled to state that his brothers complained as if he had wasted the paternal property. They proved

to be a great liability for him. He had to remark in disgust, "My relatives have done me more harm than I have done them good." Had he not shown leniency towards his relatives and give them kingships and either he might not have met his doom so soon.

**(13) His Ministers :** Some of his aides, whom he had raised to the offices of high ministers were not loyal to him. His ministers like Talleyrand and Fouché proved faithless to him. Throughout outwardly swearing loyalty to him, they actually intrigued to put an end to his authority. Napoleon had to cut short his stay in Spain in 1809 on learning that Fouché and Talleyrand were intriguing with Metternich against Napoleon. Again after Napoleon's defeat they at once changed their loyalties.

When Napoleon found that his foreign ministers could not properly cope with the work, he quickly changed them. Talleyrand was replaced by Camille de Castellane and the latter by Murat. This had repercussion on the foreign policy (of foreign country) that thwarted French interests.

**(14) Opposition of the French Middle Class :** Some historians are of the view that Napoleon had completely antagonized the French middle class by continuously pursuing a policy of war and by enforcing the continental system. All this effected the economy of France and was responsible for inflation. The manufactured goods that the middle class needed badly disappeared from the market. This produced ill-will against Napoleon. The people felt that they should be relieved of the rule of a despot, who proclaimed himself to be the 'child of the Revolution.' Yet he had practically destroyed liberty and fraternity. They were very much to be saved from the rule of a dictator.

**(15) British Opposition :** Napoleon had born down the opposition of all the countries of Europe except that of England. She had continued to defy the French continuously since 1793 excepting for a short period in 1802-03, after this signing of the Treaty of Amiens in 1802. But she renewed war against Napoleon. She formed a coalition with European powers to fight against Napoleon. She granted subsidies to various powers, who chose to fight against Napoleon. Austria Prussia etc. received moral and material help in the shape of money, men and equipment to give a tough resistance to the French Emperor. It was because of the active support of British soldiers in large numbers at Leipzig that Napoleon was defeated. Later on, it was because of the active and purposeful negotiation and the initiative of British Foreign Secretary Castlereagh that the Treaty of Chaumont was signed. This treaty bound together England, Russia, Prussia and Austria into a strong alliance with a determination to put an end to the authority of Napoleon. It was a result of this determination leadership provided by Great Britain that the allies succeeded in giving a crushing defeat to Napoleon and sending him to St. Helena in 1815.

**(16) British Navy :** The British navy played a very important role in bringing about the downfall of Napoleon. It was the British navy under Nelson that had compelled him to withdraw from Egypt in 1798. Later on, it was the British Navy that foiled Napoleon's attempt to land troops in Great Britain. The British ships under Nelson gave a crushing defeat to the combined naval forces of Spain and France at Trafalgar in 1805. After this England became mistress of the seas. French and Spanish fleets ceased to be factors in the struggle for power between Napoleon and Great Britain. Foiled in his attempt to defeat England on the seas, Napoleon then tried to bring about the economic ruin of England by establishing the so-called 'Continental System'. But the French Emperor failed in enforcing it fully, because the British navy succeeded in escorting ships carrying goods from England to the continent and vice versa. The British navy carried soldiers and material through Portugal in their struggle against Napoleon. But for the strength of the British navy, British forces could not have reached the Peninsula to break the backbone of French resistance over there. Through vulnerable points on the European continent the British navy threw down troops and subsidies for her allies to fight against Napoleon in the Battle of Nations in 1813 and later on in the Battle of Waterloo.

**(17) Moscow Campaign 1812 :** The Moscow Campaign undertaken by Napoleon in 1812, was an important cause of his downfall. Fisher had rightly stated. "The downfall of Napoleon is a trilogy of which Moscow, Leipzig and Fountainebleau the successive pieces and Waterloo the epilogue." Of this trilogy the utter failure of the Moscow Campaign foreshadowed the downfall of Napoleon. The Emperor committed the greatest blunder of his life, when he decided to attack Russia in order to punish Czar Alexander for breaking away from the Continental System. He marched at the head of his Grand Army to overrun Russia. It has been briefly explained in last lesson how the Russian, avoiding open conflict until Napoleon reached Borodino, where he met stiff resistance. He entered Moscow only to find that the city was burning. Food was scarce. His army began to starve. Then came the severe Russian winter that took a heavy toll of death. Napoleon had to leave Russia in despair. The losses of his army were killed during the course of this campaign. It ended in fiasco to the complete disgrace and humiliation of Napoleon. The great myth of Napoleonic invincibility was gone. It encouraged European states like Prussia and Austria to take up arms against him once again, with a view to bringing about his downfall. It was after the failure of the Russian Campaign that the Czar succeeded in inducing the king of Prussia to declare war against Napoleon. After some time Austria also joined them to fight 'War of Liberation'.

**(18) The Battle of Leipzig :** The Battle of Leipzig fought in October, 1813 was an important link in the downfall of Napoleon. All the big powers of Europe joined hands to give a crushing defeat to Napoleon at the Battle of Leipzig, called the battle of Nations. They then closed on Paris, with Napoleon surrendering to allies. Napoleon tried to

flee away, but he was captured. He signed his abdication at Fountainebleau and was sent to Elba. But he returned secretly to France in March 1815, and over there for hundred days more.

**(19) The Battle of Waterloo June, 1815 :** The determination of the allies put an end to Napoleon's power by defeating him at Waterloo. It was the great strategy to Duke of Wellington and the great military support given by Prussians army under Blucher to him that brought victory to allies. Napoleon appeared to be winning in the begining. But his attempts to keep Blucher's forces away from the battlefield ended in smoke. Blucher succeeded in attacking the French army from one side, while Wellington was fighting on the other side. Napoleon was caught between the two great armies and was completely defeated. His star had set. He was captured and sent as a prisoner to Island to St. Helena. Thus ended the career of a great general, who had dominated Europe for about to decades.

In conclusion, we may quote Fullar once again. He states, "Napoleon's strategy failed not only because his means were inadequate, or because his presumption was inordinate, but because his policy was out of tune with the spirit of his age. He had hinted at establishing a universal empire and followed in the foot steps of the great conquerors of the part, But time had changed. No longer was Europe a conglomeration of tribes and peoples, but instead a mass of crystallizing nations," He wrote that at Jena he had destroyed not only a federal army but feudalism itself. Out of its ashes rose a national army which at Leipzig destroyed Napoleon.

#### **Suggested Readings**

1. Ketelbey : A Short History of Modern Europe.
2. H.A.L. Fisher : Napoleon.
3. Fuller : The Decisive Battle of the Western World, vol. II
4. Leo Gershoy : The French Revolution and Napoleon.

---

**LESSON NO. 1.7**

---

**CONGRESS OF VIENNA (September 1814-June 1815)**

**or**

**The Settlement of 1815**

**INTRODUCTION :**

Napoleon had upset the political and geographical map of Europe during the first one and a half decade of the 19th century. Countries and states were wiped out and new kingdoms were founded. During this period, European powers joined together in successive Coalitions under England's leadership to strike at Napoleon but achieved no success. Rather Napoleon marched from one victory to another. But England continued to mobilize all her efforts and resources to overthrow Napoleon. His defeat was vital to the very existence of England and the security and independence of all the European powers. The consistent pressure of allied forces and various other factors weakened the resistance of Napoleon and finally he was overthrown. Napoleon's defeat created a grave situation and raised many complicated political problems. As his victories had changed the political destiny of almost all the European countries, his defeat also affected all of them. The prime need was the geographical and political reconstruction of Europe.

**Representatives in the Congress of Vienna :** The Congress of Vienna was one of the greatest political conferences in European history. Among its participants were such celebrities as the Emperors of Austria and Russia, the Kings of Prussia, Bavaria Wurtemberg and Denmark. Many princes of lesser importance and the diplomats of Europe-among whom Metternich, Talleyrand and Castlereagh were most conspicuous. Thus all powers except Turkey were represented.

The Congress met in Vienna in recognition of the leading part played by Austria in defeating Napoleon. Austrian Chancellor Count Metternich presided over the deliberations of the Congress. According to Hazen this Congress cost Austria about 16 (sixteen) million dollars at a time when the state was virtually bankrupt.

**Is it Correct to call this Congress a congress in the true sense of the word ?**

The Congress of Vienna should not be called a Congress in strict sense of the term. It was never formally inaugurated. Almost all decisions were finalized in special sessions of the committees, constituted by the great powers. The decisions were simply conveyed to smaller powers. In fact, the decision making authority was left to Russia, Austria, Prussia and England, called the Big Fours. Other countries had to accept their decisions as they were conveyed to them. Sometimes considerations of national interests made it difficult for the great powers to reach an accord. According to Hazen at one stage there arose a situation of war breaking out among the big powers, though they had got together to discuss the terms of peace.

**Problems before the Congress :** Napoleon had annexed a number of small states. So, to restore the legitimate rulers and establish an efficient government in these states was a major task before the Congress. The second problem was to crush the principles of the French Revolution also to free those countries which had been influenced by the revolutionary ideas. Thirdly, to restore the power of the Roman Catholic Church and to strengthen the position of the Pope. Fourthly, the Congress wanted to ensure that in future France should not be able to disturb the peace of Europe. Fifthly, the Congress was keen to establish permanent peace in Europe. Sixthly, the problem of the redistribution of Napoleon's colonies. And finally, the war indemnity of France was to be determined.

**Principles adopted by the Congress to solve the above Problems**

It was natural that the Congress adopted certain guidelines and principles for the settlement of those complex problems. More so when at times these involved the conflicting interests of great powers. Congress laid down certain principles, but more often than not the statesmen disregarded and violated these principles when these did not suit their national interests.

**Principles of Security :** In accordance with the principle of security, the powers sought to maintain the balance of power on the continent and contain France in a manner so as to make her incapable of violating the international peace. In conformity with this principle, the Kingdom of Saxony was given to Prussia. States bordering France were expanded in size. The general idea was to create a ring of strong states around France.



**Principle of Compensation :** The principle was enforced to provide for compensation to the countries which had suffered during the Napoleonic wars. These states were England, Russia, Prussia Austria and Sweden.

**Principle of Legitimacy :** The legitimate rights of the reigning families of Europe which had been dislodged by Napoleon, were recognized by the congress. In accordance with this principle, legitimate ruling dynasties were restored in France, Holland, Portugal, Naples and in various small kingdoms of Italy.

