

SECTION I



EVENTS AND PROCESSES

In Section I, you will read about the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the rise of Nazism. In different ways all these events were important in the making of the modern world.

Chapter I is on the French Revolution. Today we often take the ideas of liberty, freedom and equality for granted. But we need to remind ourselves that these ideas also have a history. By looking at the French Revolution you will read a small part of that history. The French Revolution led to the end of monarchy in France. A society based on privileges gave way to a new system of governance. The Declaration of the Rights of Man during the revolution, announced the coming of a new time. The idea that all individuals had rights and could claim equality became part of a new language of politics. These notions of equality and freedom emerged as the central ideas of a new age; but in different countries they were reinterpreted and rethought in many different ways. The anti-colonial movements in India and China, Africa and South America, produced ideas that were innovative and original, but they spoke in a language that gained currency only from the late eighteenth century.

In Chapter II, you will read about the coming of socialism in Europe, and the dramatic events that forced the ruling monarch, Tsar Nicholas II, to give up power. The Russian Revolution sought to change society in a different way. It raised the question of economic equality and the well-being of workers and peasants. The chapter will tell you about the changes that were initiated by the new Soviet government, the problems it faced and the measures it undertook. While Soviet Russia pushed ahead with industrialisation and mechanisation of agriculture, it denied the rights of citizens that were essential to the working of a democratic society. The ideals of socialism,

however, became part of the anti-colonial movements in different countries. Today the Soviet Union has broken up and socialism is in crisis but through the twentieth century it has been a powerful force in the shaping of the contemporary world.

Chapter III will take you to Germany. It will discuss the rise of Hitler and the politics of Nazism. You will read about the children and women in Nazi Germany, about schools and concentration camps. You will see how Nazism denied various minorities a right to live, how it drew upon a long tradition of anti-Jewish feelings to persecute the Jews, and how it waged a relentless battle against democracy and socialism. But the story of Nazism's rise is not only about a few specific events, about massacres and killings. It is about the working of an elaborate and frightening system which operated at different levels. Some in India were impressed with the ideas of Hitler but most watched the rise of Nazism with horror.

The history of the modern world is not simply a story of the unfolding of freedom and democracy. It has also been a story of violence and tyranny, death and destruction.



The French Revolution



On the morning of 14 July 1789, the city of Paris was in a state of alarm. The king had commanded troops to move into the city. Rumours spread that he would soon order the army to open fire upon the citizens. Some 7,000 men and women gathered in front of the town hall and decided to form a peoples' militia. They broke into a number of government buildings in search of arms.

Finally, a group of several hundred people marched towards the eastern part of the city and stormed the fortress-prison, the Bastille, where they hoped to find hoarded ammunition. In the armed fight that followed, the commander of the Bastille was killed and the prisoners released – though there were only seven of them. Yet the Bastille was hated by all, because it stood for the despotic power of the king. The fortress was demolished and its stone fragments were sold in the markets to all those who wished to keep a souvenir of its destruction.

The days that followed saw more rioting both in Paris and the countryside. Most people were protesting against the high price of bread. Much later, when historians looked back upon this time, they saw it as the beginning of a chain of events that ultimately led to the execution of the king in France, though most people at the time did not anticipate this outcome. How and why did this happen?

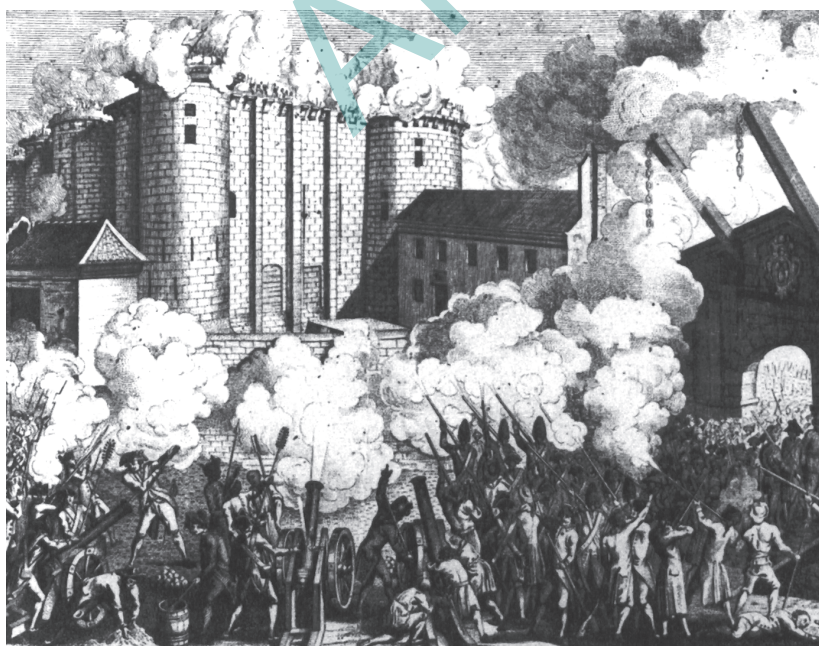


Fig. 1 – Storming of the Bastille.
Soon after the demolition of the Bastille, artists made prints commemorating the event.

1 French Society During the Late Eighteenth Century

In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France. He was 20 years old and married to the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette. Upon his accession the new king found an empty treasury. Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France. Added to this was the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles. Under Louis XVI, France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from the common enemy, Britain. The war added more than a billion *livres* to a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion *livres*. Lenders who gave the state credit, now began to charge 10 per cent interest on loans. So the French government was obliged to spend an increasing percentage of its budget on interest payments alone. To meet its regular expenses, such as the cost of maintaining an army, the court, running government offices or universities, the state was forced to increase taxes. Yet even this measure would not have sufficed. French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates, and only members of the third estate paid taxes.

The society of estates was part of the feudal system that dated back to the middle ages. The term Old Regime is usually used to describe the society and institutions of France before 1789.

Fig. 2 shows how the system of estates in French society was organised. Peasants made up about 90 per cent of the population. However, only a small number of them owned the land they cultivated. About 60 per cent of the land was owned by nobles, the Church and other richer members of the third estate. The members of the first two estates, that is, the **clergy** and the nobility, enjoyed certain privileges by birth. The most important of these was exemption from paying taxes to the state. The nobles further enjoyed feudal privileges. These included feudal dues, which they extracted from the peasants. Peasants were obliged to render services to the lord – to work in his house and fields – to serve in the army or to participate in building roads.

The Church too extracted its share of taxes called **tithes** from the peasants, and finally, all members of the third estate had to pay taxes to the state. These included a direct tax, called **taille**, and a number of indirect taxes which were levied on articles of everyday consumption like salt or tobacco. The burden of financing activities of the state through taxes was borne by the third estate alone.

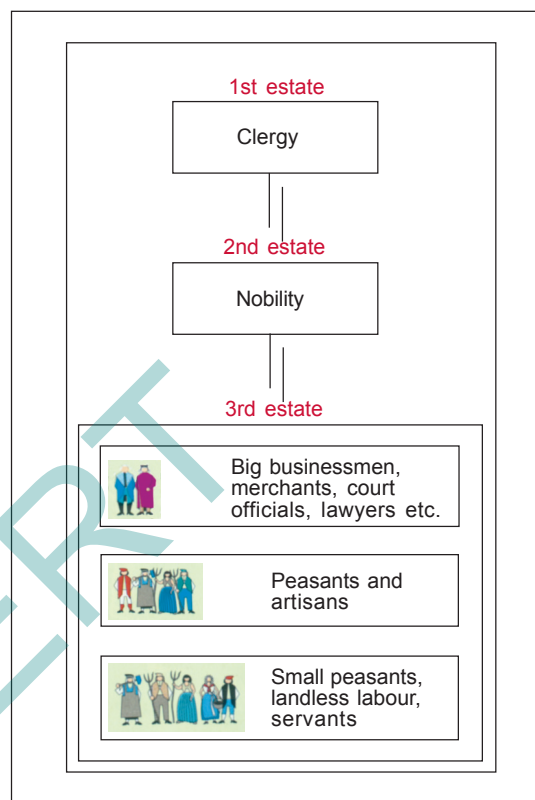


Fig. 2 – A Society of Estates.
Note that within the Third Estate some were rich and others poor.

New words

Livre – Unit of currency in France, discontinued in 1794

Clergy – Group of persons invested with special functions in the church

Tithe – A tax levied by the church, comprising one-tenth of the agricultural produce

Taille – Tax to be paid directly to the state



'This poor fellow brings everything, grain, fruits, money, salad. The fat lord sits there, ready to accept it all. He does not even care to grace him with a look.'

Activity

Explain why the artist has portrayed the nobleman as the spider and the peasant as the fly.

'The nobleman is the spider, the peasant the fly.'

'The more the devil has, the more he wants.'

Fig.3 – The Spider and the Fly.
An anonymous etching.

1.1 The Struggle to Survive

The population of France rose from about 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. This led to a rapid increase in the demand for foodgrains. Production of grains could not keep pace with the demand. So the price of bread which was the staple diet of the majority rose rapidly. Most workers were employed as labourers in workshops whose owner fixed their wages. But wages did not keep pace with the rise in prices. So the gap between the poor and the rich widened. Things became worse whenever drought or hail reduced the harvest. This led to a **subsistence crisis**, something that occurred frequently in France during the Old Regime.

New words

Subsistence crisis – An extreme situation where the basic means of livelihood are endangered

Anonymous – One whose name remains unknown



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Class Envisages an End to Privileges

Workers had participated in revolts against scarcity. But they lacked the means and all-scale measures that would bring about economic order. This was left to those who had become prosperous and had new ideas.

Witnessed the emergence of social groups,

Active

Fill in the blank with appropriate words.

Food riots, number of, weaker bourgeoisie

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Activity

Fill in the blank boxes in Fig. 4 with appropriate terms from among the following:

Food riots, scarcity of grain, increased number of deaths, rising food prices, weaker bodies.

of the monarch. Rousseau carried the idea forward, proposing a form of government based on a social contract between people and their representatives. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu proposed a division of power within the government between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. This model of government was put into force in the USA, after the thirteen colonies declared their independence from Britain. The American constitution and its guarantee of individual rights was an important example for political thinkers in France.

The ideas of these philosophers were discussed intensively in salons and coffee-houses and spread among people through books and newspapers. These were frequently read aloud in groups for the benefit of those who could not read and write. The news that Louis XVI planned to impose further taxes to be able to meet the expenses of the state generated anger and protest against the system of privileges.

Source A

Accounts of lived experiences in the Old Regime

1. Georges Danton, who later became active in revolutionary politics, wrote to a friend in 1793, looking back upon the time when he had just completed his studies:

'I was educated in the residential college of Plessis. There I was in the company of important men ... Once my studies ended, I was left with nothing. I started looking for a post. It was impossible to find one at the law courts in Paris. The choice of a career in the army was not open to me as I was not a noble by birth, nor did I have a patron. The church too could not offer me a refuge. I could not buy an office as I did not possess a sou. My old friends turned their backs to me ... the system had provided us with an education without however offering a field where our talents could be utilised.'

2. An Englishman, Arthur Young, travelled through France during the years from 1787 to 1789 and wrote detailed descriptions of his journeys. He often commented on what he saw.

'He who decides to be served and waited upon by slaves, ill-treated slaves at that, must be fully aware that by doing so he is placing his property and his life in a situation which is very different from that he would be in, had he chosen the services of free and well-treated men. And he who chooses to dine to the accompaniment of his victims' groans, should not complain if during a riot his daughter gets kidnapped or his son's throat is slit.'

Source

Activity

What message is Young trying to convey here? Whom does he mean when he speaks of 'slaves'? Who is he criticising? What dangers does he sense in the situation of 1787?

2 The Outbreak of the Revolution

Louis XVI had to increase taxes for reasons you have learnt in the previous section. How do you think he could have gone about doing this? In France of the Old Regime the monarch did not have the power to impose taxes according to his will alone. Rather he had to call a meeting of the Estates General which would then pass his proposals for new taxes. The Estates General was a political body to which the three estates sent their representatives. However, the monarch alone could decide when to call a meeting of this body. The last time it was done was in 1614.