### **Decisions of the Congress**

**Restoration of the Reigning Dynasties :** As far as possible, the reigning dynasties were restored in their respective countries. The Bourbons were restored in Spain, Naples and Sicily. The House of Orange was restored in Holland. The House of Savoy was restored in Piedmont and Sardinia. The Pope was restored in Rome with all his possessions. German princes whose territories had been included by Napoleon in the Confederation of the Rhine were also restored their territories. Tyrol was given to Austria. The right of Austria to the Austrian Netherlands (modern Belgium) was recognized and she was allowed to exchange it for some other territory.

**Decisions with regard to France :** All the conquered territories which were incorporated by Napoleon in France were taken away. The frontiers of France were reduced to what they were in 1791. Louis XVIII, the younger brother of Louis XVI of the House of Bourbon, was restored as the ruler of France. An Army of occupation, numbering one lakh and fifty thousand was to be stationed in France under the command of Wellington. War indemnity of 70 crores Francs was imposed on France.

**Gains of England :** England's gains were considerable. She had doggedly resisted Napoleon and taken initiative in the formation of successive European Coalitions against him. She had also borne the major financial burden of Allied efforts against Napoleon. So she retained a fair amount of the conquered territories of France. She occupied Heligoland in the North Sea, Malta and the Ionian Islands in the Mediterranean but her real gains were in the colonies. She received Trinidad from Spain, Mauritius and Tobago from France and Ceylon and Cape of Good Hope from Holland. Thus she became the greatest colonial and naval power of the world.

**Russia's Gains :** She was allowed to retain Finland which she had conquered from Sweden. She was also given Bessarabia which she had captured from the Turks. She also got most of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. As a result, Russia now advanced in the west towards Europe to the extent never attained by her before. Consequently she became more involved in European affairs.

**Austria's Gains :** The convening of the meeting of the Congress in Vienna had enhanced the prestige of Austria with the result that the Hapsburgs appropriated substantial profit out of the bargain. Austria refused to receive back her territories in southern Germany and Belgium because these areas were too far and created for her the problem of security. In fact now Austria wanted to strengthen and consolidate her position in southern and central Europe. So she recovered her territories in central Poland and exchanged Austrian Netherlands for areas in Northern Italy. These were the Kingdom of Lombardy and Venetia. Austria was also given Illyrian Provinces on the eastern coast of the Adriatic sea. By this extension of her coast line, Austria's importance as a maritime power immensely increased. In the west, her territory was pushed towards Tyrol and Salzburg. She also strengthened her position in the Alps. Thus we see that the population of Austria increased by four or five millions than what it was in 1792. She obtained in lieu of remote and unprofitable possessions substantial areas which raised her prestige in central Europe. She directly controlled parts of northern Italy and exercised indirect control on other areas in Italy. Austrian policy was defined by Metternich in these words. "We wished to establish our empire without there being any contact with France."

**Decisions regarding Italy :** Austrian interests determined the territorial arrangements of Italy. Austria established her control in certain strategic areas of Italy and from there Austria wanted to exert her influence over other Italian states. The Duchy of Parma was given to Napoleon's wife Marie Louis, an Austrian princess. Hapsburg princes, the ruling House of Austria, were placed on the thrones of Modena and Tuscany. The Papal states were reconstituted. In all Italian states French influence was replaced by that of Austria. Thus Metternich's desire that Italy should remain merely 'a geographical expression' was fulfilled. Curiously enough the doctrine of legitimacy was ignored by the Congress in the case of Italian republics. "Republics are no longer fashionable", remarked the Czar to a Genoese

deputation which came to protest against the transfer of Genoa to Sardinia and Venice (Venetia) to Austria.

**Prussian Gains :** Prussia was given the province of Posen out of the Duchy of Warsaw, two fifths of the Kingdom of Saxony, extensive territories on both banks of the river Rhine and she also got Pomerania from Sweden.

**Decisions regarding Germany :** Metternich prevented the emergence of a strong and united Germany. He felt that a strong Germany would clash with the imperial interests of Austria. He wanted to keep the German states under Austrian control. Thus a loose German Confederation of thirty eight sovereign States was established by the Treaty of Vienna (1815). There was to be a Federal Diet at Frankfurt under the Presidency of Austria. All the thirty-eight states were to send their representatives to the Diet which had no authority to collect taxes or raise a German army. Thus Germany was kept deliberately disunited in total disregard of the national feelings of the Germans.

**Miscellaneous Decisions of the Congress :** Of the miscellaneous decisions, important were that Norway was taken from Denmark and given to Sweden. The frontiers of Spain and Portugal were left untouched. The institution of slavery was condemned.

### **Criticism of the Decisions of the Congress**

From the above account we can see that the decisions of the Congress were not inspired by noble ideals. On surface, representative of powerful states advocated high ideals. They proclaimed slogans like the social uplift of Europe, reconstruction of the political system of Europe and enduring peace based upon a just distribution of power. Though it was attempted to make the people feel that the deliberations of the Congress were in their interest but they could not be deceived. It was clear that the victorious powers were fighting each other to appropriate maximum spoils of victory. Germans were subjected to great humiliation. According to Hazen, "Germans were indignant as they saw themselves considered as mere articles." A German editor denounced this as a heartless system of statistics.

Blucher compared this Congress to the annual cattle fair. The principle of legitimacy was followed to the extent it suited the great powers. There were departures from this principle in the case of the Republics and of some rulers. Gustavus IV of Sweden who had been deposed, was not restored.

The King of Denmark was forced to agree to the dismemberment of his territories.

Allied powers who had criticised Napoleon for his disregard of the rights of the people and Governments, betrayed his attitudes at the Congress. The diplomats of Vienna ignored the rights of the smaller states to further the interests of their countries. If Napoleon had crushed the principle of nationality to fulfil his ambitions, the diplomats at Vienna did no better. In violation of the principle of nationality, Austria was given a prominent position in Italy. Norway was detached from Denmark and given to Sweden though there was affinity of language between the people of Norway and Denmark. This adjustment was made to compensate Sweden for the loss of Finland which was given to Russia. Belgium was given to Holland.

According to Hazen, the Congress was an assembly of aristocrats who either ignored or hated the ideas of nationalism or democracy. The victorious Allies devised arrangements about European countries as if it was a settlement of their private properties. They totally disregarded the idea of nationality which had fired the imagination of the people. The principles which would have led to the establishment of enduring peace were ignored. The history of Europe after 1815 is primarily the history of successful struggles to rectify the Congress decisions.

**Self-interests was the Key to these Bargains :** The selfishness of the great powers was evident in the deliberations of the Congress. Prussia was willing to give up her Polish provinces if she could be compensated elsewhere. She fixed her attention on the rich Kingdom of Saxony with its important cities of Dresden and Leipzig. Though there was a king of Saxony and the principle of legitimacy should have been applied to him too but since he had honoured his treaties with Napoleon down to the battle of Leipzig, so Prussia denounced him as a traitor. As such his state could be made into a lawful prize. Prussia preferred to receive her increase of territory in Saxony rather than in the west along the river Rhine because Saxony had a common frontier with Prussia. She could thus consolidate and become more compact whereas any possession she might have acquired along the Rhine would have been cut off from the Kingdom by the intervening states. Moreover she wished no common boundary with France because she felt that, she would always be weak along the Rhine. Russia and Prussia supported each other's claims. Prussia supported Russian claim to Duchy

of Warsaw and Russia supported Prussian claim to the Kingdom of Saxony but England, France and Austria opposed these demands. England did not want increase in the power of Russia and Prussia. A strong Prussia could threaten Hanover which had been given to England by the Congress. Austria opposed it because she feared the power of Russia and the expansion of Prussia in northern and central Germany. The Polish and Saxony questions formed the most difficult subject before the Congress. Heated discussions took place. Talleyrand exploited this conflict of interests and concluded a secret alliance with England and Austria. The question created such a tense situation that the two groups - one comprising Russia and Prussia, the other England, Austria and France, ultimately got ready to go to war. However, ultimately the demands were moderated by Russia and Prussia. The final decision was that Russia received the major share of the Duchy of Warsaw. Prussia got the Polish province of Posen, and Cracow was declared a free city. The King of Saxony was restored to his throne and was allowed to retain the important cities of Dresden and Leipzig but had to cede to Prussia about 2/3 of his kingdom. As a further compensation, Prussia was given territories on both banks of the Rhine (Rhinish Provinces). Prussia also acquired Pomerania from Sweden which completed her control on the coast along the Baltic. Thus the deliberations of the Congress, its decisions and agreements, the demands and interests of its victorious powers clearly demonstrate the selfishness of the great powers. Big powers pushed through almost all their demands. They made a number of territorial adjustments depriving the smaller states of their due. Similarly, the influence exerted by the Big Four was proportionate to their military strength.

**Dissatisfaction with the Decisions of the Congress :** The European people hailed the Congress and gave it wholehearted support because they wanted peace at any price. They had become exhausted and fed up with a long period of bloody wars, but from the very beginning peoples of many countries resented and questioned the decisions of the Congress. The greatest opposition came from the French. They resented the territorial change in their natural frontiers. Helplessly they suffered the loss of a number of rich and strategic areas while Prussia, Austria and England received substantial territorial gains. So France felt considerably weakened in comparison to other European powers. Belgians resented the treaties

because their country was attached to Holland without their consent. Later in 1830, the Belgians revolted and abrogated the treaties of 1815. Decisions regarding Germany and Italy were undone by their people between 1860 and 1870 and they brought about the unification of their countries.

**Fyffe's View :** According to Professor Fyffe, the settlement of Vienna was made at the parting of ways between great powers in the history of Europe. When we compare the decisions of the Congress of Vienna and the Treaty of Versailles, we see clearly that the treaties of 1815 were not as harsh and severe as the Peace Settlement of 1919 proved to be. Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary of England, was not influenced by the idea of revenge. He made it clear to the diplomats at Vienna that they had got together to give an enduring peace to Europe. The principles of arbitration and mediation adopted were wherever and whenever possible. As a result, the treatment of France was not very harsh. Against it, after the first World War, Germany was held responsible for the activities and policies of its Emperor William II and was deprived of large territories and colonies. A huge war indemnity was imposed on her which amounted to millions of dollars and was not within her capacity to pay. But on the contrary, though it is true that Napoleon disturbed the peace of Europe and plunged Europe into a long period of bloody wars, the French were not held responsible for the activities of Napoleon. Even the treaty dictated to France after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo was fairly mild. Its provisions bear out the point. Boundaries of France were recognised to be what they were in 1791 and not in 1789. A war indemnity of only 70 million Francs was imposed which France easily paid off by 1818 and the Allied army of occupation was then withdrawn from France.

**Peace in Europe for a Century :** The arrangements concluded at Vienna in a spirit of conciliation and toleration preserved the peace of Europe for the next hundred years. There was no major war in Europe during this period. Against it, the result of the severe peace treaty forced upon Germany in 1919 was that the Second World War broke out in 1939.

It is true that there were many flaws in the settlement of Vienna. Very often, interests of smaller powers were ignored. Nationalism received a crushing blow in the case of many countries. Unification of some countries was prevented. Areas of some countries were detached and attached to other countries arbitrarily. Great powers were being guided by their selfishness. But it is also true that the victors did not dictate an unjust peace to the

vanquished. They did not carve out large areas for themselves out of the defeated country. They did not completely dislocate the economy of France. Castlereagh played an important role in the adoption and implementation of the policy. He only wanted to curb the striking power of France and not to crush her totally. Supporting this view, Grant and Temperley opine that it has become a fashion to criticise the settlement of Vienna.

**The Eastern Question was too complex to be solved :** Some historians have criticised the Vienna diplomats for not finding a solution of the Eastern Question but this charge is not justified because the Eastern Question was an extremely complex problem. European diplomats tried to solve this problem all through the nineteenth century but did not succeed and Turkey continued as "the sick man of Europe".

**Condemnation of Slavery :** The congress deliberated upon the problems of slavery. Though it did not take substantial measures to totally ban slave traffic yet it condemned it in strong words and held that it violated fundamental human rights.

**Example of Settlement of Disputes through Negotiations :** The Congress was an example of the settlement of disputes through negotiations. The efforts of the Congress resulted in inspiring a feeling of co-operation and conciliation among the European powers who realized that problems and disputes could be solved through negotiations and mediations. The experiment of mutual cooperation was repeated on a large scale in subsequent years and especially after the First and the Second World Wars. The Congress also made rules to regulate trade relations among the European countries and there by promoted friendly feelings among them.

**Conclusion :** As all actions have two aspects, positive and negative advantageous and disadvantageous, appreciative and critical, likewise the Settlement of Vienna also had its merits and demerits but on judging it by the standards of that age, one certainly feels that the constructive of positive features of the Vienna settlement overshadowed its flaws and omissions.

### **Suggested Readings**

1. Hazen, C.D. : *Europe Since 1815, pp. 1-10.*
2. Hazen, C.D. : *Modern Europe Upto 1945, pp. 234-39.*
3. Marriot, J.A.R. : *A History of Europe from 1815 to 1939.*
4. Ketelbey, C.D.M. : *A History of Modern Times, pp. 143-49.*

### Suggested Questions

1. Discuss the important decisions of the Vienna Congress and throw light on their significance.
2. "The Congress of Vienna made mistakes of both Dommission and Commission." Comment.

### Self-Check Exercise

1. Tick the correct statements :
  - (i) The Vienna Settlement was made by :
    - (a) The Rulers of Europe
    - (b) Representatives of all the European powers except Turkey
  - (ii) Vienna is the capital of :
    - (a) Austria
    - (b) Prussia
    - (c) Denmark
  - (iii) President of the Congress of Vienna was :
    - (a) Czar Alexander
    - (b) Telleyrand
    - (c) Metternich.
2. What were the principles which guided the work of the Congress of Vienna :
  - (a) .....
  - (b) .....
  - (c) .....
3. Fill in the blanks :
  - (i) Rule of the ..... was restored in France in 1814.
  - (ii) At the Vienna Congress frontiers of France were adjusted to what they were in.....
  - (iii) War indemnity of ..... was levied on France.
  - (iv) Germany was made into a Confederation of .....states.
  - (v) Netherland (Belgium) was attached to .....
  - (vi) The Vienna Settlement disregarded.....

### Key to Answers

1. (i) b (ii) a (iii) c
2. (a) Security (b) Compensation (c) Legitimacy
3. (i) Bourbons (ii) 1791 A.D. (iii) Seventy million Frances  
(iv) Thirty-Eight (v) Holland (vi) Nationalism.



**CHECK UP YOUR POSITION**

Excellent	:	Above 6 correct answers.
Good	:	5-6 correct answers.
Satisfactory	:	4 correct answers.
Unsatisfactory	:	Less than 4 correct answers.

---

**LESSON NO. 1.8**

---

**UNIFICATION OF ITALY, 1848-1870**

**Introduction :**

There had developed a keen desire in the forties of the nineteenth century in various states of Italy, that there should be one united national state in the country. There schools of thought had taken hold of the minds of the people as to how the unification of Italy was to be effected. 'Mazzini' who was responsible for lighting an unextinguishable fire in the hearts of Italians to work for a United Italian republic believed that Austria could be expelled from the country by raising revolts in various parts of the land and then a united republic could be set up for whole of Italy. The advocate of the second school of thought was Gioberti, who firmly believed that Italy should be united in a federation under the Pope of Rome. Ceasare Balbo and others were of the view that unification of Italy would be brought about by the House of Savoy, which ruled over Sardinia - Piedmont. They opined that Charles, the Piedmontese King, was a strong nationalist, who sympathised with the aspirations of the people and would do his best for the regeneration of Italy.

**The Revolution of 1848-49 :** With the accession of Pius IX as Pope of Rome in 1846, the people began to nurse a hope that he would bring about the unification of the country. He had begun well and introduced a number of reforms much to the annoyance and resentment of Prime Metternich, who sent troops into Ferrara (in Papal States). This was very much resented by the people.

King Ferdinand II of the Two Sicilies (Naples and the Island of Sicily) was an arch reactionary, who had let loose the reign of repression and suppression in his kingdom. The people of Sicily resented that very much. Encouraged by the Mazzinians they raised the standard of revolt against the king in January, 1848. From Sicily the revolt spread to the mainland of Naples. The king found himself in an unenviable position. He was compelled to issue political amnesty to the people and grant a constitution. He thus

went a step further than the Pope. The outbreak of revolution in Naples and the success of the revolutionaries in getting a constitution for the state encouraged the people of Tuscany to rise in rebellion. King Leopold II had to bow before the wishes of the people and to promulgate constitution in Tuscany in February, 1848. King Charles Albert also could not remain different to the wishes of the people. He had abolished censorship of press in 1847. When he found that the Pope had taken some progressive steps by introducing reforms. In the administration, he granted a constitution to the state in March 1848. Strong revolutionary sentiments had begun to take hold of the mind of the people. The Pope was very much frightened to find insurrectionary tendency growing in his domain and out of fear he was also compelled to grant a constitution, which he wanted to work properly. In the meaning, revolution had broken out in Vienna in March 1848, so that Metternich, the Chancellor had to run away to London to save his life. This spurred on the people of Lombardy and Venetia to rebel against their much hated Austrian masters. The people of Milan carried on a successful revolt against Radetzky, the Austrian Viceroy who had to evacuate Milan after five days resistance.

In Venetia too, anti-Austrian forces succeeded against the aliens. They took control of the Government. Venice (capital) became an independent republic under the Mazzinian Daniel Manin. The Austrian power appeared to be on the verge of total collapse in Lombardy and Venetia, and the pro-Austrian princes of the various Italian states had been compelled to grant constitutions. Radetzky had taken refuge in famous Quadrilatera fort of Mantua. He was making preparation for swooping down on Milan the capital of Lombardy. Milan was in sore straits. Lombards required the support of Italians to save themselves from the danger of the restoration of Austrian rule over them. The situation at the time, therefore, was very much critical. The nationalists of Italy were on trial. They needed a leader, who could lead them in a war of liberation against the Austrians. Such a leader was found in Charles Albert, who regarded Austrians as the sworn enemies of Italy and stumbling block in the unification of the country. Nationalists appealed to him to come forward. Cavour, who was then the editor of the paper *Il Risorgimento*, made a fervent appeal to him to lead the war against the aliens in the interest of the nation as a whole. He listened to him and decided to act. He issued a proclamation on March 23,

1848 to the people of Lombardy and Venetia assuring them his people's sympathy against their oppressors. He stated that "they were coming to give them that assistance", as Grant and Temperley write, "which a brother expects from a brother, and a friend from a friend." Charles Albert of Sardinia declared war against Austria on March 23, 1848. His army mainly consisting of the Piedmontese was joined by some contingents sent by Tuscany, the Papal states and Naples. In the meantime, there had been revolts in Modena and Parma, where the people recorded their votes in favour of union with Piedmont. The Sardinian army moved forward. Napoleon's army was withdrawn by its king on the pretext of suppressing an insurrection. The people also declared that his forces would not fight against Austria. This was a great set back for Charles Albert. But all the same he moved forward to fight against Austria.

**Battle of Custozza July 25, 1848 :** General Redetzky, who was a great strategist came forward to meet him at Custozza. He was more than a match for Charles Albert, whom he defeated at Custozza on July 5, 1848. Charles Albert was driven back from Milan, whose people however wrongly felt that he had betrayed them. The Austrians recaptured Milan. Charles Albert and his army were permitted to withdraw. He signed an armistice, which the Piedmontese decried and he had to declare war once again. The defeat of Charles Albert encouraged Mazzini to remark that the *royal war was over and the people's war had begun*.

In the meantime new developments were taking place at a quick pace in different Italian states. The Pope had introduced a constitution in March, 1848 and he wanted to work it in right earnest. But the extremists among the revolutionaries were dissatisfied with the reforms. One of them murdered his Chief Minister Rossi. This frightened Pius IX so much, that he fled to *Genoa* to seek refuge there. He no longer remained a votary to reform and the hopes of some people that he would head the government of United Italy, were gone for ever.

The people of Tuscany had been hoping that their Leopold king would work for a scheme to give unity to the country. But they realized that he could not go so far. Hence there was a revolt against him too. He had also to leave Florence (his capital), to seek refuge in *Genoa*. After Pope's flight from Rome, Mazzini established a republic over there. A Triumvirate, with him as head, controlled the government of this republic. Three republics had thus come

into being as a result of the revolution of Tuscany, of Rome and of Venice. It has been stated above that in 1848 - the republics after their success at Custoza, the Austrians had recaptured Milan. They were naturally keen to overthrow the venetian Republic and the Roman Republic also, to restore them to their old position. Mazzini was at command at Rome. He along with Garibaldi was preparing for a struggle against the Pope and Austria, whereas Austrians were keen to crush them. The fate of Italy hung however, upon Piedmont. Its king under pressure from his people denounced the armistice and declared war against Austria on March 12, 1849.