On 5 May 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of the Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. A resplendent hall in Versailles was prepared to host the delegates. The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each, who were seated in rows facing each other on two sides, while the 600 members of the third estate had to stand at the back. The third estate was represented by its more prosperous and educated members. Peasants, artisans and women were denied entry to the assembly. However, their grievances and demands were listed in some 40,000 letters which the representatives had brought with them.

Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote. This time too Louis XVI was determined to continue the same practice. But members of the third estate demanded that voting now be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote. This was one of the democratic principles put forward by philosophers like Rousseau in his book *The Social Contract*. When the king rejected this proposal, members of the third estate walked out of the assembly in protest.

The representatives of the third estate viewed themselves as spokesmen for the whole French nation. On 20 June they assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles. They declared themselves a National Assembly and swore not to disperse till they had drafted a constitution for France that would limit the powers of the monarch. They were led by Mirabeau and Abbé Sieyès. Mirabeau was born in a noble family but was convinced of the need to do away with a society of feudal privilege. He brought out a journal and delivered powerful speeches to the crowds assembled at Versailles. Abbé Sieyès, originally a priest, wrote an influential pamphlet called 'What

Some important dates

1774

Louis XVI becomes king of France, faces empty treasury and growing discontent within society of the Old Regime.

1789

Convocation of Estates General, Third Estate forms National Assembly, the Bastille is stormed, peasant revolts in the countryside.

1791

A constitution is framed to limit the powers of the king and to guarantee basic rights to all human beings.

1792-93

France becomes a republic, the king is beheaded.

Overthrow of the Jacobin republic, a Directory rules France.

1804

Napoleon becomes emperor of France, annexes large parts of Europe.

1815

Napoleon defeated at Waterloo.

Activity

Representatives of the Third Estate take the oath raising their arms in the direction of Bailly, the President of the Assembly, standing on a table in the centre. Do you think that during the actual event Bailly would have stood with his back to the assembled deputies? What could have been David's intention in placing Bailly (Fig.5) the way he has done?



Fig.5 – The Tennis Court Oath.

Preparatory sketch for a large painting by Jacques-Louis David. The painting was intended to be hung in the National Assembly.

is the 'Third Estate'?

While the National Assembly was busy at Versailles drafting a constitution, the rest of France seethed with turmoil. A severe winter had meant a bad harvest; the price of bread rose, often bakers exploited the situation and hoarded supplies. After spending hours in long queues at the bakery, crowds of angry women stormed into the shops. At the same time, the king ordered troops to move into Paris. On 14 July, the agitated crowd stormed and destroyed the Bastille.

In the countryside rumours spread from village to village that the lords of the **manor** had hired bands of brigands who were on their way to destroy the ripe crops. Caught in a frenzy of fear, peasants in several districts seized hoes and pitchforks and attacked **chateaux**. They looted hoarded grain and burnt down documents containing records of manorial dues. A large number of nobles fled from their homes, many of them migrating to neighbouring countries.

Faced with the power of his revolting subjects, Louis XVI finally accorded recognition to the National Assembly and accepted the principle that his powers would from now on be checked by a constitution. On the night of 4 August 1789, the Assembly passed a decree abolishing the feudal system of obligations and taxes. Members of the clergy too were forced to give up their privileges. Tithes were abolished and lands owned by the Church were confiscated. As a result, the government acquired assets worth at least 2 billion livres.

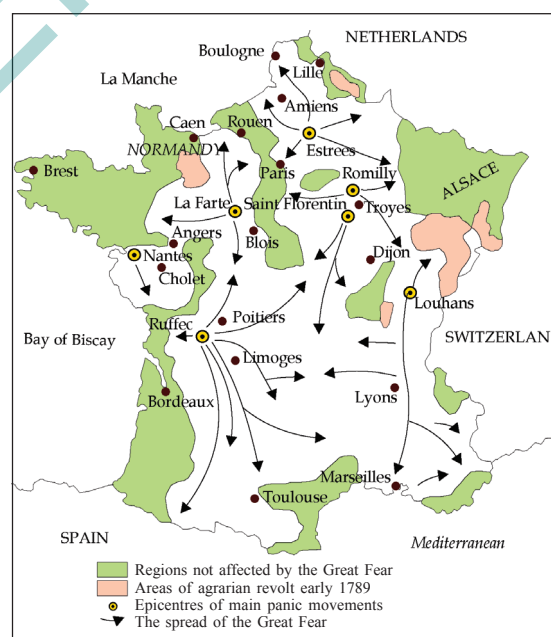


Fig.6 – The spread of the Great Fear.

The map shows how bands of peasants spread from one point to another.

New words

Chateau (pl. chateaux) – Castle or stately residence belonging to a king or a nobleman
Manor – An estate consisting of the lord's lands and his mansion

2.1 France Becomes a Constitutional Monarchy

The National Assembly completed the draft of the constitution in 1791. Its main object was to limit the powers of the monarch. These powers instead of being concentrated in the hands of one person, were now separated and assigned to different institutions – the legislature, executive and judiciary. This made France a constitutional monarchy. Fig. 7 explains how the new political system worked.

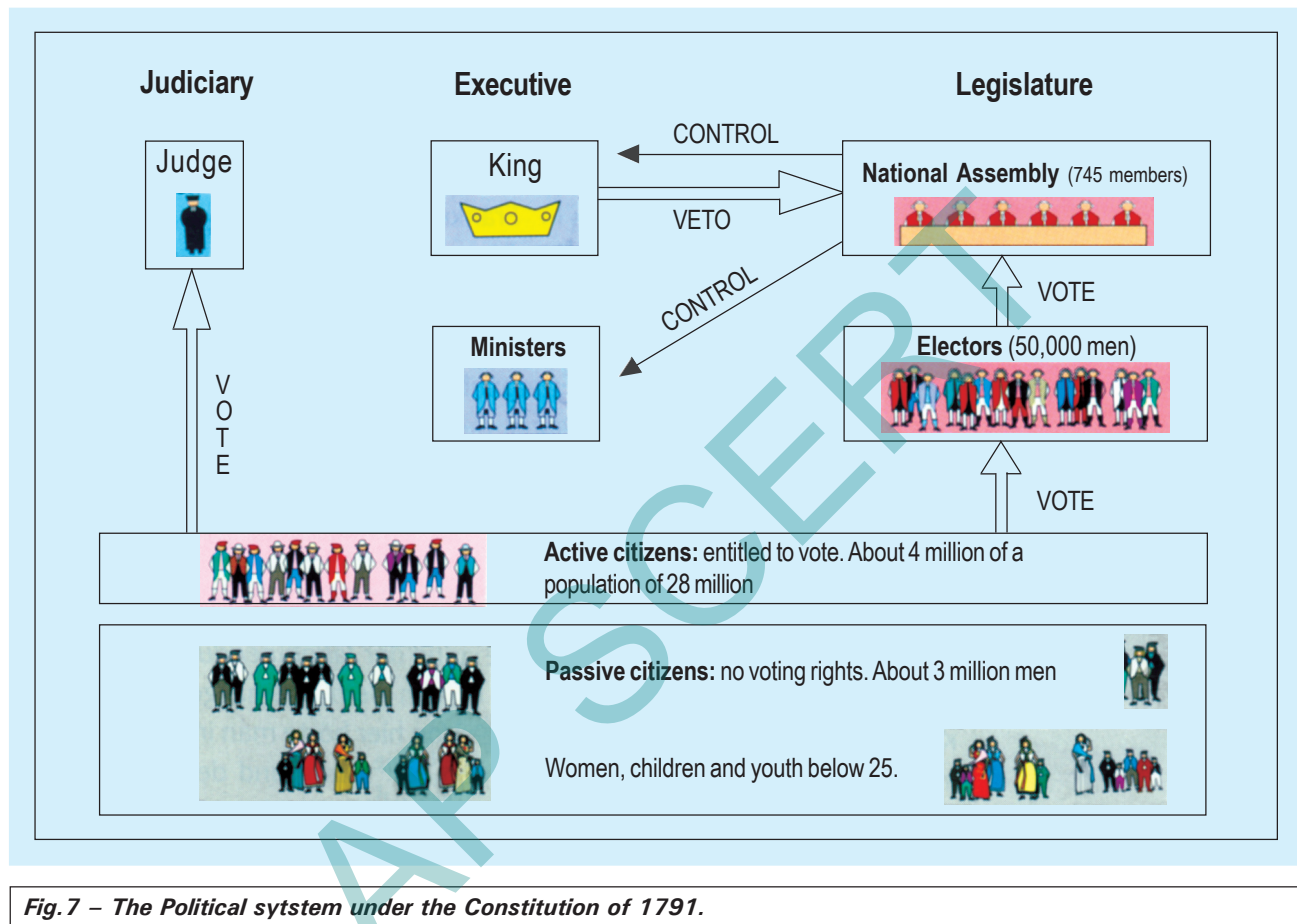


Fig. 7 – The Political system under the Constitution of 1791.

The Constitution of 1791 vested the power to make laws in the National Assembly, which was indirectly elected. That is, citizens voted for a group of electors, who in turn chose the Assembly. Not all citizens, however, had the right to vote. Only men above 25 years of age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wage were given the status of active citizens, that is, they were entitled to vote. The remaining men and all women were classed as passive citizens. To qualify as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a man had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers.



Fig.8 – *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, painted by the artist Le Barbier in 1790. The figure on the right represents France. The figure on the left symbolises the law.

Source C

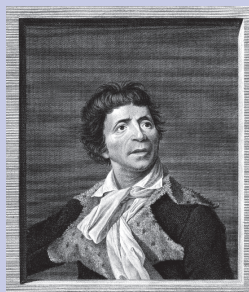
The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.
2. The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and inalienable rights of man; these are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.
3. The source of all sovereignty resides in the nation; no group or individual may exercise authority that does not come from the people.
4. Liberty consists of the power to do whatever is not injurious to others.
5. The law has the right to forbid only actions that are injurious to society.
6. Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate in its formation, personally or through their representatives. All citizens are equal before it.
7. No man may be accused, arrested or detained, except in cases determined by the law.
11. Every citizen may speak, write and print freely; he must take responsibility for the abuse of such liberty in cases determined by the law.
12. For the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration a common tax is indispensable; it must be assessed equally on all citizens in proportion to their means.
17. Since property is a sacred and inviolable right, no one may be deprived of it, unless a legally established public necessity requires it. In that case a just compensation must be given in advance.

The Constitution began with a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Rights such as the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, equality before law, were established as ‘natural and inalienable’ rights, that is, they belonged to each human being by birth and could not be taken away. It was the duty of the state to protect each citizen’s natural rights.

Source B

The revolutionary journalist Jean-Paul Marat commented in his newspaper *L’Ami du peuple* (The friend of the people) on the Constitution drafted by the National Assembly:



‘The task of representing the people has been given to the rich ... the lot of the poor and oppressed will never be improved by peaceful means alone. Here we have absolute proof of how wealth influences the law. Yet laws will last only as long as the people agree to obey them. And when they have managed to cast off the yoke of the aristocrats, they will do the same to the other owners of wealth.’

Source: An extract from the newspaper *L’Ami du peuple*.

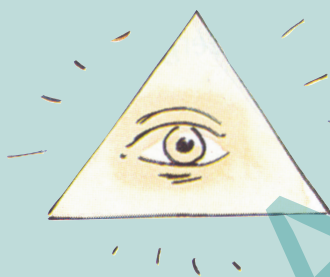
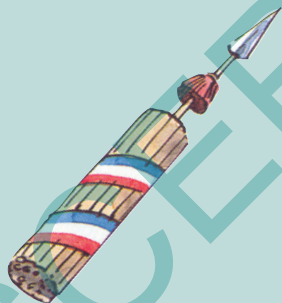
Reading political symbols

The majority of men and women in the eighteenth century could not read or write. So images and symbols were frequently used instead of printed words to communicate important ideas. The painting by Le Barbier (Fig. 8) uses many such symbols to convey the content of the Declaration of Rights. Let us try to read these symbols.

The broken chain: Chains were used to fetter slaves. A broken chain stands for the act of becoming free.



The bundle of rods or fasces: One rod can be easily broken, but not an entire bundle. Strength lies in unity.