**Battle of Novara March, 23, 1849 :** Sardinian army crossed the frontier on March 20, 1849. Their king was, however, defeated at the Battle of Novara on March 23, 1849. He was to sign a humiliating peace. He, however, refused to do so. He abdicated in favour of his son. Victor Emmanuel II, who signed peace with Austria. But he refused to withdraw the constitution, despite the pressure of Austria. The Italians, therefore began to look upon him as a friend of the people and a monarch, who could be counted upon to fight for a cause, so dear to their heart. The defeat of Charles Albert was a national calamity for Italy. It set a chain of reactions in various Italian states. The reactionary regime of the worst type had already been established once again in Naples by Ferdinand II much before the Austrians had recouped and recovered their strength in the north. In May 1849, Sicily once again fell under the despotic rule of Ferdinand. The rulers of Tuscany, Modena and Parma were also restored to their respective possessions. Reaction seemed to triumph every where except in Piedmont and in the two republics of Rome and Venetia.

The Austrians were still thinking of re-capturing Rome for the Pope; when Louis Napoleon (later on Napoleon III) the president of French Republic decided to act or counteract their designs. He wanted to win the support of the clergy and the Roman Catholics of France and to strengthen his position in the country by winning glory in a war in favour of the Pope. He sent his army to recapture Rome. Mazzini and Garibaldi organized a stiff resistance but all in vain. On June 30, 1839 the city fell to the French troops. Garibaldi left the city with his followers, whom he could promise no respite and relief from a career of strife and hunger. The Pope was restored to his old position with the support of the French troops, which remained there until 1870. Pope had shed off his liberalism and set up a reactionary rule in the so-called Papal States.

The Austrians after consolidating their position in all the northern states (excepting Piedmont and Venice) and in the central states then fell upon Venice. They besieged the city, which surrendered to them on August 24, 1890. Daniel Manin fled into exile. Venetia passed under the control of Austria, which tightened its grip over the people. The revolution of 1848-49 failed miserably and Italy once again passed under the control of unscrupulous despotic-rulers.

The failure of the revolution of 1848-49 and re-establishment of Austrian power in Lombardy-Venetia as well as the restoration of despots in various states had certain lessons for the leaders of Italian unity.

### **CAVOUR AND HIS WORK FOR ITALIAN UNITY**

Count Cavour, Comillo Benso (1810-61), popularly known as Cavour was the architect of Italian unity. He was the younger son of the Piedmontese landlord Count Michel Benso q' Cavour and a Swiss mother. He could not inherit his father's property being a younger son. Hence he had to work his own way in life, like a middle class youngman. He joined the Piedmontese army early in life, but resigned the post. He then took up the management of his father's estates and managed them very well. The experience gained by him in managing the lands, proved to be an invaluable help to him, later on, in developing the economic resources of Piedmont for the good of Italy as a whole. He had been a youngman of radical outlook in early life But the "July Revolution of 1830 moderated his radicalism and taught him that a traditional monarch could also be liberal and avoid the extreme of revolution and reaction." He travelled far and wide and visited France and England. He was very much impressed with the working of the constitutional monarchy in England and also with the government of Louis Philippe in the early years of his constitutional rule. He, therefore, came to believe that a constitutional form of government was the best form of government to advance the interest of the people and his country. In the beginning, he did not like the rule of Charles Albert, as he had not yet introduced reforms for the good of the people. But when Charles Albert removed the censorship of the press, he began to feel that after all, he was not a bad ruler. He did not in his early life, believe in Italian unity but as time passed, he felt that Italy had to be united for regeneration of the people as a whole. He founded the paper *II-Resorgiment* in 1847 to preach the gospel of Italian unity. He did not believe in Mazzini's methods

of revolution to bring unity of Italy as a republic. The victory of Mazzini's methods according to him in the words of a writer, would have meant the end of monarchy, the end of aristocratic predominance at Turin, the end of Piedontese hopes of conquer and absorbtion of the provinces of Italy. "Like d" Azeglion he had to come to beieve that regeneration of Italy would come only through the efforts of the House of Savoy, neither through revolution nor through the leadership of a Pope. It has already been stated how when Milan rose in revolt against Austria, he made a fervent appeal to king Charles Albert to come to the rescue of the valiant fighters of freedom against the alien rule. Then came the war between Piedmont and Austrian troops. Charles Albert was defeated first at Custoza in July, and then finally at Novara in 1849. According to him the defeat was the result of incompetence and betrayal of the people by other princes. He therefore, decided to enter politics. He was elected to the Piedmontese Parliament at Turin in 1848 and made his mark as a parliamentarian after some time. Firm believer as he was. In the constitutional monarchy, he was of the opinion that Piedmont under Victor Emmanuel would bring unity to the country. He prophesied in 1850. "Piedmont gathering itself all the living forces of Italy will be soon in a position to lead our mother country to the high destinies, to which she is called."

His merits as a statesman, were soon recognized and he was made the Minister of Agriculture. He made his mark as a great administrator by developing agriculture along scientific lines by using progressive methods. He became the Prime Minister of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1852 and held this position right up to his death excepting for a few months in 1859-60.

**Cavour as Prime Minister :** Cavour had a great faith in the destiny of Piedmont and of Italy. He believed that his state could lead the country to its cherished goal only after its economy had been put on sound footing and its government run on efficient lines, so as to become the envy of the Italian states. Hence he worked to improve its agriculture, trade and commerce. He built a network of railways, that were very much instrumental in improving the economy of the country. A national bank was set up a sound system of taxation was introduced. Foreign investments were encouraged. Free trade was introduced. This led to a great economic growth of the country. He encouraged education. He passed laws to reduce the clerigal power. All this made Piedmont a prosperous enlightened land, which

made a model state for other Italian dukedoms, states and provinces. Their people began to feel that if their states were absorbed into Piedmont, they could also hope to lead a life of freedom and prosperity. Thus was a great tribute to the genius of Cavour. He could claim to be a great Italian statesman of the 19th century because of his internal reforms and even if he had not brought about the unity of Italy through successful foreign policy.

**Cavour's Foreign Policy Work of Unity :** Cavour was an astute diplomat and a shrewd statesman. He believed with other Italian statesmen and if Italian unity was to be brought about, Austrians would have to be completely turned out of the Peninsula. Italy could not do so by pursuing a policy of insurrections and revolutions as had been clearly proved by the failure of the revolution of 1848-49. He had also come to the conclusion that the dictum. "Italia fara da se" i.e. Italy will act by herself, had proved to be false in the face of the events of the last few years. He had sincerely come to believe that Italy could not settle her fate without foreign help. He worked his foreign policy with a view of winning the support of some great power, in the struggle against Austria.

"He was anti-Austrian to the marrow of his bones and was preparing the ground for mounting a diplomatic campaign against the country, his first challenge to Austria came in 1853, when after a Mazzinian outbreak in Milan the Austrians confiscated the estates of certain Lombards, who had become naturalized Piedmontese." Cavour at once broke off diplomatic relations with Austria, to show to the world that he, as the Prime Minister of Piedmont, true to the Piedmontese tradition was a champion of the Italian independence. He wanted to catch the attention of the great powers of Europe, so that they could feel that there was the pressing Italian problem. An opportunity offered itself to him when the Crimean war broke out. It was his master King Victor Emmanuel II, who pressed him against his own wishes, to join the allies in this war against Russia. Piedmontese army was sent to participate in the Crimean war under the command of Lo Marmora. The Piedmontese could not play an important part in the war. But their participation in the war won them a place in the peace conference at Paris. This was a net gain for the Italians. To quote Grant and Temperley "Out of this mud (the mud of the Sebastopo trenches) said a Piedmontese soldier. "Italy will be made, and the words expressed the essential aim. Cavour could exploit his position as a representative of Piedmont at the peace conference at Paris to the maximum



advantage for Italians. No doubt, no material gain came to Piedmont by way of addition of territory, yet there were certain indirect gain that advanced *the case of Italian Unity in the first place* the very presence of Cavour at the conference as representative of Piedmont (Italy showed that there was an Italian problem awaiting solution. *Secondly*, Lord Clarendon, the British representative condemned the misgovernment in Naples, and Papal states. *Again* the presence of Austrian troops in central Italy was considered as a violation of the decision of the Congress of Vienna. *Thirdly*, the participation of Cavour in the conference enabled him to win the sympathy of England and France for the Italian cause. Of special significance for Italy was the great contact that Cavour succeeded in establishing with Napoleon III and the knowledge that he derived about the working of Napoleon III and the knowledge that he derived about the working of Napoleon's mind by establishing a rapport with him. This was of great advantage to Cavour in obtaining active French support against Austria, in the war to come. *Fourthly*, the deliberations at the conference 'strengthened Cavour's' belief that the problem of Italy could not be solved by diplomatic means and that it would be necessary to face bravely possibility of further armed struggle against Austria. All the same he knew it thoroughly well that he would have to ask the aid of some great power to measure swords with the aliens, at first he tried to enlist the active support of London in such a war, but all in vain. He then tried to win over Napoleon III. Events moved so quickly in 1858 that the French Emperor fell like a ripe fruit for an alliance with Piedmont, through the incessant efforts of Cavour. Reasons for this were not far to seek.

**Reasons :** Napoleon (*in the first instance*) sympathised with the Italian cause, since in his youth, he had known something of revolutionary movement in Italy. He had real sympathy with the doctrine of nationalism. This naturally drew him to the side of Cavour. The Emperor sent a secret messenger to Cavour to meet him at Plombieres to have talks with him on Italy.

**Plombiers Meeting and the Compact :** The Emperor and Cavour met at Plombieres on July 21, 1858 and drew up a compact secretly. It was confirmed by a secret treaty called a defensive alliance, in December, 1858. The main terms of the treaty were the following :

1. France was to come to the aid of Piedmont in future possible war against Austria, provided the latter proved to be an aggressor. Before the outbreak of hostilities, France was to put 2 lac soldiers in the field.

2. Austria was to be (in this war) expelled from Italy bag and baggage and was to be deprived of her possessions in the country.
3. The two provinces of Lombardy and Venetia, under, Austria, were to be passed on the piedmont after the victory. The duchies of Parma and Modena along with some parts of the Papal states as well as Lombardy and Venetia were to be joined with kingdom of North Italy under king Victor Emmanuel II.
4. Tuscany and part of Papal states were to form the Kingdom of Central Italy whereas the Pope was to retain direct control over Rome and surrounding areas. Naples and Sicily were to remain as separate states.
5. Napoleon III must have his reward for his participation in the war. He would get Savoy (the actual partimony of Victor Emmanuel II) and Nice, the birth place of Garibaldi.