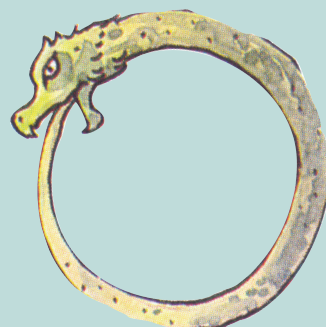


The eye within a triangle radiating light: The all-seeing eye stands for knowledge. The rays of the sun will drive away the clouds of ignorance.

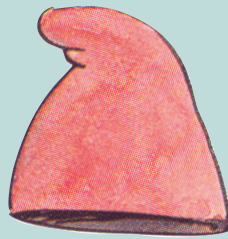


Sceptre: Symbol of royal power.

Snake biting its tail to form a ring: Symbol of Eternity. A ring has neither beginning nor end.



Red Phrygian cap: Cap worn by a slave upon becoming free.

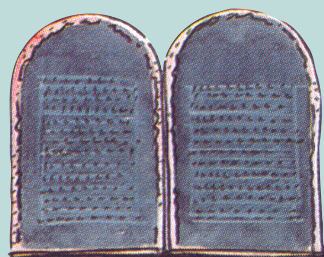


Blue-white-red: The national colours of France.



The winged woman:
Personification of the law.

The Law Tablet: The law is the same for all, and all are equal before it.



Activity

1. Identify the symbols in Box 1 which stand for liberty, equality and fraternity.
2. Explain the meaning of the painting of the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen (Fig. 8) by reading only the symbols.
3. Compare the political rights which the Constitution of 1791 gave to the citizens with Articles 1 and 6 of the Declaration (Source C). Are the two documents consistent? Do the two documents convey the same idea?
4. Which groups of French society would have gained from the Constitution of 1791? Which groups would have had reason to be dissatisfied? What developments does Marat (Source B) anticipate in the future?
5. Imagine the impact of the events in France on neighbouring countries such as Prussia, Austria-Hungary or Spain, all of which were absolute monarchies. How would the kings, traders, peasants, nobles or members of the clergy here have reacted to the news of what was happening in France?

3 France Abolishes Monarchy and Becomes a Republic

The situation in France continued to be tense during the following years. Although Louis XVI had signed the Constitution, he entered into secret negotiations with the King of Prussia. Rulers of other neighbouring countries too were worried by the developments in France and made plans to send troops to put down the events that had been taking place there since the summer of 1789. Before this could happen, the National Assembly voted in April 1792 to declare war against Prussia and Austria. Thousands of volunteers thronged from the provinces to join the army. They saw this as a war of the people against kings and aristocracies all over Europe. Among the patriotic songs they sang was the *Marseillaise*, composed by the poet Roget de L'Isle. It was sung for the first time by volunteers from *Marseilles* as they marched into Paris and so got its name. The *Marseillaise* is now the national anthem of France.

The revolutionary wars brought losses and economic difficulties to the people. While the men were away fighting at the front, women were left to cope with the tasks of earning a living and looking after their families. Large sections of the population were convinced that the revolution had to be carried further, as the Constitution of 1791 gave political rights only to the richer sections of society. Political clubs became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies and plan their own forms of action. The most successful of these clubs was that of the **Jacobins**, which got its name from the former **convent** of St Jacob in Paris. Women too, who had been active throughout this period, formed their own clubs. Section 4 of this chapter will tell you more about their activities and demands.

The members of the Jacobin club belonged mainly to the less prosperous sections of society. They included small shopkeepers, artisans such as shoemakers, pastry cooks, watch-makers, printers, as well as servants and daily-wage workers. Their leader was Maximilian Robespierre. A large group among the Jacobins decided to start wearing long striped trousers similar to those worn by dock workers. This was to set themselves apart from the fashionable sections of society, especially nobles, who wore knee breeches. It

New words

Convent – Building belonging to a community devoted to a religious life



Fig.9 – A sans-culottes couple.



Fig. 10 – Nanine Vallain, *Liberty*.

This is one of the rare paintings by a woman artist. The revolutionary events made it possible for women to train with established painters and to exhibit their works in the Salon, which was an exhibition held every two years.

The painting is a female allegory of liberty – that is, the female form symbolises the idea of freedom.

Activity

Look carefully at the painting and identify the objects which are political symbols you saw in Box 1 (broken chain, red cap, fasces, Charter of the Declaration of Rights). The pyramid stands for equality, often represented by a triangle. Use the symbols to interpret the painting. Describe your impressions of the female figure of liberty.

was a way of proclaiming the end of the power wielded by the wearers of knee breeches. These Jacobins came to be known as the sans-culottes, literally meaning ‘those without knee breeches’. Sans-culottes men wore in addition the red cap that symbolised liberty. Women however were not allowed to do so.

In the summer of 1792 the Jacobins planned an insurrection of a large number of Parisians who were angered by the short supplies and high prices of food. On the morning of August 10 they stormed the Palace of the Tuileries, massacred the king’s guards and held the king himself as hostage for several hours. Later the Assembly voted to imprison the royal family. Elections were held. From now on all men of 21 years and above, regardless of wealth, got the right to vote.

The newly elected assembly was called the Convention. On 21 September 1792 it abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic. As you know, a republic is a form of government where the people elect the government including the head of the government.

There is no hereditary monarchy. You can try and find out about some other countries that are republics and investigate when and how they became so.

Louis XVI was sentenced to death by a court on the charge of **treason**. On 21 January 1793 he was executed publicly at the Place de la Concorde. The queen Marie Antoinette met with the same fate shortly after.

3.1 The Reign of Terror

The period from 1793 to 1794 is referred to as the Reign of Terror. Robespierre followed a policy of severe control and punishment. All those whom he saw as being ‘enemies’ of the republic – ex-nobles and clergy, members of other political parties, even members of his own party who did not agree with his methods – were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal. If the court found them ‘guilty’ they were guillotined. The guillotine is a device consisting of two poles and a blade with which a person is beheaded. It was named after Dr **Guillotin** who invented it.

Robespierre’s government issued laws placing a maximum ceiling on wages and prices. Meat and bread were rationed. Peasants were forced to transport their grain to the cities and sell it at prices fixed by the government. The use of more expensive white flour was forbidden; all citizens were required to eat the *pain d’égalité* (equality bread), a loaf made of wholewheat. Equality was also sought to be practised through forms of speech and address. Instead of the traditional Monsieur (Sir) and Madame (Madam) all French men and women were henceforth Citoyen and Citoyenne (Citizen). Churches were shut down and their buildings converted into barracks or offices.

Robespierre pursued his policies so relentlessly that even his supporters began to demand moderation. Finally, he was convicted by a court in July 1794, arrested and on the next day sent to the guillotine.

Activity

Compare the views of Desmoulins and Robespierre. How does each one understand the use of state force? What does Robespierre mean by ‘the war of liberty against tyranny’? How does Desmoulins perceive liberty? Refer once more to Source C. What did the constitutional laws on the rights of individuals lay down? Discuss your views on the subject in class.

New words

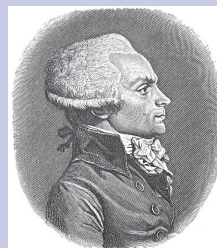
Treason – Betrayal of one’s country or government

Source D

What is liberty? Two conflicting views:

The revolutionary journalist Camille Desmoulins wrote the following in 1793. He was executed shortly after, during the Reign of Terror.

‘Some people believe that Liberty is like a child, which needs to go through a phase of being disciplined before it attains maturity. Quite the opposite. Liberty is Happiness, Reason, Equality, Justice, it is the Declaration of Rights ... You would like to finish off all your enemies by guillotining them. Has anyone heard of something more senseless? Would it be possible to bring a single person to the scaffold without making ten more enemies among his relations and friends?’



On 7 February 1794, Robespierre made a speech at the Convention, which was then carried by the newspaper *Le Moniteur Universel*. Here is an extract from it:

‘To establish and consolidate democracy, to achieve the peaceful rule of constitutional laws, we must first finish the war of liberty against tyranny We must annihilate the enemies of the republic at home and abroad, or else we shall perish. In time of Revolution a democratic government may rely on terror. Terror is nothing but justice, swift, severe and inflexible; ... and is used to meet the most urgent needs of the fatherland. To curb the enemies of Liberty through terror is the right of the founder of the Republic.’



Fig. 11 – The revolutionary government sought to mobilise the loyalty of its subjects through various means – one of them was the staging of festivals like this one. Symbols from civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome were used to convey the aura of a hallowed history. The pavilion on the raised platform in the middle carried by classical columns was made of perishable material that could be dismantled. Describe the groups of people, their clothes, their roles and actions. What impression of a revolutionary festival does this image convey?

3.2 A Directory Rules France

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

Through all these changes in the form of government, the ideals of freedom, of equality before the law and of fraternity remained inspiring ideals that motivated political movements in France and the rest of Europe during the following century.

4 Did Women have a Revolution?

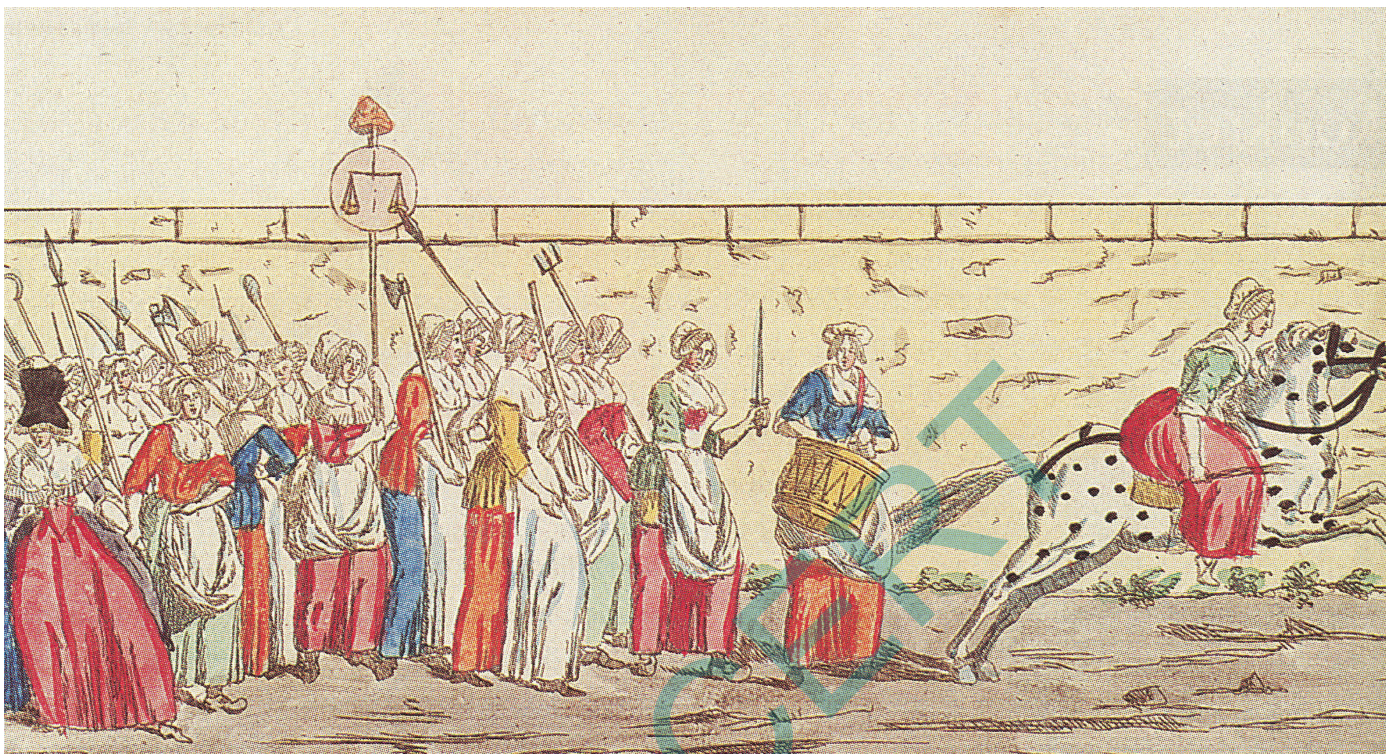


Fig. 12 – Parisian women on their way to Versailles.

This print is one of the many pictorial representations of the events of 5 October 1789, when women marched to Versailles and brought the king back with them to Paris.