**The War (1859) :** Once Cavour had secured the French alliance against Austria, he began to make preparations for the coming trial of strength. He moved the troops towards the Lombardian frontier. It had been decided at Plombieres that matter should be so arranged that war should break out as soon as possible. Napoleon III himself gave a hint to the Austrian ambassador about the working of his mind by telling him on January 1, 1859, "I regret our relations with your Government are not as good as formerly. At Napoleon's instance a pamphlet had been published in France preaching the doctrine of nationality and nationalism and stating that it applied equally to Germany and Italy. This implied that Italy should hint that Piedmont was preparing for war by declaring in the parliament. In a dramatic development, Austria issued an ultimatum to Sardinia to disarm within three days and then suddenly moved the Austrian army into Piedmont much to the joy of Cavour. The hope that Cavour had almost abandoned was realized, and Austria stood forth before Europe as the aggressor.

The die is cast and we have made history, he said exultantly. Napoleon's condition for participation in the war had been fulfilled and he jumped into the struggle on April 29, 1859. The war had begun. A number of battles took place, the most important of which were the battles of Magenta and Solferino. The Austrians were badly defeated and had to evacuated Milan on July, 7, 1859 as also the whole of Lombardy within the next few days. The allies could then easily move into Venetia to expel the Austrians from there too.

But Napoleon III suddenly decided to put an end to the hostilities. He met the Austrian Emperor at Villafrance on July 11, 1859 and signed an armistice which was later on ratified by the *Treaty of Zurich*. Reasons for this sudden change in the attitude of the Emperor and signing armistice without consulting Piedmont - Sardinia, disappointed Piedmont very much. The emperor had done this believing that he had gone a little too far and that central states of Italy had driven out the kings and were clamouring for a merger with Piedmont.

*Thirdly*, the Emperor feared that if the war was prolonged, there was the danger of Prussia joining the hostilities on the side of Austria. This might endanger the whole French position vis à vis Austria and might imply the loss of all that had been gained so far" Acting on the principle that "discretion is the better part of valour and that something is better than nothing", he decided to make peace.

**The Armistice of Villafrance :** The important terms of the armistice were the following :

1. Austria was to evacuate Lombardy, which was to be handed over to Napoleon who was to give it to Piedmont to be merged in the Kingdom. Austria was however, to retain Venetia.
2. The rulers of Tuscany, Modena, Parma etc. were to be restored to their original kingdoms. Romagna was to be returned to the Pope. (The rulers of these states had been compelled to run away to save themselves from the wrath of revolutionaries, who had established their hold over the respective governments).
3. Austria and France to work unitedly for the creation of federation for whole of Italy under the presidentship of the Pope of Rome.
4. The Pope was to introduce reforms in his possessions.
5. Napoleon was not to demand the cessation of Savoy and Nice to France. This peace was regarded by Italians as their betrayal by the French Emperor. Cavour was totally opposed to it. Victor Emmanuel finding that there was no way but to accept it good humouredly agreed to the peace. Cavour lost his balance of mind once and hurled insults at his king, who kept his calm. Hence Cavour resigned in anger. The great Prime Minister was for once in the wrong, whereas the action of Victor Emmanuel II, in agreeing to the armistice was not only an act of great wisdom and statesmanship but also

an act that went a great way in advancing the cause of Italy. Cavour however, was out of office only for a short period. He returned to his office in January, 1860, when he found that events were moving fast in Italian states to advance the cause, so dear to his heart.

**Cavour and Developments in Central Italy :** In the meantime, developments were taking place in central Italian states of Tuscany, Modena, Parma and Romagna along lines, which were against the wishes of Napoleon III and Emperor of Austria. The people of these states not willing to accept back their former rulers, as decided by the two Emperors. The inhabitants of these central states keenly desired their merger into Piedmont. Cavour and Victor Emmaneul II gave them their full support. The former sent General Janti from Piedmont to organize an army of Central Italy, with Garibaldi, as second in command. In the meantime elections had been held in all the central states. Their parliaments confirmed the early decision of the people for a union with Piedmont. The problem then was how to deal with the situation, since Napoleon was in no mood to listen to the genuine demands of the people. But Cavour knew about the weakness of Napoleon for the extension of the French Empire by making additions of new territories and he played upon the latter's ambition, to bring him round to his point of view. Cavour negotiated with Napoleon III, who was not willing to let Austria use force to restore the princes to their former position. The Piedmontese Prime Minister offered the territories of Nice and Savoy to the French in return for agreement to the merger of the central states in Sardinia Piedmont. Napoleon III, readily agreed to this in March, 1859, provided the states and the territories made decision to the effect through plebiscites. Great Britain also favoured the mergers, provided they were confirmed by popular votes. The plebiscities were, consequently held in Tuscany, Modena, Parma and Romagna and they decided practically unanimously for their merger with Piedmont. A similar plebiscite held in Nice and Savoy favoured their merger with French. Hence these two provinces became the part of the French Empire. Tuscany, Modena, Parma and Romagna were merged in Piedmont. The Parliament that met at Turin on April 1860 thus included Lombards, Tuscany, Romangna etc. In less than a year the size of the kingdom of Piedmont was considerably enlarged due to the efforts of Cavour, who induced Garibaldi to wield his sword for the good of his country. He died in June, 1861. Had he lived a little longer, he would have succeeded in bringing Venice and Rome also under the flag of united Italy.

**Annexation of Venetia (1866) :** There were still some parts of Italy, which had not yet joined the nation. Venetia was still under Austria; and Rome, protected by the French troops was still under the Pope of Rome. They could not remain out of Italy for long. Napoleon had demanded his pound of flesh from Italy in 1860 in the shape of the cession of Nice and Savoy, before he could agree to the absorption of central Italian states. They could not make Rome as their capital, since it was protected by French troops. Hence the Italian Government came to realise that they should win over Prussia; which was opposed to Austria. Italy entered into an agreement with Prince Bismarck to join in its proposed war against Austria.

Then came the Austrian-Prussian war in 1866 popularly known as the Seven Weeks' War. Austrians had to keep a large part of their army in Venetia to save it from the Italian attack. This made it possible for Prussia to give a crushing defeat to Austria at Sadowa or Koniggratz on July 3, 1866. Their navy also suffered a defeat at the hands of Austrian fleet at the Battle of Lissa. But despite their defeats they indirectly contributed to the success of Prussia. But the French force besieged Rome after some time. Garibaldi and his men put up stiff resistance against the enemy. But the city fell to the French. As already stated, Garibaldi decided to withdraw to the mountains. He asked his volunteers to follow him, if they could stand misery and suffering. He asked them "I offer neither pay nor quarters, not provisions, I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death. Let him who loves his country in his heart and not with his lips only follow me." A number of them followed him. But they were pursued and dispersed. They came to serve under him again in 1858-60. His heroic defence of Rome raised him in the estimation of the world and he began to be looked upon as a superman. He left for South America and returned to Italy again in 1854. He bought up a part of the Island of Caprera, where he set up his farm. The Piedmontese government was, by this time, planning a war against Austria. Cavour, therefore, decided to avail of his service in this war. He met Garibaldi in 1856. The latter agreed to fight in the war to be waged by the king of Piedmont, though he was himself a republican. This was confirmed at a meeting between king Victor Emmanuel II and Garibaldi, who was made a major-General in the Sardinian army, to command a brigade of volunteers. He and his men played an important part in the war and defeated the Austrians at *Verse*. Then came the Villafranca Armistice

and consequent resignation of Cavour and his return to power after some time, as explained in the last few pages. It has already been explained how Cavour succeeded in winning over Napoleon III to his scheme of annexing Tuscany, Modena, Parma etc. It was Cavour's keen desire to annex the two Sicilies. The national Society, which had been formed by the former Mazzinians, under Daniele Manin had already been creating trouble in the two provinces. Cavour, then, realized that his dream of annexing the two Sicilies could be realised only through the good offices of Garibaldi, who had retired to his home after the Austrian War.

**Garibaldi's One Thousand and the Conquest of Sicily and Naples (1860) :** Garibaldi was prevailed upon by Cavour in secret, to lead an expedition of his volunteers to Sicily to make a conquest of the island. His volunteers were willing to lay down their lives for him, as he lived like a private (ordinary) soldier. He took the same food and sat in the dark without a candle like an ordinary soldier. When the government learnt that he had a very hard life, they sent him one hundred dollars half of which he gave to a needy widow.

He left Genoa for Sicily with his famous one thousand "Red-Shirts" (the actual number was 1136) and arrived at Massala on 11th May, 1860. He moved forward to Palermo, which could not offer him much resistance. The city fell before him. Rest of Sicily was also soon overrun by him. He then crossed the straits to enter the mainland of Naples. There was very little resistance from the royal troops. Cities after cities surrendered to the valiant hero. King Francis fled to Gaeta on September 6, 1860. Thus Naples, after Sicily also came under him. Garibaldi's swift and almost complete conquest of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, exalted him to the position of "a popular idol", as Hayes put it "and for a time it appeared as though he might become a republican dictator". Garibaldi had become the dictator of the two provinces, though he had been working for Victor Emmanuel. There was a danger that he might set up a republic in the south. Garibaldi was planning to attack Rome. To check his design, Cavour sent Victor Emmanuel to south. He entertained the Papal states on the pretext of preventing Papal troops of suppressing people's movement's there. The Piedmontese forces defeated the Papal army at Castelfidardo, but they by passed Rome to avoid the displeasure of Napoleon III. He

then moved into the Napolitian territory. French had left Gaeta earlier. Victor Emmanuel II met Garibaldi, whom he heartily thanked for the conquest of Sicily and Naples. Both of them together made a triumphant entry into Naples, with crowds cheering them. The king offered reward to Garibaldi, but he refused to accept it. He retired to his island home of Caprera with only a pocketful of money and a bag of seeds. Plebiscities were held in the newly conquered territories of Sicily, Naples and the Papal States. These states decided by overwhelming majorities to be merged into Piedmont-Sardinia. King Victor Emmanuel III assumed the title of King of Italian Parliament at Turin in April 1861. Venetia, Rome and some other small parts of Italy were, however, still out of the main stream of the nation. The credit of bringing Sicily and Naples to the motherland goes entirely to Garibaldi. He would, not, however, realize his cherished dream of conquering Rome, as he received no encouragement from the Government. He worked like an idealist and lived the simple life of an idealist. He believed in right means to achieve right ends. He died in 1862.