From the very beginning women were active participants in the events which brought about so many important changes in French society. They hoped that their involvement would pressurise the revolutionary government to introduce measures to improve their lives. Most women of the third estate had to work for a living. They worked as seamstresses or laundresses, sold flowers, fruits and vegetables at the market, or were employed as domestic servants in the houses of prosperous people. Most women did not have access to education or job training. Only daughters of nobles or wealthier members of the third estate could study at a convent, after which their families arranged a marriage for them. Working women had also to care for their families, that is, cook, fetch water, queue up for bread and look after the children. Their wages were lower than those of men.

In order to discuss and voice their interests women started their own political clubs and newspapers. About sixty women's clubs came up in different French cities. The Society of Revolutionary and Republican Women was the most famous of them. One of their

Activity

Describe the persons represented in Fig. 12 – their actions, their postures, the objects they are carrying. Look carefully to see whether all of them come from the same social group. What symbols has the artist included in the image? What do they stand for? Do the actions of the women reflect traditional ideas of how women were expected to behave in public? What do you think: does the artist sympathise with the women's activities or is he critical of them? Discuss your views in the class.

main demands was that women enjoy the same political rights as men. Women were disappointed that the Constitution of 1791 reduced them to passive citizens. They demanded the right to vote, to be elected to the Assembly and to hold political office. Only then, they felt, would their interests be represented in the new government.

In the early years, the revolutionary government did introduce laws that helped improve the lives of women. Together with the creation of state schools, schooling was made compulsory for all girls. Their fathers could no longer force them into marriage against their will. Marriage was made into a contract entered into freely and registered under civil law. Divorce was made legal, and could be applied for by both women and men. Women could now train for jobs, could become artists or run small businesses.

Women's struggle for equal political rights, however, continued. During the Reign of Terror, the new government issued laws ordering closure of women's clubs and banning their political activities. Many prominent women were arrested and a number of them executed.

Women's movements for voting rights and equal wages continued through the next two hundred years in many countries of the world. The fight for the vote was carried out through an international suffrage movement during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The example of the political activities of French women during the revolutionary years was kept alive as an inspiring memory. It was finally in 1946 that women in France won the right to vote.

Source E

The life of a revolutionary woman – Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793)

Olympe de Gouges was one of the most important of the politically active women in revolutionary France. She protested against the Constitution and the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen as they excluded women from basic rights that each human being was entitled to. So, in 1791, she wrote a *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen*, which she addressed to the Queen and to the members of the National Assembly, demanding that they act upon it. In 1793, Olympe de Gouges criticised the Jacobin government for forcibly closing down women's clubs. She was tried by the National Convention, which charged her with treason. Soon after this she was executed.



Source F

Some of the basic rights set forth in Olympe de Gouges' Declaration.

1. Woman is born free and remains equal to man in rights.
2. The goal of all political associations is the preservation of the natural rights of woman and man: These rights are liberty, property, security, and above all resistance to oppression.
3. The source of all sovereignty resides in the nation, which is nothing but the union of woman and man.
4. The law should be the expression of the general will; all female and male citizens should have a say either personally or by their representatives in its formulation; it should be the same for all. All female and male citizens are equally entitled to all honours and public employment according to their abilities and without any other distinction than that of their talents.
5. No woman is an exception; she is accused, arrested, and detained in cases determined by law. Women, like men, obey this rigorous law.

Activity

Compare the manifesto drafted by Olympe de Gouges (Source F) with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (Source C).



Fig. 13 – Women queuing up at a bakery.

Activity

Imagine yourself to be one of the women in Fig. 13. Formulate a response to the arguments put forward by Chaumette (Source G).

Source G

In 1793, the Jacobin politician Chaumette sought to justify the closure of women's clubs on the following grounds:

'Has Nature entrusted domestic duties to men? Has she given us breasts to nurture babies?

No.

She said to Man:

Be a man. Hunting, agriculture, political duties ... that is your kingdom.

She said to Woman:

Be a woman ... the things of the household, the sweet duties of motherhood – those are your tasks.

Shameless are those women, who wish to become men. Have not duties been fairly distributed?'

5 The Abolition of Slavery

One of the most revolutionary social reforms of the Jacobin regime was the abolition of slavery in the French colonies. The colonies in the Caribbean – Martinique, Guadeloupe and San Domingo – were important suppliers of commodities such as tobacco, indigo, sugar and coffee. But the reluctance of Europeans to go and work in distant and unfamiliar lands meant a shortage of labour on the plantations. So this was met by a triangular slave trade between Europe, Africa and the Americas. The slave trade began in the seventeenth century. French merchants sailed from the ports of Bordeaux or Nantes to the African coast, where they bought slaves from local chieftains. Branded and shackled, the slaves were packed tightly into ships for the three-month long voyage across the Atlantic to the Caribbean. There they were sold to plantation owners. The exploitation of slave labour made it possible to meet the growing demand in European markets for sugar, coffee, and indigo. Port cities like Bordeaux and Nantes owed their economic prosperity to the flourishing slave trade.

Throughout the eighteenth century there was little criticism of slavery in France. The National Assembly held long debates about whether the rights of man should be extended to all French subjects including those in the colonies. But it did not pass any laws, fearing opposition from businessmen whose incomes depended on the slave trade. It was finally the Convention which in 1794 legislated to free all slaves in the French overseas possessions. This, however, turned out to be a short-term measure: ten years later, Napoleon reintroduced slavery. Plantation owners understood their freedom as including the right to enslave African **Negroes** in pursuit of their economic interests. Slavery was finally abolished in French colonies in 1848.



Fig. 14 – The emancipation of slaves. This print of 1794 describes the **emancipation** of slaves. The tricolour banner on top carries the slogan: 'The rights of man'. The inscription below reads: 'The freedom of the unfree'. A French woman prepares to 'civilise' the African and American Indian slaves by giving them European clothes to wear.

New words

Negroes – A term used for the indigenous people of Africa south of the Sahara. It is a derogatory term not in common use any longer

Emancipation – The act of freeing

Activity

Record your impressions of this print (Fig. 14). Describe the objects lying on the ground. What do they symbolise? What attitude does the picture express towards non-European slaves?

6 The Revolution and Everyday Life

Can politics change the clothes people wear, the language they speak or the books they read? The years following 1789 in France saw many such changes in the lives of men, women and children. The revolutionary governments took it upon themselves to pass laws that would translate the ideals of liberty and equality into everyday practice.

One important law that came into effect soon after the storming of the Bastille in the summer of 1789 was the abolition of censorship. In the Old Regime all written material and cultural activities – books, newspapers, plays – could be published or performed only after they had been approved by the censors of the king. Now the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen proclaimed freedom of speech and expression to be a natural right. Newspapers, pamphlets, books and printed pictures flooded the towns of France from where they travelled rapidly into the countryside. They all described and discussed the events and changes taking place in France. Freedom of the press also meant that opposing views of events could be expressed. Each side sought to convince the others of its position through the medium of print. Plays, songs and festive processions attracted large numbers of people. This was one way they could grasp and identify with ideas such as liberty or justice that political philosophers wrote about at length in texts which only a handful of educated people could read.

Activity

Describe the picture in your own words. What are the images that the artist has used to communicate the following ideas: greed, equality, justice, takeover by the state of the assets of the church?



Fig. 15 – The patriotic fat-reducing press.

This anonymous print of 1790 seeks to make the idea of justice tangible.



Fig. 16 - Marat addressing the people. This is a painting by Louis-Leopold Boilly.

Recall what you have learnt about Marat in this chapter. Describe the scene around him. Account for his great popularity. What kinds of reactions would a painting like this produce among viewers in the Salon?

Conclusion

In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of France. He set out to conquer neighbouring European countries, dispossessing dynasties and creating kingdoms where he placed members of his family. Napoleon saw his role as a moderniser of Europe. He introduced many laws such as the protection of private property and a uniform system of weights and measures provided by the decimal system. Initially, many saw Napoleon as a liberator who would bring freedom for the people. But soon the Napoleonic armies came to be viewed everywhere as an invading force. He was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815. Many of his measures that carried the revolutionary ideas of liberty and modern laws to other parts of Europe had an impact on people long after Napoleon had left.

The ideas of liberty and democratic rights were the most important legacy of the French Revolution. These spread from France to the rest of Europe during the nineteenth century, where feudal systems



Fig. 17 – Napoleon crossing the Alps, painting by David.

were abolished. Colonised peoples reworked the idea of freedom from bondage into their movements to create a sovereign nation state. Tipu Sultan and Rammohan Roy are two examples of individuals who responded to the ideas coming from revolutionary France.

Box 2

Raja Rammohan Roy was one of those who was inspired by new ideas that were spreading through Europe at that time. The French Revolution and later, the July Revolution excited his imagination.

'He could think and talk of nothing else when he heard of the July Revolution in France in 1830. On his way to England at Cape Town he insisted on visiting frigates (warships) flying the revolutionary tri-colour flag though he had been temporarily lamed by an accident.'

Susobhan Sarkar, *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance* 1946.

Activities

1. Find out more about any one of the revolutionary figures you have read about in this chapter. Write a short biography of this person.
2. The French Revolution saw the rise of newspapers describing the events of each day and week. Collect information and pictures on any one event and write a newspaper article. You could also conduct an imaginary interview with important personages such as Mirabeau, Olympe de Gouges or Robespierre. Work in groups of two or three. Each group could then put up their articles on a board to produce a wallpaper on the French Revolution.

Activities

Questions

1. Describe the circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France.
2. Which groups of French society benefited from the revolution? Which groups were forced to relinquish power? Which sections of society would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution?
3. Describe the legacy of the French Revolution for the peoples of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
4. Draw up a list of democratic rights we enjoy today whose origins could be traced to the French Revolution.
5. Would you agree with the view that the message of universal rights was beset with contradictions? Explain.
6. How would you explain the rise of Napoleon?
7. Today, many low-income families work as daily-wage labourers, have no land of their own and depend on government welfare schemes. In the old French society, which group is most similar to them?
 - a) Clergy of the 1st Estate.
 - b) Nobles of the 2nd Estate.
 - c) Rich people of the 3rd Estate.
 - d) Poor workers of the 3rd Estate.

?

Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution



1 The Age of Social Change

In the previous chapter you read about the powerful ideas of freedom and equality that circulated in Europe after the French Revolution. The French Revolution opened up the possibility of creating a dramatic change in the way in which society was structured. As you have read, before the eighteenth century society was broadly divided into estates and orders and it was the aristocracy and church which controlled economic and social power. Suddenly, after the revolution, it seemed possible to change this. In many parts of the world including Europe and Asia, new ideas about individual rights and who controlled social power began to be discussed. In India, Raja Rammohan Roy and Derozio talked of the significance of the French Revolution, and many others debated the ideas of post-revolutionary Europe. The developments in the colonies, in turn, reshaped these ideas of societal change.

Not everyone in Europe, however, wanted a complete transformation of society. Responses varied from those who accepted that some change was necessary but wished for a gradual shift, to those who wanted to restructure society radically. Some were ‘conservatives’, others were ‘liberals’ or ‘radicals’. What did these terms really mean in the context of the time? What separated these strands of politics and what linked them together? We must remember that these terms do not mean the same thing in all contexts or at all times.

We will look briefly at some of the important political traditions of the nineteenth century, and see how they influenced change. Then we will focus on one historical event in which there was an attempt at a radical transformation of society. Through the revolution in Russia, socialism became one of the most significant and powerful ideas to shape society in the twentieth century.

1.1 Liberals, Radicals and Conservatives

One of the groups which looked to change society were the liberals. Liberals wanted a nation which tolerated all religions. We should remember that at this time European states usually discriminated in

favour of one religion or another (Britain favoured the Church of England, Austria and Spain favoured the Catholic Church). Liberals also opposed the uncontrolled power of dynastic rulers. They wanted to safeguard the rights of individuals against governments. They argued for a representative, elected parliamentary government, subject to laws interpreted by a well-trained judiciary that was independent of rulers and officials. However, they were not 'democrats'. They did not believe in universal adult franchise, that is, the right of every citizen to vote. They felt men of property mainly should have the vote. They also did not want the vote for women.

In contrast, radicals wanted a nation in which government was based on the majority of a country's population. Many supported women's **suffragette** movements. Unlike liberals, they opposed the privileges of great landowners and wealthy factory owners. They were not against the existence of private property but disliked concentration of property in the hands of a few.

Conservatives were opposed to radicals and liberals. After the French Revolution, however, even conservatives had opened their minds to the need for change. Earlier, in the eighteenth century, conservatives had been generally opposed to the idea of change. By the nineteenth century, they accepted that some change was inevitable but believed that the past had to be respected and change had to be brought about through a slow process.

Such differing ideas about societal change clashed during the social and political turmoil that followed the French Revolution. The various attempts at revolution and national transformation in the nineteenth century helped define both the limits and potential of these political tendencies.

1.2 Industrial Society and Social Change

These political trends were signs of a new time. It was a time of profound social and economic changes. It was a time when new cities came up and new industrialised regions developed, railways expanded and the Industrial Revolution occurred.

Industrialisation brought men, women and children to factories. Work hours were often long and wages were poor. Unemployment was common, particularly during times of low demand for industrial goods. Housing and sanitation were problems since towns were growing rapidly. Liberals and radicals searched for solutions to these issues.

New words

Suffragette movement – A movement to give women the right to vote.

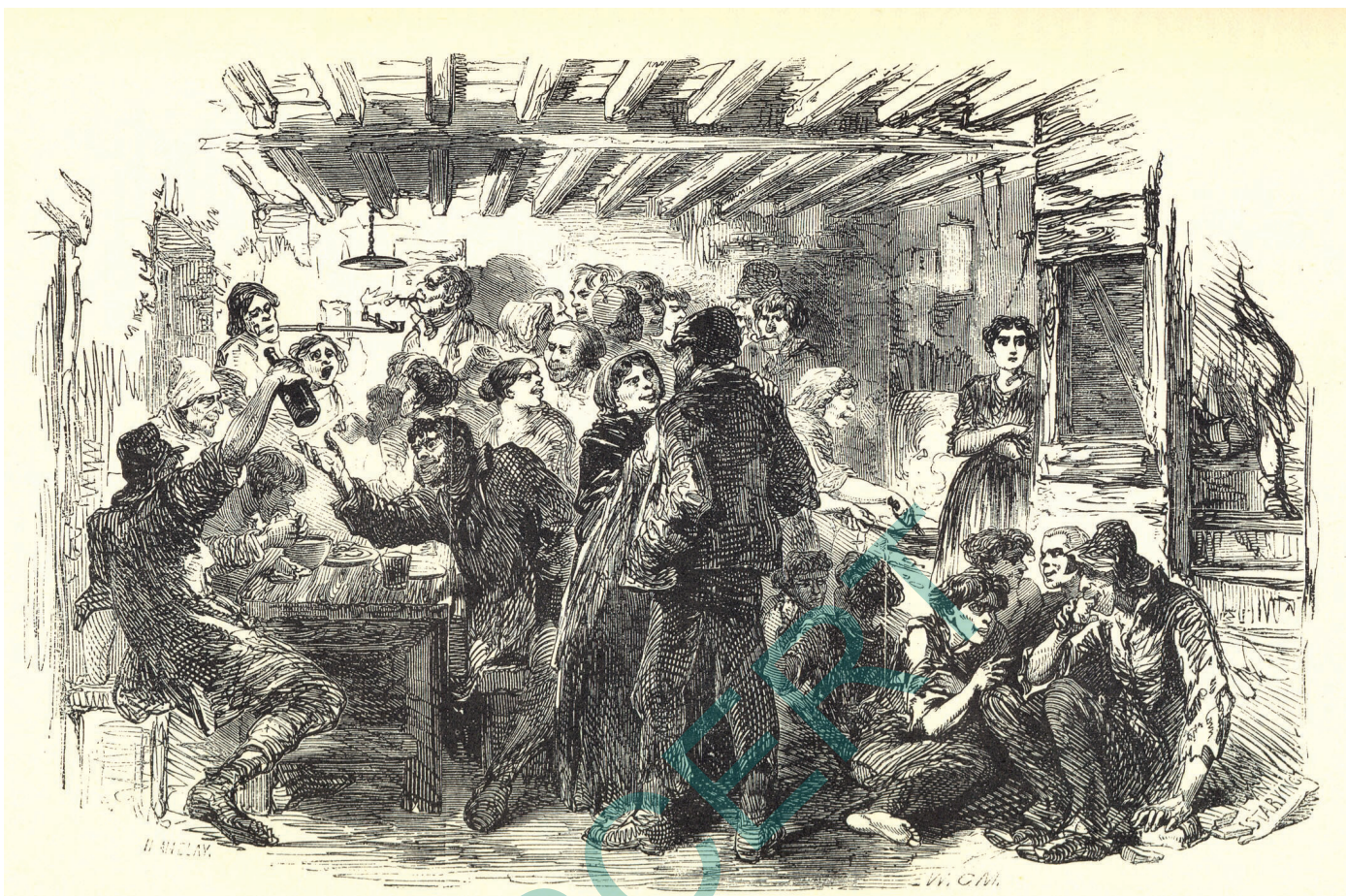


Fig. 1 – The London poor in the mid-nineteenth century as seen by a contemporary.

From: Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1861.

Almost all industries were the property of individuals. Liberals and radicals themselves were often property owners and employers. Having made their wealth through trade or industrial ventures, they felt that such effort should be encouraged – that its benefits would be achieved if the workforce in the economy was healthy and citizens were educated. Opposed to the privileges the old aristocracy had by birth, they firmly believed in the value of individual effort, labour and enterprise. If freedom of individuals was ensured, if the poor could labour, and those with capital could operate without restraint, they believed that societies would develop. Many working men and women who wanted changes in the world rallied around liberal and radical groups and parties in the early nineteenth century.

Some nationalists, liberals and radicals wanted revolutions to put an end to the kind of governments established in Europe in 1815. In France, Italy, Germany and Russia, they became revolutionaries and worked to overthrow existing monarchs. Nationalists talked of revolutions that would create ‘nations’ where all citizens would have

equal rights. After 1815, Giuseppe Mazzini, an Italian nationalist, conspired with others to achieve this in Italy. Nationalists elsewhere – including India – read his writings.

1.3 The Coming of Socialism to Europe

Perhaps one of the most far-reaching visions of how society should be structured was socialism. By the mid - nineteenth century in Europe, socialism was a well-known body of ideas that attracted widespread attention.

Socialists were against private property, and saw it as the root of all social ills of the time. Why? Individuals owned the property that gave employment but the proprietors were concerned only with personal gain and not with the welfare of those who made the property productive. So if society as a whole rather than single individuals controlled property, more attention would be paid to collective social interests. Socialists wanted this change and campaigned for it.

How could a society without property operate? What would be the basis of socialist society?

Socialists had different visions of the future. Some believed in the idea of cooperatives. **Robert Owen** (1771-1858), a leading English manufacturer, sought to build a cooperative community called New Harmony in Indiana (USA). Other socialists felt that cooperatives could not be built on a wide scale only through individual initiative: they demanded that *governments* encourage cooperatives. In France, for instance, **Louis Blanc** (1813-1882) wanted the government to encourage cooperatives and replace capitalist enterprises. These cooperatives were to be associations of people who produced goods together and divided the profits according to the work done by members.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) and **Friedrich Engels** (1820-1895) added other ideas to this body of arguments. Marx argued that industrial society was 'capitalist'. Capitalists owned the capital invested in factories, and the profit of capitalists was produced by workers. The conditions of workers could not improve as long as this profit was accumulated by private capitalists. Workers had to overthrow capitalism and the rule of private property. Marx believed that to free themselves from capitalist exploitation, workers had to construct a radically socialist society where all property was socially controlled. This would be a communist society. He was convinced that workers would triumph in their conflict with capitalists. A communist society was the natural society of the future.

Activity

List two differences between the capitalist and socialist ideas of private property.

1.4 Support for Socialism

By the 1870s, socialist ideas spread through Europe. To coordinate their efforts, socialists formed an international body – namely, the Second International.

Workers in England and Germany began forming associations to fight for better living and working conditions. They set up funds to help members in times of distress and demanded a reduction of working hours and the right to vote. In Germany, these associations worked closely with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and helped it win parliamentary seats. By 1905, socialists and trade unionists formed a Labour Party in Britain and a Socialist Party in France. However, till 1914, socialists never succeeded in forming a government in Europe. Represented by strong figures in parliamentary politics, their ideas did shape legislation, but governments continued to be run by conservatives, liberals and radicals.

Activity

Imagine that a meeting has been called in your area to discuss the socialist idea of doing away with private property and introducing collective ownership. Write the speech you would make at the meeting if you are:

- a poor labourer working in the fields
- a medium-level landowner
- a house owner



Fig.2 – This is a painting of the Paris Commune of 1871 (From Illustrated London News, 1871). It portrays a scene from the popular uprising in Paris between March and May 1871. This was a period when the town council (commune) of Paris was taken over by a ‘peoples’ government’ consisting of workers, ordinary people, professionals, political activists and others. The uprising emerged against a background of growing discontent against the policies of the French state. The ‘Paris Commune’ was ultimately crushed by government troops but it was celebrated by Socialists the world over as a prelude to a socialist revolution. The Paris Commune is also popularly remembered for two important legacies: one, for its association with the workers’ red flag – that was the flag adopted by the communards (revolutionaries) in Paris; two, for the ‘Marseillaise’, originally written as a war song in 1792, it became a symbol of the Commune and of the struggle for liberty.

2 The Russian Revolution

In one of the least industrialised of European states this situation was reversed. Socialists took over the government in Russia through the October Revolution of 1917. The fall of monarchy in February 1917 and the events of October are normally called the Russian Revolution.

How did this come about? What were the social and political conditions in Russia when the revolution occurred? To answer these questions, let us look at Russia a few years before the revolution.

2.1 The Russian Empire in 1914

In 1914, Tsar Nicholas II ruled Russia and its empire. Besides the territory around Moscow, the Russian empire included current-day Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, parts of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. It stretched to the Pacific and comprised today's Central Asian states, as well as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The majority religion was Russian Orthodox Christianity – which had grown out of the Greek Orthodox Church – but the empire also included Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Buddhists.



Fig.3 – Tsar Nicholas II in the White Hall of the Winter Palace, St Petersburg, 1900.
Painted by Earnest Lipgart (1847-1932)



Fig.4 – Europe in 1914.

The map shows the Russian empire and the European countries at war during the First World War.

2.2 Economy and Society

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the vast majority of Russia's people were agriculturists. About 85 per cent of the Russian empire's population earned their living from agriculture. This proportion was higher than in most European countries. For instance, in France and Germany the proportion was between 40 per cent and 50 per cent. In the empire, cultivators produced for the market as well as for their own needs and Russia was a major exporter of grain.

Industry was found in pockets. Prominent industrial areas were St Petersburg and Moscow. Craftsmen undertook much of the production, but large factories existed alongside craft workshops. Many factories were set up in the 1890s, when Russia's railway network was extended, and foreign investment in industry increased. Coal production doubled and iron and steel output quadrupled. By the 1900s, in some areas factory workers and craftsmen were almost equal in number.

Most industry was the private property of industrialists. Government supervised large factories to ensure minimum wages and limited hours of work. But factory inspectors could not prevent rules being broken. In craft units and small workshops, the working day was sometimes 15 hours, compared with 10 or 12 hours in factories. Accommodation varied from rooms to dormitories.

Workers were a divided social group. Some had strong links with the villages from which they came. Others had settled in cities permanently. Workers were divided by skill. A metalworker of St. Petersburg recalled, 'Metalworkers considered themselves aristocrats among other workers. Their occupations demanded more training and skill . . . ' Women made up 31 per cent of the factory labour force by 1914, but they were paid less than men (between half and three-quarters of a man's wage). Divisions among workers showed themselves in dress and manners too. Some workers formed associations to help members in times of unemployment or financial hardship but such associations were few.

Despite divisions, workers did unite to strike work (stop work) when they disagreed with employers about dismissals or work conditions. These strikes took place frequently in the textile industry during 1896-1897, and in the metal industry during 1902.

In the countryside, peasants cultivated most of the land. But the nobility, the crown and the Orthodox Church owned large properties. Like workers, peasants too were divided. They were also



Fig.5 – Unemployed peasants in pre-war St Petersburg.

Many survived by eating at charitable kitchens and living in poorhouses.