**Annexation of Rome (1870) :** The presence of the French troops in Rome made it impossible for Italy to conquer it and make the great city as its capital. Napoleon III insisted that it should remain with the Pope. In fact by a convention of 1865, Napoleon III had obtained an assurance from the king of Italy, that Florence and not Rome should be the capital of Italy, even if French troops evacuated it. In fact the French garrison left Rome in December, 1866. The extremists availed of this opportunity in attacking Rome. The French troops were still at Marseilles. They were rushed back to Rome and succeeded in defeating the Italian nationalists at Mentana. The Italians were very much annoyed with Napoleon III for denying them their right of occupying Rome. Their hostility to the French had increased intensely as a result of the statement of Roucher that the French "would never permit the Italian occupation of Rome." They were anxiously waiting for an opportunity to strike at the French. They had to wait for about four years, before they could join Prussia in a war against France. The French had left that Austrian defeat at Sadowa was a great diplomatic defeat for France itself. They very much desired to avenge the defeat by giving a crushing defeat to Prussia. The latter also rightly felt that unless it defeated France, it

could not bring about the merger of southern German states into united Germany. Italy came to an understanding with Bismarck to remain neutral in case of war.

The Franco-Prussian War came in 1870. The French recalled their troops from Rome. The Italians entered Rome on September 11, 1870. They did not touch the large Papal Estate, the Vatican in Rome proper. Rome became the new capital of Italy. A plebiscite was held in Rome on October 2. As a result of this the great city was annexed to Italy and became the capital of Italy. The unification of Italy was complete excepting the so-called *Italia Irredenta* comprising Trentino, Trieste, Tyrol, Istria etc. etc. which still remained out of Italy. "Only a million Italians" as Lane Goldman and Hunt put it, "beyond the northern border of Italy and on the east coast of Italy remained outside the Italian kingdom. They were joined to the nation at the close of World War I."

The long dream of Italians for the unification of Italy had been made possible as a result of the great efforts of Mazzini, the prophet of Italian nationalism, the astute diplomacy and statesmanship of Cavour, the heroism and self sacrifice of Garibaldi and last but not least because of the uncommon wisdom, moderation and patience by Victor Emmanuel II and his leadership of the nation along right lines after the death of Cavour. But for the glorious services rendered by these four great men of the 19th century to the cause of Italian unity, the Italians, perhaps might have to wait a generation or two more for the realization of their great dream.

### **Suggested Readings**

- (1) Grant and Temperley - Europe in the Nineteenth and twentieth Centuries.
- (2) Ketelbey - A History of Modern times.
- (3) Hazen - Europe since 1816.
- (4) Macksmith - A History of Modern Italy.



---

**LESSON NO. 1.9**

---

**UNIFICATION OF GERMANY**

**Introduction :**

In this lesson we introduce you to the issues and stages in the movement for German unity in the 19th Century. In the final phase, the focus was on Bismarck. On his rule and contribution towards German unification, Bismarck with his policy of blood and iron imported strength to Prussia and equipped Prussia militarily and diplomatically to assume leadership of the movement. In the trial of Prussia's strength, in three successive European wars, Prussia emerged triumphant. Finally in 1871 the birth of German Empire was proclaimed.

**The Origin of the Struggle :** Germany in 1789 was divided into many independent states which were dominated by Austria. But in 1805, Napoleon conquered the German states. He merged the smaller states into bigger ones and brought into existence the confederation of thirteen states and named it the "confederation of Rhine". As such, Austrian domination over this confederation was no longer there. But after the downfall of Napoleon, the Vienna congress again divided Germany into many independent small states. However, the patriots of Germany launched efforts and programmes for the unification of Germany and were successful to some extent in 1848. But their success, proved to be temporary. It was Bismarck who ultimately brought about the unification of Germany.

**VIENNA CONGRESS AND UNIFICATION OF GERMANY**

The German patriots and reformers were not satisfied with the Vienna settlement. Germany was reorganised into confederation of 39 states under the leadership of Austria. Of course a Federal Diet was created, but rulers enjoyed absolute powers in their respective states. As it was natural for all such rulers to safeguard their vested interests, so they became the avowed enemies of revolutionary movements which aimed at the unification of Germany. Besides, the Federal Diet also had some non-German members, e.g. Hanover (she was under England). Similarly the Duchy of Holstein which

was under the king of Denmark was also given representation like other German States. But, it is noteworthy that no co-operation could be forthcoming from the non-German states for the cause of unification of Germany. All the same, the Federal Diet had no control over the federated states. In fact Austria enjoyed unlimited powers in relation to the German states.

Although the Vienna Congress provided for the establishment of responsible government in all the German states but this decision was never put into practice. Rather, after 1815 reactionary measures were adopted by the German states. While it was expected from the king of Prussia, Frederick William III, that he would guide the German patriots. But he too came under the influence of Metternich. Consequently, he also resorted to repressive and oppressive measures to check the nationalists, and the reformative movements.

### **ROLE OF GERMAN STUDENTS FEDERATION IN THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY**

In view of the above dismal condition, the universities of Germany, took over the leadership in their own hand. Thus Jena became the centre of liberal movements. The university students organized reform movements and these movements gathered momentum thereafter. The ideal of German unity was loudly upheld by them. To realise this objective secret societies were formed in the Universities which also preached to the students the ideal of justice, liberty and solidarity. Their chief aim was not to bring a change in the administrative system but to preach to the younger generations the ideal of patriotism. It was their firm belief that they could only gain their objective of national integration by fostering the spirit of patriotism in the people and by elevating their character. But, somehow these societies could not gain popular following outside the universities. Therefore they did not achieve much.

**Programme of the university students :** The students emerged successful in gaining the control of sixteen universities through their organisational activities. In 1817 the students held a grand festival at Wurtemberg to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Leipzig and the tricentenary of Reformation (Protestant reforms). The festival ended with the ceremonial burning of various symbols of militarism, like a copy of

Napoleon code, a copy of Ketzbug's book and other important papers. Metternich was highly shocked by this incident. But by now, the revolutionary element had gained ground in Germany. Therefore, in the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818. Metternich cautioned the members of the Concert of Europe about the impending troubles. In March 1819 Ketzbug who was regarded as a spy of Russia, was assassinated. Metternich exploited the situation and arranged a conference.

**Carlsbad Decrees and the Unification of Germany :** According to the Carlsbad decrees one state representative was appointed in every state university of Germany. His functions were : (i) to stay on the university campus and was to exercise powers as per the order of the king; (ii) to see that law and order was properly maintained in the university : (iii) to keep a strict watch over the activities of the university teachers and to inform the government about those teachers who instigated the students against the state. The concerned ruler was obliged to remove such teachers from the staff of the University.

It was laid down in the Carlsbad decrees that no unlawful societies should exist in the universities. Such students who were expelled from a particular institution were not to be admitted by any other institution. Further, no matter exceeding twenty pages, whether a daily newspaper or an article, was to be sent to the press without the prior approval of the state official. The Federal Diet was to have the right to suppress by its own authority such writings as endangered the peace or safety of any state or entire Germany. When a newspaper or periodical was suppressed by a decision of the Diet, its Editor was forbidden to edit any other publication for five years.

Provision was also made for a Central Commission of investigation consisting of seven members. Its chief function was to conduct thorough investigation into the origin and manifold verification of the revolutionary plots and associations devised against the existing constitutions. The Central Investigation Commission was also to feed the diet from time to time with a report of the results of its investigations.

**Results of Carlsbad Decrees :** It has been rightly pointed out by the scholars that by the Carlsbad decrees, the emperor of Austria became "the head of an all powerful German police system". All the same, Metternich might have gone still further, but his enthusiasm was cooled by the opposition

of certain German states. Rather, the ruler of Wurtemberg went further and took up the challenge and granted more reforms to his people and put himself at the head of a pure German League with a view to facing the challenge of Austria and Prussia. The result was that a compromise was made in 1824 by which the independence of the smaller German states was guaranteed. But, simultaneously Carlsbad decrees were also made permanent.

### **Role of Zollverein in the Unification of Germany**

**Causes :** In spite of the repression, there were certain notable forces which were indirectly helping the cause of the unification of Germany and a reference may be made in this context to the Zollverein or the 'Custom union'. Prior to 1818, each district in Prussia had its own custom system ; and there were as many as 67 tariff systems in Prussia alone. Thus the customs system stood in the way of the promotion of trade and Prussia could not compete with Great Britain. At the same time, on account of so many custom houses, there was a lot of smuggling. So in 1818, the Tariff Reform Law was passed by this : (i) the import of all the raw materials was exempted from custom. (ii) a uniform duty of 10 percent was levied on manufactured goods, but it was fixed at 20 percent on the colonial goods, (iii) all internal custom duties were abolished; and (iv) heavy transit duties on tariff goods passing through Prussia were imposed with a view to compelling other states to join Prussia.

It may be noted here that to begin with, the Law of 1819 applied to Prussia alone but in due course, many other German States also joined this Customs Union or Zollverein. In 1819, Schwarzburg Sondershausen joined the Union. Later in 1822 six other states also joined this union.

**Opposition in the Zollverein Custom Union :** There was also opposition to the Customs Union from some German States. In 1828 a Custom Union was established in South Germany under leadership of Bavaria and Wurtemberg. In the same year, another Custom Union was formed by the Central states which consists of Saxony, Hesse-Cassel, Hanover, Brunswick and the free cities of Hamburg and Frankfurt.

However, in 1831, Hesse-Cassel joined the Zollverein and the union of Central state broke up. Bavaria also joined Zollverein though for eight years the terms of her Union were that the meeting of the Zollverein would be held at Berlin and other places. Bavarian goods were to be given special treatment. Saxony also joined Zollverein in the same year.

By 1837 most of the states had joined the Zollverein for some period or the other. But whenever the treaties expired, these were renewed. Thus ultimately, Hanover, Oldenburg Mecklenburg and the house towns remained outside the Zollverein.

**Terms of the Customs Union :** The main terms of entry into the Zollverein were complete free-trade among all the member states; uniform tariff on all the borders of the member states; and the net proceeds of the customs so obtained were to be divided among the member states in such a way that every state got its share proportionate to its population.

**Austria's Attitude towards Zollverein :** To begin with Austria was completely indifferent to the Zollverein. Metternich did not attach much importance to commerce and consequently ignored the activities of the Zollverein. However, after the overthrow of Metternich in 1848, Austria made determined effort to join the Zollverein. But Prussia successfully resisted Austria's efforts. However in 1853 a treaty was concluded between Austria and Zollverein by which some mutual concession was agreed upon.