Fig.6 – Workers sleeping in bunkers in a dormitory in pre-revolutionary Russia.

They slept in shifts and could not keep their families with them.

deeply religious. But except in a few cases they had no respect for the nobility. Nobles got their power and position through their services to the Tsar, not through local popularity. This was unlike France where, during the French Revolution in Brittany, peasants respected nobles and fought for them. In Russia, peasants wanted the land of the nobles to be given to them. Frequently, they refused to pay rent and even murdered landlords. In 1902, this occurred on a large scale in south Russia. And in 1905, such incidents took place all over Russia.

Russian peasants were different from other European peasants in another way. They pooled their land together periodically and their commune (*mir*) divided it according to the needs of individual families.

2.3 Socialism in Russia

All political parties were illegal in Russia before 1914. The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was founded in 1898 by socialists who respected Marx's ideas. However, because of government policing, it had to operate as an illegal organisation. It set up a newspaper, mobilised workers and organised strikes.

Some Russian socialists felt that the Russian peasant custom of dividing land periodically made them natural socialists. So peasants, not workers, would be the main force of the revolution, and Russia could become socialist more quickly than other countries. Socialists were active in the countryside through the late nineteenth century. They formed the Socialist Revolutionary Party in 1900. This party struggled for peasants' rights and demanded that land belonging to nobles be transferred to peasants. Social Democrats disagreed with Socialist Revolutionaries about peasants. Lenin felt that peasants were not one united group. Some were poor and others rich, some worked as labourers while others were capitalists who employed workers. Given this 'differentiation' within them, they could not all be part of a socialist movement.

The party was divided over the strategy of organisation. Vladimir Lenin (who led the Bolshevik group) thought that in a repressive society like Tsarist Russia the party should be disciplined and should control the number and quality of its members. Others (Mensheviks) thought that the party should be open to all (as in Germany).

2.4 A Turbulent Time: The 1905 Revolution

Russia was an **autocracy**. Unlike other European rulers, even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Tsar was not subject to

Source A

Alexander Shlyapnikov, a socialist worker of the time, gives us a description of how the meetings were organised:

'Propaganda was done in the plants and shops on an individual basis. There were also discussion circles ... Legal meetings took place on matters concerning [official issues], but this activity was skilfully integrated into the general struggle for the liberation of the working class. Illegal meetings were ... arranged on the spur of the moment but in an organised way during lunch, in evening break, in front of the exit, in the yard or, in establishments with several floors, on the stairs. The most alert workers would form a "plug" in the doorway, and the whole mass piled up in the exit. An agitator would get up right there on the spot. Management would contact the police on the telephone, but the speeches would have already been made and the necessary decision taken by the time they arrived ...'

Alexander Shlyapnikov, *On the Eve of 1917. Reminiscences from the Revolutionary Underground*.

parliament. Liberals in Russia campaigned to end this state of affairs. Together with the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, they worked with peasants and workers during the revolution of 1905 to demand a constitution. They were supported in the empire by nationalists (in Poland for instance) and in Muslim-dominated areas by **jadidists** who wanted modernised Islam to lead their societies.

The year 1904 was a particularly bad one for Russian workers. Prices of essential goods rose so quickly that **real wages** declined by 20 per cent. The membership of workers' associations rose dramatically. When four members of the Assembly of Russian Workers, which had been formed in 1904, were dismissed at the Putilov Iron Works, there was a call for industrial action. Over the next few days over 110,000 workers in St Petersburg went on strike demanding a reduction in the working day to eight hours, an increase in wages and improvement in working conditions.

When the procession of workers led by Father Gapon reached the Winter Palace it was attacked by the police and the Cossacks. Over 100 workers were killed and about 300 wounded. The incident, known as Bloody Sunday, started a series of events that became known as the 1905 Revolution. Strikes took place all over the country and universities closed down when student bodies staged walkouts, complaining about the lack of civil liberties. Lawyers, doctors, engineers and other middle-class workers established the Union of Unions and demanded a constituent assembly.

During the 1905 Revolution, the Tsar allowed the creation of an elected consultative Parliament or Duma. For a brief while during the revolution, there existed a large number of trade unions and factory committees made up of factory workers. After 1905, most committees and unions worked unofficially, since they were declared illegal. Severe restrictions were placed on political activity. The Tsar dismissed the first Duma within 75 days and the re-elected second Duma within three months. He did not want any questioning of his authority or any reduction in his power. He changed the voting laws and packed the third Duma with conservative politicians. Liberals and revolutionaries were kept out.

2.5 The First World War and the Russian Empire

In 1914, war broke out between two European alliances – Germany, Austria and Turkey (the Central powers) and France, Britain and Russia (later Italy and Romania). Each country had a global empire

Activity

Why were there revolutionary disturbances in Russia in 1905? What were the demands of revolutionaries?

New words

Jadidists – Muslim reformers within the Russian empire

Real wage – Reflects the quantities of goods which the wages will actually buy.

and the war was fought outside Europe as well as in Europe. This was the First World War.

In Russia, the war was initially popular and people rallied around Tsar Nicholas II. As the war continued, though, the Tsar refused to consult the main parties in the Duma. Support wore thin. Anti-German sentiments ran high, as can be seen in the renaming of St Petersburg – a German name – as Petrograd. The Tsarina Alexandra's German origins and poor advisers, especially a monk called Rasputin, made the autocracy unpopular.

The First World War on the 'eastern front' differed from that on the 'western front'. In the west, armies fought from trenches stretched along eastern France. In the east, armies moved a good deal and fought battles leaving large casualties. Defeats were shocking and demoralising. Russia's armies lost badly in Germany and Austria between 1914 and 1916. There were over 7 million casualties by 1917. As they retreated, the Russian army destroyed crops and buildings to prevent the enemy from being able to live off the land. The destruction of crops and buildings led to over 3 million refugees in Russia. The situation discredited the government and the Tsar. Soldiers did not wish to fight such a war.

The war also had a severe impact on industry. Russia's own industries were few in number and the country was cut off from other suppliers of industrial goods by German control of the Baltic Sea. Industrial equipment disintegrated more rapidly in Russia than elsewhere in Europe. By 1916, railway lines began to break down. Able-bodied men were called up to the war. As a result, there were labour shortages and small workshops producing essentials were shut down. Large supplies of grain were sent to feed the army. For the people in the cities, bread and flour became scarce. By the winter of 1916, riots at bread shops were common.



Fig. 7 – Russian soldiers during the First World War.

The Imperial Russian army came to be known as the 'Russian steam roller'. It was the largest armed force in the world. When this army shifted its loyalty and began supporting the revolutionaries, Tsarist power collapsed.

Activity

The year is 1916. You are a general in the Tsar's army on the eastern front. You are writing a report for the government in Moscow. In your report suggest what you think the government should do to improve the situation.

3 The February Revolution in Petrograd

In the winter of 1917, conditions in the capital, Petrograd, were grim. The layout of the city seemed to emphasise the divisions among its people. The workers' quarters and factories were located on the right bank of the River Neva. On the left bank were the fashionable areas, the Winter Palace, and official buildings, including the palace where the Duma met. In February 1917, food shortages were deeply felt in the workers' quarters. The winter was very cold – there had been exceptional frost and heavy snow. Parliamentarians wishing to preserve elected government, were opposed to the Tsar's desire to dissolve the Duma.

On 22 February, a lockout took place at a factory on the right bank. The next day, workers in fifty factories called a strike in sympathy. In many factories, women led the way to strikes. This came to be called the International Women's Day. Demonstrating workers crossed from the factory quarters to the centre of the capital – the Nevskii Prospekt. At this stage, no political party was actively organising the movement. As the fashionable quarters and official buildings were surrounded by workers, the government imposed a curfew. Demonstrators dispersed by the evening, but they came back on the 24th and 25th. The government called out the cavalry and police to keep an eye on them.

On Sunday, 25 February, the government suspended the Duma. Politicians spoke out against the measure. Demonstrators returned in force to the streets of the left bank on the 26th. On the 27th, the Police Headquarters were ransacked. The streets thronged with people raising slogans about bread, wages, better hours and democracy. The government tried to control the situation and called out the cavalry once again. However, the cavalry refused to fire on the demonstrators. An officer was shot at the barracks of a regiment and three other regiments mutinied, voting to join the striking workers. By that evening, soldiers and



Fig.8 – The Petrograd Soviet meeting in the Duma, February 1917.

striking workers had gathered to form a 'soviet' or 'council' in the same building as the Duma met. This was the Petrograd Soviet.

The very next day, a delegation went to see the Tsar. Military commanders advised him to abdicate. He followed their advice and abdicated on 2 March. Soviet leaders and Duma leaders formed a Provisional Government to run the country. Russia's future would be decided by a constituent assembly, elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Petrograd had led the February Revolution that brought down the monarchy in February 1917.

Box 1

Women in the February Revolution

'Women workers, often ... inspired their male co-workers ... At the Lorenz telephone factory, ... Marfa Vasileva almost single handedly called a successful strike. Already that morning, in celebration of Women's Day, women workers had presented red bows to the men ... Then Marfa Vasileva, a milling machine operator stopped work and declared an impromptu strike. The workers on the floor were ready to support her ... The foreman informed the management and sent her a loaf of bread. She took the bread but refused to go back to work. The administrator asked her again why she refused to work and she replied, "I cannot be the only one who is satiated when others are hungry". Women workers from another section of the factory gathered around Marfa in support and gradually all the other women ceased working. Soon the men downed their tools as well and the entire crowd rushed onto the street.'

From: Choi Chatterji, *Celebrating Women* (2002).

3.1 After February

Army officials, landowners and industrialists were influential in the Provisional Government. But the liberals as well as socialists among them worked towards an elected government. Restrictions on public meetings and associations were removed. 'Soviets', like the Petrograd Soviet, were set up everywhere, though no common system of election was followed.

In April 1917, the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin returned to Russia from his exile. He and the Bolsheviks had opposed the war since 1914. Now he felt it was time for soviets to take over power. He declared that the war be brought to a close, land be transferred to the peasants, and banks be nationalised. These three demands were Lenin's 'April Theses'. He also argued that the Bolshevik Party rename itself the Communist Party to indicate its new radical aims. Most others in the Bolshevik Party were initially surprised by the April Theses. They thought that the time was not yet ripe for a

Activity

Look again at Source A and Box 1.

- List five changes in the mood of the workers.
- Place yourself in the position of a woman who has seen both situations and write an account of what has changed.

socialist revolution and the Provisional Government needed to be supported. But the developments of the subsequent months changed their attitude.

Through the summer the workers' movement spread. In industrial areas, factory committees were formed which began questioning the way industrialists ran their factories. Trade unions grew in number. Soldiers' committees were formed in the army. In June, about 500 Soviets sent representatives to an All Russian Congress of Soviets. As the Provisional Government saw its power reduce and Bolshevik influence grow, it decided to take stern measures against the spreading discontent. It resisted attempts by workers to run factories and began arresting leaders. Popular demonstrations staged by the Bolsheviks in July 1917 were sternly repressed. Many Bolshevik leaders had to go into hiding or flee.

Meanwhile in the countryside, peasants and their Socialist Revolutionary leaders pressed for a redistribution of land. Land committees were formed to handle this. Encouraged by the Socialist Revolutionaries, peasants seized land between July and September 1917.



Fig.9 – A Bolshevik image of Lenin addressing workers in April 1917.



Fig. 10 – The July Days. A pro-Bolshevik demonstration on 17 July 1917 being fired upon by the army.

3.2 The Revolution of October 1917

As the conflict between the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks grew, Lenin feared the Provisional Government would set up a dictatorship. In September, he began discussions for an uprising against the government. Bolshevik supporters in the army, soviets and factories were brought together.

On 16 October 1917, Lenin persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and the Bolshevik Party to agree to a socialist seizure of power. A Military Revolutionary Committee was appointed by the Soviet under Leon Trotskii to organise the seizure. The date of the event was kept a secret.