**Importance of the role of Zollverein in the Unification of Germany:** The importance of the role of Zollverein in the unification of Germany was considerable. Prussia became a big centre of free trade. Consequently, she made remarkable progress in the political field also. Elucidating the point, Marriot and Robinson have observed that for the first time Germany became a fiscal and commercial unit. Zollverein united the German states in the bonds of mutual economic interests ; it united them under the leadership of Prussia, and it accustomed them to exclusion of Austria from the Germanic body, Fyffe adds further that the semblance of political union was nevertheless present in the growing community of material interests. He further notes that patient and even liberal in its negotiations with the weaker neighbours, Prussia silently connected to itself, through the strings of financial union, states which had hitherto looked to Austria as their natural head. Similarly, Dr. Browning has pointed out, "The Zollverein had brought the sentiments of German nationalism out of the region of hope and fancy into those of positive and material interest. The general feeling in Germany towards the Zollverein is that it is first step towards what is called Germanization. It has broken down some of the strongest holds of alienation and hostility. By a community of interests on commercial and trading questions, it has prepared the way for political unanimity."

**July Revolution and the Unification of Germany :** The July Revolution of 1830 in France had also its effects on Germany. There were demands for the grant of liberal constitutions and the same were conceded by the rulers of Hanover, Brunswick, Saxony and Hesse-Cassel. The rulers of Bavaria and Wurtemberg, etc., also confirmed the liberal constitution which they had given after 1815. But Prussia remained unchanged. However, Metternich was able once again to establish his hold over Germany and Carlsbad decrees were reconfirmed. The conference was held at Vienna and it was decided to take action against the liberal tendencies, the press, universities, etc. But in spite of these measures patriotism of the Germans could not be suppressed.

#### **Role of Frederick IV in the Unification of Germany**

During the long reign of Frederick William III (1897-1840), no changes were made in the political system of the country. The accession of William IV (1840-61) raised fresh hopes and the patriots looked toward to a new era of unity and consolidation. A large number of political prisoners were granted amnesty, many teachers were reappointed and censorship of the press was relaxed.

**Revolutions in Germany During 1830-1848 :** From 1830-1848 there were agitations in the smaller states of Germany. The object of the agitation was two fold, viz, the unification of Germany and establishment of constitutional and liberal governments in these states. Ultimately in 1847, a meeting was held and liberal programme was adopted. It was also decided to launch an agitation for the repeal of Carlsbad decrees. In this conference following two more demands were also made : the unification of Germany, and a parliament for the whole of the country.

**Failure of the Revolution of 1848 in Germany :** When the news of the February Revolution in France-reached Germany, the ruler of Baden gave a new constitution to the people and his example was followed by Wurtemberg, Nassau, Brunswick, Wiemar, Darmstad and Hesse Cassel. The ruler of Bavaria was forced to abdicate and Hanover and Saxony got liberal constitutions. So far as Prussia was concerned, there were some outbreaks in Berlin in March 1848 and the king gave the liberal constitution. There occurred a few clashes between the people and the troops and ultimately, the king of Prussia had to remove the troops from the capital. He also promised to become the leader of the newly born free German nation, it was also

proposed to set up a Provisional Government for the whole of Germany. On 5th March, 1848 fifty leaders met at Heidelberg and invitations were also issued to the members of the various state legislatures of Germany. On 31st March, 1848 about six hundred representatives attended the meeting at Frankfurt. It was decided at the meeting to set up a bicameral legislature and single executive for the Federal Government of Germany. The details were to be finalised by a Constituent Assembly of Germany to which representatives were to come from all over the country on the basis of one member for every 50,000 population. This was done and the Constituent Assembly met at Frankfurt.

The Frankfurt Parliament consisted of about 300 members in the beginning but later on, its membership rose to 500. Heinrich von Gagern was elected its president. It was dominated by professors and journalists, and much time was wasted in the discussion of abstract principles. The only work done by the Frankfurt Parliament within the first six months was the appointment of a Central Executive. It worked so slow that upto the Christmas of 1848, only fundamental rights of the people of Germany were agreed upon.

**Questions of the inclusion of Austria in Germany :** There were two opinions amongst the members of this Parliament over the issue of inclusion of Austria in Germany. The "little Germans" insisted on excluding Austria but the "great Germans" were in favour of the inclusion of Austria. Ultimately the former won and Austria was excluded. Besides, it was also decided that there should be a German Confederation with a hereditary king.

**Frederick William IV of Prussia and the failure of the Frankfurt Parliament :** The throne of the German federation was offered by the Frankfurt Parliament to Frederick William IV of Prussia on 28th March, 1849 but the offer was rejected.

**Causes for the Rejection of this offer :** The very first cause was Frederick William IV's conservative outlook. He was not prepared to be a serf of the Revolution. Since he believed in the divine rights of the kings, he was not prepared to accept the throne offered and the constitution framed by the Frankfurt Parliament. But the most probable reason appears to be that the king of Prussia was not prepared to antagonize Austria, because of her strong position at that time. At the same time, it also appeared that the king of Prussia, having neither courage nor ability, was

not equal to the task. Commenting on its failure, C.D. Hazen notes that the Parliament of Frankfurt, on which much hopes had entered, misled in the end, to some extent because of the mistakes of the members, but chiefly because of the resolution of the princes of Germany and in particular of Russia and Austria. Neither of the two leading German states, was willing to make any sacrifices for the common good & each was jealous and suspicious to the other. It, however, succeeded in drafting a constitution of many high merits, the other. It however, succeeded in drafting a constitution of many high merits, a constitution which guaranteed civil liberty to every German, equality before law, responsible parliamentary control over the Central Government and the Government of each separate state.

**Frederick William IV's Unsuccessful Effort to Unite Germany :**

Although the king of Prussia had refused the throne offered by the Frankfurt Parliament, yet he tried to unite the German states under his leadership in another way. His minister Radowiz prepared the draft of a constitution which was to be the basis of union, Prussia was to be the President of college of princes and Austria was to be excluded from it. Consequently, in 1850, a German Parliament met at Erfurt. However schwarzenberg, the new chancellor of Austria, was determined to establish Austrian supremacy over Germany and consequently was not prepared to allow the activities of Prussia to continue. The king of Prussia was forced to surrender by the convention of Olmutz, He agreed to dissolve the Union' and the German confederation of 1815 was restored But inspite of it in 1850, the king of Prussia gave a new constitution to his people and that remained the basis of the Government of Prussia upto 1918.

**Results of the unsuccessful revolution of 1848 :** Although the movement of 1848 was a failure, yet it taught certain lessons to the people of Germany. The German people now though that there could be no unification of Germany so long as Austria was strong enough to oppose her. They were convinced that unity could not be achieved by constitutional means. Austria could be expelled from Germany only if Germany had a stronger force than that of Austria. It was felt that Prussia should take the initiative in the reorganization of the army. The necessity of having a strong army was realized by all.



**William I (1861-88) and the completion of the unification of Germany**

On the death of Frederick William IV in 1861, William I became king of Prussia. It has been noted about him that he was a Prussian to the core and clearly saw the destiny that Prussia was to achieve. At the same time, he was an astute judge of men and could make a choice of servants on whom he could rely. It was his firm belief that if Germany was to be liberated, that could be done only if Prussia had a strong army. It was this conviction in his mind that he appointed Moltke as the chief of the General staff and Roon as the minister for war. It may be noted that these two were the persons who started reorganising the Prussian Army and put forward their proposals for its future expansion. The Prussian *Landtag* or Legislature voted the supplies in 1861 for one year but in 1862 it rejected the demand. Now there were following three alternatives before the king of Prussia :

- (a) He should have abandoned the reforms in the army.
- (b) He should have abdicated.
- (c) He should have suspend the constitution and dissolved the Landtag.

He was in a fix and did not know what to do. Ultimately he decided to invite Bismarck from Paris to handle the situation. It was under these circumstances that Bismarck was appointed as the Minister President of Prussia in 1862.

**ROLE OF BISMARCK IN THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY**

Bismarck was the most outstanding statesman of the nineteenth century. He was not only the chief architect of German unity but also dominated the European politics for about twenty years. As such, in recognition of Bismarck's commanding position, this period is rightly known in the history of Europe as the age of Bismarck.

**Early Career :** Otto Von Bismarck was born on April 1, 1815, in Prussia. After completing his education, Bismarck joined the civil service. But after a few years he resigned and devoted himself to the management of his family estates. It was from this period that he began to take active part in local politics.

**Entrance in Politics :** In 1847, Bismarck entered politics as a member of the United Prussian Diet, summoned by the Prussian king, Frederick William IV. In 1851 Bismarck joined diplomatic service. From 1859, to 1862, he held

various diplomatic assignments as the Prussian ambassador, first to St. Petersburg and then at Paris. It is notable that the political and diplomatic experience gained thus helped him immensely in his later career.

In January, 1861, Fredrick William IV died and was succeeded by William I. In 1862, William I who was confronted with serious internal problems and difficulties, called back Bismarck from Paris and appointed him as his Chief Minister or the President of the Council of Ministers, Bismarck had to face a number of problems. The policy that he adopted to overcome those, is obvious from his memorable speech of 1863, wherein he made it clear to the Parliament (Landtag) that the problems of German Nationalism, unification, etc. could not be solved by Parliamentary resolution, but by a policy of 'blood and iron'.

**The Policy of Blood and Iron :** Bismarck was an absolutist. He emphatically said that the problem of the unification of Germany could be solved by the policy of blood and iron and not by Constitutional means. He felt that the reorganisation of the Prussian army was absolutely essential for the unification of the country. He was even prepared to dissolve the Prussian Landtag (Legislature) if the latter refused to vote supplies for the reorganisation and expansion of the army. He could reject-constitutional methods if the Landtag posed obstructions. Thus he ruled the country in autocratic manner for years and got the money from the people without the authority of Landtag and thereby strengthened the German military machine. The policy of 'blood and iron' was an instrument for realising the great dream of German unity.

**Austria's Plan of the Congress of German Princes Failed :** In 1853 Austria summoned a Congress of the German princes to consider proposals for reforming the German Confederation. Bismarck prevailed upon the ruler of Prussia and the latter did not attend the Conference. As a result the Conference did not accomplish much.