The uprising began on 24 October. Sensing trouble, Prime Minister Kerenskii had left the city to summon troops. At dawn, military men loyal to the government seized the buildings of two Bolshevik newspapers. Pro-government troops were sent to take over telephone and telegraph offices and protect the Winter Palace. In a swift response, the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered its supporters to seize government offices and arrest ministers. Late in the day, the ship *Aurora* shelled the Winter Palace. Other vessels sailed down the Neva and took over various military points. By nightfall, the city was under the committee's control and the ministers had surrendered. At a meeting of the All Russian Congress of Soviets in Petrograd, the majority approved the Bolshevik action. Uprisings took place in other cities. There was heavy fighting – especially in Moscow – but by December, the Bolsheviks controlled the Moscow-Petrograd area.



Box 2

Date of the Russian Revolution

Russia followed the Julian calendar until 1 February 1918. The country then changed to the Gregorian calendar, which is followed everywhere today. The Gregorian dates are 13 days ahead of the Julian dates. So by our calendar, the 'February' Revolution took place on 12th March and the 'October' Revolution took place on 7th November.

Some important dates

1850s -1880s

Debates over socialism in Russia.

1898

Formation of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party.

1905

The Bloody Sunday and the Revolution of 1905.

1917

2nd March - Abdication of the Tsar.

24th October - Bolshevik uprising in Petrograd.

1918-20

The Civil War.

1919

Formation of Comintern.

1929

Beginning of Collectivisation.

Fig. 11 – Lenin (left) and Trotskii (right) with workers at Petrograd.

4 What Changed after October?

The Bolsheviks were totally opposed to private property. Most industry and banks were nationalised in November 1917. This meant that the government took over ownership and management. Land was declared social property and peasants were allowed to seize the land of the nobility. In cities, Bolsheviks enforced the partition of large houses according to family requirements. They banned the use of the old titles of aristocracy. To assert the change, new uniforms were designed for the army and officials, following a clothing competition organised in 1918 – when the Soviet hat (*budeonovka*) was chosen.

The Bolshevik Party was renamed the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). In November 1917, the Bolsheviks conducted the elections to the Constituent Assembly, but they failed to gain majority support. In January 1918, the Assembly rejected Bolshevik measures and Lenin dismissed the Assembly. He thought the All Russian Congress of Soviets was more democratic than an assembly elected in uncertain conditions. In March 1918, despite opposition by their political allies, the Bolsheviks made peace with Germany at Brest Litovsk. In the years that followed, the Bolsheviks became the only party to participate in the elections to the All Russian Congress of Soviets, which became the Parliament of the country. Russia became a one-party state. Trade unions were kept under party control. The secret police (called the Cheka first, and later OGPU and NKVD) punished those who criticised the Bolsheviks. Many young writers and artists rallied to the Party because it stood for socialism and for change. After October 1917, this led to experiments in the arts and architecture. But many became disillusioned because of the censorship the Party encouraged.



Fig. 12 – A soldier wearing the Soviet hat (*budeonovka*).



Fig. 13 – May Day demonstration in Moscow in 1918.

Box 3

The October Revolution and the Russian Countryside: Two Views

'News of the revolutionary uprising of October 25, 1917, reached the village the following day and was greeted with enthusiasm; to the peasants it meant free land and an end to the war. ...The day the news arrived, the landowner's manor house was looted, his stock farms were "requisitioned" and his vast orchard was cut down and sold to the peasants for wood; all his far buildings were torn down and left in ruins while the land was distributed among the peasants who were prepared to live the new Soviet life'.

From: Fedor Belov, *The History of a Soviet Collective Farm*

A member of a landowning family wrote to a relative about what happened at the estate:

'The "coup" happened quite painlessly, quietly and peacefully. ...The first days were unbearable.. Mikhail Mikhailovich [the estate owner] was calm...The girls also...I must say the chairman behaves correctly and even politely. We were left two cows and two horses. The servants tell them all the time not to bother us. "Let them live. We vouch for their safety and property. We want them treated as humanely as possible..."

...There are rumours that several villages are trying to evict the committees and return the estate to Mikhail Mikhailovich. I don't know if this will happen, or if it's good for us. But we rejoice that there is a conscience in our people...'

From: Serge Schmemmann, *Echoes of a Native Land. Two Centuries of a Russian Village* (1997).

4.1 The Civil War

When the Bolsheviks ordered land redistribution, the Russian army began to break up. Soldiers, mostly peasants, wished to go home for the redistribution and deserted. Non-Bolshevik socialists, liberals and supporters of autocracy condemned the Bolshevik uprising. Their leaders moved to south Russia and organised troops to fight the Bolsheviks (the 'reds'). During 1918 and 1919, the 'greens' (Socialist Revolutionaries) and 'whites' (pro-Tsarists) controlled most of the Russian empire. They were backed by French, American, British and Japanese troops – all those forces who were worried at the growth of socialism in Russia. As these troops and the Bolsheviks fought a civil war, looting, banditry and famine became common.

Supporters of private property among 'whites' took harsh steps with peasants who had seized land. Such actions led to the loss of popular support for the non-Bolsheviks. By January 1920, the Bolsheviks controlled most of the former Russian empire. They succeeded due

Activity

Read the two views on the revolution in the countryside. Imagine yourself to be a witness to the events. Write a short account from the standpoint of:

- an owner of an estate
- a small peasant
- a journalist

to cooperation with non-Russian nationalities and Muslim *jadidists*. Cooperation did not work where Russian colonists themselves turned Bolshevik. In Khiva, in Central Asia, Bolshevik colonists brutally massacred local nationalists in the name of defending socialism. In this situation, many were confused about what the Bolshevik government represented.

Partly to remedy this, most non-Russian nationalities were given political **autonomy** in the Soviet Union (USSR) – the state the Bolsheviks created from the Russian empire in December 1922. But since this was combined with unpopular policies that the Bolsheviks forced the local government to follow – like the harsh discouragement of **nomadism** – attempts to win over different nationalities were only partly successful.

New words

Autonomy – The right to govern themselves

Nomadism – Lifestyle of those who do not live in one place but move from area to area to earn their living

Activity

Why did people in Central Asia respond to the Russian Revolution in different ways?

Source B

Central Asia of the October Revolution: Two Views

M.N.Roy was an Indian revolutionary, a founder of the Mexican Communist Party and prominent Comintern leader in India, China and Europe. He was in Central Asia at the time of the civil war in the 1920s. He wrote:

'The chieftain was a benevolent old man; his attendant ... a youth who ... spoke Russian ... He had heard of the Revolution, which had overthrown the Tsar and driven away the Generals who conquered the homeland of the Kirgiz. So, the Revolution meant that the Kirgiz were masters of their home again. "Long Live the Revolution" shouted the Kirgiz youth who seemed to be a born Bolshevik. The whole tribe joined.'

M.N.Roy, *Memoirs* (1964).

'The Kirghiz welcomed the first revolution (ie February Revolution) with joy and the second revolution with consternation and terror ... [This] first revolution freed them from the oppression of the Tsarist regime and strengthened their hope that ... autonomy would be realised. The second revolution (October Revolution) was accompanied by violence, pillage, taxes and the establishment of dictatorial power ... Once a small group of Tsarist bureaucrats oppressed the Kirghiz. Now the same group of people ... perpetuate the same regime ...'

Kazakh leader in 1919, quoted in Alexander Bennigsen and Chantal Quelquejay, Les Mouvements Nationaux chez les Musulmans de Russie, (1960).

Source

4.2 Making a Socialist Society

During the civil war, the Bolsheviks kept industries and banks nationalised. They permitted peasants to cultivate the land that had been socialised. Bolsheviks used confiscated land to demonstrate what collective work could be.

A process of centralised planning was introduced. Officials assessed how the economy could work and set targets for a five-year period. On this basis they made the Five Year Plans. The government fixed all prices to promote industrial growth during the first two 'Plans'

Box 4

Socialist Cultivation in a Village in the Ukraine

'A commune was set up using two [confiscated] farms as a base. The commune consisted of thirteen families with a total of seventy persons ... The farm tools taken from the ... farms were turned over to the commune ... The members ate in a communal dining hall and income was divided in accordance with the principles of "cooperative communism". The entire proceeds of the members' labor, as well as all dwellings and facilities belonging to the commune were shared by the commune members.'

Fedor Belov, *The History of a Soviet Collective Farm* (1955).

(1927-1932 and 1933-1938). Centralised planning led to economic growth. Industrial production increased (between 1929 and 1933 by 100 per cent in the case of oil, coal and steel). New factory cities came into being.

However, rapid construction led to poor working conditions. In the city of Magnitogorsk, the construction of a steel plant was achieved in three years. Workers lived hard lives and the result was 550 stoppages of work in the first year alone. In living quarters, 'in the wintertime, at 40 degrees below, people had to climb down from the fourth floor and dash across the street in order to go to the toilet'.

An extended schooling system developed, and arrangements were made for factory workers and peasants to enter universities. Crèches were established in factories for the children of women workers. Cheap public health care was provided. Model living quarters were set up for workers. The effect of all this was uneven, though, since government resources were limited.



Fig. 14 – Factories came to be seen as a symbol of socialism.
This poster states: 'The smoke from the chimneys is the breathing of Soviet Russia.'



Fig. 15 – Children at school in Soviet Russia in the 1930s.
They are studying the Soviet economy.



Fig. 16 – A child in Magnitogorsk during the First Five Year Plan.
He is working for Soviet Russia.



Fig. 17 – Factory dining hall in the 1930s.

Source C

Dreams and Realities of a Soviet Childhood in 1933

Dear grandfather Kalinin ...

My family is large, there are four children. We don't have a father – he died, fighting for the worker's cause, and my mother ... is ailing ... I want to study very much, but I cannot go to school. I had some old boots, but they are completely torn and no one can mend them. My mother is sick, we have no money and no bread, but I want to study very much. ...there stands before us the task of studying, studying and studying. That is what Vladimir Ilich Lenin said. But I have to stop going to school. We have no relatives and there is no one to help us, so I have to go to work in a factory, to prevent the family from starving. Dear grandfather, I am 13, I study well and have no bad reports. I am in Class 5 ...

Letter of 1933 from a 13-year-old worker to Kalinin, Soviet President

From: V. Sokolov (ed), *Obshchestvo i Vlast, v 1930-ye gody* (Moscow, 1997).

Source

4.3 Stalinism and Collectivisation



The period of the early Planned Economy was linked to the disasters of the collectivisation of agriculture. By 1927-1928, the towns in Soviet Russia were facing an acute problem of grain supplies. The government fixed prices at which grain must be sold, but the peasants refused to sell their grain to government buyers at these prices.

Stalin, who headed the party after the death of Lenin, introduced firm emergency measures. He believed that rich peasants and traders in the countryside were holding stocks in the hope of higher prices. Speculation had to be stopped and supplies confiscated.

In 1928, Party members toured the grain-producing areas, supervising enforced grain collections, and raiding 'kulaks' – the name for well-to-do peasants. As shortages continued, the decision was taken to collectivise farms. It was argued that grain shortages were partly due to the small size of holdings. After 1917, land had been given over to peasants. These small-sized peasant farms could not be modernised. To develop modern farms, and run them along industrial lines with machinery, it was necessary to 'eliminate kulaks', take away land from peasants, and establish state-controlled large farms.

What followed was Stalin's collectivisation programme. From 1929, the Party forced all peasants to cultivate in collective farms (*kolkhoz*). The bulk of land and implements were transferred to the ownership of collective farms. Peasants worked on the land, and the *kolkhoz* profit was shared. Enraged peasants resisted the authorities and destroyed their livestock. Between 1929 and 1931, the number of cattle fell by one-third. Those who resisted collectivisation were severely punished. Many were **deported** and **exiled**. As they resisted collectivisation, peasants argued that they were not rich and they were not against socialism. They merely did not want to work in collective farms for a variety of reasons. Stalin's government allowed some independent cultivation, but treated such cultivators unsympathetically.

In spite of collectivisation, production did not increase immediately. In fact, the bad harvests of 1930-1933 led to one of most devastating famines in Soviet history when over 4 million died.

New words

Deported – Forcibly removed from one's own country.

Exiled – Forced to live away from one's own country.



Fig. 18 – A poster during collectivisation. It states: 'We shall strike at the kulak working for the decrease in cultivation.'



Fig. 19 – Peasant women being gathered to work in the large collective farms.

Source D

Official view of the opposition to collectivisation and the government response

'From the second half of February of this year, in various regions of the Ukraine ... mass insurrections of the peasantry have taken place, caused by distortions of the Party's line by a section of the lower ranks of the Party and the Soviet apparatus in the course of the introduction of collectivisation and preparatory work for the spring harvest.

Within a short time, large scale activities from the above-mentioned regions carried over into neighbouring areas – and the most aggressive insurrections have taken place near the border.

The greater part of the peasant insurrections have been linked with outright demands for the return of collectivised stocks of grain, livestock and tools ...

Between 1st February and 15th March, 25,000 have been arrested ... 656 have been executed, 3673 have been imprisoned in labour camps and 5580 exiled ...'

Report of K.M. Karlson, President of the State Police Administration of the Ukraine to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, on 19 March 1930.

From: V. Sokolov (ed), *Obshchestvo I Vlast, v 1930-ye gody*

Source

Many within the Party criticised the confusion in industrial production under the Planned Economy and the consequences of collectivisation. Stalin and his sympathisers charged these critics with conspiracy against socialism. Accusations were made throughout the country, and by 1939, over 2 million were in prisons or labour camps. Most were innocent of the crimes, but no one spoke for them. A large number were forced to make false confessions under torture and were executed – several among them were talented professionals.

Source E

This is a letter written by a peasant who did not want to join the collective farm.

To the newspaper *Krestianskaia Gazeta* (Peasant Newspaper)

'... I am a natural working peasant born in 1879 ... there are 6 members in my family, my wife was born in 1881, my son is 16, two daughters 19, all three go to school, my sister is 71. From 1932, heavy taxes have been levied on me that I have found impossible. From 1935, local authorities have increased the taxes on me ... and I was unable to handle them and all my property was registered: my horse, cow, calf, sheep with lambs, all my implements, furniture and my reserve of wood for repair of buildings and they sold the lot for the taxes. In 1936, they sold two of my buildings ... the kolkhoz bought them. In 1937, of two huts I had, one was sold and one was confiscated ...'

Afanasii Dedorovich Frebenev, an independent cultivator.

From: V. Sokolov (ed), *Obshchestvo I Vlast, v 1930-ye gody*.

Source

5 The Global Influence of the Russian Revolution and the USSR

Existing socialist parties in Europe did not wholly approve of the way the Bolsheviks took power – and kept it. However, the possibility of a workers' state fired people's imagination across the world. In many countries, communist parties were formed – like the Communist Party of Great Britain. The Bolsheviks encouraged colonial peoples to follow their experiment. Many non-Russians from outside the USSR participated in the Conference of the Peoples of the East (1920) and the Bolshevik-founded Comintern (an international union of pro-Bolshevik socialist parties). Some received education in the USSR's Communist University of the Workers of the East. By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, the USSR had given socialism a global face and world stature.

Yet by the 1950s it was acknowledged within the country that the style of government in the USSR was not in keeping with the ideals of the Russian Revolution. In the world socialist movement too it was recognised that all was not well in the Soviet Union. A backward country had become a great power. Its industries and agriculture had developed and the poor were being fed. But it had denied the essential freedoms to its citizens and carried out its developmental projects through repressive policies. By the end of the twentieth century, the international reputation of the USSR as a socialist country had declined though it was recognised that socialist ideals still enjoyed respect among its people. But in each country the ideas of socialism were rethought in a variety of different ways.

Box 5

Writing about the Russian Revolution in India

Among those the Russian Revolution inspired were many Indians. Several attended the Communist University. By the mid-1920s the Communist Party was formed in India. Its members kept in touch with the Soviet Communist Party. Important Indian political and cultural figures took an interest in the Soviet experiment and visited Russia, among them Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote about Soviet Socialism. In India, writings gave impressions of Soviet Russia. In Hindi, R.S. Avasthi wrote in 1920-21 *Russian Revolution, Lenin, His Life and His Thoughts*, and later *The Red Revolution*. S.D. Vidyalankar wrote *The Rebirth of Russia* and *The Soviet State of Russia*. There was much that was written in Bengali, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu.

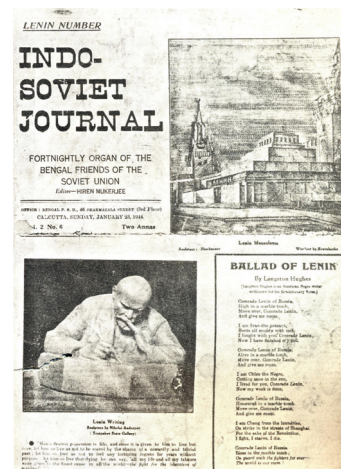


Fig. 20 – Special Issue on Lenin of the Indo-Soviet Journal.

Indian communists mobilised support for the USSR during the Second World War.

Source F

An Indian arrives in Soviet Russia in 1920

'For the first time in our lives, we were seeing Europeans mixing freely with Asians. On seeing the Russians mingling freely with the rest of the people of the country we were convinced that we had come to a land of real equality.

We saw freedom in its true light. In spite of their poverty, imposed by the counter-revolutionaries and the imperialists, the people were more jovial and satisfied than ever before. The revolution had instilled confidence and fearlessness in them. The real brotherhood of mankind would be seen here among these people of fifty different nationalities. No barriers of caste or religion hindered them from mixing freely with one another. Every soul was transformed into an orator. One could see a worker, a peasant or a soldier haranguing like a professional lecturer.'

Shaukat Usmani, *Historic Trips of a Revolutionary*.

Source G

Rabindranath Tagore wrote from Russia in 1930

'Moscow appears much less clean than the other European capitals. None of those hurrying along the streets look smart. The whole place belongs to the workers ... Here the masses have not in the least been put in the shade by the gentlemen ... those who lived in the background for ages have come forward in the open today ... I thought of the peasants and workers in my own country. It all seemed like the work of the Genii in the Arabian Nights. [here] only a decade ago they were as illiterate, helpless and hungry as our own masses ... Who could be more astonished than an unfortunate Indian like myself to see how they had removed the mountain of ignorance and helplessness in these few years'.

Activity

Compare the passages written by Shaukat Usmani and Rabindranath Tagore. Read them in relation to Sources C, D and E.

- What did Indians find impressive about the USSR ?
- What did the writers fail to notice?

Activities

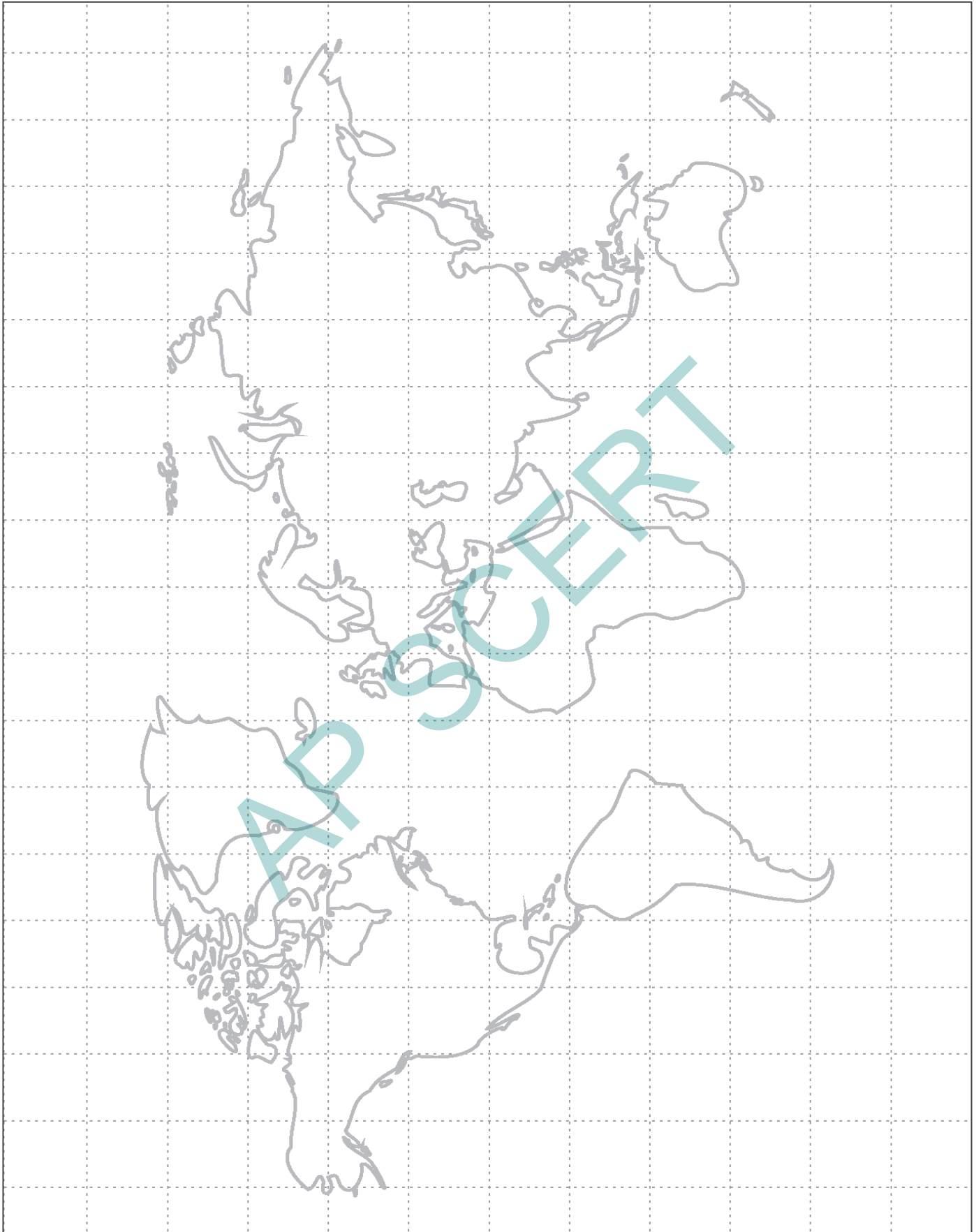
1. Imagine that you are a striking worker in 1905 who is being tried in court for your act of rebellion. Draft the speech you would make in your defence. Act out your speech for your class.
2. Write the headline and a short news item about the uprising of 24 October 1917 for each of the following newspapers
 - a Conservative paper in France
 - a Radical newspaper in Britain
 - a Bolshevik newspaper in Russia
3. Imagine that you are a middle-level wheat farmer in Russia after collectivisation. You have decided to write a letter to Stalin explaining your objections to collectivisation. What would you write about the conditions of your life? What do you think would be Stalin's response to such a farmer?

Activities

Questions

1. What were the social, economic and political conditions in Russia before 1905?
2. In what ways was the working population in Russia different from other countries in Europe, before 1917?
3. Why did the Tsarist autocracy collapse in 1917?
4. Make two lists: one with the main events and the effects of the February Revolution and the other with the main events and effects of the October Revolution. Write a paragraph on who was involved in each, who were the leaders and what was the impact of each on Soviet history.
5. What were the main changes brought about by the Bolsheviks immediately after the October Revolution?
6. Write a few lines to show what you know about:
 - kulaks
 - the Duma
 - women workers between 1900 and 1930
 - the Liberals
 - Stalin's collectivisation programme.
7. Locate these places on the World map given beside.
 - a) The country where the 1917 Revolution took place.
 - b) The country that had 'Marseillaise' as its war song.
 - c) The country where the Industrial Revolution first began in Europe.





LEARNING OUT COMES

The Students will be able to

1. What is Democracy? Why Democracy?

1. Understand Democracy and its features.
2. Distinguish between different types of governments across the world.
3. Explain the differences between Democracy, Monarchy and Dictatorship.
4. Appreciate the Rule of Law and Rights.

2. Constitutional Design

1. Explain the concept of apartheid.
2. Understand the need of Constitution and the efforts in making the Constitution.
3. Compare and contrast the Indian Constitution with that of other countries.
4. Interpret the philosophy of the Constitution.
5. Describe the guiding values of the Indian Constitution and appreciate the efforts of the Constituent Assembly.

3. Electoral Politics

1. Understand the need and the role of elections in Democracy.
2. Analyse the process of elections and the role of Election Commission in taking decisions independently.
3. Define the concept of citizenship.
4. Explain geographical importance of electoral constituencies.
5. Organise mock elections to elect class leaders and school pupils' leader.
6. Feel the sensitivity in facing the challenges in conducting free and fair elections.