**Schleswig-Holstein Question and war with Denmark (1864) :** Bismarck decided to exploit the problem of Schleswig-Holstein for achieving the broader goal of German unity. Schleswig and Holstein were two Duchies under the king of Denmark. The Duchy of Holstein was populated by Germans and also a member of the German, Confederation. Schleswig was inhabited by both Germans and Danes. But Germans were in majority, while the people of Denmark wanted to merge these duchies into their country, the people of

Germany wanted to include them in German Confederation. An attempt was made in 1848 to amalgamate the political institutions of the Duchies into those of Denmark. However, this proposal had to be given up on account of the opposition of the local Germans, Prussia and the Duke of Augustenberg who laid very strong claim to the Duchies. The situation became serious and there was possibility of a war. However, big powers intervened and a compromise was arrived at by the Treaty of London (1852), the terms of the treaty Denmark was forbidden to merge the Duchies. But soon the problem re-emerged 1853 marked the accession of a new king on the throne of Denmark and he proclaimed a new constitution merging Schleswig into Denmark and bound Holstein with closer ties. The Duke of Augustenberg revived his claims. Under these circumstances, Bismarck decided to act and exploit the situation. He did not want the Duchies to go to Denmark or to the Duke. He wanted them to be included in Prussia. At the same time, he also wanted to try the strength of the newly organised army of Prussia and through a war with Denmark both the ends could be achieved. So Bismarck entered into an agreement with Austria whereby it was decided to take joint action against Denmark. Thereafter, Bismarck gave an ultimatum to the king of Denmark, demanding from him the cancellation of the constitution that had been recently promulgated by him. As he refused to do so, both Austria and Prussia declared war against Denmark. The Danes were no match for the combined armies and by the Treaty of Vienna (1864), the king of Denmark surrendered the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein to Austria and Prussia respectively. Having got the Duchies, there arose the question of their division. Ultimately it was agreed by the Convention of Gastein (1865) that pending a final settlement Austria was to occupy and administer Holstein and Prussia was to occupy and administer Schleswig.

**War with Austria (1866) :** An analysis of the Gastein convention reveals that it was not at all favourable to Austria. She was given control over territory which was hedged by Prussian territory on two sides. Austria now felt that her position in Holstein was not secure and she began to encourage the claim of the Duke of Augustenberg. Bismarck asked Austria to refrain from such propaganda, but Austria refused and the Prussian troops entered Holstein and turned out the Austrians. When Austria tried to mobilize the forces of the German confederation against Prussia, she withdrew from German confederation in 1866 and declared war against Austria (1866).

**Isolation of Austria :** Before the actual declaration of war, Bismarck had made for Germany elaborate military preparations and at the same time manoeuvred diplomatically to isolate Austria. Bismarck did all that he could to win over Russian neutrality and thereby ensured that in the event of a war, Russia would not join hands with Austria as she had done in 1849 when Nicholas agreed to come to the help of Austria against Hungary. As far back as 1859 when he was the Prussian Ambassador at Petersburg, Bismarck had tried to woo Russia for Prussia. Moreover, the Crimean war too had broken the Austro-Russian alliance and thereby paved the way for an agreement between Russia and Prussia. On the other hand, Bismarck also could not tolerate the creation of a united Poland which was bound to be an enemy and rival of Prussia. This explains Bismarck's opposition of the Polish Revolt against Russia. He entered into an agreement with Alexander II by which he agreed to take strong action against those Poles who took refuge in Prussia. Although Bismarck was condemned for his action, but his only concern was Russian friendship. In this manner he won over Russia to his side and thus ensured Austria's isolation in the event of an Austro-Prussian war.

**Ensuring of French Neutrality in the Event of an Austro-Prussian War :** Bismarck also sought the good will of Napoleon III to the Prussian cause. While Bismarck was the Prussian ambassador in Paris in 1862, he had tried to cultivate good relations with the French Emperor. The latter also formed a very high opinion about Bismarck. In October 1865, Bismarck had an interview with Napoleon III at Bizrits, As an outcome of this meeting the French Emperor promised to observe neutrality in case of a war between Austria and Prussia. He also agreed to the annexation of the two Duchies by Prussia. Napoleon III approved of giving Venetia to Italy. Napoleon III had no objection to reformation of the German confederation and the creation of a new confederation of Northern states Bismarck suggested that France could take South eastern Belgium. From now, the aim of Bismarck was obvious. He wanted to secure the German territory.

But why did Napoleon III help Bismarck ? Many reasons can be given. Firstly, Napoleon III had real sympathy for the cause of German unity. Secondly, he also felt that with the emergence of a strong state in the North Germany, Austrian dependence on France was bound to increase. Thirdly, Napoleon III also calculated that there were more chances of Prussian defeat and in

that case, France would be in a position to establish her hold over the smaller states of Germany. Any how, Bismarck had secured the neutrality of France, and when war started with Austria, the latter could expect on help from France.

**Alliance with Italy against Austria :** Bismarck now tried to win Italy. It is noteworthy that Italy was natural enemy of Austria because she wanted to get back Venetia, which was under Austrian control. This she could do only with the help of some foreign power. To begin with only a commercial treaty was signed between Italy and Prussia. Bismarck, however wanted to bind the two countries in an alliance, because he had realised the advantage and importance of attacking Austria on two fronts-one from the Italian front and other from the Prussian front. Mutual distrust on both sides made such a definite understanding rather difficult. In spite of this a treaty was signed between the two countries in 1866, by which Italy was to attack Austria if Prussia initiated the war within three months.

**Defeat of Austria in the Austria Prussian War (1866) :** The war between Austria and Prussia was a very short one and that is why it is popularly known as the Seven Week's War. To begin with, it appeared that Austria would get the better of this confrontation with Prussia because she had the support of Bavaria, Saxony and other smaller states of Germany. However the Prussia military organisation was so efficient that Austria was no match to it. Moreover, Austria had to fight on two fronts, one against the Prussian attack and the other against the Italians. Although, it is true that the Italians were defeated in the battle of Custozza and also in naval action at Lissa but the Italian defeats did not affect the outcome of the war. Ultimately, because many Austrian troops were engaged on the Italian front, Austria was defeated in the battle of Sadowa. After this victory, the Prussian troops clamoured for a march on Vienna and they were supported by the king also. But Bismarck was opposed to such a move and ultimately his will prevailed. He offered very lenient terms to Austria and the same were confirmed by the Treaty of Prague (1867). By this Treaty, Austria agreed to dissolution of the existing German Confederation. She also consented to the organisation of Germany without Austrian participation, Venetia was given to Italy. Prussia demanded no Austrian territory and contented herself with small war indemnity.

Further the Northern districts of Schleswig were to be re-united to Denmark if the people expressed such a desire by a free vote. All the states north of Maine were to join the North German Confederation under the leadership of Prussia. The southern states of Germany were allowed to remain independent.

### **Results of the Austro-Prussian War**

**Gains of Prussia :** The Austro-Prussian war had far reaching consequences. Following were the significant results :

- (i) Prussia assumed German leadership and Austria was excluded from the North German Confederation.
- (ii) Prussian victory was a great achievement of Bismarck. As a result of this war, the liberals were discredited and liberalism was crushed in Prussia.
- (iii) Gain of Venetia by Italy was a very important step in the unification of Italy.

**Its bad effects on the Austrian Empire :** Because of the loss of Venetia and her exclusion from Germany, Austria had to enter into an alliance with the Magyars of Hungary which resulted in the Treaty of 1867 between Austria and Hungary. The common monarch was known as the Emperor in Austria and king in Hungary. The two units were almost free of each other excepting that they had a common foreign policy. This arrangement continued till 1918.

**Franco-Prussian War :** Even after the defeat of Austria the unification of Germany was not complete. The states of Southern Germany were still independent and they could only be compelled to join the German confederation. And such a coercion was not possible without using force. Under these circumstances, French reaction was predictable. There was every possibility of French help to the South German states in the event of Prussian pressure. So Bismarck tackled the situation very cautiously. From 1857 to 1870, Bismarck followed a conciliatory policy towards the southern states. He helped them with men and money to organise their military power and built up their trust. As such they were impressed by Bismarck and looked upon Prussia as their friend. But at the same time, he prepared for a military showdown with France.

According to Bismarck, "a war with France lay in the logic of History". He emotionally prepared his country and intensified war preparations. Bismarck also isolated France in order to ensure German victory in the war. It may be recalled here that Italians disgusted Napoleon III because of his betrayal of Italy against Austria. But on the contrary, Prussia had rendered full support to Italy's acquisition of Venetia. Thus, Italy was indebted to Prussia. Besides, French troops were in occupation of Rome since 1849. Now the completion of unification of Italy was possible if French troops were withdrawn from Rome and that could only be possible if France was involved in some formidable war. Thus Bismarck secured the neutrality of Italy in the event of a Franco-Prussian War. At the same time, Bismarck ensured the neutrality of Russia in the event of a Franco-Prussian war, by reviving the memories of the Crimean war in which Russia had to yield to France. Similarly, Bismarck had won over Austrian sympathy by not invading Vienna and offering a mild treaty after the Austrian defeat of Sadowa. Bismarck further came to an understanding with Russia that in case of Prussian attack on France, Russia could violate the Black Sea Clause of the Treaty of Paris (1856) by stationing her fleet there.

**Immediate Cause and Bismarck's Provocation to Napoleon III to Declare War :** Bismarck wanted that France should seem an aggressor in the eyes of European countries so that countries like England might not render any help to France. Immediate cause of this war was related to the issue of succession to the Spanish throne. By that time Prince Leopold had been offered the throne of Spain twice, but he did not accept it. On the request of Bismarck, the offer was repeated to Prince Leopold, a relative and a collateral of the king of Prussia. There was a great resentment among the French over this issue. The French people thought that France would be sandwiched between Spain and Prussia. Although Leopold revoked his acceptance of the crown, yet the agitation continued. Napoleon wanted to undertake an assurance from the Prussian king that he would never allow Leopold to be a candidate for the Spanish throne. The French ambassador Benedette had a meeting with the king of Prussia at Ems and tried to prevail upon him his views. The Prussian king informed Bismarck telegraphically about this meeting. Bismarck interpreted the telegram in such a manner that it gave an impression to the Prussian people that their king had been insulted, the French on their part took it an insult of their ambassador.

Bismarck succeeded in his mission and eventually, France declare war against Prussia.

**Battle of Sedan and the Treaty of Frankfurt :** The most important battle of this war was fought at Sedan and Napoleon III was defeated. By the peace treaty of Frankfurt (1871) France ceded Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia. France was to pay a huge amount as war indemnity.

**Completion of the Unification of Germany :** The significant result of the Franco-Prussian war was that the work of unification of Germany was completed. The king of Prussia was declared the Emperor of Germany in a ceremony held at Versailles in 1871. The Southern states of Germany-Bavaria, Baden and Hassel Cassel, etc., inspired by national feelings, voluntarily joined the German confederation. Now the North German confederation was rechristened as the German Empire and Berlin was declared to be its capital. Thus in the end it can be concluded that by adopting a policy of blood and iron and implementing it for a decade (1862-71), Bismarck brought about the complete unification of Germany, and thereby fulfilled the long standing aspirations of the Germans.